CONTACT AND CONTROVERSY BETWEEN ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY IN NORTHERN INDIA, 1833-1857: THE RELATIONS BETWEEN MUSLIMS AND PROTESTANT MISSIONARIES IN THE NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCES AND OUDH

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ABSTRACT

In the period 1833 to 1857 some *'ulamā* from the three north Indian cities of Lucknow, Agra and Delhi were drawn into open controversy with Protestant missionaries in the region. Initial contacts which began in Lucknow in 1833, were turned into prolonged and bitter encounter in the North-Western Provinces, by the dissemination from Agra of publications against Islam by a German Pietist missionary, the Reverend Carl Pfander. The two-fold objective of the thesis is to throw light on the backgrounds and motives of his *'ulamā* opponents, and to examine the types of argument they used in response to his evangelical challenge.

The response came initially from some Lucknow Shī'ī *'ulamā*, and in the second stage from some Muslim residents of Agra who served in the East India Company's subordinate services, notably in clerical capacities in the law courts. By the early 1850s concern had spread to some prominent Sunnī *'ulamā* of Delhi who were led by Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī and a Bengali medical doctor, Muḥammad Wazīr Khān.

An examination of the arguments which were used by the *'ulamā* shows that although the 'Mohammedan controversy' drew on some traditional objections to Christianity, a number of new as well as local factors determined the emphasis which was placed on claiming the irrationality of Christianity and the corruption of its scriptures. Important here was the *'ulamā*'s contact with recent European biblical criticism which they utilized in their own attacks on the Bible.

A debate held in Agra in 1854, which was hailed as a victory by the Muslims, marked the climax of religious controversy during this era. Within three years the risings of 1857 in north India, in which some of the leading controversialists were implicated, rendered both *'ulamā* and missionaries unable or reluctant to re-open the controversies.

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'Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī and Muslim-Christian Controversy in India in the Mid-19th Century', Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, No.1 (1976), pp.42-63.

ABBREVIATIONS

B.F.B.S.	British and Foreign Bible Society
B.M.S.	Baptist Missionary Society
C.M.I.	Church Missionary Intelligencer
C.M.S.	Church Missionary Society
C.R.	Calcutta Review
D.I.	T.P. Hughes, Dictionary of Islam (London, 1885)
D.N.B.	Dictionary of National Biography
E.B.	Encyclopaedia Britannica
E.I.[1]	Encyclopaedia of Islam (1st ed. Leiden, 1913-42)
E.I.[2]	Encyclopaedia of Islam (2nd ed. London and Leiden, 1960 continuing)
G.C.P.I.	General Committee of Public Instruction
I.O.L.	India Office Library and Records, London
J.R.A.S.	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society
K.K.H.	Khair Khwāh-i Hind
L.M.S.	London Missionary Society
M.A.S.	Modern Asian Studies
M.M.	'Missions Magazin' (Magazin für die neueste Geschichte der evangelischen Missions und Bibel-Gesellschaften)
N.W.P.	North-Western Provinces of the Bengal Presidency
P.P.	Parliamentary Papers
S.E.I.	Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam
S.P.G.	Society for the Propagation of the Gospel
T.U.H.	Raḥmān 'Alī, Tażkira-i 'ulamā-i Hind (Karachi, 1961).

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

Transliteration follows the system used in John T. Platts's *Dictionary of Urdu, Classical Hindi, and English* (see Preface, Tables I and II) with some modifications, mainly for convenience in typing. Thus, *'ain* (ع) and *hamza* (ء) are both represented by an inverted comma ('), چ by ch, خ by kh, غ by gh. The Persian *iẓāfat* is denoted by -i. Persian and Arabic words are transliterated according to the Urdu system, as are English words used in Urdu book titles. The familiar English forms of some Indian place-names have been retained (e.g. Delhi and Lucknow), but most other place-names have been transliterated according to Platts's system, omitting diacritical marks.

INTRODUCTION

The era of 'contact and controversy' between Protestant missionaries and Indian 'ulamā which began in 1833 and came to a climax and a sudden end in 1854-55 has not previously been examined. The purpose of this thesis is to identify the participants, their motives and their arguments in order to assess the significance of the so-called 'Mohammedan controversies'[1] in the history of contact between Islam and Christianity, and to examine the reaction of the 'ulamā to the missionaries in the broader context of Indian Muslim responses to the impact of British rule on northern India.

The scene is set in the first chapter by considering the situation of the Muslims of northern India after the English East India Company's conquest and annexation of the region in 1803, but before the beginning of the religious encounters in 1833. The evolution of Protestant missionary interest in India during this period is examined against the background of the evangelical revival, with the object of identifying the emergence of missionary interest in, and knowledge of, Indian Islam. Particular attention is paid to the reasons why the 'ulamā seldom came into contact with missionaries before 1833. Once encounter had begun and had escalated in the period between 1833 and 1854, the preaching and the publications of the Reverend Carl Gottlieb

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1. The term 'Mohammedan controversy' was first used in the title of an article submitted to the Calcutta Review in 1845 by an East India Company civilian, William Muir. Pfander and other missionaries used the term 'controversies', while 'ulamā publications described the encounters variously as religious munāzara or mubāḥaṣa (disputation, debate).

Pfander played a crucial part in turning 'contact' into 'controversy'. Thus although Pfander did not reach India until the late 1830s, the object of the second chapter is an examination of the attitudes, knowledge and strategies of this Pietist missionary whose activities would subsequently be viewed on both sides as the main catalyst in the controversies. Chapters three and four are concerned with the reasons why some _'ulamā_ of various sectarian, educational and occupational backgrounds in the three north Indian cities of Lucknow, Agra and Delhi, decided to come forward to refute Pfander by the publication of replies to his books on Islam, and by the holding of discussions and public debates. In thus clarifying the 'processes of encounter' some light is thrown on the place of the 'anti-missionary _'ulamā_' in the broader community of north Indian Muslims, and on the responses of some individual _'ulamā_ to their new situation under British rule in a reforming and 'interfering' era. An attempt is made to relate the chronology of the encounters to the changing political context, and in particular to identify contrasts between the early responses in Lucknow, the capital of the state of Oudh, and the subsequent reaction in Agra and Delhi, the foci of Muslim religious and cultural concerns in the North-Western Provinces.

In chapters five and six the arguments used by the _'ulamā_ in their counter-attack on the missionaries are examined in detail. Although the Indian _'ulamā_ drew on many of the arguments against Christianity which had been utilized in Muslim-Christian controversies from the first preaching of Islam until the Jesuit encounters at the Mughal court, they chose to concentrate their attack on two main charges. These were first, the charge that some crucial Christian doctrines were irrational,

and second, the charge that the Christian scriptures had been corrupted. In making a detailed examination of these questions, particular attention is paid to the effects on the reformulation of these charges, of local conditions in north India, and of the adoption of European critical assumptions.

The controversies ended with a public debate in Agra in April 1854, which the 'ulamā claimed as a decisive victory over Pfander. This debate engendered some further correspondence and publications, but by the middle of 1855 both 'ulamā and missionaries had relapsed into silence. There was to be no resumption of their encounters on a significant scale until the 1870s. Reference will be made in the concluding section to the possible after-effects of the era of controversies, both in India and in the wider context of subsequent Muslim-Christian encounters in other parts of the Muslim world. However, the focus of the thesis is the pre-1857 era, the significance of which has not previously been examined.

If there have been no previous examinations of this particular era of controversy and its participants, a number of studies have nevertheless been concerned with the background of the Protestant missionaries, with Western attitudes to Islam, with missionary encounters with other religious communities in India, and with various aspects of Indian-Muslim theology and politics.

Interest has been shown recently in the backgrounds and the motives of the men who responded to the missionary call during the period of the evangelical revival. F.S. Piggin and G.A. Oddie have examined the papers of candidates to various British Protestant missionary societies to assess their professed

motives and have also evaluated some economic and social considerations which were not always expressed openly by the candidates.[1] The conclusions in both these studies on education, class and motivation are relevant to the present investigation, for the missionary controversialists in India belonged to one of the societies thus examined, namely the Church Missionary Society.[2] However there is no such study of the backgrounds of the German missionaries from the Basel Society, whose influx into the Church Missionary Society carried the Pietist influence into northern India, and whose strong presence in Agra precipitated the Muslim controversies.

Very little attention has previously been paid to the aspect of missionary activity which is at the heart of this thesis - the evolution of missionary attitudes to Islam and the impact of missionary preaching on Muslims. However, a study which is useful for setting the Indian controversies in the broader perspective of changing Protestant attitudes to Islam is L.L. Vander Werff's Christian Mission to Muslims - the Record: Anglican and Reformed Approaches in India and the Near East, 1800-1938.[3] In tracing and assessing changing attitudes, Vander Werff considered the

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1. F.S. Piggin, 'The social background, motivation and training of British Protestant missionaries to India, 1789-1858', unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, London University, 1974; G.A. Oddie, 'India and Missionary Motives, c. 1850-1900', Journal of Ecclesiastical History, Vol. XXV, No. 1 (Jan. 1974), pp. 61-74.

2. Hereafter CMS.

3. L.L. Vander Werff, Christian Mission to Muslims - the Record: Anglican and Reformed Approaches in India and the Near East, 1800-1938 (South Pasadena, California, 1977).

contribution of several of the Anglican missionaries who initiated contacts with the north Indian 'ulamā, notably Henry Martyn, Carl Pfander, and Thomas Valpy French. However, he examined the evolution of Christian apologetics with only scant reference to the particular Muslim environment in which the encounter was taking place, and with little attention to the 'ulamā's replies. The present study aims to add the dimensions of interaction and reaction to previous considerations of missionary 'impact'. Closer to the spirit of this objective is a study of Portuguese Jesuit contacts with the Mughal court in the early seventeenth century. In his examination of the apologetic works of Jerome Xavier, Arnulf Camps paid detailed attention to the question of the types of argument which were adopted by the Jesuits.[1] These may be compared with the Protestant strategies two centuries later. However, their usefulness for comparative purposes is limited because the extant Portuguese treatises which Camps examined are the accounts of hypothetical encounters with north Indian Muslims rather than records of the discussions which actually took place. Furthermore it seems that the encounters left no conscious legacy on the Muslim side, and Protestant utilization of this source, as will be shown, was limited and partial.

If the question of missionary contact with Islam, particularly in nineteenth century India, is an uncharted area, there have been a number of studies which have focused on missionary encounters with other religious communities in India. Among these the most relevant chronologically and geographically

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1. A. Camps, Jerome Xavier S.J. and the Muslims of the Mogul Empire: Controversial Works and Missionary Activity (Schöneck-Beckenried, Switzerland, 1957).

for the questions raised in the present study is M. Mohar Ali's The Bengali Reaction to Christian Missionary Activities, 1833-1857.[1] However it is essentially a study of the Hindu reaction to missionary preaching in Lower Bengal, and although there are some brief references in the introduction and conclusion to the existence of a 'Muslim reaction' in Lower Bengal, they are somewhat enigmatic. For while it is argued that the Protestant missionaries tended to ignore the Muslims, and that consequently the details of the Bengali Muslims' attitude to missionary activities are not known, it is also suggested that the response of the Muslims was actually 'equally or even more hostile' than that of the Hindus, even though its nature 'cannot be accurately identified'.[2] Yet, although Mohar Ali makes no claim to follow up the question of the nature of the Muslim response, his brief comments are relevant to the present study. For he suggests that important among the provocations behind this allegedly 'hostile' Muslim reaction, was the publication in Calcutta of the works of the self-same German Pietist missionary, the Reverend Carl Pfander, whose activities in Agra would subsequently provide the catalyst for the reaction of the 'ulamā in the North-Western Provinces. Furthermore, his study of the Hindu reaction in Calcutta during the same time span (1833-1857) shows that tension came to a head there in the mid 1840s at the approximate date when the Muslim reaction in the North-Western Provinces was also gaining momentum.[3]

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1. M. Mohar Ali, The Bengali Reaction to Christian Missionary Activities, 1833-1857 (Chittagong, 1965).

2. ibid., p. 12; 203.

3. ibid., Chap. 1, 'The Tattvabodhini Sabha and the Missionaries'; Chap. 2, 'Anti-Missionary propaganda'.

Although it seems unlikely that there was cross-fertilization of arguments between Hindus and Muslims in different parts of the Bengal Presidency, this parallel series of missionary controversies provides some basis for a comparison of the types of objection which _paṇḍits_ and _'ulamā_ were currently proffering in opposition to missionary preaching.[1]

In a more recently published work, _Resistant Hinduism_, R.F. Young has examined the response of three Hindu apologists to an evangelical challenge to Hinduism which was first published in the late 1830s.[2] Young's coinage of the term 'resistant Hinduism' for the stance taken when some _paṇḍits_ chose to challenge rather than to accommodate to Christianity, suggests a wider context in which the first preaching of evangelical Christianity in northern India provoked 'resistant _'ulamā_', as well as _paṇḍits_, to attempt a defensive response. On the Christian side there was a personal link between these two sets of encounters in the Muir brothers, John and William, who were civilian officers in the North-Western Provinces government. While John Muir, a Sanskrit scholar, provoked the Hindu 'resistance' identified by Young, his younger brother, William, a noted Arabist, subsequently played an important part in the 'Mohammedan controversies' with the _'ulamā_ which are the subject of the present thesis.[3]

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1. e.g. disputes between Vedantists and missionaries beginning c.1842 and ending c.1847 on questions such as the attributes of God, the doctrine of the Trinity, miracles, attacks on the historicity of the Bible, ibid., pp. 22-31; 38-48.

2. R.F. Young, _Resistant Hinduism: Sanskrit Sources on Anti-Christian Apologetics in Early Nineteenth-Century India_ (Vienna, 1981).

3. ibid., Chap. 4; J. Muir, _Matapar̄ikṣā: a sketch of the argument for Christianity and against Hinduism_ (Calcutta, 1839); W. Muir, _The Mohammedan Controversy_ (Edinburgh, 1897).

Also useful for comparing types of argument is N.M. Saverimuttu's study of encounters between Catholics and Hindus in Jaffna, in northern Ceylon, in the early years of the twentieth century.[1] Of the two main themes in his study, the conversion of large numbers of low caste Hindus to Roman Catholicism, and 'the lively debate on theological and philosophical issues', the latter is relevant to present concerns. Although many of the Jaffna controversies reflected matters of particular Hindu concern, notably reincarnation and vegetarianism, the discussions on the nature of God, and on incarnation, bear comparison with the objections which the north Indian _'ulamā_ had earlier made to the doctrines of the Trinity and the divinity and sonship of Christ. Although Saverimuttu did not identify the channels of communication, he found that knowledge of Western philosophical and theological criticism of Christianity was an important influence on the nature of the Hindu response as the present study will show had also been the case in north India at a much earlier date. It seems, on the other hand, that the Jaffna reaction occurred in a political vacuum, and the dimension of British governmental involvement in the Muslim controversies in the north seems to have been absent in Ceylon. Thus, although there are few studies of religious controversy, and none which ask the questions which are to be attempted here, some themes of comparison and contrast can be identified in the above-mentioned works.

It might be expected that light would be shed on the question of the motives of the _'ulamā_ participants by studies

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1. N.M. Saverimuttu, 'Relations between Roman Catholics and Hindus in Jaffna, Ceylon, 1900-1926: A Study of Religious Encounter', unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, London University, 1978.

which have focused on other aspects of Indian Muslim theology and politics in the mid-nineteenth century. Again, however, little is available. Most relevant is C.W. Troll's recent study, Sayyid Ahmad Khan: a Reinterpretation of Muslim Theology.[1] Sayyid Aḥmad Khān was reared and employed in the same environment in Agra and Delhi which nurtured the 'ulamā whose hostility to Christianity is the subject of the present thesis. Yet Sayyid Aḥmad's writings on Christianity and Islam in the 1860s, and in particular his 'modernist' view of the Bible, mark a strong contrast to the hostile reaction of the 'ulamā who were writing on the same subjects only a few years earlier. Troll's examination of Sayyid Aḥmad's sources for his Mahomedan Commentary on the Holy Bible shows that 'modernist' and 'fundamentalist' 'ulamā were utilizing the same Western commentaries and works of criticism to arrive at opposite conclusions on crucial questions of exegesis. His study throws some light on the role of the Agra missionaries and of Company officials such as William Muir, in the escalation of Muslim concern about the claims of Christianity.

Yet efforts to place the missionary-'ulamā controversies in the wider context of Muslim responses to British rule still await further studies on Muslim attitudes in the early nineteenth century and on the role of the Muslims in the risings of 1857. In the present study Peter Hardy's The Muslims of British India has provided the basis for certain assumptions about the general position of the Muslims of north India during this period.[2]

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1. C.W. Troll, Sayyid Ahmad Khan: A Reinterpretation of Muslim Theology (New Delhi, 1978).

2. P. Hardy, The Muslims of British India (Cambridge, 1972).

A useful line of more detailed enquiry was opened up in this area by Mushiru-l-Haqq's study of 'Indian Muslims' attitude to the British in the early 19th century: A Case Study of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz'.[1] However, the gap between Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz and the post-1857 years still yawns wide, for more recently published studies of the north Indian Muslim community are firmly based in the second half of the nineteenth century, containing only introductory references to the pre-1857 situation.[2] Furthermore, urban and regional studies which have claimed to focus on the cities and provinces of the north have passed over religious questions in general, and the 'Muslim controversies' in particular, with little more than a brief mention.[3]

Among Urdu publications on the subject of Muslim religion and culture in the early nineteenth century, the works of K.A. Nizami of Aligarh Muslim University have been helpful in setting the scene.[4] However, there are few critical studies in

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1. Unpubl. M.A. thesis, McGill University, 1964.

2. e.g. F. Robinson, Separatism among Indian Muslims: the Politics of the United Provinces' Muslims, 1860-1923 (Cambridge, 1974); D. Lelyveld, Aligarh's First Generation: Muslim Solidarity in British India (Princeton, New Jersey, 1978).

3. e.g. J. Pemble, The Raj, the Indian Mutiny and the Kingdom of Oudh 1801-1859 (Hassocks, 1977). The preliminary survey of 'the city' in the pre-annexation years, contains no reference to the religious discussions in Lucknow in the 1830s, nor to the mujtahid's family, members of which played an important part in the religious life of Lucknow as well as in the Muslim controversies. Narayani Gupta's recent study of Delhi between Two Empires (1803-1931) (Delhi, 1981) makes a brief reference (p. 8) to the debates between Pfander and the 'ulamā in the 1850s, but the focus of this study, in spite of the title, is also the post-1857 era.

4. K.A. Niẓāmī, '1857 se pehle kī Dihlī 'ulamā wa mashā 'īkh kā ijtimā'', in Tārīkhī maqālāt (Delhi, 1966), pp. 210-257.

Urdu on the role of the 'ulamā participants. The chronology of the religious controversies, and some biographical material on the 'ulamā, have been obtained from the publications of Maulānā Imdād Ṣābrī, notably his Firangiyon Kā jāl, and his biography of Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī, the Āsār-i Raḥmat.[1]

A study of these encounters has proved possible because most of the letters and tracts which are known to have passed between the missionaries and the 'ulamā have been located. On the missionary side, the letters and reports written by the Reverend Carl Pfander during his formative years in the Near East, are deposited in the archives of the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society. The manuscript draft, in German, of Pfander's book, the Mīzān al-Ḥaqq, which was later at the heart of the Indian 'ulamā's concern, is also in the same archive. His correspondence from India and Turkey is deposited in the Church Missionary Society archives in London.[2] The views of Company officials in the North-Western Provinces, notably of Sir William Muir, who were closely involved in the controversies, are to be found in both missionary and government records. Missionary journals, such as the Church Missionary Intelligencer and the Khair Khwāh-i Hind, carried detailed accounts of some of the controversies. Mission and college archives and libraries in Agra, Delhi, Allahabad and Calcutta also contain materials on particular aspects of the study. Finally, the published

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1. Ṣābrī, Firangiyon kā jāl (Delhi, 1949); Āsār-i Raḥmat (Delhi, n.d.).

2. Part of this collection was recently (1981) transferred to the University Library at the University of Birmingham.

works on Islam by Pfander and Muir, some of them in translation into Urdu and Persian, and some of them in several revised editions, constitute an important source for tracing crucial changes in attitude and strategy which were the result both of Muslim criticism and of European orientalist scholarship during the mid-nineteenth century.

The publications of the _'ulamā_ are almost equally complete, for most of the published replies to Pfander's works, and some relevant correspondence with various missionaries, have been located in various college and _madrasa_ libraries in India and Pakistan. However, while the home and committee records of the missionary societies, and their periodicals, have made it possible to place Pfander and the other missionary participants in a wider context than the 'controversy' records alone would permit, it has not always proved possible to identify the other concerns and allegiances of the _'ulamā_ participants with an equal degree of assurance. If the greater accessibility and comprehensiveness of missionary sources result in some imbalance, two factors have helped to offset this. Assessment of certain key stages has been possible, where Muslim sources were seemingly lacking, because of the inclusion within missionary records of ostensibly verbatim translations or paraphrases of letters and tracts written by various _'ulamā_ participants. Where translation from the original language, usually Urdu or Persian, has been done by the missionaries or by a journal editor, this has been indicated. Faulty or misleading translation by the missionaries may have distorted the _'ulamā_'s arguments, but in some important instances the availability of two distinct translations of the same source has aided interpretation. Secondly, although missionary sources seem to be more

comprehensive, and are certainly more accessible, for the earlier stages of the encounters, the climax of the controversies which occurred in Agra in 1854, is documented much more fully in Muslim than in missionary sources. In this instance the publication of several accounts of the debate by several hands, has allowed a full examination of this crucial stage. Thus, apart from the failure to locate a few important earlier and contemporary works which the 'ulamā drew on for their own arguments, it is felt that the sources bearing directly on the interaction of missionary and 'ulamā arguments about Islam and Christianity provide a complete enough record on which to base some conclusions about the significance of this era of controversy.

The missionaries, in particular, carried out frequent revision of their tracts, therefore it is important to identify the particular editions to which the 'ulamā had access. When the relevant edition has not been available and a later one has been consulted this has been indicated. Controversial works by the 'ulamā published in Arabic have not been consulted, but in the most important instance a French translation was available.[1] Transliteration of Urdu words follows the system used in Platts' Urdu Dictionary, modified mainly for convenience in typing.[2] However, when missionary translations are available they have been used, and their transliteration has not been altered. Citations from the Qur'ān

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1. P.V. Carletti (ed.) Idh-har-ul-Haqq ou Manifestation de la Vérité de el-Hage Rahmat-Ullah Efendi de Delhi, 2 vols (Paris, 1880).

2. See p.6, 'note on transliteration'; J.T. Platts, A Dictionary of Urdu, Classical Hindi and English (London, 1884).

are according to George Sale's translation, in the two-volume edition of 1801, which was used by several of the missionaries and was also referred to by some of the 'ulamā.[1] It has usually been possible to identify the particular translations of the Bible which were used by the 'ulamā , but where there is no indication the English Authorized Version of 1611 has been used.

1. G. Sale, (trans.), The Koran; commonly called the Alcoran of Mohammed ... to which is prefixed a Preliminary Discourse, 2 vols (London, 1801).

CHAPTER ONE

'ULAMĀ AND MISSIONARIES IN NORTHERN INDIA IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

THE MUSLIMS OF NORTHERN INDIA IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

At the beginning of the nineteenth century vast tracts of northern India which had once formed the heartlands of the Mughal Empire fell into the hands of the English East India Company to remain under British control until India's independence. A number of studies of the 'twilight' years of the north Indian Muslim courts have shown that in spite of political subordination the early decades of the nineteenth century witnessed a 'flowering of literature and learning' and a resurgence of the artistic and religious pursuits which had been characteristic of Indo-Muslim culture in its Mughal heyday.[1] During this time there was little contact, and seemingly no conflict, with the cultural and religious values of the new European rulers. Understanding of this quiescent phase before 1833 will be sought in this chapter in an examination of the general situation of the Muslims and the north Indian _'ulamā_ during the first years of British rule. Secondly, attention will be paid to the reasons why the vanguard of the evangelical missionary movement failed to penetrate _'ulamā_ circles in the north at this time. On the Muslim side, Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz (1746-1824), and on the Christian side, Henry Martyn (1781-1812) have sometimes been singled out as the initiators of contact and controversy between Islam and Christianity in India. Their roles will be re-assessed in the light of the absence, rather than the occurrence, of any meaningful encounter during their lifetimes.

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1. R. Russell and K. Islam (trans. and edit.) _Ghalib 1797-1869, Vol. 1: Life and Letters_ (London, 1969), p. 30; P. Spear, _Twilight of the Mughuls_ (Cambridge, 1951, reprinted Delhi, 1969).

The geographical limits for this study are set by the location of the subsequent controversies, and of the homelands of the 'ulamā who participated. In the administrative terminology of the 1840s and 1850s this region was known to the Company as the North-Western Provinces of its Bengal Presidency. The adjacent subsidiary alliance kingdom of Oudh, which was annexed by the Company in 1856, will also be included.[1] Here lay the heartlands of the former Muslim dominance over the north Indian plains. The three cities of Delhi, Lucknow and Agra, where controversy would centre, were particularly important in Muslim eyes, not only for their significant Muslim populations, but also for the attraction they exerted to poets, artists and 'ulamā from the entire region and beyond, in this era of renewed cultural and religious activity.

There are no census figures for the early years of the nineteenth century, but it is estimated that at mid-century the Muslims of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh comprised 'rather more than a tenth of the population'.[2] The initial pattern of Muslim settlement had been set by the succession of invasions from Central Asia which from the twelfth century onwards had swept down onto the Indo-Gangetic plains. If Delhi was always the main magnet, there

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1. The region has been known variously as the Ceded and Conquered Provinces (1803), the Western Provinces (1822), the Presidency of Agra (1834), the North-Western Provinces (1836), and the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh (1902). Before the annexation of Oudh its ruling nawabs had been in subsidiary alliance with the East India Company since 1765 and had been granted the title of kings of Oudh in 1819. After independence in 1947 the whole region became the state of Uttar Pradesh within the Indian Union.

2. P. Hardy, The Muslims of British India (Cambridge, 1972), p. 2. The census of 1881 estimated the Muslim population at about 13 per cent.

was also a concentration of Muslims in other towns which were, or became, centres of government and related religious and cultural interests. It is estimated that two-fifths of the total urban population of the region was Muslim,[1] and the identification of urban settlement with crucial Muslim interests is demonstrated by the size of the Muslim population in three cities in the region which will feature in this study. For nearly half the population of the city of Delhi was Muslim, while in Lucknow and Agra the population was between 30 and 40 per cent.[2] Certain rural areas, notably in Meerut and Rohilkhand, had also attracted substantial Muslim settlement, but in contrast, in the remote Himalayan fringes of the province very few Muslims had settled. The present study will be concerned mainly with town-dwelling Muslims, although many of the _'ulamā_ who would encounter the missionaries in the cities of Lucknow, Agra and Delhi came from and periodically returned to, families whose ancestors had resided for generations in various rural districts.

The Muslims of the province were descended either from Indian converts to Islam, or claimed that their ancestors had settled in northern India after the various Central Asian waves of invasion and immigration. The Indian descendants of Arab, Turkish, Persian and Afghan ethnic stock felt pride in stressing their genealogical

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1. F. Robinson, _Separatism among Indian Muslims_ (Cambridge, 1974), p. 13.

2. G.J. Christian, _Report on the Census of the North West Provinces of the Bengal Presidency_ (Calcutta, 1854), pp. 51; 67; _Census of the N.W. Provinces, 1865_ (Allahabad, 1867), pp. 15-17; J. C. Williams, _Report on the Census of Oudh_ (Lucknow, 1869), I, pp. 30-32.

links with the family of the Prophet, with the Arabs, or with former ruling houses of India. Muslims with such claims to be Sayyid, Shaikh, Mughal or Pathan made up the ashrāf category, which had become a politically and socially dominant élite in the old Mughal heartlands. Those with ashrāf connections numbered nearly half the total Muslim population of the province, the rest being the descendants of converts to Islam, mainly from Hinduism.[1] Although the 'ulamā class was drawn from very varied backgrounds, most of those who will figure in this study had claims to ashrāf status.

Significant also is the division of the Muslim population between Sunnīs and Shī'īs. Most were Ḥanafī Sunnīs, but an influx of Persians during the Mughal period had resulted in pockets of strong Shī'ī influence. The Shī'a might have been a tiny minority on an all-India evaluation - they comprised only approximately 3 per cent of the total Muslim population of this region - but in certain parts of the north they had an influence out of all proportion to their numbers. Particularly was this so in the city of Lucknow, where a governor of Persian origins had taken advantage of the weakness of Mughal central power in the mid-eighteenth century to make himself de facto ruler of his ṣūba of Oudh, thus creating the state with which the British subsequently made a subsidiary alliance. His family's patronage of Shī'ī interests encouraged other Shī'īs to settle at his court and the Sunnī-Shī'ī relationship in the region as a whole was an inherent source of internal tension. A number of Shī'ī 'ulamā, as well as Sunnīs, would play an important part in the

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1. cf. Robinson, op.cit., p. 24; Hardy, op.cit., pp. 6-7.

ensuing controversies with the missionaries.

THE NORTH INDIAN 'ULAMĀ

If the reaction of Muslims to the missionaries was eventually to be led by members of the 'ulamā class both Sunnī and Shī'i, then the place of men of this calling among the wider north Indian Muslim community should be established. A useful discussion of the grounds for defining the Indian 'ulamā as a social class is found in Peter Hardy's article , 'The 'Ulama in British India'.[1] From a religious perspective various definitions agree in distinguishing the 'ulamā as scholars whom the rest of the Muslim community regard as being particularly well learned in the study of the Qur'ān and the traditions, and in the other specialized branches of Islamic theology and jurisprudence.[2] Annemarie Schimmel has emphasized the importance of their role within the Muslim community in defining the 'ulamā as 'the religious authorities in Islam, scholars of theology and law, upon whom the interpretation of the sharī'a rests so that

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1. 'The 'Ulama in British India', Journal of Indian History, Golden Jubilee Volume (Kerala, 1973) pp. 831-32.

2. The term 'ulamā (plural of 'ālim) has been variously defined as 'doctors of law and religion', 'those who know', those who 'possess 'ilm or learning', those having the qualities of 'knowledge, learning, science in the widest sense, and in a high degree.' See Platts' Dictionary; T.P. Hughes, Dictionary of Islam, p. 650; E.I.[1], IV, pt. 2, p. 994.

they are the true leaders of the community.'[1] The necessary scholarship was usually acquired by studying at the feet of some already renowned 'ālim, and often with other students in a particular type of religious seminary, the madrasa. Completion of this traditional form of religious study would seem to be the one necessary criterion for defining the outer boundaries of the 'ulamā class.[2] Yet in Mughal India, in contrast to Ottoman Turkey, there had been no government sponsored madrasa system or centralized syllabus of studies.[3] Thus once a student had exhausted the resources possessed by the scholars of his own locality, he might gravitate at will to other prominent 'ulamā or to some of the more renowned seminaries in centres of religious learning such as Delhi and Lucknow. After completing the madrasa syllabus there was the possibility of being called into state service, but to an office which might at other times be held by a non-'ālim Muslim or even by a Hindu. Within the state bureaucracy, however, the judicial branch, including the important offices of qāẓī (judge), and muftī (jurisconsult), was monopolized by men of the 'ulamā

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1. Islam in the Indian Subcontinent (Leiden, 1980), p. 275. A late 19th century missionary definition of the 'ulamā also hinged on the recognition of the importance of their role as leaders of the Muslim community, explaining that 'in this plural form the word is used as the title of those bodies of learned doctors in Muhammadan divinity and law, who ... form the theocratic element of the government in Muslim countries, and who by their fatwās or decisions in questions touching private and public matters of importance, regulate the life of the Muhammadan community', T.P. Hughes, D.I. (1885), p. 650.

2. 'They were a class by reason of their education, and ... by education in a particular way', Hardy, op.cit., p. 831.

3. H.A.R. Gibb and H. Bowen, Islamic Society and the West (London, 1950), I, pt.2, p.84.

class, because only those scholars who had been initiated into Islamic jurisprudence by other 'ulamā would possess sufficient knowledge of Islamic law to fulfil the duties of such posts. On the other hand an individual 'ālim might be so greatly revered among his fellow 'ulamā that he would spend the rest of his life in madrasa or mosque teaching, though at this stage also many 'ulamā would return to the mosques, madrasas and maktabs of their own locality in order to ensure that the learning they had acquired at the leading seminaries might be re-imparted to the boys of their home community. Thus although some 'ulamā might serve the state in a direct capacity, many did not do so, nor did the Mughal government stipulate any mandatory tests or grading by rank or salary which might have given a professional structure to an otherwise somewhat fluid process. Indeed if the common process of Islamic education, acquired either in a madrasa or by individual teaching, may be said to define the necessary minimum intellectual grounding for an 'ālim, whether or not he remained afterwards in village obscurity, what counted more than pretensions to the higher realms of examinable knowledge, and more than specific professional status or family background, was his acceptance by the local Muslim community. For in a society where the faithful habitually turned to those of their co-religionists they most esteemed and respected for guidance on particular questions of belief and behaviour, the 'ulamā might be defined as those men so resorted to - those who were accepted and recognised as 'learned' by their local community rather than those who might by more objective tests be classified as either especially 'learned' or of 'professional' scholarly status.

The fluidity of the Indian 'ulamā class was reflected

also in the diverse origins of its members. Although two or three religious centres such as the Farangī Maḥall in Lucknow and the Madrasa-i Raḥīmiyya in Delhi, had won by the early 19th century a reputation which singled them out from other institutions, and although there was a tendency in certain families for a son to follow his father's footsteps into a particular madrasa, by no means all the 'ulamā had studied under prominent scholars at the leading madrasas or were adhering to family tradition.[1] For there was no caste-like exclusiveness attached to membership of the 'ulamā class, and as the great city madrasas as well as the village maktabs considered it their duty and function to instruct all Muslim boys regardless of family affiliation or financial status, the result was that youths representative of the entire Muslim social spectrum might emerge with the status of 'ālim. Thus among the ten per cent of the population who were Muslim, many would number among their family members, scholars who were regarded as 'ulamā.

Explanation of the belated emergence among this diverse 'ulamā class, of any awareness that the Christian religious message was being preached and published in opposition to the Qur'anic message, necessitates some examination of the ways in which British expansion was impinging on the north Indian Muslim community and its interests

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1. Hardy, 'The 'Ulama in British India', p. 832, shows that in a random sample of 100 Indian 'ulama who died in the 19th century, 'fifty per cent had an 'ālim for a father, twenty-six per cent were pupils of 'ulamā' not apparently related to them and eighteen per cent had fathers not apparently 'ulamā' and received education from persons unmentioned. Of these hundred 'ulamā' fourteen were educated at Farangi Mahal, sixteen were taught by the well-known Delhi 'ālim, Shah 'Abd al-'Aziz, but fifty-three appear to have been attached to no outstanding centre of Islamic learning.'

during the first years after annexation.

EFFECTS OF BRITISH EXPANSION ON THE MUSLIMS OF THE NORTH

In the post-1857 years and until fairly recently it was usual to assume that the extension of British rule to northern India necessarily undermined the previously dominant Muslim élites, and reduced the Muslim population generally to a 'race ruined under British rule.'[1] But the trend of more recent and detailed study of the region has tended to the opposite conclusion, that far from being 'ruined' by British rule, some of the Muslims in the North-Western Provinces actually prospered under the new regime, and even when the impact was detrimental to his economic interests, a Muslim land or office-holder was likely to be no worse off than his Hindu counterpart from the same locality. Thus up to 1857 the Muslim section of the population still represented a 'substantial landed interest in the North-Western Provinces'.[2] Where subordinate posts in the Company's service were open to Indians, whether as deputy collectors and _tahsīldārs_ in the revenue service, or as _amīns_ and _munsifs_ in the judicial service, the Muslims of the north continued to hold a high proportion of such offices up to the 1880s.

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1. W.W. Hunter's, _The Indian Musalmans: are they bound in conscience to rebel against the Queen?_ (London, 1871), was regarded as the crucial source for the evolution of this view. For a recent assessment of the place of Hunter's book see M. Mohar Ali, 'Hunter's _Indian Musalmans:_ a re-examination of its background', _J.R.A.S._ No. 1 (1980), pp. 30-51.

2. Hardy, _Muslims of British India_, p. 49.

It seems that the strikingly favourable position which Muslims still held in the revenue service in the 1850s was maintained at least until 1882 when Muslims held 55 per cent of the tahsīldār posts in the United Provinces.[1]

The situation of Muslims in the judicial service is of particular relevance to this study, for it will be shown that Muslim law officers were prominent among the first critics of the missionaries in Agra. In 1850 Muslims held 72 per cent of the judicial posts in the North-Western Provinces which were open to Indians.[2] Although there is insufficient information to make firm generalizations about attitudes, there are reasons for surmising that in spite of these seemingly favourable occupational opportunities under the British, some of the north Indian Muslim families whose sons had traditionally served in the Mughal judicial system, might have feared that their position would be gradually eroded, if not actually undermined. For in spite of earlier promises to uphold the 'laws of the Shaster and the Koran',[3] there had been gradual inroads into the Mughal judicial system. Modifications of the Islamic rules of evidence, and changes in the substance of the laws defining certain crimes and punishments, heralded the evolution of a hybrid

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1. Robinson, op.cit., p. 23; Hardy, Muslims of British India, p. 38.

2. T.R. Metcalf, The Aftermath of Revolt (Princeton, 1965), p. 301, where the statistics are based upon returns from 20 of the 32 districts in the North-Western Provinces. See P.P. (1852), X, pp. 597-617. Also referred to by Hardy, op.cit., p. 38. Robinson shows the maintenance of the Muslim position in the judicial service in the 1880s, op.cit., p. 23.

3. Regulation III of 1793, D. Sutherland, The Regulations of the Bengal Code (Calcutta, n.d.).

form of criminal law and penal procedure which was referred to in the new digests and legal handbooks as 'Anglo-Mohammedan law'. Furthermore although Muslims were seen to be maintaining their position in the subordinate judicial services as a whole, the available appointments were indeed 'subordinate', for although _qāẓīs_ continued to be appointed, they were mere assistants to the new breed of English judges. Although opportunities for Indians in the civil branch of the judiciary were to increase after 1828, it may be questioned whether posts as _munṣifs_ and _amīns_ compensated for the gradual withering away of higher judicial responsibility. It also seems likely that the judicial opportunities which did exist in the north were increasingly snatched by candidates, albeit still Muslims, from Lower Bengal.[1] Thus the seemingly favourable statistics for employment may hide demotion in some quarters, and considerable real change in the inner composition of the Muslim judicial class.

On the other hand it is probable that until the changes in education and language policy in the 1830s, many Muslims of the North-Western Provinces remained unconcerned about the implications of British recruitment policy, and in Oudh, anyway, the kings continued to make their own appointments until the annexation of the state in 1856. A factor which may have been conducive to the acquiescence of the Muslim service classes

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1. Lists of 33 _'ulamā_ who had qualified in 'Mohammadan Law'at the Calcutta Madrasa examinations of 1837 and 1839 were circulated to the commissioners of the North-Western Provinces, urging them to appoint them to any vacancies which might occur. All 33 gave their birth place as Lower Bengal, which suggests that by that date there was a one-way flow of law officers from the Lower to the Upper Provinces. Agra (General Judicial, 1834-1857), Vol. 7/171. U.P. State Archives.

generally was the support given by the British to the concept of 'anglo-oriental' education in the North-Western Provinces. In the mid 1820s colleges were opened in Delhi and Agra in which the teaching of Arabic and Persian was accorded an important place and a high proportion of the teaching staff were 'ulamā. Delhi College, in particular, which was grafted on to a derelict madrasa was for its first few years something of a monument to pure orientalism, being intended to placate the sons of those,

> who had been reduced by the political convulsions from affluence to indigence, and whose prejudices prevented their engaging in any of the meaner occupations of life.[1]

In 1829, which was later considered to mark the peak of Delhi College's success, an important reason for self-congratulation was the extent to which it was felt that some of the learned Muslims of Delhi had both accepted the college's existence, and were also participating in its functions and examinations.[2]

In Agra as in Delhi the local British patrons of the new anglo-oriental college included Arabic and Sanskrit in the original curriculum although the General Committee had favoured only Persian and Hindi. In 1831 English was added, but although the demand for oriental subjects subsequently declined, Arabic and Persian were retained, and survived even after the 'Anglicist' education resolution of 1835. It was indicative of local British attitudes that although Persian was temporarily abolished at Agra College,

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1. J. Kerr, A Review of Public Instruction in the Bengal Presidency from 1835 to 1851 (London, 1853), part 2, p. 191; 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, Marḥūm Dihlī Kālij (Karachi, 1962), pp. 10-14.

2. Kerr, op.cit., p. 193.

it was later restored 'as a measure that would be acceptable to the Mahomedan population.'[1] A few anglo-vernacular schools were set up in the 1820s in other urban centres in the North-Western Provinces. One of these was at Bareilly, a centre of Muslim settlement. But in most cases these institutions were short-lived. In 1835 the anglo-vernacular school at Meerut had 60 Muslim pupils out of a total roll of 112, but a few years later it was closed down. Otherwise apart from the efforts of a few individual officers in their own districts, there were no serious attempts until the 1840s to enquire into the state and nature of indigenous education in the North-Western Provinces. The Anglo-oriental colleges at Delhi and Agra were not as yet regarded as subversive of higher Islamic learning, while below the madrasa level the maktabs and Qur'ān schools which existed in every village of the province, continued to provide for the educational and religious needs of Muslim boys in traditional fashion. In Oudh the only European schools were intended for the children of the Residency staff and for other Christians. Even in the cities of the North-Western Provinces where the local branches of the General Committee of Public Instruction were now active, British interest in education seemed supportive to, not destructive of, Muslim scholarly interests. In general then, ashrāf and service Muslims, including those 'ulamā who belonged to both categories, continued for some time after annexation to benefit from their previous social and economic advantages and did not necessarily face sudden and complete deprivation and change as a consequence of British expansion. However, for the

1. ibid., p. 183.

purposes of this study it is necessary to look in more detail at two inter-related aspects of the Muslim situation - conditions at the centres of religious and cultural patronage at the two courts of Delhi and Lucknow, and the particular situation of the members of the 'ulamā class who had links with those two cities.

THE MUSLIM COURTS AT DELHI AND LUCKNOW

When Delhi fell to Lord Lake's forces in 1803, the Company was forthright in the assertion of its power to take the revenues of the conquered provinces and to administer them according to its own precepts. Yet the Mughal family retained the title of King, and within the walls of the Red Fort a court in miniature maintained the aura of authority which its predecessors had once wielded over more than half the subcontinent. Throughout the pre-Mutiny period there was no precise definition of the Mughal king's legal status. Although the Company reiterated that the Emperor had been reduced to a mere pensionary status carrying only a 'nominal sovereignty', Shāh 'Alam (d. 1806) and his successors, Akbar Shāh (1806-1837) and Bahādur Shāh (1837-1857), continued to assert that the Company, although clearly in temporary political control, was nevertheless still the Emperor's vassal.[1] Illusions of former grandeur were to some extent fostered by the outlook of the first generation of British officials in Delhi, several of whom belonged to the school of thought, now waning, which held Indian culture

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1. The discussion of the Mughal court's relationship with the East India Company is based on P. Spear, Twilight of the Mughuls, pp. 32-59.

and traditions in some respect, and were therefore prepared to humour Mughal sensitivities. By 1830 this attitude was hardening into one of impatience that such an anachronistic and prodigal royal household had not been swept tidily away. Gradually, the formalities which had marked, in Mughal eyes, the upkeep of a suzerain-vassal relationship, were ignored or abandoned by the British. Anyway, adherence to mere forms of etiquette could no longer hide the stark facts that the very survival of the Mughal depended on a pension from the Company which all his pleas seemed powerless to raise, and that the crucial land revenues and other economic resources of the surrounding territories were now at the Company's disposal. No longer an employer of armies, or of administrators, the Delhi court was no longer a magnet for seekers of high office or service in the state. These were indeed the 'twilight' days of the Empire.

Yet in spite of the stripping away of political and economic power, the Mughal court had remained, in some important respects, the focus of Muslim culture and loyalties throughout most of Muslim India. Indeed, during the first half of the nineteenth century, there was a revival in Delhi of the Muslim literary and artistic forms which had made the city the creative centre of Indo-Islamic culture in the era of Mughal greatness. During the wars of the eighteenth century many scholars had fled away from Delhi to find security and patronage at the newly established Shī'ī court at Lucknow. But, in the half-century of internal peace which followed the British victory over the Marathas, 'Delhi experienced something like a renaissance, a flowering of literature and

learning.'[1] The atmosphere in the city during this time was evocatively recalled by Altāf Husain Hālī in the preface to his biography of the Delhi poet, Ghālib,

> In the thirteenth century of the Muslim era when the decline of the Muslims had already entered its most extreme phase, and, along with their wealth, renown and political power, their great achievements in the arts and sciences had also departed from them, by some good fortune there gathered in the capital, Delhi, a band of men so talented that their meetings and assemblies recall those of the days of Akbar and Shahjahan.[2]

In spite of straitened circumstances the court continued to extend patronage to a circle of poets, miniature painters and calligraphists.[3] The kings of this period showed a particular interest in poetry and both Akbar Shāh and Bahādur Shāh composed verses of their own and encouraged the poets who came to their court. Long before the poet Ghālib's success at court in the 1840s, Delhi and its mushā'aras had drawn him from his home in Agra because of the flourishing traditional cultural life which the Mughal capital city still offered. By this time the drain of scholars to Lucknow had ended, and Delhi had recovered, and some would say, exceeded, its former cultural greatness.

If the mushā'aras in the Red Fort continued regardless of the British presence, the attitudes of the early British officials in Delhi were anyway sympathetic to such activities. It is usually argued that the separation of the 'Delhi Territories' from the

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1. R. Russell and K. Islam (trans. and edit.) Ghalib 1797-1889. Vol. 1: Life and Letters (London, 1969), p. 30.

2. ibid.

3. P. Spear, 'Ghālib's Delhi' in R. Russell (ed.), Ghālib: the Poet and his Age (London, 1972), pp. 50-51.

rest of the 'conquered' provinces allowed the city and its hinterland to be administered in a flexible way which was conducive to the preservation of traditional institutions and procedures. The appointment of a succession of Residents who were relatively sympathetic to Indian culture and reluctant to innovate, is considered to have insulated the Delhi Territories from both the 'letter' and 'spirit' of the British administrative regulations until at least the 1830s. The attitude of Charles Metcalfe, who was Resident from 1811 to 1819, and again from 1825 to 1827, has been emphasized as a key factor in the preservation of traditional Delhi.[1] Some of the early officials were excellent Arabic and Persian scholars who chose to amuse themselves by composing Persian couplets. If William Fraser was unusual among them in actually seeking contact in ashrāf circles, most of the Delhi officials seemed willing at least to soften the fall of the former Muslim ruling elites. Certainly this attitude was apparent in the Delhi civilians' support for the anglo-oriental college during its early years. Thus the era of Mughal 'twilight' can be identified up to the early 1830s at least, as a time when British attitudes seemed to be supportive to Muslim cultural values.

Lucknow too, for different reasons, and with different results, was the scene of a varied and active cultural life during the first three decades of the nineteenth century. The Company's strategic interests in the late eighteenth century had evolved a relationship of subsidiary alliance with the rulers of Oudh, whereby the state was protected from attack by rival Indian powers, but in

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1. Spear, Twilight, p. 87; E. Thompson, The Life of Charles, Lord Metcalfe (London, 1937), p. 117.

return the ruler had to pay a subsidy for the upkeep of a force of the Company's troops which would be garrisoned in the state. A British Resident was appointed to Lucknow to act as an intermediary between the Nawab-Wazir and the Governor-General. Initially the ruler retained full control over internal affairs, but by the beginning of the nineteenth century a number of developments had combined to result in an increasing degree of British interference in the state. Failure to meet the exact terms of the treaties had been well utilized by the Company to tighten its grip. The revised treaty of 1801 not only hallowed the cession of several districts of Oudh to direct Company control, but it also introduced the notion that the manner of government should be acceptable to British scrutiny, for 'his Excellency will always advise with, and act in conformity to, the counsel of the officers of the said Honourable Company.'[1] At the same time, however, the treaty 'guaranteed' to the ruler the 'possession' of his remaining territories and the exercise of his 'authority' over them. A facade of sovereignty was added when from 1819 onwards the Nawab-Wazirs were encouraged to accept the title of kings. By then, however, the British Residency was actually assuming the influence of an alternative 'court', in which the giving of 'advice' could be utilized in order to exert pressure on the internal policies of the new 'kings'.

Yet, during the first three decades of the century the

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1. Article VI of treaty between the East India Company and the Nawab-Wazir, Sa'ādat 'Alī Khān, concluded 10 Nov. 1801, in J. Pemble, The Raj, the Indian Mutiny and the Kingdom of Oudh 1801-1859 (Hassocks, 1979), pp. 260-261.

Company hesitated to make full use of its increased leverage. During this time the general principle of non-interference in the affairs of native states was adhered to by the Governors-General, and the Lucknow Residents contrived to accomplish their reforming ends only indirectly, and mainly through the manipulation of the King's chief ministers.[1] Until Lord William Bentinck's visit to Lucknow in 1831 there were no persistent attempts to follow up the stipulations of the 1801 treaty in respect to the mode of internal government. If the British presence was increasingly evident, the rulers were able, for the moment, to take advantage of the personal security it guaranteed to them, paying scant regard to the Residents' strictures about corrupt and inefficient government.

In the cultural sphere the peculiarities of the British relationship with Oudh interacted with tendencies resulting from the manner of the nawabi dynasty's recent rise to power, to encourage interests which bore a uniquely Lakhnawī stamp.[2] The Muslim and Shī'ī identity of the ruling family and its interest in using its patronage to support traditional Muslim learning, ensured that Lucknow was a propitious environment for scholars. The city's cultural life had also been stimulated in the late eighteenth century by the influx of scholars from war-torn Delhi.

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1. R.J. Bingle, 'Changing attitudes to the Indian states, 1820-1850: a study of Oudh, Hyderabad and Jaipur' in C.H. Philips and M.D. Wainwright (eds.) Indian Society and the Beginnings of Modernisation, c. 1830-1850 (London, 1976), p. 71.

2. The cultural, religious and domestic life of the Lucknow court in the years before annexation is depicted in 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Sharar, Guẕashta Lakhnau (Lucknow, n.d.), translated by E.S. Harcourt and Fakhir Hussain as, Lucknow: the last phase of an Oriental Culture (London, 1975).

The poetry written in Lucknow has received particular attention from the critics of Persian and Urdu literature. Ralph Russell considers that the new emphasis which the Lakhnawī poets chose to give to 'polish and refinement' in their Urdu verse resulted in the main in 'empty formalism'.[1] Nevertheless, even if the poetic achievements had a different emphasis from those of Delhi, this was the age when Lucknow established its reputation as a centre of Persian and Urdu literature second only to Delhi. As in Delhi the court and aristocracy also patronised other traditional forms of Muslim artistic expression, including calligraphy, miniature painting, music, goldwork and jewellery. The royal library won the reputation of being one of the finest in Asia. The dynasty immortalized its rule by the building of palaces, mosques and tombs along the banks of the River Gumti, so that Lucknow, non-existent in the middle of the eighteenth century, was a city of some size and considerable splendour when King Naṣīr al-Dīn Haidar came to the throne in 1827.[2]

Whereas Delhi was the product of many centuries growth and of many political vicissitudes, Lucknow was to experience its sudden and short-lived flowering under the influence of, but also under the shadow and censure of, the English East India Company. The British presence had a number of effects on the cultural concerns of the city. It allowed Lucknow a window on the West

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1. R. Russell and Khurshidul Islam, Three Mughal Poets: Mir, Sauda, Mir Hasan (London, 1969), pp. 264-267. Also, S.M. Ikram, Muslim Civilization in India (New York, 1964), p. 280.

2. R. Llewellyn-Jones, 'The City of Lucknow before 1856', in K. Ballhatchet and J. Harrison (eds.) The City in South Asia (London, 1980), pp. 88-121.

which was not open to the same extent in early nineteenth century Delhi, although the British political presence was more direct in the latter city. In directly ruled British territories the Company was able to control the settlement of Europeans who were not in its own employment. Oudh, however, in spite of some attempts by the Company to prohibit military appointments, drew to its court Europeans of various nationalities, and Eurasians, who took service with the kings in a wide range of public and domestic capacities.[1] Although the court was thus open to diverse Western influences, it is felt that they 'affected outward behaviour but produced no fundamental change in ideas or outlook.'[2] Indeed, it is usual to dismiss the European influences which intruded into the life of the Lucknow court as a mere Western veneer which fell far short of the degree of genuine cultural change and synthesis which was a characteristic of the city of Calcutta during the era of the 'Bengal Renaissance'. In all spheres, from astronomy to architecture, British criticism of Oudh, both at the time and in retrospect, has tended to view the manner and degree of innovation and synthesis as the superficial achievement of a superficial and degenerate court. Yet while the court chose to dally with the West, the deeper traditional religious concerns of the 'ulamā element in the city's Muslim population, continued unabated throughout this period. Also, the marked receptivity of Lucknow to Western

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1. R. Llewellyn-Jones, 'The Court and the Residency at Lucknow - a Study in Functionalism', an unpublished paper presented to the Seventh European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies, London University 7-11 July, 1981, p. 21.

2. J. Pemble, op.cit., p. 31.

contact and influence was to prove an important factor in opening the way for the encounter with Christianity which would eventually be initiated in this city.

The pulse of Muslim religious learning in both Delhi and Lucknow can best be taken by reference to the state of the madrasas of those cities during the early years of the 19th century. It is usual to stress the importance of the Delhi theologian, Shāh Walī Allāh, whose teaching activities at his father's seminary, the Madrasa-i Raḥīmiyya, and publications on a wide range of theological problems are said to have ensured that the religious life and inner spirit of the now politically despondent Muslims had not been entirely broken during the troubles of the 18th century.[1] After his death in 1762, his son, Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz, assisted by his younger brothers and a growing circle of disciples and pupils, continued to exert such a strong influence on the religious life of Delhi that by the time of the British victories the Madrasa-i Raḥīmiyya was attracting scholars from all over northern India and beyond, and political annexation seems to have caused no disruption to its activities. Up to Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz's death in 1824 the Madrasa-i Raḥīmiyya continued to be an active and influential centre of the traditional branches of Sunnī religious scholarship, noted especially for the study of ḥadīs̤ and tafsīr, and for the translations of the Qur'ān into Urdu which were attempted for the first time during this period. But in many

1. K.A. Nizami, 'Shāh Walī Ullāh' in Encyclopaedia of Islam, III, pp. 432-3; S.M. Ikram, 'Shah Waliullah (1) Life and Achievements in the Religious Sphere' in A History of the Freedom Movement 1707-1947 (Karachi, 1957), Vol. I, pp. 491-511; Khalil 'Abdel Hamid 'Abdel 'Aul, 'God, the Universe and Man in Islamic Thought: The Contribution of Shah Waliullah of Delhi (1703-1762)', unpubl. Ph.D. Thesis, London University, 1971; S.A.A. Rizvi, Shah Walī-Allāh and his Times (Canberra, 1980).

accounts of the Indian Muslims this one madrasa and its luminaries have been allowed to overshadow to a perhaps unjustified degree the activities of the other madrasas and khānaqas whose 'ulamā and pīrs were also influential in the city at this time. K.A. Nizami's study of the religious life of Delhi in the pre-Mutiny period has shown that Muslims continued to flock to Delhi, not only to the Madrasa-i Raḥīmiyya, but also in order to study with, and pay allegiance to, a number of highly renowned theologians and pīrs some of whom taught in madrasas other than the Raḥīmiyya or were the khalīfas of the various Ṣūfī orders which were also experiencing a period of renewed spiritual activity.[1] The corollary of political decline seems to have been a revitalization of the spiritual, as well as the cultural, life of the educated Muslims of the city.

Like Delhi, Lucknow was noted for its contributions to religious scholarship during this period. Among the Sunnīs it owed its reputation chiefly to the activities of the Farangī Maḥall family of theologians who had been active since the early eighteenth century. The new syllabus of studies, the Dars-i Niẓāmiyya, which was evolved and taught by these scholars, caused changes in the pattern and content of madrasa studies all over India. Not only did some scholars choose to come to Lucknow rather than to Delhi to benefit from the new syllabus as well as from the security of the city, but many smaller and less prominent seminaries adopted the Dars as a blue-print for their own reforms. Whereas Delhi

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1. K.A. Niẓāmī, '1857 se pehle kī Dihlī 'ulamā wa mashā'ikh kā ijtimā' ', in Tārīkhī Maqālāt (Delhi, 1966), pp. 210-257.

continued to place the emphasis on tafsīr and hadīs, the madrasas of Lucknow showed more concern for jurisprudence and logic.[1] In the eighteenth century Shī'īs as well as Sunnīs were eager to be taught by Farangī Mahali scholars.

However, the rise to political power in Oudh of the Shī'ī family of nawabs assisted the growth of a separate centre of Shī'ī religious studies in Lucknow. Although at first the Sunnī law codes continued to be administered according to the rulings of a Sunnī muftī, and Shī'ī youths had no option but to attend the Sunnī madrasas, the growing Shī'ī influence in the city was reflected in the early 19th century by the appointment of a Shī'ī mujtahid and the founding of a separate Shī'ī madrasa.[2] Under the leadership of Sayyid Dildār 'Alī, the first mujtahid, and assisted by the patronage of the court, Shī'ī interests flourished and the royal press was utilized by them for their religious publications, some of which were directed against the Sunnīs.[3] Whatever the internal frictions, Lucknow had certainly established itself during the early years of subsidiary alliance

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1. F.C.R. Robinson, 'Farangi Mahall', in E.I.[2] Supplement, 1982, pp. 292-294. For the works included in the Dars-i Nizāmiyya see S.A.A. Rizvi, Shāh Walī-Allāh and his Times (Canberra, 1980), pp. 389-392.

2. J.N. Hollister, The Shi'a of India (London, 1953), p. 161; N.B.E. Baillie, A Digest of Moohummudan Law (London, 1869), part 2, pp. xii-xiv; S. Ahmad, Two Kings of Awadh (Allahabad, 1971), pp. 126-129.

3. Abd al-Halīm Sharar, Guzashta Lakhnau, p.95; Maulawī Rahmān 'Alī, Tazkira-i 'ulama -i Hind (Karachi, 1961), pp. 186-187 (hereafter T.U.H.); Maulawī Mirzā Muhammad 'Alī, Najūm al-samā (Lucknow, 1303 A.H.), I, pp. 346-350; 402-406.

with the British as a centre of Islamic scholarship, different from, but equal in many important respects, to the traditional centre in Delhi.

Other centres of Islamic learning in northern India were in turn revitalized by contact with _'ulamā_ who had studied in Delhi and Lucknow. In cities where a high proportion of the population was Muslim, and Muslims also flocked from outside in search of employment or learning, the duties of the _'ulamā_ included, besides teaching, the issuing of _fatāwā_ on problems of belief and behaviour, and the writing and publication of books on various aspects of Islamic theology. In the remotest villages as well as in the Muslim quarters of the bigger towns, the _'ulamā_ continued to ensure that the call to prayer was heard at the appointed times, that the Friday sermon was delivered, that small boys were taught the Qur'ān in the _maktabs_, and that the major festivals of the Islamic year were honoured publicly. It seems that during the first thirty years or so of British rule these multifarious concerns of the _'ulamā_ were not detrimentally affected by the substitution of the Company's rule for that of the equally 'infidel' Marathas. The Company still had no right or means to interfere in the religious life of the kingdom of Oudh, and in the directly ruled territories of the Upper Provinces it still honoured its pledge to 'non-interference' with the laws and customs of its Hindu and Muslim subjects. The Delhi Territories seemed particularly immune from the impact of any innovations which were prepared for the rest of the North-Western Provinces.

THE 'ULAMĀ AND CONTACTS WITH THE BRITISH BEFORE 1833: SHĀH 'ABD AL-'AZĪZ AND CHRISTIANITY

There has been very little study of the contacts which occurred between the *'ulamā* of northern India and the British officers who were posted to the region in the years immediately after annexation. It seems indeed that personal contact was minimal and that many of the *'ulamā* would be content to ignore the British presence as long as there was no interference in their religious concerns. The likely points of contact in the Upper Provinces were the law courts, where British judges were dependent on the professional services of the 'Mohammedan law officers', Delhi and Agra Colleges where *'ulamā* were employed in the oriental departments, and private employment, where *'ulamā* would on occasion act as *munshīs* for officers wishing to acquire Arabic and Persian.[1] A handful of British officers who sought a deeper knowledge of Persian literature or Muslim society, or who married Muslim women, may have penetrated the cultural barrier.[2] As a rule, however,

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1. Among other pupil-teacher relationships, William Fraser was taught by Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz; N. Middleton by Mirzā 'Abū Tālib Tabrīzī Isfahānī ('Landanī') and Lt. C.F. Hart by Lutf Ullāh.

2. By the early nineteenth century intermarriage between Europeans and Indians was rare. The conspicuous example among north Indian Muslims was the marriage of 'Begam Samru' of Sardhana, and Walter Reinhardt, the German adventurer. After Reinhardt's death, Begam Samru became a Roman Catholic. B. Banerji, *Begam Samru* (Calcutta, 1925). There were a number of marriages between princesses of the Mughal court and European officers, among them the marriage of Ẓahīr al-Nisa Begam, an adopted daughter of Akbar Shāh II, to Major Hyder Hearsay (1782-1840). It was extremely rare for European women to marry Indians. The marriage of an English woman to Mīr Hasan 'Alī, the son of a Lucknow *'ālim*, who taught Urdu at Addiscombe, resulted in an inside account of *zanāna* life. Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali, *Observations on the Mussulmauns of India*, 1st published 1832 (reprint of 1917 edition, edited by W. Crooke, Karachi, 1978).

the two worlds were separate, physically and culturally. William Fraser was unusual among his fellow officers in that he deliberately 'consorted with the grey-beards of Delhi.'[1] More generally, even the best informed of the British officers reached only the fringe of the Muslim cultural world. A Captain Riley who was reputed to be one of the best Arabic scholars among the British officers of his day, remarked in 1832 that 'at Delhi, Maulavee Ubdool Uzeez, if still living, is regarded as the "Ne plus ultra" amongst Moosalmans of India'.[2] The remark is indicative of the British distance from the inside world of the 'ulamā, for when it was made Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz had already been dead for eight years.

Yet Riley's comment correctly identified Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz as being regarded by fellow Muslims, and by British observers, as the leading 'ālim of the age. A closer examination of Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz's contacts with the British may throw some light on contemporary attitudes to Christianity at least among his own circle of 'ulamā. Until recently consideration of his attitude to the British has concentrated narrowly on his fatwā declaring northern India to be a dār al-ḥarb (land of war), and on the inspiration he is subsequently alleged to have given to the Wahhābī jihād

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1. Victor Jacquemont, a French botanist, commented on William Fraser, the Governor-General's Agent in Delhi (d. 1835) that 'he is half Asiatic in his habits ... the only officer of government, who, to my knowledge, keeps up any social relations with the natives. Last Sunday I paid a few visits with him to some of these long-beards. This politeness and condescension is, I fancy, blamed by the other British officers,' Letters from India, 2 vols (2nd ed. London, 1835), II, pp. 259-260.

2. Capt. S. Riley, to Joseph Wolff, Nasirabad, 28 Aug. 1832.

movement.[1] In contrast some recent studies have disputed the validity of this approach, emphasizing instead that Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz's attitude to the British was one of pragmatic acquiescence with the new power as long as the fulfilling of Islamic injunctions was not interfered with by the government.[2] Based mainly on consideration of some fatāwā relating to social intercourse with the British, the learning of English and the taking of government employment, this view establishes Shāh 'Abd al'Azīz as unlikely to show any strong hostility to Christianity and its agents while, in the period before his death, missionary organizations had not yet made any positive efforts to penetrate 'ulamā circles in the north. There certainly seems to be little evidence in Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz's religious writings that he felt any concern on this score. Yet an unbridgeable gulf yawns between those historians who thus stress his conditional 'acquiescence'

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1. K.A. Nizami is among many historians who argue that Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz played a direct part in setting in motion a jihād against the British: 'Sayyid Ahmad of Rae Bareli, the central figure of the Mujāhidīn movement, was selected by Shāh 'Abdu 'l-'Azīz to organise a jihād, struggle against the British power and give a practical shape to his and his father's teachings for political regeneration', see 'Socio-Religious Movements in Indian Islam (1763-1898)', in Islamic Culture, Vol. 44, no. 3 (July 1970), p. 103.

2. Mushiru-l-Haqq, 'Indian Muslims' Attitude to the British in the early Nineteenth Century: A Case Study of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz', unpublished M.A. Thesis, McGill University, 1964. S.A.A. Rizvi's recent work, Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz: Puritanism, Sectarian Polemics and Jihād (Canberra, 1982), has not been used, but his conclusions would seem to agree with those of Mushiru-l-Haqq on Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz's pragmatic attitude to various aspects of British rule, viz., 'Shāh Ghulām 'Alī Naqshband uncompromisingly dissociated himself from the British but Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz had no objections to maintaining a limited association with them, while keeping Islamic interests predominantly in view,' Rizvi, op.cit., p. 579.

with British rule, and those 'ulamā -historians who argue that he initiated the era of religious controversy with the missionaries. For Maulānā Imdād Ṣābrī and Mu'īn al-Ḥaqq have both described Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz as the first Indian 'ālim to defend Islam against the threat represented by Christian padres.[1] The merits of these rival views depend partly on the use which has been made of the collections of Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz's fatāwā and malfūẓāt (religious sayings).[2]

In highlighting Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz's pragmatism, Mushir al-Haqq does not dispute the issuing of the dār al-ḥarb fatwā, but explains the circumstance of its issue as one in which there was considerable concern among Muslims about appropriate activity, both economic and social, in a region which had fallen seemingly irrevocably under non-Muslim rule. He disputes, however, the implication that 'Abd al-'Azīz advocated the waging of jihād, pointing out that he did not advocate either active military jihād or hijrat (flight).[3] Furthermore, when the advice given in a number of other fatāwā is set side by side with the dār al-ḥarb fatwā, and with evidence on Shāh 'Abd al'Azīz's actual behaviour towards Europeans, it is concluded that the general tenor of his rulings was that 'the Muslims were advised to collaborate with

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1. Imdād Sābrī, Farangiyon kā jāl (Delhi, 1949), p. 137; Mu'īn al-Ḥaqq, introduction to Urdu trans. of Malfūẓāt-i Shāh 'Abd al-'Aziz (Karachi, 1960), p. 19.

2. References to the Fatāwā-i 'Azīzī follow the translations of Mushir al-Haqq in 'Indian Muslims' Attitude to the British'. Mu'īn al-Haqq's edition of the Malfūzāt also include the Kamālāt-i 'Azīzī (miracles) in which there are some references to contacts with Europeans.

3. Mushiru'l-Haqq, 'Indian Muslims' Attitude', pp. 60-64.

the non-Muslim government as long as their religious and cultural character remained intact.[1] Thus when he was questioned about whether it was permissible for a Muslim to take up government service, the answer depended on whether the duties of the office would involve any conflict with the shari'at. Types of service might be divided into various categories, 'sinful', 'forbidden', 'permissible' and 'desirable', the criterion being not the type of post, but whether or not a specific posting was likely to lead to involvement with unIslamic principles or activities, for,

> If someone accepts a post under them [infidel government] to kill a Muslim or to destroy a [Muslim] state or to promote infidel practices or to find faults with Islam just for the sake of criticism, then all these services are grave sin and near to kufr.[2]

It may be surmised that on this basis most subordinate posts which were then available in the British service would be regarded as 'permissible' if not actually 'desirable'. When, for example, Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz was questioned about his nephew, Maulawī 'Abd al-Ḥai's acceptance of the post of muftī in the judicial service, he would have allowed it with certain reservations, although Shāh Ghulām 'Alī, head of the Naqshbandī order, objected altogether.[3] Several of his own circle took up judicial posts, he himself taught William Fraser, and Maulānā Mamlūk 'Alī accepted a teaching post at Delhi College. Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz also ruled that learning the English language and wearing western dress were lawful as long as

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1. ibid., p. 109.

2. Fatāwā-i 'Azīzī, Urdu trans. (Cawnpore, n.d.) Vol I, pp. 327ff, cited here from 'Indian Muslims' Attitude', pp. 55-56.

3. 'Indian Muslims' Attitude', pp. 57-59.

the individual was careful to preserve his identity as a Muslim and was not doing so simply to ingratiate himself with the British.[1] On the other hand his views on the permissibility of eating with Englishmen were more ambiguous. On one occasion his answer indicated that the Muslim in question had reached the verge of kufr by eating with his employer and must therefore do penance for his action. But a ruling on another occasion suggests that he considered eating with non-Muslims to be permissible as long as forbidden foods were not served.[2] Thus the general tenor of Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz's rulings was that Muslims might co-operate with the British as long as Islamic values were not violated. There seems to have been no deep conflict during the early years of British rule between his edicts and the practice of the 'ulamā in his circle. This is shown by the atmosphere in Delhi College where several prominent 'ulamā, some of whom were clearly associated with Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz, recognised that institution as generally supportive of Muslim interests by giving their services in teaching, examining and committee capacities. As artists, poets and other scholars were doing, they continued their traditional concerns almost regardless of the British presence, seldom deliberately seeking contact, but accepting it when it was specifically sought by the British officers themselves.

The use of the Malfūẓāt and Kamālāt as sources for 'Abd al-'Azīz's views raises problems of a different order from the

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1. ibid., p. 60.

2. ibid., pp. 21; 60.

Faṭāwā, notably difficulties in establishing their authenticity. Yet the references in these collections to his discussions with padres have been presented as the sole evidence for the claim that he initiated religious controversy. Mushiru-l-Haqq, on the other hand, comes to the conclusion that 'during the lifetime of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz the religious debates between Muslims and Christians had not started' and did not start until after 1830.[1] Certainly, in spite of several references to the role of the Resident, Charles Metcalfe, in bringing about these encounters, no comparable references have been found in Lord Metcalfe's papers or in missionary records. Haqq, however, does not challenge the actual occurrence of the incidents recorded in the Malfūẓāt, but argues that they were of the character of mere 'religious curiosities' rather than serious debates.[2] The purpose behind the recording of such conversations seemed to be semi-humorous, as the following reminiscence suggests,

> it is reported that once a missionary came to Delhi to Metcalfe, the English Resident at Delhi, and wished to have a debate with some prominent 'ālim. Metcalfe brought him to Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz on the condition that if the missionary would be talked down by Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, then the missionary would pay two thousand rupees to Metcalfe. Otherwise Metcalfe would pay to the missionary the same amount on behalf of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz. Both agreed and went to Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz. Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz was asked to answer the question on the ground of reason and logic without quoting the Qur'ān or the Hadith. The missionary asked if the Prophet Muhammad was the beloved prophet of God why did he not ask God to save his grandson, Husayn and his children. The assassination of Husayn, he said, proved that the Prophet Muhammad was not beloved of God. Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz replied that the Prophet did go to God for help, but God said that He could not help his

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1. ibid., pp. 15-16; 31.

2. ibid., p. 31.

grandson because He could not save his own son from crucifixion. This reply silenced the missionary, and he paid the promised amount to Metcalfe.[1]

Even if these incidents actually happened, they were isolated events. There were no publications by the <u>'ulamā</u> in the period before 1833 which resemble the tract warfare against Christianity which accompanied the verbal encounters of the later era. Nor does polemical literature between Muslims in the 1820s suggest that there was as yet any concern about Christian 'innovations'. Certainly the early literature associated with Sayyid Aḥmad of Rai Bareilly's reforming movement shows scarcely any awareness of the British presence and no concern about Christian preaching. During the early 1820s a number of tracts were published by Sayyid Aḥmad's circle from various presses in Calcutta and the north. The <u>Ṣirāṭ-i Mustaqīm</u> and the <u>Taqwiyāt al-Imān</u> had been written by Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz's nephew, Shāh Muḥammad Ismā'īl.[2] These two tracts were expositions of the spiritual insights which had led Sayyid Aḥmad to initiate a new Ṣūfī order, the Tarīqa -i Muḥammadī, and contained exhortations to cleanse Sunnī Islam from

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1. <u>Kamālāt-i 'Azīzī</u>, pp. 225-6, translated in 'Indian Muslims' Attitude', pp. 118-119.

2. Maulānā Muḥammad Ismā'īl Shahīd (d. 1831), nephew of Shah 'Abd al-'Azīz. <u>E.I.</u> new ed. III, p. 431. <u>Sirāt-i Mustaqīm</u>, Urdu translation (Deoband, n.d.) J.R.C. 'Notice of the peculiar Tenets held by the followers of Syed Ahmed, taken chiefly from the "Sirat-ul-Mustaqim", a principal Treatise of that Sect, written by Moulavi Mahommed Isma'il', <u>Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal</u>, I, 11 (Nov. 1832) pp. 479-498; Mir Shahamat Ali, 'Translation of the Takwiyat-ul-Iman, preceded by a Notice of the Author, Moulavi Isma'il Hajji', in <u>J.R.A.S.</u>, 1st series, XIII (1852) pp. 310-372.

the innovations which he considered had become attached to it in the Indian environment. However, only in four pages of the Sirāt was any reference made to the contemporary political situation. Even there the British were not mentioned specifically, for the days of Mughal greatness were compared only in vague terms with the 'darkness' which had now spread over the land.[1] Nor in the sections of the Taqwiyāt which were concerned with tauḥid and shirk did Shāh Ismā'īl single out Christianity for especial censure. He distinguished four sources of 'innovations' but laid more stress on those which had derived from contact with Hindu religious customs, and indeed on Shī'ī deviations, than on, for instance, Christian trinitarian doctrine. There are in all half a dozen references to Christianity, but no mention is made of the existence of Christians in contemporary India nor of the foreign power whose victories over the Muslims had permitted their presence. The context of the references was either Qur'ānic or traditional. Even when the activities of 'priests' were censured as an example of committing shirk by resorting to an intermediary between god and man, the comment was based not on any observation of the new infidel rulers at worship but on a comprehensive distaste for all such intermediary practices in all religions, including schismatic sects within Islam itself.[2] Christianity, in the eyes of the writer of the Taqwiyāt al-Imān, was merely one of a number of mistaken religions, and its followers to be condemned as much, but not more, and generally for the same reasons, as the Hindus and even the Shī'ī and other misguided Indian Muslims. Thus, in the formative phase

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1. 'Notice of the peculiar Tenets held by the followers of Syed Ahmed', p. 487.

2. 'Translation of the Takwiyat-ul-Imān', p. 348.

at least, the tract literature which was circulated by the reform movement's leaders contained no underlying ideological campaign against the religion practised by the British rulers.

Thus there is no evidence in the fatawa or the malfuzat accredited to Shah 'Abd al-'Aziz, or in the early reforming literature which was disseminated during his lifetime and just after, to suggest that the 'alim, whom Muslim and European contemporaries alike, regarded as the outstanding theologian of the age, was hostile to Christianity. If his friendship with British officials in Delhi brought him into sporadic contact and conversation with some 'padres' they were almost certainly Company chaplains rather than missionaries.[1] The accounts of such meetings contain no hints of any concern about their activities. He seemed concerned only to score at their expense by a display of verbal dexterity. It is said that he learned Hebrew, but if he did have any scholarly interest in Judaism or Christianity it did not result in any publications by any of his circle. If Maulana Shah 'Abd al-'Aziz was particularly favourably situated to make deeper contacts if he had so desired, most of his fellow 'ulama in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh had at this time no such channels of communication with evangelical Christianity.

INDIA AND MISSIONS IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

The rarity of contact between the 'ulama and Christian preachers in northern India before 1833 can be explained by the weak missionary presence before that date. In spite of the Jesuit

1. The malfuzat uses the term padre, but gives no names.

interest in the Mughal court in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and the resumption by the Capuchin order, of Catholic activity in the north in the eighteenth century, it seems that the few Roman Catholic missionaries in the region did not try to revive Jerome Xavier's earlier contacts with the 'ulamā, and some actually disclaimed any positive programme of evangelization among non-Christian Indians.

By the eighteenth century the Indo-Gangetic plain had become a Capuchin sphere of influence, culminating in 1808 with the creation of the 'Vicariate Apostolic of Tibet - Hindostan'.[1] During the subsequent fifty years, Catholic attention was concentrated first on Patna, then on Agra, two cities which were important centres of Muslim religious concern. Yet in the early years of the nineteenth century the entire Vicariate, including Bettiah, Lucknow and Sardhana, as well as Agra and Patna, was administered by only six priests.[2] In this situation, the Capuchins chose to concentrate their attention on the already existent congregations of European, and earlier converted, but 'lapsed', Indian Christians, and seemed disinclined to preach publicly to Hindu and Muslim audiences, or to expend efforts on vernacular translations of the Bible. Padre Angelo, who was Prefect of the Tibet-Hindustan mission at Agra, justified his priorities in 1807, explaining,

> my itineration was never directed at preaching the gospel to the infidels, unless by chance, because, always almost alone ... in those regions,

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1. K.S. Latourette, A History of the Expansion of Christianity, 7 vols (New York, 1944), VI, pp. 87-88.

2. The Capuchin Mission Unit, Cumberland, Maryland, India and its Missions (London, 1923), p. 131.

> I scarcely found sufficient time for teaching the faithful of Christ who, on account of the corruption of customs, and on account of the lack of missionary fathers, and on account of the depravity of those who scarcely remained [Catholic] ... lost the catholic faith or rushed into the Muhammedan rite as happened especially at Agra ... I did not give my work to preaching the gospel to the infidels, knowing after all my efforts to be useless...[1]

The only conversion of a Muslim to Catholicism to cause any stir was that of Begum Samru of Sardhana, near Meerut, which occurred shortly after the death of her husband, the soldier of fortune, Walter Reinhardt. The Begum used part of her wealth to build a church at Sardhana, and to support missionary activities in the region. However, the circumstances of this conversion were acknowledged to be unusual and although the Catholic outpost of Sardhana captured British and Indian imaginations in the early nineteenth century, the Begum's adherence to Catholicism remained an isolated phenomenon.[2]

In contrast to Roman Catholic disclaimers of attaching any priority to evangelization, the new Protestant hope for the evangelization of India which grew out of the evangelical revival in Europe, was unlikely to be immediately set in motion as long as the English East India Company continued to pose obstacles to missionary expansion in the Bengal Presidency. Although a handful of Protestant missionaries had been active in parts of south India throughout the eighteenth century, the Company made strenuous efforts

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1. 'Extract of a letter from Padre Angelo, Prefect of the Mogul Mission' to Henry Martyn, in S. Wilberforce (ed.) Journals and Letters of the Rev. Henry Martyn, B.D., 2 vols (London, 1837), II, pp. 48-49; cf. Latourette, History, VI, p. 89.

2. Latourette, op.cit., VI, p. 87.

to prevent the settlement of such missionaries in the Bengal Presidency. Its own interests in Bengal were narrowly commercial, and the minority of its servants who were not indifferent about religious matters tended to an 'orientalist' admiration for Indian culture which was very far removed from the evangelical view of Hindu depravity. The notion of 'non-interference' with the religions and customs of the native peoples initially reflected the Company's own convenience, but by the time the evangelicals became interested in India 'non-interference' had been enshrined as a principle which must be adhered to in order to fulfil a pledge of honour which would guarantee the stability of British rule in India. Any evangelical criticism of the Company's policy would be countered by the regulations issued in 1793 which promised the Indian peoples to 'preserve to them the laws of the Shaster and the Koran in matters to which they have been invariably applied, to protect them in the free exercise of their religion'.[1] That very year some Anglican evangelicals, led by William Wilberforce and the members of the 'Clapham sect', made the first parliamentary onslaught on the 'non-interference' outlook, but the Company managed to maintain its embargo on missionary activity for a further twenty years. Although the Baptist trio of Carey, Marshman and Ward succeeded in establishing a mission in Danish-held Serampore, from where they could exert some influence in Calcutta, missionaries of other societies were refused permission to reside in Bengal. Limited access was finally gained in 1813 when the Charter Renewal

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1. Regulation III of 1793, D. Sutherland, The Regulations of the Bengal Code (Calcutta, n.d.); H. Verney Lovett, 'Social Policy to 1858', in H.H. Dodwell (ed.), The Cambridge History of India, 6 vols. (New Delhi, 1958), VI, p. 122.

Act of that year permitted the granting of residence licences to those wishing to promote the religious and moral improvement of the Indian peoples.[1] But this long-sought sanction was granted only reluctantly and the Company continued the attempt to honour its pledge to 'non-interference' in spite of the missionary presence and in spite of its own new episcopal establishment, by constantly asserting both its 'neutrality' in religious matters and its official dis-association from Christian missionary activity of any kind. As a result missionary activity in the period after 1813 was permissible but was still considerably impeded.[2] By the 1820s there was a slow growth of evangelical influence among the younger generation of civil and military officers posted to India which finally created a climate of opinion in which an influential and growing minority of government servants would regard the missionaries with sympathy rather than with the former mixture of derision and alarm. Nevertheless, until the turning point of Lord William Bentinck's administration (1828-1835) the Company continued to try to preserve the Indian religions from the full force of evangelical fervour by constant invocation of the 'non-interference' and 'neutrality' principles, and by ignoring and sometimes discountenancing, the activities of particular missionary

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1. 53 Geo III, cap. 155, sec. xxxiii; J.W. Kaye, Christianity in India: An Historical Narrative (London, 1859), p. 274.

2. Kenneth Ingham has referred to the period 1793-1833 as 'an unsettled though not wholly unfavourable atmosphere' for the missionaries. 'From the British Governments in India the missionaries might look in general for approval extending at times to active support, but an incautious step might produce immediate recriminations.' Reformers in India 1793-1833 (Cambridge, 1956), p. 19.

societies.[1] This cautious and sometimes actively hostile attitude of the government was therefore an important factor in delaying, and then conditioning, the missionary impact on northern India. While the caution may be seen as a response to the particular problems posed by British rule in India it seems that the initial hostility reflected the more general reaction of established institutions in Protestant Europe to the challenge of the evangelical outlook.

What then were the characteristics of the religious revival known as 'evangelicalism' which caused its adherents to view India as a sphere of momentous possibilities, and its enemies to fear its disruptive tendencies? Although several separate revivalist streams had emerged in Protestant Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it is generally agreed that all shared some essential common features.[2] Crucial to the evangelical stance was the nature of the spiritual ordeal which made individuals aware of their state of sin, deliverance from which depended on repentance and complete faith in Christ's atonement. The subsequent transition from total despair to the certainty of salvation through faith in Christ set the newly converted evangelical apart from other 'nominal' Christians who had not yet recognised their sinful and hopeless state. Saved from the edge of the abyss, but remembering vividly its horrors the evangelicals felt impelled to point out to others the error

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1. A.A. Powell, 'The Government neutrality policy and its application in the North-Western Provinces and the Punjab in the 1840s and 1850s', unpublished paper contributed to Professor C.H. Philips' study group on 'Policy and Practice under Bentinck and Dalhousie', School of Oriental and African Studies, London University, July 1978.

2. J.D. Walsh, 'Origins of the Evangelical Revival', in G.V. Bennett and J.D. Walsh (eds.), Essays on Modern English Church History (London, 1966), p. 135.

of their ways and the means to attain their own state of spiritual certainty. If the first impulse was towards the unregenerate in the villages and towns of their own neighbourhood, the message was quickly seen to have universal implications. The East India Company's consolidation of its position in India in the late eighteenth century presented the evangelicals, they felt providentially, with the prospect of saving the souls of a people who were enmeshed in a system of sinful idolatry. The urgent preaching which would take place in the bazaars of India in the mid 19th century thus reflected the fervency of the message carried by the first itinerant preachers in mid eighteenth century Protestant Europe, and the terms of encounter had already been partly set too in the mould of the previous century's revivalist theology and strategies.

Evangelical theology has had very critical treatment, for contemporary critics and historians of religious thought alike have pointed to the lack of theological complexity in the salvation from sin theme. 'The evangelical movement', comments Gerald Cragg, 'proved comparatively sterile as a theological force.'[1] Ian Bradley is more disparaging in a recent evaluation in which he says that 'the doctrines of the depravity of man, the conversion of the sinner, and the sanctification of the regenerate soul represent virtually the sum total of the theology of early nineteenth-century Evangelicalism'.[2] Bernard Reardon's study of religious thought in the nineteenth century suggests that contemporaries also hinged

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1. G. Cragg, The Church and the Age of Reason, 1648-1789 (Harmondsworth, 1972), pp. 153-4.

2. I. Bradley, The Call to Seriousness (London, 1976), p. 22.

on the 'weakness of evangelical theology 'with its alleged lack of intellectual fibre and the conventionalism of its language'.[1] However, explanations of the origins of evangelicalism which have stressed its upsurge in reaction to the rationalism and 'intellectualism' then prevailing in the established Protestant churches may lead to some over-simplification and distortion of the outlook of the early Protestant missionaries. If 'experiential' is regarded as the antithesis of 'rational' then the evangelicals no doubt seemed anti-intellectual to their contemporaries, and those who scorned their 'enthusiastic' urgency also derided their seemingly simplistic theology and their reliance on 'stock phrases rather than reasoned arguments'.[2] Instead of the intellectually satisfying, if arid, 'proofs' and 'evidences' which had previously set the terms of religious debate the evangelicals set store by an intuitive knowledge of God which was attained through personal experience. In contrast to rationalist apologetics such a 'system of feeling' may amount only to a 'theological mood and stance' and not to a complete 'system of thought'[3] or as J.H. Newman dismissed it at the time - 'but an inchoate state or stage of a doctrine'.[4] Yet some of the early evangelical missionaries and their mentors, the Anglicans in particular, did not entirely renounce the rationalist heritage in favour of the preaching of a simple 'heart religion'. Some of them, indeed, would expound their belief in the

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1. B.M.G. Reardon, From Coleridge to Gore, a century of religious thought in Britain (London, 1971), p. 25.

2. Cragg, op.cit., p. 154.

3. C. Welch, Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth century, Vol. 1, 1799-1870 (London, 1972), pp. 26-27.

4. Reardon, op.cit., p. 25.

superiority of Christianity to Islam on rational lines which must call in question any generalisations about evangelicalism as a 'wholehearted and unashamed appeal to the emotions'.[1] There were significant differences in emphasis between individual apologists which were partly a reflection of differences in theology and background between the various national and sectarian groupings within the broader movement of European revivalism. Indeed the theological stance of the individual missionary preacher was to be an important factor in determining the various Indian responses to missionary advances, and it was no mere coincidence that the era of 'contact and controversy' with the Muslims would be brought to a head by a German Pietist missionary who had made a conscious disavowal of 'reason' in favour of pure 'heart religion'.

But preaching of evangelical Christianity of any kind first had to await the Company's pleasure. During this era of enforced inactivity the institutionalization of individual zeal, which would later ensure both the direction and the continuity of the missionary impact, was achieved within evangelical centres in Protestant Europe. For the establishment of the 'collegia pietatis' in the German states, the Anglican 'holy clubs' and the Methodist class and circuit in Britain, was followed in the last years of the eighteenth century by the founding of missionary societies dedicated to the extension of evangelical activity overseas. In the 1790s half a dozen such societies were established by English evangelical interests, to be followed a decade or so later by a number of Scottish, German and American

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1. Bradley, op.cit., p. 19.

societies.[1] These new societies with their 'home' and 'corresponding' committees and their networks of subordinate stations overseas were to provide the institutional framework necessary for channelling the broad and growing evangelical sympathies of Europe into specific projects in India and elsewhere. A permanent organisation and an explicit strategy were pre-requisites for making a sustained impact, and it was the extension of the missionary network into Upper Bengal in the 1830s, at the moment when government antipathy was turning into guarded sympathy, which would create a situation in which 'contact' might be established in those regions.

EARLY PROTESTANT MISSIONARY CONTACTS WITH INDIAN MUSLIMS IN THE BENGAL PRESIDENCY

Apart from the Company's general hostility to missionary activity, which limited expansion in Bengal as a whole, there were also particular reasons why the evangelicals were able to make very little contact with the Muslims of Upper Bengal before the 1830s. If the *'ulamā* were as yet unalarmed by the British presence, the missionaries for their part, were preoccupied with plans to evangelize the Hindus. The nature of this preoccupation can best

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1. Among the Protestant overseas missionary societies founded in this period were the following: Britain - Baptist Missionary Society (1792); London Missionary Society (1795); Scottish Missionary Society (1796); Church Missionary Society (1799); Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (1817-18); U.S.A. - American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (1810); United States Baptist Mission (1814); Missionary and Bible Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America (1819); Europe - Netherlands Missionary Society (1797); Jänicke's Berlin Mission (1800); Basel Evangelical Missionary Society (1815). See K.S. Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity, IV, The Great Century. A.D. 1800-A.D.1914* (London, 1941), pp. 85-93.

be examined in Lower Bengal, a region of almost equal Hindu and Muslim population, where British rule had been consolidated before the founding of the missionary societies, and where Protestant evangelicalism made its first impact in the north. There were several reasons for evangelical neglect of Indian Islam at this moment in time. In spite of recent Mughal hegemony in India the British tended to regard the sub-continent as intrinsically Hindu rather than Muslim in character, and the missionaries, as well as some of the orientalists who were associated with the Company, saw the Muslims as intruders into India who did not merit special attention.[1] Secondly, Europeans and the evangelicals in particular, felt immediate and deep revulsion at both the religious beliefs and the socio-religious customs which they identified with Hinduism. The child sacrifices at the mouth of the Ganges, the high and increasing number of satīs in Lower Bengal at the beginning of the 19th century and the Jagannath festival in nearby Orissa, combined to enforce an image of Hinduism as a religion of total depravity. Indian Islam, in contrast, exhibited to their eyes no such glaring examples of religiously inspired barbarism, and at the doctrinal level the points at issue between advocates of Islam and Christianity were very familiar and yet seemed incapable of resolution. By the eighteenth century the world of Islam no longer presented the economic and political challenge to Europe which it had done in earlier centuries, and with the ebbing of fear, curiosity ebbed likewise.[2] It seems that an impasse had

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1. D. Kopf, British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance: The Dynamics of Indian Modernization, 1773-1835 (Calcutta, 1969), p.103.

2. N. Daniel, Islam, Europe and Empire (Edinburgh, 1966). R.W. Southern, Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), pp. 12-13.

already been reached in Muslim-Christian encounter, and the evangelicals who came out to India in the early 19th century had as yet given no attention to reconsideration of the relationship between the Christian and the Islamic revelation.[1] Islam was considered to present formidable obstacles to conversion and the optimism which was characteristic at this time of missionary forecasts of sweeping success in India focused mainly on drawing the Hindu population to the gospels.

This general tendency to view India as a Hindu country was reinforced by the preoccupations and activities of the Serampore Baptists who, in spite of the Company's policy, had succeeded in initiating evangelical activities in Lower Bengal before the turn of the century. The Baptists held that in principle all non-Christian peoples, Muslims included, would be equally susceptible to the gospel message. William Ward, one of the original 'trio' at Serampore, wrote in 1803, 'Hindoos and Mahomedans will as surely fall under the doctrine of the Cross as Greenlanders and Hottentots'.[2] A degree of concern for the Bengali Muslims was demonstrated by the setting up of a subordinate station at Jessore after receiving information that some Muslims in that district were showing curiosity about the Serampore mission. Yet in spite of a readiness to react to any signs of a Muslim response, the Serampore missionaries nevertheless continued to regard the mission to the Hindus as their prior

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1. Missionary neglect of the Muslim world in general was lamented as late as 1850 by an American missionary, the Rev. J.L. Merrick, 'Evangelical enterprise has traversed almost all regions, and gone to work with devoted perseverance in every clime, but it is singular how little has been done or attempted for the welfare and salvation of Mohammedans.' Translator's preface to The Hyat-ul-Kuloob (Boston, 1850), p. viii.

2. W. Ward to Dr Ryland, n.d., in J.C. Marshman, The Life and Times of Carey, Marshman and Ward (London, 1859), I, p. 182.

concern. Their predisposition to this view was reinforced by the failure to stimulate any Muslim enquirers during the first three years of the mission, until, that is, the Jessore enquirers came to their attention. The Serampore Bible translation programme also demonstrated this emphasis. Whereas 'Hindoostanee' had been included in the list of seven languages which the missionaries drew up in 1804 as part of a long-term plan to translate the Bible into the major languages of India, they did not themselves complete the proposed translations into Urdu and Persian. The ostensible reason for this neglect was the sound and practical one that government officials had already completed translations of the gospels into these languages. William Carey, the founder of the Serampore Mission, remarked in reference to the translations of Lt. Col. Colebrook and Mr William Hunter, 'We will gladly do what others do not'.[1] This particular division of labour also reflected Carey's personal interest and skills in the Sanskrit derived vernaculars of India, indeed none of the Serampore missionaries wanted to concentrate primarily on Urdu or Persian. When the Colebrook and Hunter translations proved to be incomplete and unsuitable for distribution Carey and Marshman were again only too glad to discover that the East India Company chaplain, Henry Martyn, was directing his attention towards the languages of the Indian Muslims.[2] After Martyn's death his Persian and Urdu

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1. J.C. Marshman, op.cit., p. 195.

2. Lt Col R.H. Colebrook, Surveyor-General in the Company's service, supervised a translation of St Matthew's Gospel into Persian which was published by the Hindoostani Press at Fort William College in 1805. The actual translation had been done by Mirzā Muhammad Fitrat who later became Henry Martyn's munshī. The same press published William Hunter's Urdu translation of the Gospels in 1805. Apart from the need for a complete New Testament in both languages, the latter work was in Devanagari not Arabic script and was therefore considered unsuitable for Muslim readers.

translations were printed at the Serampore press, but although Baptist agency and encouragement thereafter furthered the distribution of the gospels among Indian Muslims, the question was always secondary to their immediate concern for Hindu evangelization.

A contrary impression may have been given by the fact that a dispute with the East India Company in 1807 which had threatened the very existence of the Serampore Mission, had focused on a 'Muslim tract' printed at the mission press which denounced the prophet Muḥammad as a 'tyrant'.[1] The agitation which the tract caused in government circles seemed initially to lend weight to the impression that the Baptists were concentrating on proselytism of the Muslims as much as of the Hindus. But Carey's defence revealed that whereas several tracts had been published in recent years on Hindu themes, the tract which had seemingly caused offence to Muslims was the only one which had been prepared for Muslim readers. Carey urged, 'this is the only one which your Lordship's memorialists have at any time addressed to the Mussulmans as they have generally found them less fond of discussion than the Hindoos'.[2] Furthermore the passages which were deemed to give offence had been inserted without the missionaries' knowledge by an Indian munshī, and out of 2,000 printed only about 300 had actually been distributed. Of course at this moment Carey was anxious to justify the mission's actions to the Company. Never-

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1. 'Translation of an address from the missionaries at Serampore to all persons professing the Mohummudan religion', and 'An Account of a certain Tyrant from his birth to his death', in 'Proceedings relative to the missionaries', enclosures to Secret Letters from Bengal, 2 Nov. 1807, Secret Dept., Home Misc. Series, Vol. 690, pp. 9-21.

2. Copy of a memorial from the missionaries of Serampore addressed to Lord Minto, 30 Sept., 1807, enclosure to Secret Letters from Bengal, 2 Nov. 1807, Secret Dept., Home Misc. Series, Vol. 690, p. 114.

theless his own statement of what had occurred, which was accepted by the Company, confirms the impression given by many contemporary missionary memoirs that Bengali Muslims showed much less interest in Serampore activities than did Hindus in the region, and that the missionaries were consequently reinforced in their own predisposition to pay less attention to them. William Ward's Account of the Writings, Religion and Manners of the Hindoos[1] was not succeeded by any major Baptist work on the Indian Muslims.

The missionary presence was even less noticeable in the newly acquired Muslim areas of the Upper Provinces. In 1810 the Company foiled the first Baptist attempt to send a missionary to the Panjab and quickly removed a Baptist who had taken up residence in Agra. Although the Rev. J.T. Thompson, also a Baptist, was established in lonely state in Delhi by 1818, and remained there until his death in 1850, Serampore seemed no more than half-hearted in devising schemes for subordinate stations in the Upper Provinces. Thus the Protestant missionary society which was the most active and successful in the Bengal Presidency in the years preceding and following the permissive clauses of the 1813 Charter Act did not consider itself to be 'a mission to Muslims'.

The London Missionary Society (L.M.S.), and the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.), had also attempted to send missionaries to Bengal even before the Company's embargo was lifted. But their

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1. Published in 4 vols at Serampore in 1811, and subsequently republished in London in 1817-20 with the title amended to, A View of the History, Literature and Religion of the Hindoos.

efforts to penetrate into the Upper Provinces met similar opposition. Nathanael Forsyth's plan to open an L.M.S. mission in Benares was twice rejected before 1813, but at the third attempt, in 1819, the L.M.S. established M.T. Adams in that city. However, there was no further L.M.S. expansion anywhere in the north until the late 1830s, and no measurable impact on the Muslims.[1] C.M.S. efforts followed a similar pattern, for even after the 1813 legislation made entry into India easier, of the five stations established in the Upper Provinces before 1833 only those at Chunar (1814), Benares (1815) and Gorakhpur (1824) took firm and permanent root. Those planned for centres of high Muslim concentration, notably at Agra (1813) and Meerut (1815) suffered long periods of virtual closure before their permanent re-establishment in the late 1830s. Preliminary efforts at Delhi, Kanpur and Lucknow came to nothing.[2] Only in Agra was there any sign that Muslims were affected by the early missionary activity, when the preaching of a convert from Islam, one Shaikh Ṣāliḥ, resulted in a number of further conversions. Significantly, the impulse behind his own conversion, after which he took the name of 'Abd al-Masīḥ, had been the preaching not of any Protestant missionary, but that of an East India Company army chaplain stationed at Kanpur.

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1. C.S. Horne, The Story of the L.M.S. (new edition, London, 1908), pp. 92-93; 117-118.

2. E. Stock, The History of the Church Missionary Society, 3 vols (London, 1899), I, p. 312.

HENRY MARTYN AND THE MUSLIMS OF THE NORTH

The short residence in northern India of this evangelical Company chaplain, Henry Martyn, was to prove of long-term significance for the history of contact and controversy, for according to later evangelical tradition Martyn was the 'first modern missionary to the Mohammedans'.[1] Yet at first sight the journals of his brief period in northern India seem only to reinforce the impression that the Muslims of these regions remained undisturbed by the presence of Christian preachers.[2] A distinction must therefore be made between his immediate, almost negligible, impact, and the long-term effects of his activities and encounters, particularly his translations of the New Testament into Urdu and Persian, and the compilation of the first Protestant tracts in answer to ulamā objections to Christianity.

Martyn bore many of the marks of the evangelical revival. He was born in 1781 in a part of Cornwall where the itinerant evangelical preachers, both Methodist and Anglican, had been particularly active. His own conversion took place at Cambridge where he came under the influence of Charles Simeon who was making the university a centre of Anglican evangelicalism and was also playing a key part in establishing links between evangelicalism and the need for overseas missionary activity.[3] Yet although

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1. The sub-title of George Smith's biography, Henry Martyn, Saint and Scholar, First Modern Missionary to the Mohammedans, 1781-1812 (London, 1892).

2. J. Sargent, Memoir of the Rev. Henry Martyn, B.D., second edition (London, 1819); S. Wilberforce (ed.), Journals and Letters of the Rev. Henry Martyn, B.D., 2 vols. (London, 1837).

3. A. Pollard, 'The influence and significance of Simeon's work', in A. Pollard and M. Hennell (eds.), Charles Simeon (1759-1836) (London, 1959), pp. 178-80; H.E. Hopkins, Charles Simeon of Cambridge (London, 1977).

Martyn's diaries and letters reflect the agonies of the soul which were typical of the evangelical spiritual ordeal, his Cambridge education had also given him an intellectual grounding which would have significant effects on his attitude to Islam and Christianity. He was acknowledged to be one of the best scholars of his year and he completed his undergraduate studies as Senior Wrangler. The logical aptitude of a mind already proficient in mathematical and philosophical reasoning processes may explain his readiness to accept and to pursue the evidential and rational types of argument he would later encounter among the _'ulamā_ of India and Persia. In his case the religion of the heart was certainly firmly buttressed by the conclusions of the mind.

Martyn felt that he was called to be a missionary as early as 1802, but his decision to concentrate on Muslim evangelization evolved slowly. As soon as he was certain of his protégé's intention, Simeon put him in touch with Charles Grant and William Wilberforce in London, and under their influence Martyn's interest in India deepened. However, for family financial reasons he accepted Grant's patronage to become an East India Company chaplain rather than what he termed a 'pure' missionary. He started to study a number of Indian languages several months before he left England, obtaining help with Urdu from John Gilchrist, a prominent orientalist who had recently returned to England from Calcutta. This move does not necessarily indicate that Martyn had already decided to concentrate on Islam for he regarded 'Hindustani' not as a 'Muslim language' but as the lingua franca of northern India and therefore as the most useful language to acquire while his ultimate posting remained uncertain.

When he arrived in Calcutta in 1806 the Serampore missionaries and the Company chaplains, David Brown and Claudius Buchanan, suggested various ways in which he might fill some gaps in their already far-flung translation programme. For his own part Martyn was categorical only in his determination to shake the dust of Calcutta off his feet and to seek a posting in an upcountry station where he might have some hopes of initiating his missionary plans and where his particular style of 'enthusiastic' preaching would be free from the sneers he was enduring from the European community in the capital city. The intensity of his feeling on this point was revealed in a letter to the Reverend David Brown, 'If ever I am fixed at Calcutta I have done with the natives'.[1] But like other evangelicals at this period he still conceived of India in Hindu terms and felt that Benares would be the most suitable posting for him. In a letter home he confided, 'I should have preferred being near Benares, the heart of Hindooism'.[2] Nevertheless a note in his journal suggests that the seed of his subsequent concentration on Islam was actually sown before he left Calcutta,

> The thought of the Mahometans and Heathens lies very heavy upon my mind. The former, who are in Calcutta, I seem to think are consigned to me by God, because nobody preaches in Hindoostanee.[3]

In the end the Company's decision to post him to Patna not to Benares, and his progress in Urdu and Persian but seeming inability

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1. Henry Martyn to David Brown, 21 July 1807, in Journals and Letters, II, p. 94.

2. Martyn to Lydia Grenfell, Serampore, Sept. 1806, ibid., I, pp. 498-499.

3. Martyn, Journal, 25 July 1806, ibid., p. 471.

to master Sanskrit, reinforced the awareness among the evangelicals that they lacked a distinguished Islamic scholar in determining his area of concentration.

Martyn spent three years at the military cantonment of Dinapur, and a year at Kanpur. Dinapur was a few miles from the madrasas of Patna and Phulwari, and his duties at Kanpur occasionally took him to Lucknow and to Benares. But during his three and a half years in northern India he never visited Agra or Delhi, nor did he record any comments about the 'ulamā of those cities. Even in Dinapur and Kanpur his contacts with Muslims proved to be very limited.

One reason for Martyn's hesitancy in trying to make contacts was that, in spite of his final resolution to work among Muslims, his knowledge about Islam was initially very limited. The study of non-Christian religions had played no part in his degree or ordination requirements. He started to read George Sale's 'Preliminary Discourse' to the Qur'ān only as he sailed up the Ganges. When he was settled in his first station he studied the English translation of the Qur'ān by Sale and several months later he began to read the Arabic Qur'ān with the help of a munshī.[1] On his departure from India for Persia he commenced Lodovico Marracci's refutation of the Qur'ān.[2] Meanwhile his contacts with Indian Muslims, limited though they were, had caused him to begin

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1. Martyn, Journal, 30 Oct., 3 Nov. 1806, 30 March, 10 April, 24 April, 3-5 Dec. 1807 in Journals and Letters, I, p. 441. II, pp. 38, 50, 131, and J. Sargent, op.cit., pp. 206, 210, 264.

2. L. Marracci, Prodromus ad Refutationem Alcorani (4 parts, Rome, 1691); Martyn, Journal, 28 Jan. 1811, in Journals and Letters, II, p. 331.

to consider his own principles of refutation. Thus after a few months in Dinapur he recorded that he was studying Leland's arguments against the Deists in the hope of drawing out some points which would also serve to counter Islam,[1] and in a letter to Daniel Corrie he stated, 'I read everything I can pick up about the Mahomedans'.[2] Nevertheless, on his own confession he had been ignorant of some of the most basic Islamic tenets when he had arrived in India. His limited choice of authorities reflects both the stagnation of European interest in the thought and beliefs of the Islamic world and also the survival of the evidential approach to debate on religious questions. However, the recurrence of the name of George Sale in Martyn's reading is a significant pointer to future patterns. Sale's 'Preliminary Discourse' and English translation of the Qur'ān had gone through several editions since its first publication in 1734. Its adoption by the evangelicals was in some respects surprising for Sale, a rather shadowy figure, had been suspected during his lifetime of being a Muslim and even though this was untrue his portrayal of Islam and of the prophet Muhammad was decidedly sympathetic.[3]

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1. Among John Leland's works against the Deists were, A defence of Christianity (London, 1753) and A view of the principal Deistical writers that have appeared in England in the last and present century, 3 vols (London, 1754-56); Martyn, Journal, 7 May 1807, in Journals and Letters, II, p. 58.

2. Martyn to Rev. D. Corrie, 29 Feb. 1808, ibid., p. 164.

3. George Sale, The Koran commonly called the Alcoran of Mohammed, translated into English immediately from the original Arabic; with explanatory notes, taken from the most approved commentators. To which is prefixed a Preliminary Discourse (London, 1734). Re-editions in English in 1764, 1795 and 1801; D.N.B., L, pp. 179-181; R.A. Davenport, 'A Sketch of the Life of George Sale', in 1877 edition of Sale's Koran, pp. x-xii.

Martyn and other evangelicals no doubt resorted to him in the first instance as the only available source in English of factual and comprehensive information about Islam, but an unintentional and important result was the gradual emergence of a more conciliatory evangelical view of Islam which was at least partly inculcated under the influence of Sale's scholarly and liberal attitude and his expressed intention of approving in Islam 'such particulars as seemed to me to deserve approbation'.[1] Yet although the general nature of Sale's influence on Martyn can be conjectured from the frequency of the journal references to his translation and discourse, he recorded no assessment of Sale's views, and his journals give the impression that he was actually more strongly influenced on specific points of Islamic doctrine by contact with the munshīs who assisted him with the translation of the Bible. In any case, in spite of intensive reading and consultation, at the end of his four years in India he remained hesitant about his command of the languages and theology necessary for sustained debate with Muslims and he purposely held back from initiating any encounter until he should feel more certain of his ground. Nor did he attempt to publish any tracts on Islam during his time in north India.

Apart from his own scholarly reasons for caution, Martyn was also limited by his position as a Company chaplain from any activities which might be deemed to run counter to the Company's policy on 'non-interference in the religious affairs of the natives.'

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1. G. Sale, Preface to his translation of the Qur'ān entitled 'To the reader', in 'new' 2 vol. ed. (London, 1801), I, p. vii.

If he had openly neglected his duties as chaplain to the European troops to concentrate on evangelization of Indians he would have provoked censure and probably dismissal. On several occasions he fulminated against the Company's attitude but in practice he usually observed the required restrictions. It has been suggested by Martyn's detractors that other evangelical chaplains who faced similar restrictions on their activities, nevertheless made more impact than he did, and that his main obstacle was temperamental unsuitability rather than the Company's 'non-interference' policy. For in spite of his hesitancy to preach in the bazaars, many European accounts agree that Martyn exemplified the caricature of an 'enthusiastic' hell-fire preacher so often ridiculed by opponents of evangelicalism. He had been made quickly aware of the unpopularity of this type of preaching, first by the sailors on the voyage out to India, one of whom had complained that 'Mr Martyn sends us to hell every Sunday',[1] and then by the Company officials in Calcutta. Although he refused to alter his tone when preaching to Europeans he seemed to be aware that it was necessary to make a conscious effort to curb the excesses of his zeal when addressing Indians and he was critical of what he considered Joshua Marshman's contemptuous tone to a Brahmin audience.[2] Yet J.W. Kaye, a Company servant who was unsympathetic to Martyn, concluded that the chaplain's excitable, not to say morbid temperament, had combined with the constant stress caused by physical weakness, to render him incapable

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1. Martyn, Journal, 15 Sept. 1805, Journals and Letters, I, p. 318.

2. Martyn, Journal, 20 July 1806, ibid., pp. 469-70; 16 Jan. 1807, in Sargent, op.cit., p. 234.

in practice of any such restraint. Kaye's conclusion, 'The truth must be told; Martyn lacked judgement and discretion; he lacked kindliness, not of heart, but of manner',[1] perhaps betrays partisanship. Yet self-awareness of an inability to communicate with Indians, or indeed with the uneducated English 'lower orders' was frequently the cause of Martyn's own heart-searchings.[2] In practice however, the occasions were very few during his residence in northern India when even the excesses of an uncurbed evangelical tongue might have provoked a reaction of any kind from a Muslim audience. The impassioned outbursts for which he was noted among Europeans were heard only by his munshīs within the privacy of his study. Bazaar preaching, which Martyn was ambivalent about anyway, was not tolerated by his Company employers, and as a result his first experiment in public preaching took place only after three years in India when his final departure was already imminent. Unable even then to risk entering the bazaars he confined his address to a crowd of beggars which every Sunday assembled voluntarily at his own compound in Kanpur.

Martyn's caution in his attempts to establish schools in and around Patna also shows the limited scope for an evangelical chaplain's activities, for as he explained,

> I do not institute more till I see the Christian books introduced. The more schools the more noise, and more inquiry; and more suspicion of its being of a political nature. Besides, if all the schools were to come to a demur together, I fear their deciding against us; but if one or two schools, with much thought about it, comply with our wishes, it will be

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1. J.W. Kaye, Christianity in India: An historical narrative (London, 1859), p. 189.

2. Martyn, Journal, 27 Jan. 1805, 20 Oct. 1805, in Journals and Letters, I, pp. 222, 338.

> a precedent and example to others ... I trust our motto shall be, 'constant though cautious' - never ceasing to keep our attention fixed steadily on the state of things; and being swift to embrace every opportunity.[1]

There was good reason for this caution for, apart from the likelihood of arousing the Company's displeasure, his classrooms had been quickly emptied by a rumour that the new English padre intended to convert the pupils. The schools were re-opened when the rumour died down, but Martyn felt obliged to compromise his original intentions by using Sanskrit literature of a type he considered 'harmless' instead of immediately introducing his translations of the Bible into the classroom.[2]

Yet although some of the channels of communication which later missionaries would use were closed to Martyn, and although his temperament may have set up other barriers, he did make some contacts, mostly shortlived, with some educated Muslims. They were of three kinds - the munshīs he employed to help with translation, some 'ulamā mainly from the Patna region, and some members of the local Muslim aristocracy. He made no converts from Islam during his sojourn in the north, but 'Abd al-Masīḥ, the one Muslim whose subsequent conversion to Christianity can be attributed to Martyn's influence, later played an important part in initiating the first phase of Protestant missionary activity in the Agra region.[3]

Martyn's most sustained contacts were with the munshīs

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1. Martyn to Rev. D. Corrie, n.d., in Sargent, op.cit., pp. 267-68.

2. Martyn to Rev. D. Corrie, Dinapur, 10 March 1807 and 18 May 1807 in Journals and Letters, II, pp. 28-29, 66.

3. G. Smith, op.cit., pp. 285-286.

who assisted him with his translation work. Missionaries then and later seemed to experience no difficulty in obtaining help from educated Muslims and Hindus for the work of translating the Bible, even though the long-term intention behind the project was the undermining of their own religions. In Martyn's case relations were often unharmonious, sometimes stormy, for in the course of the necessary textual discussions he could not resist the attempt to convince his servants of the truth of the books they were translating.[1] On the other hand Martyn was still self-avowedly ignorant about Islam and his translators were his main source of information on detailed points of Qur'ānic exegesis. If such men provided his closest and most consistent contact with the world of Islamic scholarship their place within that world should be determined. In Maulānā Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz's categories they might be regarded as Muslims who had taken up 'forbidden' forms of service under non-Muslim rule and by assisting to translate the Bible they were in danger of putting themselves outside the pale of Muslim society.[2] Apart from Martyn's temperamental weaknesses, the ambivalence and insecurity implicit in the munshī's function may explain the storminess of the relationship. Critics hostile to missions would later claim that the typical munshī was a half-educated sycophant who had nothing to lose by taking employment with the missionaries, and whose situation as a fringe member of his own society put him in no position to initiate the missionaries into the intricacies of Islam or Hinduism. The Muslims who served Martyn as munshīs all had better scholarly pedigrees than this caricature suggests.

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1. Martyn, Journal, 16 Jan. 1807, in Sargent, op.cit., pp. 233-34.

2. See above, p.51.

Mirzā Fitrat, who joined Martyn at Dinapur in 1807, was a Shī'ī from Benares who had previously been employed to assist John Gilchrist at Fort William College where he had gained the confidence of the evangelicals for his work on the Colebrook and Hunter Bible translations. Throughout the three years he worked with Martyn he, and a Bengali munshī, one Murād 'Alī, made strenuous objections to Christian doctrines and threatened to enlist local Muslim scholars in the defence of Islam.[1] That they never succeeded in doing so may reflect either an anxiety to remain in Martyn's employment or that they actually were persona non grata among the 'ulamā. On the other hand Martyn's third munshī, Nathaniel Sābāṭ, was to play a significant part in linking this period of cautious preparation with the encounters with the 'ulamā which were to begin in the 1830s. During the time he worked for Martyn the evangelicals in Bengal paid much more attention to Sābāṭ than they did to their other munshīs and paṇdits. This was because he was an Arab Christian who had been converted in extremely dramatic circumstances.[2] At a time

1. Martyn to Rev. D. Corrie, Dinapur, 28 April 1807 in Journals and Letters, II, p. 55.

2. According to Claudius Buchanan, Jawād bin Sābāṭ was the son of Ibrāhīm Sabat a member of 'a noble family of the line of Beni-Sabat who trace their pedigree to Mahomed'. As a young man he set out on a journey through Persia and Afghanistan with a friend called 'Abdallāh. The latter decided to take up a state appointment in Kabul and while there was converted to Christianity 'by the perusal of a Bible'. Sābāṭ later rediscovered 'Abdallāh in Buchara and when he heard of his conversion he delivered him up to the king. 'Abdallāh refused to renounce Christianity and Sābāt was present at his former friend's execution. However, the sight filled him with remorse and resuming his travels he reached Madras where he was appointed muftī by the British. While in south India he read an Arabic New Testament 'and at length the truth of the word fell on his mind ... like a flood of light'. Sābāt was baptised in Madras by Dr Kerr who put him in touch with the Serampore missionaries. He joined them to act as a munshī but before he left Madras his family made an abortive attempt to retaliate for his apostacy by sending his brother from Arabia to kill him. C. Buchanan, 'The Conversion of Sabat', in Christian researches in Asia second edit (London, 1811), pp. 179-185. The Serampore missionaries suggested that Sābāṭ should join Martyn at Dinapur.

when the evangelicals found it almost impossible to influence Muslims of any class, the conversion of a man who claimed descent from the prophet Muḥammad and who belonged to a reputable and learned family, seemed to give justification at last to their optimism about the eventual impact of the gospels on the Muslim world. However, Sābāṭ was extremely difficult to deal with. Conscious, perhaps of his importance to the missionaries, and possessing by all accounts, a proud and fiery disposition, he caused havoc in Martyn's household. The journals abound with reference to the munshī's shortcomings and erratic behaviour,

> Sabat has been tolerably quiet this week; but think of the keeper of a lunatic, and you see me. ... lately taking offence at something his landlord did, he and Ameenah [Sābāt's wife] employed themselves in tearing up every shrub, plant and flower in the garden.[1]

It seems that he was retained in Martyn's service only because of his value as an Arabic and Persian translator and, it may be surmised, as a symbol of the receptivity of Muslims to Christianity. In the end he was proved suspect on both these counts. Even before Martyn left India Sābāṭ's translations, particularly the Persian New Testament, were questioned by other scholars and munshīs, and soon after Martyn's death he renounced Christianity and returned to Islam. Shortly afterwards he declared himself again a Christian, but before the Calcutta evangelicals could react to this situation he was killed in a befittingly dramatic and unlikely manner.[2]

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1. Martyn to D. Corrie, 28 March; 14 Nov. 1808, in Journals and Letters, II, pp. 173; 223.

2. The evangelicals thought that Sābāṭ had renounced Christianity and had returned to Islam because of criticism of his translations. He later left Calcutta for Penang where he announced his reconversion to Christianity. However, while in the service of the Sultan of Atjeh he was captured by rebels and ended his days tied up in a sack and thrown into the sea. G. Smith, Henry Martyn (London, 1892), p. 228.

The missionaries were thus robbed of one of their first educated Muslim converts, and the Ṣābāṭ saga might have had no further significance than as a warning against allowing baptism too easily. Ṣābāṭ, however, had entered wholeheartedly into the luke-warm attempts to stimulate contact between Islam and Christianity and had provided an initiative which was still otherwise lacking in whichever of the two camps he happened to be identified with at the time. Not only did he assist Mirzā Fitrat in acquainting Martyn with Islamic doctrine, but while his cautious master stood back from actually entering the lists with the local *'ulamā* Ṣābāṭ willingly went into the fray.[1] The *'ulamā* were not yet prepared for any such encounter so there was no immediate sequel. Nevertheless Ṣābāṭ prepared a small book challenging the 'false reports of a victory over him' which had been spread by the *'ulamā*.[2] There is no evidence that this tract was actually circulated beyond the Patna region during Ṣābāṭ's lifetime, but the refutation of Christianity which he prepared after he had moved briefly back into the Muslim camp was taken up long afterwards when one of the first defences of Islam which appeared in the 1830s incorporated Ṣābāṭ's arguments.[3] Thus the insight into Christianity which Ṣābāṭ had gained under Martyn's tutelage was to fuel a later stage of bitter encounter.

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1. Martyn, Journal, 30 Nov. 1808, *Journals and Letters*, II, p. 228.

2. Rev. D. Corrie to Rev. D. Brown, 30 Dec. 1808, ibid., p. 232.

3. Maulawī Sayyid 'Abbās 'Alī, *Khulāsa-i Ṣaulat al-Ẓaigham* (An Abridgement of the Lion's Onset), written c. 1832, published Lucknow, 1842.

Martyn's few contacts with members of the 'ulamā class were conducted mainly through these munshīs but, because of tentativeness on both sides, face-to-face encounter resulted only on a very few occasions. His journals contain several references to the 'ulamā at Phulwari and at Patna, but his knowledge of them seems to have remained only superficial. His reluctance to make a more direct personal contact was explicit in his reply to his munshī, Mirzā Fitrat, when he requested Martyn to go to the Phulwari madrasa to discuss Islam and Christianity,

> He wishes me to go to Phoolwaree, the Mussulman college, and there examine the subject, with the most learned of their doctors. I told him I had no objection to go to Phoolwaree, but why could not he as well enquire for himself, whether there were any evidence for Mahomedanism, without my going and exciting prematurely the attention of the whole country and the government.[1]

In the end Martyn never visited the Phulwari madrasa, nor did he seem to be aware of its Ṣūfī associations, or of the reputations of its 'ulamā.[2] Thus whem some of the Phulwari 'ulamā deigned to

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1. Martyn, journal, 19-21 Nov. 1807, in Journals and Letters, II,p.129.

2. Phulwari was a small town situated between Dinapur and Patna. The mosque and madrasa were known as 'Phulwarisharif'. Maulānā Abū'l-Ḥayāt Nadvī comments that the Phulwari madrasa had won the reputation in Bihār which the Farangī Mahal had achieved in Oudh. Hindustān kī qadīm Islāmī dars gāhīn (Azimgarh, 1971), pp. 53-54. In a British description written shortly after Martyn left the region, Francis Buchanan made disparaging comments about the Phulwari 'ulamā, which nevertheless showed more knowledge about the madrasa than Martyn had acquired while resident nearby. Buchanan commented, 'there are ... a good many persons who have acquired the title of Maulavi, but they do not teach, and some of them are probably rather shallow; but among them are some who have a high reputation.' He singled out Ẓahīr al-Ḥaqq, with 8 to 10 pupils, and Ni' mat Allāh, with 20 pupils, as leading teachers. An Account of the Districts of Bihar and Patna in 1811-1812, 2 vols (Patna, n.d.) I, pp. 82; 297.

pay him a visit he recorded only superficial comments about them, and in any case he did not succeed in engaging them in sustained conversation,

> A very respectable Sygad [Sayyid] from Pulwarrie called this morning; a very old and well-behaved man. I endeavoured to have some discussion on religion, but he artfully avoided it.[1]

Although Martyn made frequent visits to Patna in the course of his official duties, he did not succeed in penetrating 'ulamā circles there any more than he had in Phulwari.[2] A relation of one of the leading 'ulamā of Patna called on him twice, but his brief references to the conversation which ensued suggest that they were from the beginning at cross-purposes,

> A son-in-law of the Qaree ool Qoorrat [Qāzī 'l quzāt]of Patna, a very learned man, called on me. I put to him several questions about Mahometanism, which confused him, and as he seemed a grave honest man, they may produce lasting doubts.[3]

Some of Martyn's journal comments about the 'ulamā suggest that his own attitude, demeanour and speech were probably responsible for preventing any prospect of real interchange on such occasions. While in Dinapur he recorded,

> To-day I hear one of these haughty Mussulman means to visit me. I shall see what arguments he can bring for the support of his filthy religion.[4]

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1. Martyn, journal, 10 Sept. 1807, in Journals and Letters, II, p. 104.

2. Patna city, the capital of Bihar, was estimated in 1812 to have a population of 312,000. About 10% of the population of the district was Muslim, but the proportion was higher in the city, where there were a number of important mosques and a madrasa. The Capuchins had built a church in the city in the 1770s.

3. Martyn, journal, 6-10 June 1808, Journals and Letters, II, p. 197.

4. Martyn to Rev. D. Corrie, Dinapur, 8 Feb. 1808, ibid., p. 154.

It would seem from Martyn's journals that the few meetings which occurred with the Phulwari and Patna _'ulamā_ resulted from their initiative rather than from his, but the main motive behind their visits was probably mere curiosity about the new English padre, for they were clearly unwilling to engage in any protracted religious discussion. On the one occasion when Martyn thought that the Phulwari _'ulamā_ were seeking a real discussion with thim, they withdrew just before the proposed meeting was to take place.[1] Sābāṭ, however, continued to press himself upon the Phulwari _'ulamā_, although Martyn 'advised him to let the matter rest there',[2] and in the end he spent some time 'drawing out some arguments against the Koran, and some passages from it, for the use of Sabat, who is next Sunday to have a formal dispute with an assembly of Moolahs'.[3] But again the _'ulamā_ withdrew for, according to Martyn's information, the father of one of the participants had advised him not to enter into such a dispute.[4] Later when Sābāṭ had removed himself during one of his frequent rages to Patna he seemed to be more successful in establishing contacts there, for Daniel Corrie recorded,

> He has daily disputes with the great natives of Patna, who all seem anxious for the honour of restoring him to the faith ... Latterly he was invited where he unexpectedly found above one hundred Mollahs collected to banter him.[5]

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1. Martyn, Journal, 16 Nov. 1807; 31 Jan. 1808, ibid., II, pp. 125; 152.

2. Martyn to Rev. D. Corrie, 8 Feb. 1808, ibid., p. 154.

3. Martyn, Journal, 30 Nov. 1808, ibid., p. 228.

4. Martyn, Journal, 5 Dec. 1808, ibid., p. 228.

5. Rev. D. Corrie to Rev. D. Brown, 30 Dec. 1808, ibid., p. 232.

Controversy was anyway second nature to a man of Sābāt's temperament, and the 'ulamā for their part, seemed to feel less hesitancy in debating with an apostate than with a European missionary who was in the Company's service. On several other occasions Martyn's own projected meetings also came to nothing. When his munshī, Murād 'Alī, felt helpless to counter Martyn's constant urging of the gospels he asked a 'learned native' for help. He in turn made contact with a 'leading man from Benares' who was to come in person to deal with Martyn. Although he was as usual reluctant, Martyn felt that this time the meeting should not be avoided,

> I am preparing for the assault of this great Mahomedan Imaum [sic]. I have read the Koran and notes twice for this purpose, and even filled whole sheets with objections, remarks, questions, &c. but alas! what little hopes have I of doing him or any of them good in this way.[1]

All was indeed in vain for the maulānā never appeared. Although Martyn's journals contain references to several discussions with individual 'ulamā, he failed to maintain contact with any of them. His original intentions of visiting Delhi remained unfulfilled. Although he had heard rumours of the physical danger of 'preaching in any part of India beyond Benares', he had expressed a hope, before he set out from Calcutta, that he would travel as far as Delhi, commenting,

> It was not long since that a Roman Catholic missionary was murdered at Delhi by the Mussulmans; yet I hope to preach the gospel there.'[2]

However, he never reached Delhi and seemed to have no knowledge of

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1. Martyn to Rev. D. Corrie, Dinapur, 28 April; 4 May 1807, ibid., II, pp. 55-57.

2. Martyn, Journal, 27 Aug. 1806, Journals and Letters, I, p. 488.

its _'ulamā_. Although his duties at Kanpur took him occasionally to Lucknow for European baptisms and marriages, he recorded only one encounter with the _'ulamā_. On this occasion he visited the tomb of Āṣaf al-Daula where he was successful in engaging some _'ulamā_ in an hour-long conversation. However, the disputation which ensued, merely ended in 'their referring me for an answer to another', and there was no sequel.[1]

Martyn's experiences with the 'great men' of the region were likewise inconsequential. Although his occasional duties at the British Resident's house in Lucknow gave him the opportunity for a breakfast audience with the Nawab-Wazir of Oudh, Sa'ādat 'Alī Khān, he found himself totally ignored, for the Nawab 'said not a word to me.'[2] At dinner with a British general he met Nawab Shamsher Bahādur, but his hopes of engaging him in conversation were disappointed for he found him to be illiterate, dull and unwilling to talk.[3] Nevertheless, in spite of his failure with such Muslim aristocrats, Martyn regarded them as the channels through which the gospel might eventually be spread to the Muslim population. He disagreed, however, with his colleague, David Brown's plans to force the Bible, unsolicited, to their attention, arguing,

> Your idea about presenting splendid copies of the Scriptures to native great men has often struck me, but my counsel is, not to do it with

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1. Martyn to unidentified correspondent, probably Corrie or Brown, 10 Jan. 1810, ibid., II, pp. 281-2.

2. Martyn to Rev. D. Corrie, 10 Jan. 1810, ibid., II, p. 281.

3. Martyn to Rev. D. Corrie, 11 Dec. 1809, ibid., p. 276. Shamsher Bahādur has not been identified. He was possibly a member of an important Oudh family holding lands in Partabgarh.

> the first edition. I have too little faith in the instruments to believe that the first editions will be excellent; and if they should be found defective, we cannot after once presenting the great men with one book, repeat the thing.[1]

Martyn's single success among the Muslim aristocracy seems to have been with Nawab Bāqir 'Alī Khān of Bankipur, near Dinapur, whom he described as a 'Mahometan nobleman' belonging to 'the Soofi dynasty of the kings of Persia.'[2] Other accounts support Martyn's in indicating that Bāqir 'Alī was unusual among the Indian Muslim aristocracy at this time in positively seeking out European contacts of all kinds. Francis Buchanan explained the nawab's reasons for owning a house in the suburb of Bankipur as well as one in Patna city, on the grounds that,

> this house was formerly occupied by an European gentleman, and, I believe, has been bought by the Nawab with a view chiefly to receive visits from Europeans.[3]

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1. This comment, which he made in 1810, is particularly significant because five years earlier, after he had been studying Urdu for a mere few months in preparation for his departure for India, he had asked John Gilchrist to help him with a translation of the Bible. Gilchrist had advised Martyn to wait until he had a better command over the language and some experience of India, for in his view premature publication 'was the rock on which missions had split', an example being the faulty translation of the Lord's Prayer which 'was now a common subject of ridicule with the people'. It seems that Martyn had digested Gilchrist's lesson so well that his Calcutta colleagues were often frustrated by his perfectionism and procrastination. Martyn, Journal, 21 March 1805, Journals and Letters, I, pp. 240-241.

2. Martyn, Journal, 10 Aug. 1808; Martyn to Rev. D. Brown, Patna, 28 March 1809; Journals and Letters, II, pp. 210; 238. In Martyn's published journals the Nawab's name was rendered variously, 'Bakir Ali', II, p. 171; 'Bahir Ali Khan', II, p. 193; 'Meer Bahi Ali', II, p. 205; 'Mahommed Bahir', II, p. 210.

3. Buchanan, op.cit., I, pp. 58-59.

Martyn's own references to his 'new friend' suggest too that Bāqir 'Alī had several other friends among the European community in Patna, and that he was eager for discussions on a wide range of subjects, including chemistry and mathematics. Two visits to the Nawab's house, where Martyn was 'highly delighted with his sense, candour, and politeness', and exultant to discover at last an educated Muslim who was willing to engage in theological discussion, were followed by intermittent meetings during the rest of Martyn's time in India.[1] But although he continued to value his friendship, his initial optimism was soon tempered by the realization that Bāqir 'Alī was 'ambitious of the name of a learned man' and 'seems to wish to acquire information, but discovers no spiritual desire after the truth.'[2] Martyn persisted with the contact partly because he valued Bāqir 'Alī's scholarship. Indeed when the Urdu translation of the New Testament was completed he hoped that the nawab might be persuaded to inspect it. This was finally achieved, for in 1809 Martyn reported,

> Last week we began the correction of it [the Urdu N.T.] : present - a Seid of Delhi, a Poet of Lucknow, three or four literati of Patna, and Babir Ali [sic] in the chair. Sabat and myself assessors. Almost every sentence was altered.[3]

As chairman of the revision committee, Bāqir 'Alī Khān, who remained to the end utterly resistant to the gospel message, succeeded in leaving his mark on the version of the scriptures

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1. Martyn to Rev. D. Corrie, 20 June 1808, in Sargent, op.cit., p. 298.

2. ibid.

3. Martyn to Brown, Patna, 28 March 1809, Journals and Letters, II, II, pp. 237-38.

which would be widely circulated in northern India over the next three decades. When Martyn travelled back down the Ganges on his final journey to Calcutta he paid a last visit to Bāqir 'Alī.[1] This was the one lasting and relatively open relationship which Martyn succeeded in establishing with learned Muslims during his time in India. Although the participation of other Muslim scholars in the Bible revision procedure shows that Martyn had made some other contacts in Muslim learned circles, his own estimation of their significance, pronounced in a moment of elation, was none-theless extremely exaggerated,

> It is a delightful consideration, to have set these Indians at work without hire at the word of God, for their own eternal salvation. Already kings are becoming nursing fathers to the church.[2]

Indeed a more realistic picture of events was provided by one of Martyn's munshīs who warned him that although 'I might meet with two or three sensible men, who would think of what I said, and attempt to give an answer', the rest would ignore him 'from prejudice, and even from principle, holding it to be a sin so much as to hear or read the words of another religion.'[3] This seems to be the attitude Martyn usually encountered among the educated Muslims of northern India during the first decade of the 19th century, and it accords with the outlook already indicated in the examination of the 'ulamā's attitudes.

In these circumstances it is not surprising that there

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1. Martyn, Journal, 18 Oct. 1810, ibid., p. 322.

2. Martyn to Brown, Patna, 28 March 1809, ibid., p. 238.

3. Martyn, Journal, 9 May 1807, ibid., II, p. 59.

were few converts from Islam during these years, and scarcely any from among ashrāf Muslims. The only conversion of any note was of the Lucknow Muslim, Shaikh Ṣāliḥ ('Abd al-Masīḥ), who later attributed his interest in Christianity to his attendance at one of Martyn's beggar sermons in Kanpur.[1] Soon after Martyn's departure from India, Shaikh Salih was baptized in Calcutta when he took the name, 'Abd al-Masīḥ. He accompanied the evangelical chaplain, Daniel Corrie, to Agra where he worked as a pastor until 1825. The preaching of Corrie and 'Abd al-Masīḥ in the Agra region resulted in a number of conversions from both Islam and Hinduism. His attempts to draw the attention of the Delhi and Lucknow aristocracy and 'ulamā were in vain, however, until just before his own death.[2] For in 1826, on a visit to his family in Lucknow, 'Abd al-Masīḥ received the support of the British Resident, Mordaunt Ricketts, for a plan to open a C.M.S. station in that city. Ricketts, who was soon removed on suspicion of corruption, also introduced him at court and arranged for him to have a

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1. Shaikh Ṣāliḥ gave his own birthplace as Delhi, but his family appeared to have Lucknow connections. Some missionary accounts refer to him as the one-time keeper of the King of Oudh's jewels, 'a zealous Delhi Mohammedan, and a man of some rank, having been master of the jewels at the Court of Oudh'. E. Stock, The History of the Church Missionary Society, 3 vols (London, 1899) I, p. 132. Another account suggests that at the time of his conversion he was struggling to make a living as a munshī and dealer in copper, for 'his connexions were among the most respectable people in the Doab, though, from the changes in the Government of late years, they had fallen into comparative poverty.' See 'Memoir and Obituary of Rev. Abdool Messeeh', in Missionary Register (Oct. 1827), pp. 449-453.

2. 'Abd al-Masīḥ visited 'the chief cities of the Upper Provinces', but failed to achieve an audience with the King of Delhi, Akbar Shāh, 'who had expressed a wish to see him, but was dissuaded by some about him from shewing the Christian convert so much honour.' Missionary Register (Oct. 1827), p. 451.

'conference with a Molvee, in the presence of the Minister of the King of Oude.' Subsequently he was permitted to debate with other 'ulamā.[1] At this moment, on the brink of encounter with the Lucknow 'ulamā, 'Abd al-Masīḥ died, and the plan for a mission station there was abandoned, not to be taken up again until 1858. Furthermore, 'Abd al-Masīḥ's work in Agra, which had already resulted in many conversions, was allowed to lapse, and the missionary presence was not felt again in force in Agra until the arrival of Carl Pfander's colleagues after the famine of 1837.

Thus apart from the transitory initiatives of Abd al-Masīḥ in Agra and Lucknow in the 1820s, it seems that there is scarcely any evidence of encounter between evangelicals and 'ulamā in northern India before the year 1833. Daniel Corrie was unusual among the Company chaplains of this period in encouraging contact, but between 1813 and 1833 the Protestant missionary stations in the north remained scattered, weakly manned, and in several cases short-lived. The few that put down deeper roots were not, with the exception of Delhi, situated in Muslim religious centres. There seems to have been scarcely any awareness of Christianity among the 'ulamā and there is very little evidence of any discussion about the rival claims of Islam and Christianity. The distance between the world of the 'ulamā and that of the padres is suggested by Bishop Heber's comment that the nature of his own office was completely misunderstood in the mid 1820s by a 'learned' maulawī in the north who addressed him as the patriarch of Constantinople,

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1. Missionary Register (Aug. 1826), pp. 392-398; (Oct. 1827), pp. pp. 451-452.

for

> Of the Bishop of Calcutta, eo nomine, I had previously reason to believe nothing had been heard or known in Hindostan, or anywhere out of the immediate neighbourhood of the Presidency.[1]

It seems that most 'ulamā would have wished to avoid any discussion with Christians even if circumstances had been conducive to such encounters, and if forced into justifying their attitude might reply in the manner reported of Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz by a British army officer,

> Among the Moosulmans of less learning you will generally find your answer in "You have your religion, and I have mine", and with those who would make a show of listening to you, whether you have acquired the seven sciences (an answer given by Ubdool Uzeiz of Delhi to an Arab convert of Busrah ... as an excuse to assist a trial of strength in these matters on paper).[2]

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1. M.A. Laird (ed.) Bishop Heber in Northern India: Selections from Heber's Journal (Cambridge, 1971), p. 144.

2. Capt. S. Riley to J. Wolff, Nasirabad, 9 August 1832, in J. Wolff, Researches and Missionary Labours (London, 1835), p. 289.

CHAPTER TWO

THE EVOLUTION OF AN EVANGELICAL APOLOGETIC DIRECTED AT MUSLIMS

HENRY MARTYN'S PERSIAN TRACTS AND TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE

In spite of the rarity of face-to-face encounter between Muslims and missionaries in northern India before 1833, the initiation of a Protestant evangelical apologetic which would later be directed at north Indian Muslims can be traced to this era. Although Henry Martyn had failed to make any direct impact on more than a handful of Muslims during his three years in the north as an East India Company chaplain, the tracts and translations he completed in Persia just before his death in 1812 were the starting point for the subsequent concentration on Indian Muslim evangelism. Samuel Lee, who was appointed professor of Arabic at Cambridge University in 1819, and was also for a time Arabic tutor to the Church Missionary Society, provided a channel, by his publication in 1824 of an English translation of Martyn's tracts, through which Henry Martyn's apologetic was made known to Carl Pfander by the time he commenced the draft of his own first book for Muslims in 1829.[1] Pfander, among other missionaries in India, acknowledged that he had consulted 'Martin's controversy' in Lee's translation.[2] He, like other missionaries of his generation, preferred not to draw directly from the themes and methods of argument which Martyn had used in his Persian tracts, yet Lee's

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1. S. Lee, Controversial Tracts on Christianity and Mohammedanism by the late Rev. Henry Martyn, B.D. of St. John's College, Cambridge, and some of the most eminent writers of Persia translated and explained: to which is appended an additional tract on the same question; and, in a preface, some account given of a former controversy on this subject, with extracts from it. (Cambridge, 1824).

2. Pfander to H. Venn, Peshawar, 4 Jan. 1856, CMS CI1/0227/26.

translations, together with his summaries of earlier controversies, and his own advice for missionaries, constituted a compendium and reference book on possible strategies to adopt in future encounters with Muslims.

The reluctance of later missionaries to adopt Martyn's arguments reflected in part the generation of his tracts in unique circumstances in Shiraz in 1811, where some 'ulamā contacts had initiated a debate on miracles, and where the Ṣūfī inclinations of his Muslim hosts provided the impulse for his own tract on mysticism. Although there are indications in the miracle tracts of Martyn's own evangelical priorities, and in particular of his explanation to Muslims of the need for atonement for sins, his early death prevented the completion of a more comprehensive, and a perhaps more characteristic apologetic which might have been in closer accord with the needs of the next generation of evangelical missionaries.[1]

Martyn's tracts on miracles were replies to a spate of treatises on the miracle theme by a number of Persian 'ulamā who claimed that they were responding in turn to Martyn's previous challenge to produce proofs of the prophethood of Muḥammad.[2] During his residence in India Martyn had already come to the conclusion that defence of the Muslim claims for the truth of

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1. Henry Martyn's 'Second Persian Tract ... in Reply to Mirza Ibrahim' and 'Third Tract on the Vanity of the Sofee System, and on the Truth of the Religion of Moses and Jesus', Controversial Tracts, pp. 116-123; 147-154.

2. 'Notice of the Controversy with Mr. Martyn', Controversial Tracts, pp. cxiv-cxxiii; Mirzā Ibrāhīm's tract, ibid., p. 1; Martyn to Daniel Corrie, Shiraz, 12 Sept. 1811, in Journals and Letters, II, p. 375.

their religion rested on the argument from miracles, for conversation with even the 'best'of their scholars had rendered it impossible to discover that

> more than three arguments can be offered for their religion, which are, the miracles wrought by Mahomet; those still wrought by his followers; and his challenge in the 2nd chapter of the Koran, about producing a chapter like it.[1]

Soon after his arrival in Persia a number of 'ulamā presented him with tracts on the first of these arguments, namely the accomplishment of miracles by Muḥammad. Martyn chose, however, to prepare a detailed reply only to a tract which had taken up the third argument, namely that the 'excellence' of the Qur'ān was in itself the most significant proof of Muḥammad's prophethood.[3]

Martyn seemed to respond to the miracle challenge with considerable relish, for his own evangelical conviction was still firmly supported by a strong attachment to the 'evidences' of religious truth. Indeed the miracle tracts owed much in argument to the type of controversy which had marked the Deist challenge to orthodox defenders of revelation in eighteenth century Britain.[4]

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1. Quarterly Report to the Associated Clergy, 6 April 1807, in Journals and Letters, II, p. 46.

2. e.g. 'An Extract from the Book of Aga Acber on the Miracles of Mohammed', in Controversial Tracts, pp. 40-71.

3. 'Translation of the Arabic Tract of Mirza Ibrahim', in Controversial Tracts, pp. 1-39. Mīrzā Ibrāhīm was described by the scribe from whose manuscript Lee made his translation as 'our great Moola and teacher of the traditions of the learned ... the descendant of the illustrious Prophet, Mohammed Ibrahim Ibn Al Hoseini Al Hasani Al Hoseini', op.cit., p. 39.

4. e.g. the definitions and tests of miracles which had been provoked by Deist works such as John Toland's Christianity not Mysterious (1696) and Thomas Woolston's A Discourse on the Miracles of our Saviour 6 pts (London, 1727-29). In the mid 18th century David Hume's sceptical essay on miracles in his Enquiry concerning Human Understanding had revived the miracle controversy.

If he had not been willing to respond in kind it is probable that the Persian 'ulamā would anyway have refused to discuss more evangelical themes, for in one of the rejoinders which was written just after Martyn's death it was admitted,

> If the Padre had, like other foolish and ignorant Christians, contended for the divinity of Jesus, for his exclusive prophetic mission, for the doctrine of the two natures, - of the Trinity - the descent of the Holy Ghost, or of union with the Deity, or of any other subject manifestly implying infidelity, plurality of Gods, or Sadduceism, we should not have attempted to refute him; because such statements would have been unworthy of consideration.[1]

Thus the main legacy from Henry Martyn's Persian controversies consisted of tracts arguing the 'superiority' of the 'Muslim' over the 'Christian' miracles, and discussion of the tests which were held to be appropriate for proving that the miracles claimed had in fact occurred.[2] But the next generation of missionary apologists in India was reluctant to use the argument from miracles, nor did the Indian 'ulamā attempt to make this central to their

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1. Mirzā Muhammad Ruzā, 'The Rejoinder of Mohammed Ruza of Hamadan in answer to Mr. Martyn's Tracts,' c. 1813, in Controversial Tracts, pp. 179-180.

2. Mirzā Ibrāhīm argued that a miracle is 'an effect exceeding common experience, corresponding to a claim of prophecy made, and accompanied by a challenge to produce the like'. While he accepted the miracles of Moses and Jesus, he held that the miracle of the writing of the Qur'ān was 'superior' because it was permanent and of an intellectual rather than a physical quality. In his reply, Martyn objected in particular to the Mirza's insistence that 'the miracle of every Prophet must be referrible to such sciences as were generally known in his day: as for instance, the sciences of physic and magic in the times of Jesus and Moses, respectively, to which their miracles were referrible'; and raised the traditional Christian objection that the superior eloquence of the Qur'ān had not been proved. He disputed the validity of the Mirzā's argument from the permanence and 'intellectual' quality of the Qur'ān, and concluded by disputing the testimony presented for Muḥammad's miracles. Controversial Tracts, pp. 1-39; 80-101.

own counter-attack, although the assertion of the 'excellence of the Qur'ān' would continue to be encountered frequently during bazaar confrontations with Muslims.

The second main theme in Martyn's Persian controversies was consideration of mysticism as a path to union with God. On his first arrival in Shiraz Martyn had expressed surprise at the preoccupation with mysticism noticeable among his Muslim hosts, and he had hoped initially, that they would prove to be more open to the Christian message than the Muslims he had so far encountered in India.[1] But his initial optimism about Persia soon faded, and he felt constrained to point in his third tract to 'the vanity of the Sofee System'.[2] For in his view, although the mystical goal of 'union with the Deity' was certainly desirable, it was impossible to achieve by the means advocated by the Ṣūfīs, for without the 'possession of a real love to God ... there can be no union with him either mediate or immediate'.[3] He thus passed quickly from a critique of the inadequacies of Ṣūfīsm to an explanation of the Christian understanding of the role of the Gospels in bringing sinful man to a condition of real 'love to', and hence real union with God.[4] However, Martyn's arguments against

1. 'As the Persians are a far more unprejudiced and inquisitive people than the Indians, and do not stand so much in awe of an Englishman, as the timid natives of Hindoostan, I hope they will learn something from me'. Martyn to Lydia Grenfell, Shiraz, 23 June 1811, Journals and Letters, II, p. 364.

2. 'Mr. Martyn's Third Tract', Controversial Tracts, pp. 139-160.

3. ibid., pp. 146-147.

4. ibid., pp. 147-149.

Islamic mysticism, although capable of adaptation to the Indian Muslim environment, were not drawn on by the next generation of missionaries, who seemed to be scarcely aware of the Ṣūfī dimension within Islam. Yet although neither the 'miracle' nor the 'mysticism' tracts were utilized directly, Professor Samuel Lee chose to present his own advice to future missionaries to Muslims in the form of a critique of the shortcomings of Martyn's tracts, for in spite of holding that 'the general question at issue may ... not be advanced by such a method', he nevertheless adopted a strategy of 'adverting occasionally to the arguments which have been given in the foregoing pages'.[1]

By 1824 however, Martyn's scholarship was being drawn on in a way which made a more direct link between his tentative efforts to evangelize in north India and Persia, and the subsequent phase of contact and controversy in India. In Persia he had improved the translations of the Bible which he had worked on in Dinapur and Kanpur with Nathaniel Sābāṭ and Mirzā Fitrat, and by his death in 1812 the finally corrected versions were in the hands of missionary friends in Calcutta.[2] From 1814 onwards,

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1. 'The Question discussed in the preceding pages resumed by the translator', Controversial Tracts, p. 451.

2. Martyn's correspondence shows the difficulties he faced in trying to complete satisfactory translations, e.g. 'I found on my arrival here, [Shiraz] that our attempts at Persian translation in India were good for nothing', Martyn to Lydia Grenfell, Shiraz, 23 June 1811, Journals and Letters, II, p. 364; 'The Arabic version of the Psalms, now in the hands of all the Christians of the East, follows the Septuagint which in every single Psalm, differs very materially from the English. Which sense of the Hebrew are we to take?' Martyn to Rev. David Brown, Kanpur, 3 March 1810, ibid., p. 285.

translations of parts of the Bible in Arabic, Persian and Urdu were printed and distributed from presses in Calcutta and London. By the mid 1840s some of the translations to which the north Indian 'ulamā had access would have been revised almost beyond recognition, but those used in the crucial early stages still bore Martyn's stamp.[1] If his own tracts were by then regarded either as too rational in tone, or too rarefied in subject matter, for use by the next generation of missionaries, a tract written by his wayward munshī, Jawād bin Sābāṭ, after he had temporarily renounced Christianity and returned to Islam, was utilized by the next generation of 'ulamā in their own refutations of Christianity. For these reasons, Henry Martyn's groundwork for a Christian apologetic directed at Muslims, though scarcely noticed in India during his lifetime, was important for the evolution of an evangelical apologetic for Indian Muslims more than twenty years after his death.

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1. The British and Foreign Bible Society catalogue lists the following editions of the Old and New Testaments as translated by Henry Martyn and his munshīs and in some cases revised by the Calcutta missionaries and chaplains:-
   Urdu N.T.: 1814 - B.F.B.S., Serampore Mission Press, Arabic script.
   1817 - B.F.B.S., Hindoostanee Press, Calcutta, Devanagari script.
   1819 - B.F.B.S., Richard Watts, London.
   1829 - Calcutta Aux. Bible Soc., Serampore Mission Press.
   Urdu O.T.: 1822 - Calcutta Aux. Bible Soc., Serampore Mission Press.
   Persian N.T.: 1815 - Russian B.S., Petropoli; 1816 - B.F.B.S., P. Pereira, Calcutta; 1827 - B.F.B.S., Richard Watts, London; 1828 - Calcutta Aux. Bible Soc., C.M.S. Press; 1837 - B.F.B.S., Richard Watts, London; 1841 - Am. & F.B. Soc., Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta.
   Arabic N.T.: 1816 - B.F.B.S., Calcutta (Sābāṭ's translation, revised by Thomason).
   1825 - B.F.B.S., London (5,000 copy reprint of above, revised by S. Lee and J.D. Macbride).
   1826 - B.F.B.S., Calcutta (Sābāṭ's translation, edited by Thomason).

SAMUEL LEE AS INTERMEDIARY BETWEEN MARTYN AND PFANDER

Professor Samuel Lee not only translated and published Martyn's tracts but he also played an important part in his own right as an orientalist with evangelical connections. His appointment to the chair of Arabic at Cambridge in 1819 was a remarkable example of the effectiveness of evangelical patronage in promoting the interests of some of its poor and uninfluential protégés. After a charity school education, Lee who was one of eleven children, had been apprenticed to a carpenter. He had taught himself Latin, Greek, Hebrew and Syriac as he worked at his bench, and by thus qualifying himself to become a schoolmaster he came to the attention of Jonathan Scott who had been Persian Secretary to Warren Hastings in India. Scott encouraged Lee to add Arabic, Persian and Urdu to his acquirements, and through Scott he met Claudius Buchanan and some of the Church Missionary Society officials who used their influence to get him admitted to Queens' College, Cambridge.[1] The C.M.S. no doubt hoped that Lee would devote his outstanding talents singleheartedly to their missionary objectives, but Lee preferred to pursue academic honours. In 1819 he was appointed to the chair of Arabic before he had even gained his Master's degree. However, he did play an important part in the revisions of Henry Martyn's translations during the 1820s. The third edition of Martyn's Persian New Testament which appeared in 1827 was edited by Lee after

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1. A.M. Lee, A Scholar of a Past Generation. A brief memoir of Samuel Lee, D.D. (Cambridge, 1896); 'The Rev. Samuel Lee, D.D.', obituary in Church Missionary Intelligencer, IV, No. 3 (March, 1853), pp. 56-63; DNB. (reprint 1967-68), XI, pp. 819-820.

consultation with the Scottish Mission at Astrakhan.[1] He also agreed to be Arabic tutor for the C.M.S. college which was opened at Islington in 1825, but by 1831 he had given up this commitment. It may be surmised that Lee felt that he owed his academic success to missionary and 'Indian' initiative and was therefore willing to give scholarly assistance when it suited him, but that he was not deeply evangelical in outlook himself. Indeed on one occasion he expressed considerable irritation with the evangelical tone of Martyn's journals, criticising 'the reprehension of self, the painful detail of a miserable heart; prayer had recourse to for two hours at a time, and still no comfort! ... This disposition to self-torment is wrong and unscriptural'.[2] Nevertheless, after some procrastination he had finally undertaken the publication of Martyn's 'Persian controversies'. The addition of a tract of his own in which he set out some guidelines for future Muslim evangelization thus marked a significant stage in the evolution of a missionary apologetic for Muslims for it carried the authority of a noted orientalist and Anglican clergyman who had sympathies and links with the missionaries even if he may have lacked any deep personal commitment to their cause.[3]

Samuel Lee reinforced the rational tendencies which have already been noted in the Cambridge evangelical outlook. Although Lee was very critical, like Martyn, of what he regarded as the

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1. He also edited the reprint of Martyn's Persian Psalter which was published in London in 1824 and revised a new translation of Genesis with help from the East India College at Haileybury, which was published in London in 1827.

2. S. Lee to his wife, Bristol, 11 July 1842, in A.M. Lee, op.cit., pp. 93-94.

3. S. Lee, Controversial Tracts, 'The question ... resumed by the translator', pp. 451-584.

abstruse 'metaphysics' of Islamic theology, he set out to demonstrate that Christianity was 'a more rational and profitable creed' than Islam. The crucial difference between Islamic metaphysics and Christian rationality lay for him in the susceptibility of the latter revelation to proof by acceptable logical and historical tests. He considered that the 'Persian controversies' had hinged on the application of unsuitable 'proofs' for which should be substituted John Locke's 'tests of probability'.[1] His innovation lay principally in a change of emphasis from proof of miracles to proof of prophecy, for stressing the difficulty in distinguishing between 'miracles' and 'magic' he urged the relinquishment of the miracle argument altogether in favour of the prophecy argument which he regarded as more demonstrable. Since one of his proposed tests for the fulfilment of predictions rested on conformity with previous revelations Lee established a new link between evidential apologetics and the textual integrity of the scriptures which he then proceeded to justify by an examination of the manuscript sources of the Bible up to the time of Muḥammad.[2] In this way an essentially rational superstructure of argument was made to rest on historical foundations.

Lee's work was published before the full impact of German 'Higher Criticism' was felt in England, yet thirty years later an obituary remarked on 'his strenuous disapproval of the presumptuous speculations of modern German Neologians, to whom he would hardly grant a hearing, so strongly was he set against them'.[3] His main

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1. ibid., p. 466. cf. J. Locke, 'Of probability', in An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, 5th edition 1706, reprinted in 2 vols, edited by J.W. Yolton (London, 1965), II, pp. 250-251.

2. Lee, op.cit., sections 1-2, pp. 474-516.

3. C.M.I., IV, No 3 (March 1853), p. 63.

object in the early 1820s was to defend the integrity of the Bible against the relatively mild criticism of certain English theologians, notably Dr Benjamin Kennicott, who had stated that some passages had been victim to 'wilful corruption'.[1] Lee argued that although 'various readings' and 'copyists' errors' may be detected in the Bible, they do not affect the essential and unique doctrines of Christianity.[2] He was conscious of the need for missionaries to acquire a deeper knowledge of the Biblical sources and languages, but by the time of his own death in the 1850s the question of the authenticity of the Bible would have been taken up in the missionary-'ulamā disputes in India in a way he had certainly not anticipated, and for which the missionaries were ill-prepared even if they had heeded his argument. Nevertheless, the publication of the Controversial Tracts provided an 'apologetic' handbook for missionaries to Muslims where none had existed before.

It seems that Lee had worked out this brand of evidential apologetics in the light of his view of man as an essentially rational and accountable being, who once convinced of the textual authenticity of the Christian scriptures would then obediently accept the revealed doctrine rather in the manner of a child responding to a father figure.[3] Such a logical but cold formula was certainly reminiscent of eighteenth century polemics in both argument and tone and held little in common with the 'heart religion' of subsequent decades. Yet Lee provided the groundwork, in his scholarly

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1. Lee, op.cit., 'The opinions of Dr. Kennicott and others, on the general corruption of the Hebrew Scriptures examined', pp. 517-533.

2. ibid., p. 532.

3. ibid., p. 574.

researches into the relationship between Islam and Christianity, which would eventually permit a reassessment on lines fundamentally different from his own. Crucial here was his collection and collation of hitherto unpublished materials on previous encounters between Muslims and Christians, notably on the Jesuit encounters in sixteenth century India as well as on Martyn's Persian encounters. He had discovered an important work of Jerome Xavier's in Queens' College library in Cambridge and had proceeded to unearth and collate various Muslim replies to it which had been written in the two succeeding centuries.[1] He had acquired Henry Martyn's manuscripts from Sir Gore Ouseley to whom they had been passed after Martyn's death in Anatolia. He also listed a number of works by Europeans and Muslims which he considered necessary for a full understanding of the state of the debate or for elucidation of particular points of Muslim doctrine.[2] This attempt to evaluate the available literature on Islam was marked by a tendency to generalize about the religion on the basis of Shī'ī sources, for the books which he thought 'almost indispensable should be studied by Missionaries' were almost all Shī'ī in origin.[3]

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1. ibid., preface, p.v. Xavier's work was the 'Ā'īna -yi ḥaqq-numā', translated by Lee as 'A mirror shewing the truth'.

2. These included, Edward Pocock's Specimen Historiae Arabum (Oxford, 1649), and various anti-Jewish and anti-Christian tracts contained in J.L. Burckhardt's collection of Arabic MSS in Cambridge University Library.

3. ibid., p. cxxv. Lee mentioned that he had originally intended 'to give, as a sort of prolegomenon, an account of the creed of the Shīah or Mohammedan sect of Persia, followed by the principal tenets of their mysticism from the Dabistān of Mohsin Fani and other writers, to whom I have access', but because of lack of space and time 'I shall reserve my materials on these subjects for a future work' (p.v). The promised work on the Shī'a was never completed however.

By providing the next generation of missionaries with a knowledge of previous encounters, as well as with a strategy for a revised apologetic, Samuel Lee viewed with a new optimism their chances of success in the task of Muslim evangelization.[1] Indeed the publication of his book in 1824 with a dedication to the Prime Minister, Lord Liverpool, and an acknowledgement to a former Governor-General of India, Lord Teignmouth, was intended to initiate a new and a more scholarly concentration on the Muslim world. Yet although the work was ultimately to be important in the transition of ideas and attitudes its immediate impact must have fallen far short of its author's expectations. The Controversial Tracts did not circulate among Muslims in the way Lee had originally intended. His other multifarious academic preoccupations were probably partly to blame, for it seems that he never completed the Persian edition and the further translations he had contemplated.[2] In 1845 William Muir, a British civilian in the North-Western Provinces of India, commented that although the American Presbyterian missionaries at Ludhiana, in the Panjab, had prepared an Urdu translation of Lee's tract it had not been circulated. Muir, who was by this time playing an important part in the controversies with the Indian 'ulamā, nevertheless considered it to be an 'excellent work' which although needing the abridgement of some 'wearisomely long' sections, was standing the test of time sufficiently well for him to recommend that 'the remainder might be printed in a cheap form fit for general circulation'.[3] But an edition of this kind was never produced and

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1. ibid., p. iv.

2. ibid., p. v; cxxiii; cxxvii.

3. W. Muir, 'The Mahommedan Controversy', C.R. IV (1845), pp. 422-435.

Samuel Lee's work therefore made no direct impact on the Muslims of northern India. However, the handful of missionaries who chose to initiate contact with the Indian 'ulamā in the 1830s and 1840s had studied Lee's Controversial Tracts and some of them acknowledged the influence of some of his ideas and researches. The Reverend John Wilson a Scottish missionary working in Bombay, acknowledged his debt to Lee in the formulation of his own rebuttal of the 'corruption' charge in the course of a dispute with local Muslims.[1] More significantly, the Reverend Carl Gottlieb Pfander, who was to be primarily responsible for turning encounter into controversy with the 'ulamā in the north, listed Lee's book as a formative influence on his own view of Islam.[2] Samuel Lee's significance for the present study is therefore as a bridge between Henry Martyn and Carl Pfander in the evolution of missionary strategies towards the Indian Muslims.

THE REVEREND CARL GOTTLIEB PFANDER AND ISLAM

Because the preaching and publications of Carl Pfander proved to be the catalyst which stirred the 'ulamā in northern India

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1. Wilson took part in a dispute in Bombay with one Hājī Muhammad Hāshim of Isphahan. Wilson's reply to the Hājī's tracts was published in the Oriental Christian Spectator, Vol. IV, issues Jan.-Dec. 1833. When defending the 'purity and integrity of the Scriptures' Wilson quoted from Samuel Lee's examination of the 'corruption' charge. Oriental Christian Spectator, IV, 5 (May 1833). cf. Lee, Controversial Tracts, p. 496.

2. Many years later Pfander commented that 'Professor Lee on Martins [sic] Controversy' had been useful to his own work. Letter to H. Venn, 4 Jan. 1856. C.M.S. CI1/O227/20.

to respond to Christianity, the rest of the present chapter will be concerned with an examination of Pfander's knowledge of Islam and attitudes to Muslims. Martyn had represented the first upsurge of Anglican revivalism but Pfander felt the call to be a missionary when Pietism was declining in most of its original strongholds in the German states. Long before the revival had begun in England the preaching and writing of Philip Jakob Spener (1635-1705) and August Hermann Franke (1663-1727) had established strong Pietist centres in Prussia and in several of the other Protestant states.[1] Franke was mainly responsible for giving the revival a missionary dimension, for in 1705, in his capacity as Professor of Oriental Studies at Halle University, he was able to support the King of Denmark's request for missionaries by putting forward two of his own students. The letters they subsequently sent him from South India he published in his Halle newspaper. Because of Franke's interest and connections this first Protestant mission to India, which was patronised by the Danish crown and funded partly by Anglican well-wishers, was actually manned by German Pietists.

However, by the late eighteenth century Pietism was losing its influence in Germany, and the Halle missionary enterprise was also weakening. Yet Pfander's birthplace, Württemberg, was the one state where the revival maintained its impact into the nineteenth century. A number of reasons have been suggested for the persistence of religious revivalism in this region alone, at a time when the Enlightenment was diluting its influence elsewhere in Germany.

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1. F.E. Stoeffler, The Rise of Evangelical Pietism (Leiden, 1965); C. Welch, Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth century, Volume I, 1799-1870 (London, 1972), pp. 22-24.

F.E. Stoeffler has commented that although the Spener-Halle movement had provided the impetus for the growth of Pietism in Württemberg, as it had in many other states, the soil was already particularly well prepared by 'a strong native inclination toward personal piety and social sensitivity' in this region.[1] Once established in Württemberg, Pietism produced its own spokesmen in men such as Johann Albrecht Bengel (1687-1752) and Friedrich Christoph Oetinger (1702-1782).[2] Yet in spite of their individuality the Württemberg Pietists were remarkable for retaining their followers within the church structure of orthodox Lutheranism. The harmony they consequently maintained with the orthodox elements whose resentment had often been vented against Pietist centres in other states, was in turn conducive to their own survival. The conventicle meetings which were characteristic of Pietism elsewhere took a particular form in Württemberg, where the prayer meetings were organized from within the Lutheran Church. As a result Pietism remained not only more vital but also more socially pervasive in Württemberg than elsewhere. Stoeffler comments that whereas in other parts of Germany religious revivalism tended to attract the nobility, 'In Swabia it became a genuine grass-roots movement, in which the butcher, the baker, and the Candlestick-maker had a real stake'.[3] Claude Welch emphasizes the same characteristic when he refers to Württemberg Pietism as being 'more "domesticated" into the parish system' than it was elsewhere.[4]

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1. F.E. Stoeffler, German Pietism during the Eighteenth Century (Leiden, 1973), 'Pietism in Württemberg', pp. 88-130.
2. ibid., pp. 94-120.
3. ibid., p. 129.
4. Welch, Protestant Thought, p. 24.

The establishment in 1815 of a new evangelical missionary seminary in Basel, in Switzerland, created a new channel between Pietism and overseas missionary activity, and indeed a high proportion of the first candidates came from Württemberg.[1] Among them was Carl Gottlieb Pfander from Waiblingen, a village near Stuttgart where his father was a baker. The characteristic Pietist emphasis on the establishment of schools as well as conventicles in almost every village in Württemberg meant that by the age of twelve Pfander had received a solid evangelical grounding. He commented in his seminary application, 'At school I learned properly reading, writing, a little counting and I had good religious instruction'.[2] He moved from the village school to a local Latin school and then on to the Moravian Brüdergemeinde Kornthal in Stuttgart where the more advanced classical curriculum was also firmly based on the inculcation of Pietist values. During his time there he first came across the missionary journals to which he later attributed the genesis of his own calling. In 1820, when he was seventeen, his teachers at Kornthal nominated him as a candidate for the newly established missionary seminary at Basel.

Although few references survive to his four year period

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1. Four of the first seven candidates were from Württemberg, and by 1826 thirty seven of the hundred candidates who had by then applied were from this state. P. Eppler, Geschichte der Basler Mission (Basel, 1900), p. 12; P. Jenkins, 'Villagers as missionaries - Towards a definition of the Pietism of Wurtemberg as a Missionary Movement', a paper presented to the Conference of the African Studies Association of the United Kingdom, Oxford, 1978, p. 2.

2. Correspondence of Karl Gottlieb Pfander, BV 40, Basel Mission Archives: Curriculum vitae, cl. 4. The spelling 'Carl' which Pfander adopted when he joined the C.M.S. mission in India will be used hereafter.

of study at Basel, the questions posed to him on admission elicited from him some replies which indicate the ways in which his Pietist background and education had already influenced him. He was of a studious inclination but his previous education, in spite of providing a firm literary and classical grounding, was certainly narrow. A question about the books he had read received the brief reply, 'The Bible and some others'.[1] At Kornthal he had continued with Latin and in addition, 'I learned too a little Greek but nothing else'.[2] It seems that the Basel seminary curriculum was likely to reinforce this devotional and uncritical approach to Biblical studies. Although the theological departments of some German universities were beginning to reflect the new interest in Biblical criticism which was emerging at the time when Pfander was a student at Basel, the missionary seminary tried to keep its students immune from rationalist and critical influences. When W.M.L. de Wette was appointed Professor of Theology at Basel University, the seminary students were discouraged from attending his lectures.[3] In some quarters, de Wette was certainly considered to be a dangerous rationalist, yet he subscribed fully to traditional

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1. ibid., cl. 8.

2. ibid., cl. 4.

3. Wilhelm Martin Leberecht de Wette (1780-1849), dismissed from post at Berlin University in 1819, Professor of Theology at Basel University, 1822-49. His novel, Theodor oder des Zweiflers Weihe (Theodore, or the Consecration of the Doubter) was at the heart of the attacks on him as a rationalist. K. Barth, Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century (Valley Forge, 1976), pp. 482-490; P. Schaff, Germany; its universities, theology, and religion (Edinburgh, 1857), p. 242; F. Keppler, Calwer Kirchenlexikon (Stuttgart, 1937), p. 418; P. Eppler, Geschichte der Basler Mission 1815-1899 (Basel, 1900), pp. 16-17; H.H. Schrey, article 'De Wette', in Neue Deutsche Biographie (Berlin, 1957), III, p. 628.

dogma. Indeed Karl Barth has described him as 'a rationalist in understanding, a mystic or Pietist by disposition.'[1] It was not to be expected that the seminary authorities would recognize such a conciliation of apparent opposites, thus in the 1820s de Wette and other 'critical' theologians were avoided in favour of those, such as Augustus Tholuck, who were seen at this time as more uncompromisingly evangelical in outlook.[2] It seems that the Basel seminary maintained its isolation from 'higher criticism or issues in liberal theology' until at least the turn of the twentieth century.[3] Avoidance of any contact with the new 'critical' approach to the Bible was to have important consequences for the development of Pfander's Christian apologetic for Muslims. Although many Protestant missionaries adhered at this time, and indeed until late into the 19th century, to a fundamentalist attitude to the Bible, and were usually less able than their own home churches to come to terms with critical assumptions, the degree of receptivity varied. In the first quarter of the 19th century the Cambridge and Basel evangelicals occupied opposite ends of this spectrum. Whereas Samuel Lee had read and challenged the most notable English critics before he published the Controversial Tracts in 1824, Pfander who graduated that very year from the Basel seminary, seems to have been unacquainted with either critical assumptions or critical works.

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1. Barth, op.cit., p. 482.

2. Frederick Augustus Tholuck (1799-1877), Professor of Dogmatics and Exegesis at Halle University, 1826-1877.

3. P. Jenkins, 'Villagers as Missionaries', p. 13, shows that Basel missionaries working in Africa in the period 1894-1913 were still isolated from 'higher criticism'.

If the Basel attitude to Christian theology was uncritically devotional, the seminary nevertheless succeeded in preparing its candidates for confrontation with peoples of other religions more thoroughly and more imaginatively than was possible at that time in the British missionary societies, including the Anglican ones. Although the Church Missionary Society was founded seventeen years before the Basel Society it had no proper seminary until 1825.[1] Before this date the candidates were prepared for service overseas by the spare time efforts of a number of country clergymen. Some of these tutors were scholars of repute in specialized fields, but they were stretched beyond their knowledge by the demands now made upon them. The Reverend Thomas Scott who prepared the C.M.S. candidates from 1807 to 1814 was well known and respected for his commentary on the Bible, but this new responsibility obliged him to spend his evenings teaching himself the elements of Arabic, and of other oriental and African languages, in order to give the missionary candidates the same lesson the next day.[2] Meanwhile the society had taken Samuel Lee under its wing in the hope that after graduation at Cambridge he would take over the role of tutor in the Muslim languages. Lee preferred, however,

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1. In that year a college was established at Islington in London.

2. Scott's son described how his father was appealed to by the CMS. 'to teach the missionaries Susoo and Arabic, of neither of which language has he any knowledge! He felt very uncomfortable about this for a day or two. However, he has now begun to study these new languages with them.' J. Scott, <u>The Life of the Rev. Thomas Scott</u>, 4th edition (London, 1822), pp. 381-382; C. Hole, <u>The Early History of the Church Missionary Society</u> (London, 1896), p. 123.

to pursue professorial status at Cambridge, and although he was prepared until 1831 to repay his first patrons by some part-time teaching of Arabic and Persian in their new college at Islington, there were many Anglican candidates who went overseas in the 1820s with no knowledge of the relevant oriental languages. The preparation in the Basel seminary seems to have been much more intensive, at least in the period when Pfander was a student. Arabic was taught to the candidates by Professor Hengstenberger of Basel University. In 1824 the director of the seminary, Theophilus Blumhardt, introduced a series of lectures entitled 'Vorlesungen über den Coran' which was to occupy between four and six hours of the students' study time each week.[1] Although there seems to be no record of the contents of Blumhardt's lectures Pfander later stated that they had constituted one of the major influences on the evolution of his own view of the relationship between Islam and Christianity.[2] The history of the mission also stresses Blumhardt's role in laying the ground for Pfander's 'extensive and penetrating knowledge of Islam'.[3] The relative thoroughness of the oriental side of the Basel curriculum was no doubt partly a consequence also of that mission's access to candidates in abundance at a time when there was no mission field directly available to them. In contrast the C.M.S. had a vast outlet for its energies, especially after the renewal of the East India Company's charter in 1813, which permitted the settlement of missionaries in Bengal. Yet even after

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1. 'Buch für die Wochenzettel des Missions-Institutes', 26 Jan. 1822-10 July 1824, Basel Mission Archives.

2. Pfander to H. Venn, Peshawar, 4 Jan. 1856, Pfander correspondence, Church Missionary Archives, CI1/O227/26.

3. P. Eppler, op.cit., p. 17.

1813 the C.M.S. found great difficulty in attracting any missionary candidates from Britain. When candidates did appear they were rushed quickly overseas whereas the Basel candidates had more than enough time before placements could be found in which to follow through the demanding four year seminary curriculum. In Pfander's case his scholarly aptitude was quickly recognised and in 1823 the director of the seminary obtained from the King of Württemberg his exemption from military service on the ground that his exceptional gifts were better suited to the mission than to the battle field.[1] Thus if Basel had strengthened the characteristically Pietistic elements in Pfander's sense of missionary vocation it had also initiated him into the languages and beliefs of the Muslim world to a degree which was unusual for evangelical missionaries of his day.

Yet Pfander's scholarly attainments at the seminary did not appear to create any conflict with his modest beginnings. Indeed as the son and the apprentice of a rural master baker his background was typical of the first generation of students at Basel, for three-quarters of the first hundred candidates had previously been employed as 'skilled artisans' in trades such as farming, weaving, shoemaking, tailoring and baking.[2] The policy of the founders was avowedly to find a middle course between the academic atmosphere among the all-graduate missionary intake at the Halle University seminary, and the opposite extreme of the Moravian

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1. C.F. Eppler, D. Karl Gottlieb Pfander, ein Zeuge der Wahrheit unter den Bekennern des Islam (Basel, 1888), p. 6.

2. Register of Candidates, Basel Mission Archives.

missions which had favoured the recruitment of uneducated artisans. The demanding, if theologically narrow, curriculum at Basel envisaged the transformation of craftsmen into scholars, a test in which Pfander had excelled. His personal acceptance of the 'missionary-craftsman' concept was demonstrated later when his experience of obstacles to preaching and to teaching in the Middle East convinced him that an itinerant watch-maker would be more likely to gain the confidence of the local Muslims than would a self-avowed and open missionary preacher.[1] His plan to take up the watch-maker's craft if prospects for evangelism did not improve was not implemented, but even without resorting to this stratagem it may be argued that his rural background, forthright manner and somewhat uncouth appearance combined to lessen the distance, and to remove some of the obstacles to communication, between the missionary and his peasant audiences in India. Colonel H.B. Edwardes, an East India Company officer, referred to him in the 1840s as 'that burly Saxon figure and genial, open face, beaming with intellect, simplicity and benevolence', a description which is also evoked by the portrait in Eppler's biography of Pfander.[2] It is suggestive also of a further point of contrast between the Anglican and the Pietist missionaries to Muslims during the early years of contact. Although a minority of the Anglican missionaries had also emerged

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1. Pfander's diary on a journey to Tabriz, 18 Feb. 1833, Magazin für die neueste Geschichte der evangelischen Missions und Bibel-Gesellschaften, No. 4 (1834), p. 667.

2. Quoted by S.M. Zwemer, 'Karl Gottlieb Pfander', The Moslem World, XXXI, 3 (July, 1941), p. 218. Another contemporary used the phrase 'the genial Dr Pfander', A.M. Lee, A Scholar of a Past Generation: A Brief Memoir of Samuel Lee, D.D. by his daughter (London, 1896), p. 64; C.F. Eppler, op.cit., frontispiece.

from a rural and 'skilled artisan' background which was similar to Pfander's,[1] their entry into higher education seemed to cause a sharper break with this background. As soon as Henry Martyn and Samuel Lee, both, arguably, from an 'artisan' background, entered Cambridge University their studies became narrowly academic. Both earned the highest academic laurels and were afterwards admired first and foremost as scholars. Indeed contemporaries had remarked on Martyn's temperamental inability to find any rapport with his listeners either European or Indian, and although he finally established close relationships with the _'ulamā_ of Shiraz, the common ground was again scholarly. Lee was temperamentally suited to Cambridge academic life where he could pursue at ease the philological studies relevant to the reassessment of Biblical questions and could establish influential social contacts. He was never drawn towards personal face-to-face contacts in the overseas mission field and he never travelled to Muslim countries. Pfander, in contrast, who was bent on preaching directly the more urgent 'religion of the heart', may have been assisted in making contacts with unlettered peasants by his more 'genial' temperament and by the rural origins on which he never turned his back. Thus, a combination of Pietistic evangelical fervour with an unusual depth of Islamic scholarship, in a man who seems to have retained the common touch, was to produce the catalyst which eventually disturbed the _'ulamā_ of northern India.

The period of thirteen years which Pfander spent in the

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1. F.S. Piggin, 'The Social Background, Motivation, and Training of British Protestant Missionaries to India, 1789-1858', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1974, p. 18.

Russian Caucasus and in Persia before his transfer to India in the late 1830s allowed the crystallization of his views on Islam. He began the study of Persian, observed the practices of various Muslim communities and sects, collected books about Islam and attempted to make contact with some local 'ulamā. The activity which was the most significant for his subsequent contacts in India was the writing and the publication of three books on Christianity which were intended for Muslim readers. Among these the Mīzān al-Ḥaqq (Balance of the Truth) was the book which the missionaries and the 'ulamā alike would later regard as the starting point of the controversy between them. In the Miftāḥ al-Asrār (Key of Mysteries) and the Ṭarīq al-Ḥayāt (Way of Life) he gave separate and detailed attention to the doctrines which he considered to be essential to evangelical Christianity because he felt that 'the subject of the "Divinity of Christ" and the "Trinity" as well as the doctrine of "Sin and Redemption" required a more complete and more explicit treatment than the plan of the Mizan would allow of'.[1] A fourth book which was prepared but was not published during these years was a short tract on the Muslim ḥadīs̤ (Traditions) which he intended for European readers.

Pfander's emergence as a writer of books on Islam and Christianity had resulted from the frustrations of his first missionary post at Shusha in Georgia where he worked among a mixed population of Muslims and Armenian Christians. He had very soon realized that 'verbal discussion' was inadequate as a means to

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1. Pfander to H. Venn, Peshawar, 4 Jan. 1856, Pfander correspondence, C.M.S. CI1/0227/26.

evangelize Muslims who 'would not listen to any full and lengthened statement of Christian doctrine nor to any explicit argument in favour of the Gospel and in refutation of the Koran, ... neither could such important subjects be brought forward without constant interruption from the oponent [sic].'[1]
The 'extensive' library of the Shusha mission station held nothing suitable and anyway the prevalence of the evidential approach to religious inquiry in Europe caused him to despair of finding any already published work which might be adapted to his task. When he failed to prevail on the more senior missionaries at the station to fill the gap he thereupon resolved, with some sense of his own inadequacy, to prepare a general exposition of evangelical Christian belief which would be especially 'adapted to the Muhammedan mind.'[2]
The manuscript was completed before the end of 1829 for Pfander had soon discovered that 'to my surprise, and contrary to all my expectation, my pen ran on with ease, and page after page was filled.'[3] The German manuscript to which he gave the title 'Wage der Wahrheit'[4] was translated into Armenian and published in Moscow in 1831.[5] It was published in a Persian translation in 1835 at Shusha as the Mīzān al-Ḥaqq, the title which would establish the book's place in the evolution of controversy between Christianity and Islam.[6]

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1. ibid.

2. ibid.

3. ibid.

4. The German MS of the 'Wage der Wahrheit oder Untersuchung Über das Evangelium und den Koran' is deposited at the Basel Mission Archives, No. FC-10.9.

5. There is a copy of this edition in the Basel Mission library, No. 27l.s.

6. loc. cit., No. G.34.

The Mīzān had certainly been written in response to an immediate and local problem but the adaptability of its themes to the 'Muhammadan mind' in the other parts of the Muslim world to which Pfander was later transferred, or with which he had established contacts, is indicated by the history of its translation during the subsequent thirty years into the classical and vernacular languages of almost the entire Muslim world. The second Persian edition was published in Calcutta in 1839 shortly after Pfander's arrival in India, and a third edition appeared ten years later in Agra at the height of his controversies with some 'ulamā in that city. Meanwhile Pfander had prepared an Urdu version which was first published in Mirzapur in 1843, a second Urdu edition appearing in Agra in 1850. During the 1860s the Mīzān was published in Turkish (1861), Arabic (1865), Marathi (1865), and English (1867), a sequence which showed that although Pfander's 'controversial' approach to the 'ulamā was by then questioned in evangelical circles, his first and most important book on Islam and Christianity was nevertheless standing the test of time. In the subsequent half-century the Mīzān was supplemented by other works by other authors, yet there were intermittent re-editions, including an English revision in 1910.[1] An article written in 1917 about Pfander's significance referred to the Mīzān as 'a still unsurpassed weapon against Islam'.[2] On the other hand the circulation of his other books was more narrowly confined to Pfander's own mission fields and to India in particular. Persian editions of the Miftāḥ al-Asrār were published

1. Rev. W. St. Clair Tisdall, The Balance of Truth (London, 1910).

2. F. La Roche, 'Karl Gottlieb Pfander', M.M., (Aug. 1917), p. 504.

in Calcutta in 1839 and in Agra in 1850 and were quickly followed by Urdu editions.[1] Similarly, the Tarīq al-Ḥayāt was published in Calcutta in 1840 and in Agra in 1847 where an Urdu translation followed in 1853.[2] It will become apparent at a later stage of the argument that the timing and the place of publication of these re-editions of his three main works reflected the dynamic of the controversy in the 1840s which the initial publication of the Mīzān in northern India was to unleash. His fourth work, a tract called Remarks on the Nature of Muhammadanism: Traditions, was published in Calcutta in 1840 and in London in 1858, but it was never translated from the original English version, for the significant reason that its contents were intended for European eyes alone.[3] The themes and arguments of these four books, together with the diaries and letters of his Shusha years, provide the basis for an examination of the characteristic features of Pfander's exposition of evangelical Christianity.[4] Some impression may be formed from them too of his evolving attitudes to Islam and to Muslim society and of his understanding of the prospects and problems of attempting Muslim evangelization at the crucial moment when he was on the point

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1. Miftāḥ al-Asrār, Persian:- Calcutta, 1839; Agra, 1850; London, 1861.
   Urdu:- Agra, 1850.

2. Tarīq al-Ḥayāt, Persian:- Calcutta, 1840; Agra, 1847; London, 1861; Ludhiana, 1875.
   Urdu:- Agra, 1853; Ludhiana, 1867.

3. The second edition was unrevised.

4. Pfander's letters and diaries are deposited in the 'Südrussland und Persien' section of the Basel Mission archives. The quotations used are mainly from extensive extracts which were published in two journals, Magazin für die neueste Geschichte der evangelischen Missions und Bibel-Gesellschaften, and Der Evangelische Heidenbote, both published in Basel under the auspices of the evangelical mission. The former will be referred to by the abbreviation 'M.M.'.

of transfer from the Caucasus to India.

It has already been suggested that the Pietism of Pfander's home and educational circles had inculcated the religion of the heart and a fundamentalist view of the Bible which contrasted strongly with the evangelicalism of the Cambridge Anglicans, Martyn and Lee, whose published works showed some signs of a rationalist legacy and also some awareness of recent 'critical' Biblical scholarship. The full force of Pfander's brand of Pietistic evangelicalism was displayed in his exposition of Christianity for Muslims where his case rested first on the 'spiritual needs' of the individual soul, and secondly and consequentially on a firm denial of the role of human reason in the search for religious truth. There has been some disagreement, however, about the position Pfander is considered to have occupied in the evangelical reaction to the eighteenth century emphasis on reason. Norman Daniel, for instance, drew a contrast between Martyn and Pfander, finding the latter to be 'a writer more strictly evangelical in the party sense of that word', and one who 'had a stronger taste for arguments that make no intellectual demand'.[1] Yet L.L. Vander Werff in a study which focused specifically on the evolution of 'The Strategy of Christian Mission to Muslims' has reversed the relationship, suggesting that Martyn's successors, including Pfander, frequently replaced Martyn's 'biblical content and sensitivity to the Muslim ... by a more rationalistic spirit' which in Pfander's case made him 'a blend of European pietism and rationalism' whose 'appeal is basically

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1. N. Daniel, Islam Europe and Empire (Edinburgh, 1966), p. 256.

to reason and conscience'.[1] It will later be argued that the anti-rational emphasis in Pfander's Christian exposition was one of the elements which first antagonised the 'ulamā and subsequently became a major issue of debate, and therefore it is important to substantiate at this stage the view of Pfander as an exponent of 'heart religion' and a decrier of reason, and then to reassess in this light the nature of the rational traits on which Vander Werff chose to place the central emphasis. This will be done by examining three principal themes within Pfander's exposition of Christianity, namely, the means to a knowledge of God, the nature of God, and the meaning of sin and salvation.

The starting point of the Mīzān al-Ḥaqq, the Miftāḥ al-Asrār and of many of Pfander's verbal confrontations with Muslims, was the assertion that knowledge of God can only be obtained through revelation and that reason is insufficient for this purpose. The 'marks of a true revelation' which recur in only slightly varying form throughout Pfander's works, made the spiritual needs of the individual sinful heart the focus of the quest for religious truth. In the words of the introduction to the Mīzān there are five criteria, for

> 1. A true divine revelation must, above all, fulfil and satisfy the great and ineradicable need of men for eternal and never-ending well-being ...[2]

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1. L.L. Vander Werff, Christian Mission to Muslims: the Record (South Pasadena, California, 1977), pp. 35; 41.

2. '... das grosse, unaustilgbare Bedürfnis des Menschen nach dauerhaftem, ununterbrochenem Wohlsein'. MS. 'Wage der Wahrheit', p. 11. When writing and speaking in English on this fundamental question Pfander stressed, variously, the 'needs', 'wants', and 'cravings' of the individual soul for 'eternal happiness'. e.g. in a letter to an Indian 'ālim he defined the first criterion of a true revelation as, 'That it satisfies man's spiritual wants, which are comprised in a true knowledge of God, in the forgiveness of sins, in a purified heart, and in true and eternal happiness.' Khair Khwāh-i Hind, No. 7, new series (July 1845). Cf. English translation of the Mizan ul Haqq (London, 1867), 'A true revelation must satisfy the cravings of the soul of man for eternal happiness', p. vi.

2. A true revelation should be in accordance with the dictates of the conscience which God has established in man's heart ...
3. Since God has explained himself by the conscience as just and holy; that is to say, as the friend of the righteous and the punisher of transgressors, a true revelation must also exhibit him with these attributes ...
4. Since God is eternal, absolute, and unchangeable, it is necessary that a true revelation should set him forth with these attributes; that is to say, that just as when the universe is contemplated intelligently, God is recognised as One, Eternal, Almighty, Omniscient, Allwise, Merciful, and the Creator of heaven and earth, so the genuine revelation should describe him as such.
5. There must be no real contradictions in a true revelation; that is to say, the important particulars and doctrines contained in the inspired books must be agreeable to one another ...[1]

Whereas Pfander considered it unnecessary to elaborate the third, fourth and fifth tests the priority he attached to the first two was indicated by his detailed explanation of their full meaning. The 'needs of man for eternal and never-ending well-being' he defined as three:-

1. Man needs to know the truth concerning himself and concerning God: that is to say, he requires a perfect knowledge of the attributes of God, of his holy will and pleasure; of the design of God in his own creation; and of the means by which this end is to be realized. For how can man attain true happiness if he knows nothing of these things?
2. Man needs the pardon of his many shortcomings and transgressions; for he feels in himself that he is a defaulter in the sight of his creator, and that in thought, word, and deed he does not behave as he ought; and so on every side his conscience bears testimony to his being a sinner against God ...[2]
3. Besides this necessity for the forgiveness of sins, the spirit of man needs to become good, pure, and holy ... man must become pure and holy if the satisfaction of the pure and holy God should rest on him, in which alone consists and can consist, the true happiness of men.[3]

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1. Pfander, MS 'Wage der Wahrheit', pp. 11-18; cf. Mizan (1867), pp. vi-viii.

2. '... er ist also mannigfach schuldig vor Gott ...'; cf. Mizan (1867), p. vi.

3. cf. Mizan (1867), p. vi.

These three spiritual 'wants' are crucial for finding communion with God for,

> as these three necessities of the human spirit are implied in its cravings after perpetual happiness, no one who has not found the knowledge of the truth, and stood justified before his maker, and has not cleansed his heart from impurity, can by any means enjoy the true and boundless happiness which is found only with the glorious God ... And God, of his supreme wisdom, has implanted this desire in man's soul only that, by its full satisfaction, he might find eternal blessedness. Therefore, it is imperative that a divine revelation should meet that desire; and, as has been expressed above, since the chief design of a divine revelation is to still the cravings of the human soul,[1] beyond all controversy, that which does not do so is of no profit at all. On this ground, to whatever sect or religion a professedly written revelation may belong, if it does not satisfy the cravings of the human soul, of a certainty neither that book nor that religion are of divine origin.[2]

There are grounds for suggesting that, although the central emphasis in this exposition is indisputably pietistic in tone, the method of presentation in the form of five tests seems to be derived from the evidential polemics of the eighteenth century, and that the fourth test, in particular, is reminiscent of the argument from design. Furthermore, it is possible that Pfander was consciously influenced by Professor Lee's 'tests' which had been published as an appendix to the Controversial Tracts on Christianity and Mohammedanism. At all events Samuel Lee's daughter stated in a memoir about her father that in deciding on a 'line of argument' for the Mīzān al-Ḥaqq Pfander 'had taken up and expanded a plan suggested by my father, to whom he gladly acknowledged his indebtedness.[3] This testimony,

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1. '... so muss durchaus eine wahre Offenbarung diese grossen Bedürfnisse des Menschen Geistes vollkommen befriedigen ...'; cf. Mizan (1867), p. vii.

2. MS 'Wage', pp. 11-18; cf. Mizan (1867), pp. vi-vii.

3. A.M. Lee, op.cit., pp. 64-65.

written many years afterwards, is not as decisive as it may appear for there is no evidence of any direct contact between Lee and Pfander in the period before the drafting of the Mīzān, and his daughter was probably referring to a much later visit paid by Pfander to Lee which could not have occurred earlier than his first visit to England during his furlough from India in 1850. However even if the influence was not as specific as Lee's daughter suggested it is known that Pfander had read the Controversial Tracts before he wrote the Mīzān and it may therefore be surmised that he was indeed influenced by the format and by some of the lines of argument he encountered in this and in some other more rational treatises.[1] Nevertheless the uniqueness of Pfander's exposition may still be held to consist in the new and categorical emphasis which he placed on the assertion that a revelation should be adjudged true by its conformity to the pressing needs ('wants', 'cravings', 'necessities') of the individual sinner in his search for 'spiritual happiness'.

Such a conclusion is strengthened by the unambiguousness of Pfander's rejection of human reason as a means to obtain knowledge of God. This was an underlying theme of both the Mīzān and the Miftāḥ and of many of his letters and sermons. It is important, however, to try to reconstruct his initial standpoint before the Indian 'ulamā had obliged him to reconsider and to restate his position by their constant reiteration of the priority of reason. His main thesis was that reason is an unsuitable instrument for pursuing knowledge about God for it is only a 'dim torch' which is

1. C.G. Pfander to H. Venn, Peshawar, 4 Jan. 1856, C.M.S. CI1/O227/26.

sufficient for the world of the senses but not for the world of the spirit.[1] In the Miftāḥ he prefaced his doctrinal exposition of the nature of God by a detailed denial of the power of human reason to understand the nature of God, for 'just as if somebody looks in the direction of the sun, and darkness comes on his eyes, so is it when he desires to know the pure nature of the original sun [God] through the human intellect'.[2] The categorical terms and simple imagery of these early statements seem equally far removed from the subleties of the rationalist polemics of the previous century in Europe, and from the metaphysical knots in which Pfander would later be tied by the Indian 'ulamā.

Another facet of Pfander's emphasis on the priority of revelation over reason which would effect the nature of his contacts with the 'ulamā was his defence of the authenticity of the Christian scriptures. In the Mīzān al-Ḥaqq he placed the section on 'The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments neither abrogated nor corrupted' before his exposition of Christian doctrine, and it is clear that he realized the necessity for forestalling the age-old Muslim charge of 'abrogation' and 'corruption' before claiming the superiority of the Christian over the Islamic revelation. Of crucial significance here was Pfander's conservative attitude to the Bible, an outlook which was very common among missionaries of his generation but which indicated in his case considerably less awareness of recent Biblical scholarship than was true of his Anglican contemporaries.

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1. Pfander used the term 'das matte Licht' in the original manuscript ('Wage', p. 9). This was translated as 'dim torch' in the English edition. (Mizan, p. v).

2. Miftāḥ, Urdu edition (Agra, 1850), p. 4.

Professor Lee had faced up to the challenge of scholars such as Dr Benjamin Kennicott who had asserted the 'wilful corruption' of the Hebrew Scriptures by the Jews, and after a study of the relevant texts he had concluded that although a few 'various readings' existed, they 'affected no point of doctrine, prediction, or historical fact whatsoever'.[1] Pfander, however, in spite of acknowledging Lee's influence upon other sections of the Mīzān al-Ḥaqq, made no references to the professor's researches in his own section on abrogation and corruption, and certain as he was of the 'perfect agreement'[2] of the ancient manuscripts with the 'modern copies' of the Bible, he categorically denied the entire charge - 'the Old and New Testaments have, neither in the time of Mohammed nor before his time, - in fact have never at any time been changed or altered'.[3] Thus the 'abrogation and corruption' section seemed to exemplify the characteristic of extreme Biblical conservatism which the Basel seminary had nurtured. In Pfander's eyes therefore, revelation was the only means to a knowledge of God, his tests of a true revelation were primarily pietistic in tone, and although their presentation probably owed something to a legacy of rationalist influences, his own attitude to the scriptures which made up the Christian revelation was shown in his books for Muslims to be unshakeably conservative.

Pfander's second concern, which was dependent on the prior

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1. Lee, Controversial Tracts, p. 532.

2. 'ganz genau Übereinstimmen', MS 'Wage', p. 61; cf. Mizan (1867), pp. 18-19.

3. Mizan (1867), p. 22. Pfander's defence of the authenticity of the Bible is examined in detail in Chap. 6.

establishment of the Christian scriptures as the only revelation capable of gratifying the soul's need for a knowledge of God, was to explain God's nature. In most previous encounters between Islam and Christianity the main difference between the two religions had seemed to rest on the understanding of divine unity. Pfander's explanation of the Christian idea of God would therefore have to accommodate the inevitable Muslim riposte that the belief in the divinity of Christ and the trinity of the godhead amounted to _shirk_ and was therefore incompatible with a monotheistic religion. Central to Pfander's exposition was the explanation that these doctrines were 'mysteries' of God's nature which have been revealed in both the Old and the New Testaments, and which need not be accountable to mere human reason. The main purpose of his second book, the _Miftāḥ al-Asrār_ was to provide the 'key' to this eternal 'mystery', for,

> the proving of these things will not be argued from the human reason and from the sciences of this world, but only from the words of Christ, and from the clear verses of the _Injīl_ and the _Taurāt_, because the divinity of Christ and the doctrine of the Trinity are among the mysteries of God's nature, and in the reason of the human being there is neither the power nor the ability to reach the infinite depths of God's mysteries and to be able to understand them, for they are not within reason's jurisdiction.[1]

He then proceeded to demonstrate the revelation of these mysterious doctrines, drawing testimony from the words of Christ, from the apostles, and from the Old Testament prophets. The basis of his own faith was very simply stated,

> It is enough for man to know that the all-wise God has revealed in his word such mysteries as are

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1. _Miftāḥ_, Urdu edition (Agra, 1850), p. 4.

> peculiar to his pure nature, and it is necessary and obligatory for his servants to believe and accept them, although they may not fully understand them.[1]

However, by asserting that two of the central doctrines of Christianity were not only above 'reason' in the philosophical sense, but by implication beyond discussion of any kind, Pfander was sure to antagonize those Muslim scholars whose own tradition of religious enquiry was strictly rational in approach. Indeed it was likely that any Muslim who could be persuaded to read Pfander's books would quickly identify these doctrines as the main obstacles to intellectual understanding of Christianity.

A third and interrelated theme which revealed Pfander's own stance as an evangelical, and also another likely area of Muslim hostility or incomprehension, was his explanation of sin and salvation. Like Martyn before him, Pfander was drawn to the overseas mission field as the result of a personal spiritual ordeal which had only been terminated by his acceptance of Christ as his saviour from his state of 'original sin'. In this third book the *Ṭarīq al-Ḥayāt*, he explained the meaning of sin and the Christian plan of salvation in a manner he deemed suitable for Muslim readers. Years later, however, he realized that the *Ṭarīq* had been the least in demand of his books. It seems probable that its failure to make an impact was related to the strangeness of its theme in Muslim eyes. Whereas the *Ṭarīq* did not seem to challenge any essentials of Muslim theology and did not therefore cause immediate antagonism in the way the *Miftāḥ* did, it was liable, nevertheless, to be completely ignored because the notion of original sin seemed to hold no immediate

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1. ibid., p. 7.

meaning for Muslims. One of the leading Indian controversialists in the 1840s explained his refusal to attempt a refutation of this book because he was puzzled and revolted by the evangelical view of sin.[1] For Pfander, however, the failure of the Tarīq was of great personal significance, for his life's work as a missionary rested on his deep conviction of the urgent need to force recognition of sin upon all those with whom he came in contact.

> The Holy Scriptures affirm that all mankind are sinners in the presence of God, and incapable of doing a single good and meritorious work to atone for their sins, and the Gospel teaches that God only, through Christ, has mercy upon sinners; that He vouchsafes to forgive the sins of those who truly believe in Christ, and know Him to be their Saviour and Mediator, and grants them to attain eternal Life.[2]

In his tract on the Muslim traditions Pfander gave an explanation to his English readers for this gap in understanding about sin asserting that Muslims are

> unacquainted with the actual nature of sin. Sin is understood by them only as an external act; with the sins of the heart, with this world of unseen actions and countless transgressions they are quite unacquainted, or when observed, take no further notice of them.[3]

The state of the heart was therefore central to Pfander's Christian exposition. When his three books are considered together as comprising the essentials for a Muslim to reach an understanding and acceptance of Christianity it seems beyond question that the choice of themes and the manner of exposition are derived directly from the Pietistic 'religion of the heart'. Whereas the Mīzān al-Ḥaqq

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1. Sayyid Muhammad Hādī, introduction to the Kashf al-Astār (Lucknow, A.H. 1261/1845).

2. Mizan (1867), p. 94.

3. C.G. Pfander, Remarks on the Nature of Muhammadanism:Traditions (Calcutta, 1840), p. 23.

certainly owed more in structure and argument to the evidential and rationalist tradition, and to Professor Lee in particular, than did the two subsequent books, the central and frequently repeated theme was nevertheless the satisfaction of man's 'spiritual needs' by a divine revelation the tests for which owed nothing to reason. It is argued therefore, that any classification of Pfander within the 'rationalist' tradition has originated more from the nature of the Muslim opposition to his books in India, which tried to force him into debate on a rationalistic basis, than from his own initial inclinations which were deeply opposed to such an outlook.

An examination of Pfander's attitude to Islam and to Muslim society requires some further consideration of the bases of his knowledge. Whereas Henry Martyn had made no formal study of Islam, Pfander had begun to learn Arabic at Basel where he had also attended a course of lectures on Islam and at some early, but unspecified, stage he had read George Sale's translation of the Qur'ān and Professor Samuel Lee's Controversial Tracts.[1] The quotations from the Qur'ān which he used in the first German draft of the Mīzān al-Ḥaqq were from an Arabic edition, but he also referred the reader to Sale's translation.[2] Although there is no acknowledgement in his writings

1. In 1856 Pfander recorded, 'Professor Lees on Martins [sic] Controversy, some of Dr Tholuck's works and lectures of Dr Blumhardt on Muhammadanism, delivered when I was at the Basil [sic] Missny. College, proved of great use'. K.G. Pfander to H. Venn, Peshawar, 4 Jan. 1856. C.M.S. CI1/0227/26. The MS draft of the Mīzān al-Ḥaqq contains references to Martyn's controversies.

2. MS 'Wage' (1829), p. 26. Pfander referred during his years in India to a two-volume English edition of Sale's translation, but he did not specify which of the many eighteenth and nineteenth century editions he was using. Thus all unspecified Qur'ānic references have been given in the two-volume 'new edition' of Sale which was published in London in 1801.

of any specific influence from Sale's views it would seem likely that Pfander, like Martyn and indeed most Arabists of that age, had used Sale's 'Discourse' as a starting point for his own examination of Islam. He did acknowledge, on the other hand, the general influence on his thinking of Dr August Tholuck, the German orientalist and evangelical theologian, who shortly after giving a student oration in which he had argued the superiority of Islam to Christianity had been 'awakened' to Christianity by contact with some German Pietist leaders. At the age of twenty Tholuck had replaced the deposed W.L. de Wette in the Chair of Old Testament exegesis at Berlin. In the early 1820s he had started to publish his oriental researches, including a work on Persian Ṣūfīsm, but by 1826 when he moved to the Chair of Dogmatics and Exegesis at Halle he was concentrating his attention on Biblical exegesis. Publications, such as his Exposition of Paul's Epistle to the Romans (1824) were making him a pillar of the evangelical stand against both rationalism and the emerging extreme critical tendency in German theological circles.[1] Pfander did not specify which of Tholuck's works had particularly influenced him, but it may be surmised that it was the combination of Islamist and evangelical in Tholuck which made his contribution seem especially relevant to Pfander's own missionary situation.[2]

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1. F.A. Tholuck's stand against rationalism had included a reply to W.M.L. de Wette's Theodor oder des Zweiflers Weihe (1822) entitled Die Lehre von der Sünde und vom Versöhner, oder die wahre Weihe des Zweiflers (1823). Their controversy took place while Pfander was a student at Basel. C. Welch, Protestant Thought, p. 218; K. Barth, Protestant Theology, pp. 508-518.

2. Welch attributes the influence of Tholuck on a 'remarkable variety of nineteenth century thinkers' to his 'locating of the center of gravity for Christian thinking in the specific experience of sin and regeneration', op.cit., p. 218.

Between the writing of the Mīzān and the draft of his final book of this period Pfander had extended and deepened his first hand knowledge of Islamic theology and society. During his travels in Persia and Mesopotamia he had come into brief contact with a number of 'ulamā, he had experienced several sustained relationships with some of the munshīs who had assisted his translation work, and he had encountered Muslims of various doctrinal and sectarian persuasions.[1] The tendency, which has already been noticed in Martyn and Lee, to base opinions about Islam on an examination of Shī'ī sources, was reinforced by Pfander who collected a number of important Shī'ī works during his visit to Persia. He acknowledged, in particular, the influence of Muḥammad Bāqir-i Majlisī, a seventeenth century Shī'ī scholar whose collection of traditions was republished in Teheran in 1831 just before Pfander's visit to that city.[2] It has been said that Majlisī achieved his strong influence among Shī'īs because he chose to write most of his books in Persian rather than in Arabic, and it is probable that his production of a 'series of readable manuals in Persian' was also the reason for his accessibility to European missionaries in the early nineteenth century at a time when they were struggling to master the languages of the Muslim world.[3] Pfander's

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1. Pfander's letters and diaries in the Basel Mission Archives, published extracts in M.M. and the Evangelische Heidenbote.

2. Pfander, diary, 15 Dec. 1832, in M.M., No. 4 (1834), p. 661; SEI., p. 540. The publications of Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī include Ḥayāt al-qalūb, 3 vols. (Teheran, 1824-44); Kitāb ḥaqq al-yaqīn (Teheran, 1825); 'Ain al-ḥayāt, later edition, Lucknow, 1837).

3. D.M. Donaldson, The Shi'ite Religion: A History of Islam in Persia and Iraḳ (London, 1933), pp. 303-304.

access to Shī'ī rather than to Sunnī works of commentary is particularly noticeable in his tract on the Traditions, in which examples from Majlisī's Ḥaqq al-Yaqīn, 'Ain al-Ḥayāt and Ḥayāt al-Qalūb were used to indicate Muslim doctrines more extensively than were the Sunnī traditions with which Pfander was by then also acquainted through Captain Matthew's translation of the Mishcat-ul-Masabih.[1] But, although the first close evangelical contacts were thus, fortuitously, with Shī'ī Islam, neither Martyn nor Pfander paid close attention to the doctrinal differences between the Sunnī and the Shī'ī sects. If it was Islam in its Shī'ī manifestation with which Pfander had closest contact during his formative years, he was in any case better informed generally about Muslims and their faith, than were most other Protestant missionaries of his generation.

The revisions and re-editions of Pfander's books during the 1840s and 1850s which have been referred to already, show some further evolution in his views on Islam. While some alterations were dictated for strategic reasons as a result of the first controversies with the Indian 'ulamā, and others were stylistic revisions which reflected the improvement in his command of Persian and Urdu, some changes reflected the influence of ongoing European scholarship in the Islamic field. In the latter category Pfander made particular mention of the German Arabist, Gustav Weil, who published a series of books on Islam in the early 1840s. In 1848 Pfander recorded that, 'the late writings of Dr Weil on Muhammed and the early history

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1. K.G. Pfander, Remarks on the Nature of Muhammadanism: Traditions (Calcutta, 1840), p. 6; A.N. Matthews, Mishcat-ul-Masabih, 2 vols, (Calcutta, 1809).

of Muhammedanism, offered some new and important materials, which I was anxious to turn to proper use in this revision'.[1] At a later stage Pfander incorporated some of the historical findings of the East India Company civilian, William Muir, who had in turn been influenced by Weil.[2] Thus Pfander's view of Islam was certainly not static, even though he had developed its essential outline while he was a young missionary in the Caucasus. The crucial areas in which the results of European scholarship would modify his initial evangelical criticism will be indicated in the following analysis.

Pfander's view of Islam may be regarded as complementary to his evangelical view of Christianity, especially in its emphasis on the 'deficiency' rather than the 'falsity' of the Islamic doctrines. He held that the crucial test of Islam, as of any other revealed religion, was the satisfaction of the needs of the soul, but immediately he found the religion wanting, for in his view the Qur'ānic revelation was merely, 'a matter of cold speculation, occupying only the understanding, leaving the heart unaffected and unaltered',[3] and its doctrinal contents were for him 'merely a

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1. Pfander, journal, 29 Sept. 1848. C.M.S., CI1/O227/42. Among the works of Gustav Weil which were published during Pfander's early years in India were, Mohammed der Prophet, sein Leben und seine Lehre (Stuttgart, 1843); Historisch-kritisch Einleitung in den Koran (Bielefeld, 1844); Biblische Legenden der Muselmänner (Frankfurt am Main, 1845); Geschichte der Chalifen. Nach handschriftlichen grossentheils noch unbetnützten Quellen bearbeitet, 5 vols (Mannheim, 1846-62).

2. Mizan (1867), pp. 120-127. Muir embarked on some of his own researches partly because of pressure from Pfander.

3. Pfander, Remarks, section 1, 'On God', p. 6.

matter of head knowledge ... a mere dead idea ... concerned with metaphysical perfections not the moral attributes of God.'[1] The degree of importance which he attached to this diagnosis of 'spiritual deficiency' can be put in perspective by a consideration of his views on the relationship between Islam and other religions. He felt that the Islamic revelation marked a great improvement on the paganism of Arabia because it raised polytheism to monotheism, but it fell short of Christianity, in spite of 'borrowing' some good moral precepts from the latter, because the essential life-giving spiritual doctrines of Christianity were not adopted. Consequently the 'borrowed' precepts, though they gave Islam a superficial similarity to Christianity, were entirely unavailing,

> as they did not receive the whole of divine truth and rejected Christ, this part, thus separated from the stock, from the tree of life, could neither actually enlighten nor save them.[2]

This general theme of the spiritual deadness of Islam was reinforced by decrying the 'externality' of a number of specific Muslim doctrines and practices. The Muslim idea of sin he found deficient because the significance of Adam's fall had not been realized, therefore no 'change of heart' was involved in acknowledging sinful actions which were merely external to the perpetrator. Forgiveness for sins could be ensured by a number of devices, including ritual prayer which Pfander regarded as a mere 'mechanical ceremony.'[3] Heaven and hell were conceived of in 'material' and

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1. ibid., pp. 6-7.

2. ibid., section 6, 'On paradise', p. 41.

3. ibid., section 3, 'On the nature of sin', pp. 22-25; section 4, 'On the nature of forgiveness of sin', pp. 25-31.

'sensual' terms.[1] Throughout this analysis the key to the inability to internalize any of the doctrines was the Muslim rejection of Christ as the only possible mediator between sinful man and God.

Pfander was preoccupied then with the ways in which Islam fell short of Christianity rather than with the abuses and charges of falsehood which were characteristic of medieval and much subsequent polemic. Indeed, his awareness, through experience, of the strategies which would be appropriate to a Muslim audience produced a gentle, sometimes almost ingratiating tone in his books for Muslims. In the Mīzān, for instance, he explained,

> Do not be irritated about these words which may perhaps seem hard to you; they have not been written in order to revile Muhammad and to provoke you, but because they are the truth, and we hold it our duty before God to set forth the truth for you, openly and clearly.[2]

In certain respects, therefore, Pfander seemed to be moving away from the usual denunciations of a 'false religion' which had marked many earlier European writings on Islam, and it is likely that Sale's 'Preliminary Discourse', especially the advice to avoid 'hard words', had played a part in this new approach. On the other hand it is significant that Pfander's tone in the one book which was intended for European readers was much more reminiscent of the traditional type of defamatory interchange, and showed little sign of reflecting a new and a more sensitive assessment of a religion which is deficient rather than actually false. In these pages the traditions are 'gross fictions', Islam itself is a 'system of falsehood', the Islamic theology is a 'mire of error and superstition',

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1. ibid., section 5, 'On the nature and punishment of hell', pp. 31-34; section 6, 'On paradise', pp. 34-41.

2. MS, 'Wage', p. 300; Mizan (1867), p. 118.

and the Muslim who refuses Christianity is described as liable to 'soon turn again as a dog to his own vomit, and wallow afresh in the mire from which he has been washed'.[1] These denunciations in the tract on the Traditions seem to be the undisguised views of a missionary who would hesitate to ruin his cause by stating such opinions openly in his books for Muslims, and are difficult to reconcile with the evidence that Pfander was receptive to new ideas which would modify his view of Islam during his period of contact with Muslims in the Middle East and India. Indeed study of his Remarks on the Nature of Muhammadanism in isolation, casts doubt on the claim that his writings did mark any kind of advance in understanding over previous Christian apologists. The inconsistency which seems unavoidable here is less glaring if the denunciatory terminology of the English tract is regarded as a characteristic of evangelical writing in general rather than a peculiarity of Pfander's writing on Islam. In the early nineteenth century such epithets were certainly used by many evangelicals to describe those whom they considered to be unregenerate. The 'mire of error and superstition' thus describes the state of all, Christians included, who are deficient in not yet recognizing their state of sin. The use of such language indicates the state of latent tension within the evangelical between a sense of personal spiritual certainty and optimism, and a conflicting feeling of deep despair about most of unregenerate mankind. Thus although the contrast in tone would seem to suggest a merely strategic adoption of a conciliatory attitude to Muslim readers as distinct from the honest denunciation which was intended for European eyes, it was a

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1. Pfander, Remarks, pp. 3-5.

denunciation characteristic of most evangelical tracts of the period.

Although Pfander seemed to share the evangelical perspectives of his age, the evolution of his view of Muḥammad suggests that he was nevertheless open to influence from the new interpretations of Muḥammad's mission which were published by European scholars in the period between the first draft of the Mīzān and the final revision of his books. In his books for Muslims Pfander was from the beginning unambiguous in his definition of Muḥammad as a 'false prophet', for in his eyes he did not fulfil any of the criteria of true prophethood which he had drawn up.[1] Nevertheless, Pfander's discussion of Muḥammad was in several important respects different from the invective against the 'false prophet' in which earlier writers had often indulged. His 'tests' focused on 'contradictions' and 'powers' rather than on the personality and life of Muḥammad, thus making it possible to bring the charge of falsity without the detailed inquest into the prophet's alleged 'sensuality' and vengefulness' which had been the hallmark

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1. 1. 'As it is impossible that the divine utterances should contradict one another, so the declarations and doctrines of one claiming to be a prophet, and of the revelation which he brings, must not conflict with the teaching and writings of the preceding prophets in fundamental particulars.
   2. He should be endowed with the power of working miracles, and of delivering prophecies.
   3. The prophet must speak and act in a manner worthy of the dignity of his office, and be zealous for the glory of God, and the fulfilment of his commandments.
   4. As force is manifestly obstructive of true faith, love, and obedience, he should not use compulsion; but by instruction, warning, and loving invitation, induce men to embrace his religion.' Mizan (1867), p. 77; cf. MS, 'Wage', p. 230.

of earlier accounts.[1] Although the chapter in the Mīzān which he called 'Über Muhammad' would have given an opportunity to unleash such denunciations, Pfander chose rather to view the human weaknesses of Muḥammad as evidence that the idea of 'inward purity' was 'completely foreign' to him. Consequently his message was spiritually deficient and he could not therefore be a mediator for the sins of others. It was thus not important to Pfander to show Muḥammad as totally devoid of good qualities, indeed wherever he could find grounds for praising his personal qualities he did so, finding him to be 'a man of great intelligence and sagacity, pleasant and agreeable in his utterances ... very benevolent to the poor, affable to his subordinates, tender and friendly to his friends and followers.'[2]

This new emphasis on the deficiency of Muḥammad's powers as a prophet and mediator instead of on the positive aspects of his personality was at least partly the product of Pfander's subsequent reading on Islam. By the time that he was revising his books in the late 1840s certain European scholars had suggested that Muḥammad's belief in his own mission was a product of historical, psychological and physical factors which had combined to convince him that he was indeed the messenger of God. Dr Gustav Weil, for instance, attributed Muḥammad's conviction of his prophethood to epileptic fits during which he was subject to visions.[3] Weil was not original

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1. He did discuss Muhammad's alleged 'sensuality' and the question of his marriages, but the criticism was toned down considerably in the later editions of the Mīzān. Cf. MS, 'Wage' (1829), p. 298; Mizan (1867), pp. 117-118.

2. MS, 'Wage', pp. 300-301.

3. G. Weil, Mohammed der Prophet, sein Leben und seine Lehre (Stuttgart, 1843), pp. 42-45.

in this suggestion, indeed the emphasis on epilepsy was a characteristic of medieval writings on Islam, but it was from this source that Pfander adopted an idea which allowed him to portray Muḥammad as a 'deluded' rather than a conscious and wilful 'imposter' who had invented a religion to suit his own selfish interests. Thus in the later editions of his books Pfander's view of a personality which was 'deficient' in the qualities necessary for true prophethood took into account various conditioning circumstances such as Muḥammad's ill health, and stressed the responsibility of others, such as the 'companions', who were to be blamed for inventing the 'gross fictions' of many of the traditions.[1] Nonetheless, although Pfander may be seen as moving away, with all readers of Sale and Weil, from the European image of Muḥammad the 'sinful imposter' towards a more scholarly and objective assessment there was a strong countervailing pressure from the constant and increasing evangelical emphasis on the person of Christ. Pfander was thus held back, in spite of his oriental studies and receptivity to scholarly contributions, in the mainstream of Christ-centred evangelical exposition, which was inevitably dismissive of rival claimants to the office of prophet and mediator. Thus although Pfander's view of Muḥammad was both scholarly and relatively sensitive as compared to some earlier missionary depictions of 'Muhammad the tyrant', his evangelical emphasis on the necessity for a mediator for the sins of mankind, a role which he firmly denied to Muḥammad, must inevitably make his writings seem disparaging and distorted to Muslim readers.

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1. Compare part 3, chap. 4 of the MS draft of the Mīzān with the editions published after Pfander had read Weil.

Pfander's views on Islamic society were never co-ordinated into any comprehensive account but they may be pieced together from his letters and reports. He believed that the moral standards of a particular society are a product of the dominant religious norms. He considered that in Europe the 'spirit of Christianity' with its 'internal' precepts, and in particular its injunction to 'love thy neighbour', had produced a type of society where the priority was the good of the whole community. The 'spirit of Islam', on the other hand, was 'external' and materialistic, and productive therefore of a self-seeking and materialistic society which he characterised as a 'Raubsystem' of all against all.[1] More precisely, the Islamic countries, notably Persia and Turkey, lacked a 'class of honourable, upright people' which could be identified in the West as exercising a 'moral' if not necessarily an 'evangelical' influence on the rest of society, 'whose word is true and dependable, and in whose hearts there abides a feeling for the good of their neighbours'.[2] In contrast, he felt that most of the potential leaders in Muslim countries were as self-seeking as the rest of the community. Indeed certain leaders used their position only to exacerbate the moral ills of society. His references to the _'ulamā_ were reminiscent in tone of contemporary British attitudes to the Brahmin caste in India which was frequently depicted as using its hold over the minds of the people to perpetuate its own position

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1. Pfander, Journal of his travels through Kurdistan and Persia, 24 March 1831, in _M.M._, No. 3 (1832), p. 488; Diary, Baghdad, Sept. 1830, _Der Evangelische Heidenbote_, No. 23 (1 Dec. 1831), p. 95.

2. Pfander, Journal, _M.M._, No. 3 (1832), p. 489.

within Hindu society and to advance its own material interests.[1] His low opinion of the Persian 'ulamā was coloured by his own rough treatment at their hands. He had found them hostile to his preaching to the point of an attempt on his life in Kermanshah, and he considered that they constituted the main obstacle to his plans for Muslim evangelization. He recorded that the mullās retaliated not only by preaching that he should be put to death, but they urged the people to destroy his books, and whipped up religious hysteria by saying the bindings were of pigskin.[2] However, in spite of his feeling that the influence of the Persian 'ulamā seemed to be increasing in the 1830s, Pfander was convinced that a significant turning point was about to be reached.

In conclusion, therefore, some attention should be paid to Pfander's view of the prospects and problems of evangelizing the Muslim world at the crucial moment in the mid 1830s when he was about to be transferred from the Caucasus to India. Pfander shared the optimism in spite of obstacles which was a common and enduring characteristic of all evangelical thought during this period. Thus whatever the objective circumstances - the hostility of the 'ulamā class, the destruction of his books, the disinterest of the common people, and finally the closure of the Shusha mission station by the Tsar - Pfander was nevertheless able to reach the conclusion that the entire Muslim world was coming to a turning

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1. ibid., p. 470; cf. James Mill, The History of British India, reprint of 2nd edition of 1820 (New Delhi, 1972), I, pp. 471-472.

2. ibid., p. 468.

point in its history in the second quarter of the nineteenth century which would at last provide the opportunity for successful evangelization.[1] This diagnosis was based on a number of factors. God's providential plan for erring mankind was at the centre of his interpretation, for Christian apologists were constantly faced by the problem of explaining why God had allowed the rise of false or heretical religions. Pfander believed that the rise and spread of Islam had been allowed partly in order to suppress idolatry but also as a punishment for the errors and deviance of the Arab Christians in the period preceding Muḥammad's mission. When the Christians returned to the true gospel then peoples the world over, including the Muslims, would also turn to Christ. One sign that this moment was approaching was the recent upsurge of evangelical activity in the West which through its missionary arm was preparing the ground in the overseas world. Political trends seemed to be demonstrating also the providential scheme in which Pfander believed. The decline of the Ottoman Empire seemed to portend the breakdown of the traditional power structure in the Islamic world, and the cracking of the political edifice would mean also the gradual dissolution of religious ties and beliefs. Thus the Muslim peoples would at last be receptive to the gospel.[2]

Throughout this analysis Pfander placed great emphasis on the efficacy of a technologically superior and progressive Europe in ensuring the eventual success of the gospel. The introduction

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1. 'The time of judgement and of God's reprisal seems to have come for the Muslim people', Pfander, diary, Baghdad, Sept. 1830, in Der Evangelische Heidenbote, No. 23 (1 Dec. 1831), p. 93.

2. ibid.

of the printing press and the establishment of some English and French-medium schools were already breaking the 'ulamā's monopoly over the minds of the masses,[1] and the appearance of steam ships on the Bosphorus was creating a sense of wonder and awe at the technical superiority of the West which Pfander believed would result in the opening of the door to the gospel.[2] Indeed Western commercial and military progress would cause the Muslim powers to choose between ignoring the West, a path which could only lead to their own ultimate extinction, and the voluntary adoption of Western techniques.[3] In the latter case the opening of the door to Western technical innovations would also open it to the influence of Christianity, for in Pfander's view,

> This leads unintentionally to what is for Islam an unknown degree of religious tolerance. By this means, however, the way will be paved, unobserved, for bringing the gospel to these countries, and the door of Islam which has already been so long locked up, will be opened to the messengers of Christ.[4]

In the intermediate stage the reaction of the Muslim educated classes, especially in the cities, would be very important. They would be the first to appreciate Western technical superiority, and the first, therefore, to turn away from Islam in a transitional stage of 'religious indifference' and scepticism which would make missionary preaching much easier than before.[5] Pfander's vision of the role of

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1. Pfander, Diary of a journey to Tebris, Sept. 1832-March 1833, in M.M., No. 4 (1834), pp. 667-668.
2. Pfander, diary of a journey from Shusha to Constantinople, 29 May 1836, in M.M., No. 3 (1837), pp. 438-439.
3. Pfander's journey through Kurdistan & Persia in spring 1831 in M.M., No. 3 (1832), p. 506.
4. ibid., p. 507.
5. ibid. Also Pfander's diary, 22 Feb. 1833, in M.M., No. 4 (1834), pp. 671-672.

the educated classes in the future evangelization of the Muslim world was indeed at variance with immediate events in Persia where he travelled in fear of his life and where he was an object of suspicion and rumour even in the towns. However it accords very well with contemporary missionary expectations in India where an influential group of evangelicals foresaw the breaking down of the hold of Hinduism through English education, to be followed by an intermediate stage of scepticism or 'infidelity' before an eventual turning to the gospels.[1] Shortly afterwards the question of the breaking down of the 'exclusion' of the West in the Far East would raise similar questions in evangelical circles about the relationship between the adoption of Western techniques and skills, and the possible reception of the Christian gospel in Japan and China. Thus Pfander's prognosis was an expectation of events which was common to many evangelicals at this time, and although circumstances had not been propitious in Persia, he identified a slight 'stir' among the Muslims in Shusha just before the mission closed as a sign that the long-term process was about to begin.[2] Furthermore, the pressure of the West on Turkey, the 'sick man of Europe' in the 1820s and 1830s, and the simultaneous consolidation of the British hold on India, the home of one fifth of the world's Muslims, gave real substance to the view that whatever the long-term effects on religion and culture, Europe was undoubtedly destined to be an important arbiter of Muslim political and economic fortunes. At this point in time and circumstances Pfander was suddenly transferred from the Middle East to India.

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1. A. Duff, India and Indian Missions (Edinburgh, 1839), pp. 520; 600.
2. Pfander's diary, 8 June 1835, in Der Evangelische Heidenbote, No. 20, (15 Oct. 1835), p. 88; Annual report for 1835, in M.M., No. 3 (1836), pp. 450-453.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PROCESSES OF ENCOUNTER

(1) CONTACT AND CONTROVERSY 1833- 1848

THE CHANGING CONTEXT OF MISSIONARY ACTIVITY IN INDIA IN THE 1830s

At the time when Pfander was transferred to India evangelical optimism was certainly more soundly based than before. By this date the East India Company, which had come under considerable pressure from evangelical and other reforming influences, was beginning to take some initiatives in the religious sphere which would call in question the meaning of 'non-interference' and 'neutrality', and which would augur more sympathy than before for missionary objectives.

The gradual change in government attitudes to religious questions reflected the slow but persistent spread of evangelical influences in the families from which the Company recruited its writers and cadets in the early nineteenth century.[1] Although the advocates of active assistance to missions would still remain a minority in all three presidencies, the next decade saw a concentration of such men reaching high office in certain provinces. In the Bengal Presidency, the North-Western Provinces, and after 1846 the Panjab, counted a high proportion of staunch evangelicals among their administrators.[2] The outlook of the Governor-General was also significant. John Rosselli's study of Lord William Bentinck has

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1. M. Warren, 'The Church militant abroad: Victorian missionaries', in A. Symondson (ed.), The Victorian Crisis of Faith (London, 1970), p. 64.

2. e.g. James Thomason, William Muir, Henry Carre Tucker (N.W.P.); John Lawrence, Robert Montgomery, Donald McLeod, R.N. Cust, Charles Raikes, Edward Thornton (N.W.P. and subsequently the Panjab). R.F. Young has discussed the role of evangelical civilians in the North-Western Provinces in Resistant Hinduism: Sanskrit Sources on Anti-Christian Apologetics in Early Nineteenth-Century India (Vienna, 1981), p. 51.

suggested that he was considerably influenced by evangelicalism in the years following his Madras governorship. His wife, Mary Acheson, was in close touch with evangelical circles in England, and Rosselli considers that Bentinck, principally under her influence, had moved to a position of 'moderate' evangelicalism by the time that he took up the governor-generalship of India in 1827.[1] Percival Spear has captured the restraint of this stance, for in his view Bentinck's 'was a religion of salvation without hell-fire, of an over-ruling but not interfering providence, of guilt without too much conviction of sin, of good works and promotion of the faith.'[2] Certainly in spite of his private support for missionary enterprises and in spite of his acts of interference with Indian religious customs Bentinck continued to uphold the principle of government neutrality, and he stopped far short of advocating 'open Christianity' for the government of India. The degree of judicious moderation and pragmatism which was at work here may be illustrated by Bentinck's handling of the Court of Directors' despatch which in 1833 recommended the ending of the Pilgrim Tax and the 'government connection with idolatry'.[3] Although evangelical criticism of the Company had focused on this issue above all others Bentinck chose not to implement the recommendations.[4] The prohibition of _satī_ is usually considered his most evangelical act for which he received

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1. J. Rosselli, _Lord William Bentinck; the Making of a Liberal Imperialist 1774-1839_ (London, 1974), Part 1, chap. 6, 'An evangelical couple', pp. 61-66.

2. P. Spear, 'Lord William Bentinck', in C.H. Philips and M.D. Wainwright (eds.), _Indian Society and the Beginnings of Modernisation c. 1830-1850_ (London, 1976), p. 12.

3. Despatch to Bengal (Misc. Revenue Dept.) 20 Feb. 1833, 'Pilgrim Tax', para. 62.

4. ibid., para. 58. The Pilgrim Tax was not prohibited until 1841.

thanksgiving memorials from the missionaries of Calcutta, yet his mind was only finally made up after testing the likely Indian response by means of questionnaires to up-country military and civilian officers.[1] During his entire governor-generalship Bentinck always acted extremely circumspectly in the religious sphere and usually in response to more general reforming pressures than those exerted solely by like-minded evangelicals. Nonetheless, the Bentinck era may be rightly identified as the watershed of British attitudes towards the Indian religions. If Bentinck was 'among the foremost of British modernizers in India in the nineteenth century'[2] the new objectives which were formulated for British rule in India during his period of office gave those who were more single-mindedly evangelical than himself sound reasons for renewed optimism about their own aims for India. Subsequent Governors-General and their Calcutta councils would continue to pay lip-service to the dictum that neutrality must be the yardstick of government policy, but by his cautious initiatives in social and religious reform Bentinck had ensured that the missionaries, though still critical of what they considered to be government hypocrisy, now felt that the Company was at least closer than before to their standpoint.

The opportunity to take advantage of the more favourable climate was provided by the opening up of India to private interests which occurred at the climax of the free trade attack on the

1. 'Papers relating to Suttee, 1828-1832', Papers of Lord William Bentinck, Portland Collection, PwJf 2597-2624.

2. C.H. Philips (ed.), The Correspondence of Lord William Cavendish Bentinck, 2 vols (London, 1977), I, p. xliv.

vestiges of the Company's monopoly. Bentinck's dream of the economic regeneration of India through European settlement was never to be fulfilled, but the clauses of the Charter Renewal Act of 1833 which ended the system of residence licences thereby removed the final restriction on missionary expansion.[1] In fact the Company had scarcely ever withheld licences from the missionaries who had applied in the period from 1813 to 1833, and it is possible that some historians of mission such as Julius Richter and Kenneth Ingham have exaggerated the significance of this technicality.[2] However, either as a direct result of the new legislation, more broadly as a reflection of the greater receptivity in government circles, or possibly for reasons which were peculiar to the internal development of each missionary society, there was a marked intensification of missionary activity in India in the period after 1833. This was most noticeable in the more recently acquired, and the up-country territories. In the North-Western Provinces the number of missionary stations trebled between 1833 and 1845.[3] The most active new-comer in this region was the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. which decided to concentrate its efforts on the north-west of India, with the result that five stations were opened in the North-Western Provinces between 1836 and

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1. 3 and 4 William IV, cap. 85, sec. lxxxi.

2. J. Richter, A History of Missions in India, trans. S.H. Moore (Edinburgh and London, 1908), p. 192; K. Ingham, Reformers in India 1793-1833 (Cambridge, 1956), p. 122.

3. Based on tables in J. Mullens, Statistical Tables of Missions in India, Ceylon and Burmah at the close of 1861 (London, 1863), pp. 17-20 and K. Ingham, Reformers in India 1793-1833 (Cambridge, 1956), pp. 134-136. The data from these two sources differ slightly, mainly because some stations were very temporary in character. It seems that the total number of stations rose from 8 to 23 over this period.

1845 and several in the Panjab.[1] In this case internal reasons were probably the strongest, for the American board of missions was newly established, but as ten of the sixteen missionaries who were sent out in its first year of existence went to India the new receptivity of the government and the consequent ease of entry probably also affected the decision. At the same time the Anglican Church Missionary Society strengthened its position in the north-west as well as in other parts of India. Its thinly spread stations in the 'north' (including Lower Bengal) had been run by a total of 28 European missionaries during the entire period from 1813 to 1833, and of this number less than half were still at their posts in 1833. Yet ten years later the number of C.M.S. missionaries in the region had doubled, and by 1854 the 1833 figure had trebled. The number of mission stations had also increased, but less dramatically than the number of missionaries, because the C.M.S. home authorities were adamant in consolidating already existing stations, preferring to close unsuccessful ventures and refusing to expand into untested areas.[2]

The building of churches, schools and orphanages followed the increase of missionary personnel in the region. But the sphere of activity which was to have most effect on the 'ulamā was the translation, publication and dissemination of Bibles, prayer books and tracts in the Arabic, Persian and Urdu languages. The founding of the British and Foreign Bible Society in London in 1804 had created an interdenominational channel for the translation of the

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1. Mullens, op.cit., pp. 17-20; J.C.B. Webster, 'Mission Sources of Nineteenth Century Punjab History', unpublished paper, pp. 10-11.

2. J. Mullens, op.cit.; K. Ingham, op.cit., pp. 134-136; Missionary Register for 1834, 1842 and 1854.

Bible. The individual missionary societies also sponsored translations both in Europe and overseas. In the early nineteenth century Calcutta was the scene of a number of separate translation schemes run by the Company chaplains, by the Serampore Baptist mission and by Fort William College. Their efforts were combined at the point of distribution by the 'Bibliotheca Biblica' repository in Calcutta. By 1811, according to Claudius Buchanan, the repository held over 4,000 volumes in a number of Asian and European languages, including Arabic, Persian and Urdu.[1] But the main stimulus for the publication of Bibles in the languages of Indian Muslims came from Henry Martyn, and the first effects of his work were not felt until after 1816 by which time his Arabic, Persian and Urdu New Testaments had all been printed in Calcutta. During the next two decades the New Testaments which were distributed in India in these languages were essentially revisions and re-editions of Martyn's pioneering work. However, by the late 1830s the experience of using these Bibles in rural areas of the upper provinces, and the recent arrival of new Protestant missionary societies on the scene, had combined to occasion more radical revision, especially of Martyn's Urdu New Testament. The British and Foreign Bible Society catalogue lists thirteen new translations and new editions of the New Testament which were published in Urdu between 1837 and 1845. Members of various missions were meanwhile commencing work on the Old Testament. The process culminated in the first complete Urdu Bible which was published in Calcutta in 1843.[2]

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1. C. Buchanan, Christian Researches in Asia, 2nd ed. (London, 1811), pp. 231-232.

2. T.H. Darlow and H.F. Moule, The Historical Catalogue of the Printed Editions of Holy Scripture in the library of the British and Foreign Bible Society, 2 vols. (London, 1903-1911), II, part 3, pp. 742-753; J.S.M. Hooper, Bible Translation in India, Pakistan and Ceylon (Oxford, 1963).

Improvements in linguistic skill among the missionaries, and a new desire for more idiomatic expression, caused some of the pressure for revision. An example was the 'Benares Translation Committee' edition of the Gospels and Acts, published in Urdu in 1837, which simplified Henry Martyn's translation, 'especially in regard to difficult Persian and Arabic terms'.[1] A new edition of the Persian New Testament which was published for the American and Foreign Bible Society in 1841 stated that although based on Martyn's version, 'in this edition there has been made by the editors, a slight alteration in a few of the theological terms'.[2] In some cases growing anxiety about faulty, as well as inappropriate, translation seemed to be exacerbated by denominational, and even regional, jealousies among the missionaries, to promote further revisions. A feud developed in 1844 when some missionaries at Benares resented the alteration of their translation by some Calcutta missionaries, who, in their view, were not sufficiently conversant with the languages of the upper provinces. Their list of grievances accused the Calcutta committee's recent edition of 'containing several scores of serious errors ... any one of which would have been sufficient to condemn an English Edition, and all of which might have been most easily avoided by any careful and competent superintendence of the press ...'.[3] Even when such errors were noticed and rectified the

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1. List of 'Western Hindi-Urdu' Bibles, Darlow and Moule, Historical Catalogue, II, part 3, p. 745.

2. List of Persian Bibles, ibid., II, part 4, pp. 1201-1211.

3. C.G. Fagan, Sec. and Treasurer of the Benares Auxiliary Bible Soc., to Sec. British and Foreign Bible Society, Benares, 31 July 1844, Foreign Correspondence, 1804-1856, India 'Inwards', 1844. British and Foreign Bible Society archives, (hereafter B.F.B.S.).

damage could not be undone if the edition had already been distributed. If John Gilchrist had already been aware at the turn of the century of the harm which injudicious translation might occasion, it seems that the missionary societies had forgotten, or were not heeding, his warning in the 1840s. Yet in the 1850s the 'ulamā would press this lesson home with the argument that differences in translation proved the 'corruption of the scriptures'. It remains to be shown then, why Muslim scholars who had hitherto remained aloof from Christianity, were gradually drawn into a study of the Bible.

THE BEGINNING OF CONTACT AND CONTROVERSY

In the twenty years after Henry Martyn's departure from northern India there was scarcely any contact between Christian preachers and Muslims in any part of the region. Yet from 1833 onwards contact was established and controversy soon followed. The establishment of mission stations in Muslim cultural and religious centres obviously paved the way. The reason why some of the 'ulamā then abandoned their traditional attitude of disdain and instead of urging their co-religionists to ignore the missionaries, began to prepare refutations of Christianity, is more difficult to answer. It is tempting to make a causal link between the 'new policies'[1] of the Bentinck administration and the emergence of resistance among religious élites who felt threatened by the signs of increasing government interference in the socio-religious sphere.

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1. Percival Spear describes the Bentinck era as a time of 'new policy' initiatives, History of India, Vol. II, chap. 10.

The occurrence of the first 'response' in 1833, the year of the Charter Renewal Act and the peak of the Bentinck reforms, would seem to support this view. Thus, although Hindu customs seemed to be the specific concern of the reformers,[1] the proposed changes in education policy in an 'Anglicist' direction, and the proposed reform of the law might be seen in the long-term as threats to Muslim religious and occupational interests. Certainly some retrospective accounts of the 'ulamā's attitudes in the pre-1857 era have emphasised the effects of the proposed abolition of the sharī'at and the threat to the position of Muslim women.[2] However, evidence that any part of the Muslim community was actually apprehensive of these broader implications of British policy as early as 1833 is sparse and requires careful interpretation. The sequence of events in the establishment of contact seems to suggest that such general fears fuelled the controversy only in its later stages.

This view may be tested by examining the three stages in the encounter, which started in 1833 in Lucknow, developed in the 1840s in Agra, and culminated in the 1850s in a phase of open and hostile controversy in Delhi and Agra. The role of the Reverend C.G. Pfander was crucial, for although he did not arrive in India until 1838, his deliberate decision to re-activate the interest of those 'ulamā who had participated in the initial Lucknow phase helped to escalate a more general concern among the 'ulamā of the whole region.

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1. e.g. prohibition of satī, elimination of the thags and attempts to end the Pilgrim Tax.

2. e.g. Maulānā Sayyid Muḥammad Miyān, 'Ulamā-i Hind kā shāndār māẓī, 4 vols. (Delhi, 1957-60), IV, pp. 35, 38; Maulānā Imdād Sabrī, Firangiyon kā jāl (Delhi, 1949); Muftī Intiẓām Ullāh Shahābī, Īst Indiyā Kampanī aur Bāghī 'Ulamā (Delhi, n.d.).

LUCKNOW

The first important encounter between the missionaries and the 'ulamā took place in the city of Lucknow in an atmosphere not of hostility and fear, but of seemingly genuine curiosity and goodwill. The meeting occurred under the joint auspices of the King of Oudh and the British Resident, at a darbār where both were present.

The explanation for this unlikely event lies largely with the nature of the previous sixty years of subsidiary alliance relationship which had permitted the flourishing of the traditional Islamic and cultural preoccupations of the court side by side, and sometimes incongruously, with a receptivity to Western cultural and scientific influences.[1] King Naṣīr al-Dīn Haidar, who came to the throne in 1827, intensified the eclectic tendencies of his ancestors. Indeed it is usual to deride him as an indiscriminate Anglophile, who adopted European fashions in dress, furnishings and food, in an effort to 'imitate the English in everything'.[2] His fascination with mechanical devices such as clocks, telescopes and hot air balloons is represented as a childish infatuation with new toys rather than a genuine interest in discovering new scientific principles. Not only Europeans, but Muslims, including some Shī'īs, criticized the King for his taste for enacting at the court religious ceremonies which were only tenuously connected with Shī'ī practices, and strongly influenced by Hindu traditions.[3] The King's taste for

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1. See Chap. 1.

2. J. Pemble, The Raj, the Indian Mutiny and the Kingdom of Oudh 1801-1859 (Hassocks, 1977), p. 27.

3. Maulānā 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Sharar, Guzashta Lakhnau (Lucknow, n.d.), pp. 57-58.

religious innovation seems to have been an important factor in creating an atmosphere at his court which was propitious for religious encounter of an unprecedented kind.

The signs of growing British impatience with the affairs of Oudh had had no noticeable effect on the preoccupations of King Naṣīr al-Dīn's court. Yet less than two years before the religious encounter Lord William Bentinck had signalled his concern by visiting Lucknow to issue a warning to the king which amounted to a threat of annexation. Two years later the warning would be repeated.[1] Although John Low, who was the British Resident at the time of the encounter, was the first of a line of 'remote, censorious and sternly uncorruptible' Residents who contrasted with the 'accessible, sociable and complaisant' officers of the 1820s, his attempts to show the Company's displeasure by suspending darbārs apparently had little or no effect in deterring Naṣīr al-Dīn from his preferred pursuits.[2]

The king's court thus provided a congenial atmosphere for religious encounter which the newly censorious attitude of the Company did nothing to dampen. Nevertheless, it was the personality and interests of the Shī'ī mujtahid which were crucial to the outcome. It was noted in chapter one that Maulānā Sayyid Dildār 'Alī had been responsible in the early years of the century for forwarding the interests of the Shī'ī element in Lucknow's population. When Dildār 'Alī died in 1819, his eldest son, Maulānā Sayyid Muḥammad had taken

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1. Rosselli, op.cit., pp. 226-228; R. Bingle, 'Changing attitudes to the Indian states', pp. 71-72.

2. Pemble, op.cit., p. 47; J. Low, Resident at Lucknow, to Secret and Political Dept., 1 May 1833, in Bengal Secret and Political Consultations, 16 May 1833, item 2.

on his mantle as the leader of Shī'ī religious interests. He was to be renowned as the most prominent Shī'ī 'ālim in northern India until his own death in 1867.[1] He was assisted by his brothers, nephews and other relatives and followers in continuing the teaching and theological study initiated by his father. During this period a separate Shī'ī madrasa was established in Lucknow, for which the mujtahid's brother, Maulānā Sayyid Ḥusain was mainly responsible. Sayyid Muḥammad also began to play an increasingly important role in the state judiciary where he was concerned with civil and criminal matters as well as with the traditional functions connected with the religious law.[2] Yet in spite of these multifarious interests, it was the mujtahid who took it upon himself to respond favourably to a request for religious discussion with a Christian missionary who happened to pass through Lucknow in 1833. It will be shown that his personal interest had long-term consequences beyond the immediate events of that year.

The eccentricity of the Lucknow court certainly helped to create an atmosphere favourable to religious discussion which was unique in the Muslim centres of population in north India. But the Christian traveller to whom the mujtahid responded has also been described as one of the most eccentric figures who ventured east in the nineteenth century. Joseph Wolff, the missionary in question, was in Guy Wint's words,

> a very absurd, preposterous, and very vain man; by all the standards of his day and afterwards, he was a figure of pure fun. He began by seeming a figure born out of improbable nightmares, and

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1. S. Ahmad, Two Kings of Awadh (Allahabad, 1971), pp. 127-128; Maulawī Mirzā Muḥammad 'Alī, Najūm al-Samā' (Lucknow, 1303 A.H.), I.

2. G.D. Bhatnagar, Awadh under Wajid 'Ali Shah (Benares, 1968), p. 17.

> ended by standing forth among the larger lunacies of the Victorian age.[1]

Such an unsympathetic portrait finds plenty of support from Wolff's own voluminous journals.[2] This son of a German rabbi had been attracted to Catholicism while still a child, and from the age of eleven he wandered around central Europe, enrolling at various seminaries, Catholic, Protestant and Jewish. He was baptized at seventeen, but although he then professed himself to be a Catholic, he entered the Protestant university at Tübingen to study oriental languages and theology. A period at the College de Propaganda Fide in Rome was followed by a visit to England where he came in contact with evangelicals of various denominations. Among the Cambridge evangelicals who influenced him were Charles Simeon, with whom he studied theology, Samuel Lee, who taught him Arabic and Persian, and Daniel Wilson, who later became Bishop of Calcutta. In this circle Wolff was made aware of Henry Martyn's work among the Muslims, but he felt that his own missionary calling was to evangelize the Jews. It was thus under the auspices of the Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews that he planned, in 1821, the first of many journeys to Asia. The aspect of his preaching which distinguished him from most missionaries of his day was his conviction that the second coming of Christ was ordained for the year 1847. His own calculations were based on various Old Testament prophecies,

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1. Joseph Wolff, A Mission to Bokhara, edited and abridged with an introduction by Guy Wint (London, 1969), p. 1.

2. Among the records of his journeys which he published are the following:- Missionary Journal and Memoir (London, 1824); Journal ... for the Year 1831 (London, 1832); Researches and Missionary Labours among the Jews, Mohammedans, and other Sects (London, 1835); Narrative of a Mission to Bokhara in the Years 1843-1845 (London, 1845); Travels and Adventures of Joseph Wolff, 2nd ed. (London, 1860).

principally in the Book of Daniel, but his millenarianism had also been nurtured by contact with the Irvingites in England, including Edward Irving, the founder of the sect, Henry Drummond and James Hatley Frere.[1] When Wolff reached Lucknow in 1833, after more than a decade of missionary travels, the imminency of the apocalypse was the main theme of his message.

The caricature of Wolff as a figure of fun is the fate liable to befall all millenarians, especially when time runs out on their predictions. However, Wolff the evangelical missionary, was also an extremely worldly man, and he succeeded in upholding his credit during his travels in India because of his social connections with influential figures in both Britain and India. His marriage, after an introduction by Edward Irving, to Lady Georgina Walpole, the sixth daughter of the Earl of Orford, stood him in very good stead. Among the doors which were opened to him by this aristocratic connection were those of Government House in Calcutta and Simla, where Lady Bentinck treated him as a personal guest. Their evangelical sympathies created common ground where perhaps there was no other, and a missionary who was dear to the Governor-General's wife would be treated with at least formal courtesy wherever he travelled in India.[2] Thus he received a warm welcome from William Fraser, the

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1. The 'Irvingites' were the followers of Edward Irving (1792-1834), a minister of the Church of Scotland, whose apocalyptic sermons during the 1820s resulted in the founding of the Catholic Apostolic Church in London. In 1825 he predicted that the second coming of Christ would be in 1864. Henry Drummond (1786-1860), a banker and Member of Parliament, helped to found the Catholic Apostolic Church. Wolff's only son was named after Drummond.

2. Wolff kept up his private correspondence with Bentinck until the latter's death in 1839: J. Wolff to Lord William Bentinck, letters of 5 July, 26 July, 8 Sept., 10 Sept. 1832, refer to his tour of north India. Papers of Lord William Bentinck, Portland Collection, PwJ f 2352-53; 2358-59.

Commissioner of Delhi, and from John Low, the Resident at Lucknow, and the cream of British-Indian society flocked to his lectures in the major cities of northern India. His own accounts of such receptions may be put in perspective by Wint's warning that all through Wolff's life it was 'one of his most engaging characteristics to be convinced that everybody doted on him'.[1] His journals certainly suggest this proclivity. There are hints, indeed, that some of the British officials initially viewed him rather guardedly. Wolff's own journal reveals Lord William Bentinck's reservations,

> I was told here [Simla], that the proclamation I had issued at Goojrawala [sic] made people suspect that I must be crazy, and that was the reason why Lord William would not request Runjeet Singh to permit me to go to Cashmeer until he had seen me.[2]

His subsequent meeting with Wolff clearly reassured the Governor-General, but the concern about the proclamation, which had contained the announcement of Christ's imminent second coming, was shared by others such as William Fraser, who had nevertheless given Wolff an apparently effusive welcome.[3] It seems that his good connections and introductions, and the knowledge that his visit was only fleeting, combined to override any misgivings which were felt in government circles about his millenarian views. At all events Wolff's journey

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1. Wint, op.cit., p. 3.

2. J. Wolff, journal, 3 July 1832, Researches and Missionary Labours among the Jews, Mohammedans and other Sects, 2nd ed. (London, 1835), p. 273.

3. In a letter to Wolff dated 1 Feb. 1833, Delhi, Fraser wrote jocularly but probably critically,

   > I shall be always happy to hear of your welfare, and at present you are as happy as it is possible for a man to be. When you are fifty, you will be sobered down to a staunch metaphysician. I beg you to read that excellent book of Mr Locke's, Christianity with reason; read his chapter particularly on Enthusiasm. J. Wolff, op.cit., p. 417.

across northern India was completed without causing any open expression of official concern, although when he reached Calcutta he was attacked in some newspapers, including the Bengal Herald.

The missionaries in India certainly treated him as a welcome guest. He already had contacts with the C.M.S. because of his years in the Simeon fold at Cambridge, and he had met the Baptist, Joshua Marshman, in Scotland. He received invitations to preach from missionaries and chaplains of all denominations. He was particularly attracted to Alexander Duff, who responded in kind. Duff, however, felt the same reservations as the Company officials about the millenarian theme, adding as a cautious afterthought to an otherwise admiring letter to Wolff,

> I might say that it would be well to introduce the subject of the Millenium at all times with a notification, that you did not consider your view of it an essential article of faith, but merely as your own opinion, which you are ready to deliver when required.[1]

Whatever the varied reactions of his European audiences it seems that in most of the one hundred and thirty stations he visited in northern India in 1832-33 Wolff was quickly forgotten by Britons and Indians alike. That his impact was more significant in Lucknow was due in part to the propitious climate for religious debate which has been noted. Furthermore, it will be shown that Wolff's millenarian theme found an immediate point of contact with Shī'ī theologians whose belief in the eventual re-appearance of the 'hidden imām' caused them to attach more than usual importance to the announcement of the second coming of Christ.[2]

The response in Lucknow contrasted strongly with the very fleeting impact Wolff had made in Delhi a few weeks before, where

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1. A. Duff to J. Wolff, Calcutta, 22 April, 1833, ibid., p. 435.

2. J.N. Hollister, The Shi'a of India (London, 1953), pp. 92-100.

he had obtained an audience with the Mughal king, Akbar Shāh, and had also discussed Persian manuscripts with the heir apparent, Bahādur Shāh.[1] He also had several meetings in Delhi with local 'ulamā, one of which had taken place at the British Residency. It is significant that his main protagonist in Delhi was Maulānā Muḥammad Isḥāq, who belonged to Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz's circle and was by 1832 one of the leading 'ulamā of the city. According to Wolff, Muḥammad Isḥāq deliberately sought him out for a private religious discussion, and a fortnight later they conversed when 'several thousand Mohammadans were present'.[2] Wolff then sent the 'ālim a letter stating his views about Christ, and received in return a Muslim declaration of faith. When Wolff asked for proof of Muḥammad's mission, Muḥammad Isḥāq sent a second letter specifying the proof from miracles, from the Qur'ān's perfection and from Muḥammad's personal attributes. His request for proofs of Christianity launched Wolff on a defensive explanation.[3] Missionary and 'ālim seemed all set to continue the contact by letter, yet when Wolff left Delhi at the end of 1832 the matter was dropped, and it seems that there was no revival of interest in Christianity in that city until the early 1850s. Although Muḥammad Isḥāq had departed momentarily from the attitude of disdain shown previously by the Delhi 'ulamā, once the immediate stimulus was removed by Wolff's departure he returned to his other concerns.

When Wolff reached Lucknow he obtained an audience with

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1. Wolff, journal, 11 Dec., 24 Dec. 1832, op.cit., pp. 361, 375.
2. ibid., 6 Dec., 23 Dec., pp. 361, 362.
3. ibid., pp. 362-369.

the King of Oudh. He commented effusively on his first meeting with Naṣīr al-dīn Ḥaidar who embraced him, gave him a present of ten thousand rupees and 'told me he would appoint a day when he would assemble the Mullahs, and hear my faith discussed, and have a narrative of my journey', yet when the darbār met the king stayed only long enough to hear an account of Wolff's travels, retiring before the religious discussions began.[1] Such patronage, initial interest, but rapid ennui on the king's part are usual features in contemporary accounts of Naṣīr al-dīn's court, and it would seem that he really attached no more significance to Wolff's visit than to those of a stream of momentarily entertaining Europeans who had previously received his hospitality and fleeting interest.

In any case, Wolff although flattered as always by the attentions of the high and mighty, had quickly singled out the court 'ulamā as the real object of his visit. It seems that he already had some notion of the mujtahid's significance as a leading Shī'ī scholar, but he does not seem to have been acquainted with the part the family of Sayyid Muḥammad had played in recent decades in establishing Shī'ī influence in Lucknow. Contemporary British accounts, obsessed as they were with the more spectacular events at the court, made scant reference to the religious life of the city, and Wolff knew of Sayyid Muḥammad simply as the 'Mujtehed of the Sheah' and as one of the 'principal Mullahs at Lucknow'.[2] During the week which intervened between his first visit to court and the full darbār Wolff wrote to the mujtahid and introduced himself as a

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1. ibid., 26 Jan. 1833, p. 382.

2. ibid., 2 Feb. 1833, op.cit., pp. 384-5.

traveller who was anxious to meet the learned and great men of the regions he passed through. His millenarian theme was announced straightaway even in this short missive.[1] In his reply the mujtahid seemed to respond very eagerly to the idea of a meeting, saying

> I also have been desirous, from time to time, of obtaining an interview with the learned and accomplished of your religion; and wish to have a sight of the essence of Christianity, with its proofs, so that whenever you feel disposed, nothing shall be in the way of an interview.[2]

However, the account of events which the Shī'a compiled after Wolff's departure suggests that behind the mujtahid's apparent readiness there actually lay some doubt about making any response at all because it was held that Wolff, 'is deficient in courtesy and politeness, and also in the science of reason as well as that of conversation.'[3] It is possible that Wolff's reference to the second coming of Christ was the factor which nevertheless persuaded the mujtahid to proceed. At all events his reply requested 'particulars' of this event which Wolff provided in his next letter, together with an explanation of the prophecy in the eighth chapter of Daniel where 'it is written that Jesus will appear at the end of 2,300 years'.[4]

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1. Wolff to Sayyid Muhammad, n.d., translated and published in Christian Intelligencer (Oct. 1838), pp. 442-443. This Calcutta missionary journal (hereafter C.I.) published an account of the contacts between missionaries and 'ulamā which occurred in the year 1833 in a number of its issues in 1838-39. Included were translations of the 'ulamā's letters and pamphlets. Subsequent references to these encounters are based on the C.I. translations, supplemented by Wolff's publications and the mujtahid's correspondence.

2. Sayyid Muḥammad to Wolff, n.d., C.I. (Oct. 1838), p. 443.

3. Muhammad 'Alī, compiler of a pamphlet relating 'the Rev. Mr. Wolff's proceedings at Lucknow, and his controversy with Mussulmans', which was sent to the C.M.S. missionary, William Bowley by the mujtahid, and later translated and published in the C.I. series. (Oct. 1838), p. 443.

4. Sayyid Muhammad to Wolff, and Wolff to Sayyid Muḥammad, n.d., ibid., pp. 443-445.

The mujtahid embarked on a reply but before he could send it Wolff appeared in person to discuss the matter. The references to these discussions in Wolff's published diary are very brief for he merely recorded for the 30th January 1833 that, 'I disputed with the Mussulmans of the Sheah persuasion', and he outlined only the discussion on prophecy.[1] Yet the much more detailed account which was compiled for the Muslims by one Muḥammad 'Alī shows that they discussed on that same day, Wolff's reasons for conversion from Judaism to Christianity, the alleged alterations in the Christian scriptures, and the sins of the prophets, as well as the mujtahid's objections to Wolff's interpretation of the Daniel prophecy.[2] However, the crucial and irreconcilable difference between them was seen to be the prophecy issue and it continued to dominate the subsequent correspondence. The mujtahid was anxious to refute Wolff's exegesis, but at the same time he was clearly in sympathy with the apocalyptic message. Thus he endeavoured to show that the Old Testament prophecies relied on by Wolff for indicating both the first and second comings of Christ were actually applicable to the coming of Muḥammad, or in some cases to the mahdī who was still awaited by the Shī'a. When discussing, for example, the signs by which the fulfilment of the prophecies would be known the mujtahid countered Wolff's interpretation by,

> Why does not the voice from Heaven signify the descent of the esteemed of God (namely Emam Mehdee) for instance, these signs attending the appearance of His Excellency the Lord of command (the same

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1. Wolff, journal, published in Researches and Missionary Labours, 2nd ed. (London, 1835), p. 382.

2. Muḥammad 'Alī's pamphlet, C.I. (Oct. 1838), pp. 445-446.

person) is clearly written in the Hudees.[1]

Two or three days after the private discussion and the exchange of letters, Wolff and the mujtahid met in the royal darbār to assert their views in formal and public debate. Munāẓara, or religious disputation, had some precedents in India, but was nevertheless unusual between adherents of differing religions. The Mughal Emperor Akbar had encouraged discussions at his court by advocates of various religions, including Christianity. Calcutta, during the era of 'renaissance' in the early nineteenth century was the scene of religious debates between Christian missionaries and Hindus. However, since the beginning of British rule orthodox Muslim theologians had preferred to ignore the Christian presence, and in any case private discussion was held to be wiser than public debate.

For his part, Joseph Wolff clearly relished the opportunity presented to him to state his views publicly and in the presence of the King of Oudh and the British Resident. In his journal for the second of February, 1833, he wrote,

> This was a delightful day! At eleven o'clock in the morning, Emaum Bakhsh, the Meer Daha, i.e. Master of the Ceremonies, came to the British residency, and announced to Major Low, in the name of his Majesty, that his Majesty was expecting me for the purpose of hearing my lectures delivered in the Persian tongue, and my discussion with the Moulvees (as the Mullahs are called here). I went in the carriage with Captain Paton,[2] Sir Jeremiah and Lady Bryant[3] in a palakeen, and Major Low in

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1. Sayyid Muḥammad's second letter to Wolff, n.d., C.I. (Oct. 1838), pp. 450-451. Also translated by J. Wolff in Researches and Missionary Labours, p. 390.

2. The Assistant Resident in Lucknow.

3. Sir Jeremiah Bryant was a Lieutenant Colonel in the 36th Regiment of Native Infantry of the Bengal Army which was stationed at Mhow. In 1833 he was serving as Judge Advocate General.

> another carriage ... We entered a large hall, where all the Moulvees were seated on chairs. Emeer Sayd Ahmed,[1] the Mujtehed of the Sheah, occupied the first seat. His Majesty seated himself upon a Royal couch, a beautiful crown upon his head, and clothed in Royal robes. Major Low was seated at his right hand, and near Major Low sat Lady Bryant; I sat at his Majesty's left hand. I then rose, made proper reverence, and stated the reasons of my belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, and of my Missionary journeys.[2]

The Muslim account of the gathering was less specific about the identities of the British guests, but added the information that although the Shī'ī 'ulamā were the spokesmen for Islam, 'a body of the learned Soonites' was also in attendance.[3] In this account it was stated that the king retired before the religious discussion began, but Wolff made no reference to this. For reasons which are not clear the mujtahid refused to participate personally once the king had departed, and asked his brother, Sayyid Ḥusain, to take his place. The discussion again centred on prophecy. Wolff's journal shows that he was quite confident that he had satisfactorily defended the Christian interpretation of certain Old Testament prophecies, for

> A discussion took place about Isaiah xxi by which the Mullahs wanted to show the prophetic office of Mohammed, by the words "Burden upon Arabia", which is translated in the Arabic Bible, "Prophecy in Arabia"; but I proved to them that it means "A prophecy predicting a calamity upon Arabia".[4]

Yet in the Muslim account of the same discussion Wolff's reply was

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1. His correct name was Sayyid Muḥammad.

2. Wolff, journal, op.cit., pp. 383-4.

3. Muḥammad 'Alī, op.cit., C.I. (Nov. 1838), p. 487.

4. Wolff, journal, 2 Feb. 1833, op.cit., p. 384.

deemed to be 'no satisfactory answer', and consequently 'the Resident took him by the hand and arose', thus causing the Muslims to conclude that the Resident was trying to remove the missionary from a humiliating situation.[1]

The precise role played by the British Resident, John Low, is difficult to determine. Although there were evangelicals in his family there is no evidence that he particularly favoured the missionary cause.[2] His hospitality to Wolff represented no more than the required courtesy shown to visitors bearing the Governor-General's introduction. His own comments on the darbār suggest only that he regarded attendance at any of the king's darbārs as politically unwise at that particular stage of strained relations between the Company and the Kingdom of Oudh.[3] He did not record any opinions on Wolff's beliefs and methods, and only in the Muslim account was Low represented as playing an influential role both in initiating and in terminating the discussion.[4] This emphasis may reflect the growing anxiety of some of the 'ulamā to show missionary embarrassment at defeat in munāẓara as a cause of political embarrassment to the British. This was certainly a characteristic of Muslim accounts of subsequent debates.

Wolff, on the other hand, appears to have been highly gratified by the attention he had received in Lucknow. His meeting

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1. 'From what passed at this time, it appeared to several who were present, that the great man, the Resident being impartial, and ornamented with wisdom and penetration, perceiving that the Rev. Gentleman did not give profitable answers, acted as he did. But secrets are known to God alone'. Muḥammad 'Alī, op.cit., C.I. (Nov. 1838), p. 487.

2. U. Low, Fifty Years with John Company (London, 1936); DNB XXXIV, pp. 184-185.

3. J. Low, Resident at Lucknow, to Secret & Political Dept., 1 May 1833, in Bengal Secret & Political Consultations, 16 May 1833, item no. 2, para. 7.

4. Muḥammad 'Alī, op.cit., C.I. (Nov. 1838), p. 487.

with the Shī'ī 'ulamā was important in the long-term because the mujtahid did not lose interest after Wolff's departure, but determined to prepare a more comprehensive answer to the Christian challenge. Wolff had noticed that the Lucknow 'ulamā were already in possession of translations of the Bible,

> The Mussulman Mullahs are in possession of the Arabic Bible, and the Persian New Testament of Henry Martyn; they have marked passages with red ink throughout, which proves that they had been reading it diligently.[1]

At the royal darbār he noted that when he cited a passage from the Old Testament, 'all the Mullahs opened their Bibles'.[2] Thus, in spite of the seeming failure of Henry Martyn's preaching it is clear from Wolff's references that Martyn's translations of the Bible, and particularly his Persian New Testament, had by this time circulated fairly widely among the 'ulamā of northern India. He surmised also that they had acquired some Biblical commentaries, for the mujtahid based one of his arguments against Wolff's interpretation of the Daniel prophecy on 'the translation of some English books which have been printed'.[3] Wolff was unsuccessful in trying to elicit the titles of these books. Earlier he had discovered that an 'ālim in Kashmir possessed a copy of Nathaniel Sābāṭ's refutation of Christianity. However, the missionaries had been inconspicuous in these regions in the two decades since Martyn's departure, and the mujtahid had found no previous opportunity for the face-to-face confrontation he obviously relished. His chance meeting with Wolff

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1. Wolff, journal, 31 Jan. 1833, op.cit., p. 383.

2. ibid., 2 Feb. 1833, p. 384.

3. Sayyid Muhammad to Wolff, n.d., in Wolff, op.cit., p. 386, and in Muhammad 'Alī's pamphlet, C.I. (Oct. 1838), p. 447, where the translator used the phrase 'certain English books'.

had been harmoniously and courteously conducted, and the prophecy theme had been pursued by both sides. Nevertheless, there are grounds for thinking that the Shī'īs realised that Wolff's millenarian view was not representative of Christian opinion as a whole for Muḥammad 'Alī recorded, 'it is rumoured that the Reverend Gentleman has himself invented this theory, and the European gentry in general disapprove'.[1] In any case there is no doubt that the *mujtahid* was aware that other areas of disagreement existed which had received only scant attention in his encounter with Wolff. The conclusion to the Muslim account of events in Lucknow reveals the perspective of the Shī'ī circle about possible future developments,

> As at this place, the Reverend Gentleman was alone, but in Calcutta and other places many Clergymen will assemble, and whatever he may, after consultation, write, will be complete and established. On this account the many difficult passages were not brought forward in conversation, such as the Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity, and the essence of the Trinity, also respecting God being the Father and his Excellency Jesus being the son, as well as many other questions which remain, all of which shall be forthcoming if the door of correspondence continue open.[2]

Wolff did in fact proceed to Calcutta, where he spent some time at Government House and at the Serampore Mission, but the *mujtahid's* expectation that he would refine and complete his arguments against Islam was disappointed. Wolff mislaid one of the *mujtahid's* letters, and his own final reply was anyway never received by Sayyid Muḥammad. However, unbeknown to the *mujtahid* there was an unexpected sequel, for on his way to Calcutta Wolff had stopped at Patna where

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1. Muḥammad 'Alī, op.cit., *C.I.* (Nov. 1838), p. 490.
2. ibid., p. 489.

he had conversations with some of the _'ulamā_, notably with one Maulānā Wā'iz al-Haqq.[1] It is possible that the readiness of the Patna _'ulamā_ for this exchange marked some stirring of the embers of Henry Martyn's sojourn at nearby Dinapur or even of Nathanial Sābāt's forays with the _'ulamā_ of the Phulwari _madrasa_. Yet these encounters would probably have proved as transitory as those at Delhi if certain missionaries, who had a more permanent interest than Wolff in the evangelization of the region, had not been as anxious as the _mujtahid_ to pursue the matter further.

The missionary who provided the link between Wolff and Pfander was William Bowley, a Eurasian who had been working since 1815 at the C.M.S. mission at Chunar in Mirzapur District, about twenty miles from Benares. His decision to be a missionary was connected with Henry Martyn's activities, for in Agra he had met, and was influenced by, 'Abd al-Masīh, Martyn's first convert from Islam. In the summer of 1833 Bowley heard about the recent events in Lucknow when he 'read in the papers that several learned Muhammadans both at Patna and Lucknow had held discussions with the Reverend Joseph Wolff and had boasted of the triumph they had obtained.[2] Bowley wrote to the _'ulamā_ who had been involved with Wolff, and included with his letter a copy of a pamphlet of his own entitled 'Certain marks of a true prophet' which he had already circulated among local Muslims. Two of the _'ulamā_ thus addressed sent replies, namely Wā'iz al-Haqq of Patna, and Maulānā Sayyid Muhammad, the

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1. Maulānā Wā'iz al-Haqq has not been identified.

2. _C.I._ (Oct. 1838), p. 435. The newspaper is not specified.

mujtahid at Lucknow. After the exchange of several letters the Patna 'ālim seemed to decide against continuing the encounter any further.[1] The mujtahid, on the other hand, regarded Bowley's initiative as a chance to pursue the issues which had eluded full discussion with Wolff. He therefore replied to Bowley urging him to present an answer to the Muslim account of the Lucknow encounters, a copy of which he enclosed with the letter.[2] The mujtahid and Bowley never met in person, but their correspondence continued for several months in the summer of 1833. It was important less for any intrinsic development of the debate, than for Bowley's decision to have the records of the whole encounter published in a Calcutta missionary journal five years afterwards, and as it happened, simultaneously with Pfander's arrival in that city.[3] Thus when Pfander arrived fresh from his encounters in Shusha and Persia, and in a mood of great optimism about the imminent collapse of the Muslim world, his views seemed to be confirmed by Bowley's version of the recent 'stir' among the Muslims of upper India.

However, from the point of view of mutual images Bowley's sudden interest in the 'ulamā was unfortunate, for he belonged to a generation of missionaries who tended to stress only the evils to be found in non-Christian religions. His tone was reminiscent of the 'Serampore tract' on the 'false prophet of Islam' which had caused government outrage in Calcutta in 1807. Whereas missionaries

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1. ibid., pp. 435-441. No references have been found to any subsequent contact between the Patna 'ulama and the missionaries during this period.

2. ibid., p. 441.

3. The publishing of the records of the encounter in the Christian Intelligencer between Oct. 1838 and Feb. 1839 coincided with Pfander's arrival in India in October 1838.

newer to the field were beginning to adopt a more conciliatory tone and to avoid outright condemnation of other religions, Bowley, who belonged by age to the earlier school of thought, and had been confined for nearly twenty years to one isolated station, continued to stress the evils he found in Islam,

> If the Prophet of Islam baptized any, he did it with the sword, and with blood ... To decide fairly between Christ and Muhammad the lines must be drawn as counter to each other as between light and darkness, between good and evil.[1]

If Wolff had been eccentric he had at least tried to accommodate himself to the status of a guest at a foreign court, and he had tried to understand, and had indeed revelled in, some of the conventions of Muslim society. Bowley, however, in his eagerness to expose the falsity of Islam, approached the 'ulamā with no pretence of discretion or respect. When he addressed the mujtahid he took no account of the fact that he was a highly respected figure among the Shī'ī Muslims, and he showed his impatience with Muslim literary conventions by reproving him for the terms of 'monstrous hyperbole' in which he described the king of Oudh.[2] Ironically, he was partly motivated to participate himself by a desire to wipe out the harm he felt that Wolff had done by his millenarian obsession. This is not apparent from the published accounts because Bowley was careful, like Duff, to avoid any public criticism of a fellow missionary. The only hint in his letters to the mujtahid was his remark that 'the private opinions of persons' and 'unprofitable speculations' should be avoided in the future.[3] His actual concern about Wolff's

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1. Bowley, 'Answer to a pamphlet written by Moulowee Muhammud Ulee, son of Muhammud Tukee of Uspahan, in the Persian language, relative to a controversy which took place at Lucknow with Moulowee Syud Muhammud and the Rev. Mr. Wolff', in C.I. (Dec. 1838), p. 545.
2. ibid., p. 542.
3. Bowley to Sayyid Muhammad, n.d. (Nov. 1833?), in C.I. (Dec. 1838), pp. 541-2.

views was reserved for a private letter to another missionary,

> I should have felt heartily grieved to find him humourous [sic] and causing a laughter. His proclamation at Cawnpoor that the Messiah will appear personally in 14 years I cannot approve, because it appears to me unwarranted and adapted to do harm.[1]

Fellow missionaries and some government officials of an evangelical outlook had felt private misgivings about Wolff, yet it seems that it was actually the millenarian aspect of his preaching which had drawn, and then held, the attention of the Shī'ī 'ulamā. On the other hand, Bowley's own participation, far from redressing the balance, only soured the harmonious atmosphere which, in spite of theological disagreements, had marked the initial encounter. Although Bowley had been responsible for a translation of the Bible into Urdu, and for the publication of several tracts, there are indications that other missionaries considered him to be a very indifferent scholar. His translation of the Bible later received heavy criticism from two prominent missionaries who found that 'in some important qualifications he was altogether wanting. His education had been very limited. He was entirely ignorant of the original languages in which the Scriptures are written'.[2] Yet Bowley was convinced that the Christians held the monopoly of critical discernment. He reproved the mujtahid for comparing

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1. W. Bowley to L. McIntosh, Baptist missionary at Allahabad, 24 July 1833. Letter 12, file 15, letters to Rev. L. McIntosh, Carey Library, Serampore.

2. J.A. Kennedy (L.M.S.) and W. Smith (C.M.S.) to Rev. A. Brandon (For. Sec. of Brit. and For. Bible Soc.), Benares, 12 August 1844, in Foreign Correspondence, 1804-1856, India 'Inwards' 1844, B.F.B.S. archives. It seems that William Bowley was not competent in Persian, for he repeatedly urged the mujtahid to write to him in 'Hindustani' instead of Persian, Bowley to Sayyid Muhammad, 29 August 1833, C.I. (Nov. 1838), pp. 491, 498.

Christianity to Hinduism and Confucianism because the Christian nations'

> universal learning and knowledge of history is admitted by all, and [they] consequently possess the means, adequate to investigate and to pass a correct judgement of these matters

whereas, the Hindus and Chinese are 'poor creatures, who are themselves enslaved in idolatry and false systems, and ignorant of history', and therefore unfitted to be competent judges.[1]

Secure in his own sense of intellectual and moral superiority Bowley felt no compunction in distinguishing between Christ and Muḥammad as between 'light and darkness', and he dwelt on Muḥammad's evil actions in slaying 'thousands and tens of thousands' and in causing 'the blood of myriads to be split for the propagation of his religion', for in his view 'the Prophet of Islam was a carnal man, and a slave to his passions'.[2] Bowley's view of Muḥammad might be contrasted with the more sensitive views currently being expressed by Pfander in his books for Muslims in which he was clearly influenced by recent scholarly advances, and also by his awareness of the harmful effects of such views on Muslim readers. Indeed the effect of Bowley's crudely expressed condemnations was to sour the mujtahid's hitherto open-minded interest in finding out the Christian point of view in an atmosphere of real enquiry. Bowley's invective must have brought him to the reluctant realization that contact with the missionaries might in future mean bitter recriminations of this kind rather than the open exchanges he had envisaged.

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1. ibid., p. 491.

2. Bowley, 'Answer', in C.I. (Dec. 1838), p. 547.

In any case the correspondence between them did not contain any new contribution to the argument on either side. The attempt to provide point by point refutations of assertions made either at the Lucknow debate or in subsequent pamphlets made the letters discursive and repetitive in form. Bowley himself was irritated by this procedure and complained to the *mujtahid*,

> As you proceed, objections are repeatedly stated, and from thence questions proposed, and those questions are answered, and from those answers imaginary adversaries are set up and then those adversaries are combated.[1]

But he possessed neither the scholarship nor the power of language to break the circle himself. The *mujtahid* was irritated in turn by Bowley's tendency to take refuge in statements such as, 'Here are facts stated, the mode of which it becomes not us to enquire: it is sufficient for us that God has said so'.[2] Controversy ranged over most of the traditional themes of dispute between the two religions. In the long term the pamphlets they exchanged proved of greater significance than the letters. For Bowley sent the *mujtahid* a tract he had written on the Trinity, the study of which was to play a part in the latter's decision to introduce the reason-revelation theme rather than to continue the prophecy argument when he eventually came in contact with Pfander.[3]

This exchange of pamphlets and letters took place during six months in 1833 and then stopped abruptly. Matters had proceeded as far as was allowed by the present state of knowledge, skills and

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1. Bowley to Sayyid Muhammad, 29 Aug. 1833, in *C.I.* (Nov. 1838), p. 493.

2. ibid., p. 497.

3. Bowley's 'Hindustani' tract on the Trinity was enclosed with a letter to the *mujtahid* written at Chunar on 29 Aug. 1833. Its contents are not known, but the *mujtahid* would later refer to this and other tracts in his subsequent letters to Pfander.

experience of the two participants. On the one hand Bowley was a missionary who possessed no gifts which were suitable for such an encounter apart from enthusiasm. His views on the Bible were extremely conservative, and he was not familiar with the currents of contemporary Biblical criticism in Europe. His views on Islam were hostile and inflexible. There was thus no room for manoeuvre on his part, and his lack of sensitivity to Muslim culture and beliefs made him anyway reluctant to contemplate compromise. His situation as a lone missionary in an isolated station made it difficult to draw on the support of other missionaries or sympathetic civilians as later participants would do. On the other hand, the year's events had clearly made a considerable impact on the mujtahid. He had come into personal contact with a Christian preacher for the first time, had debated and corresponded with him, and had then entered into correspondence with yet another missionary whose views had turned out to be hostile and insensitive. It is likely that he now wanted to take stock of the situation, to consider the questions which had been thrown up by the various discussions, and then try to discover some Christian scholar who would seem more amenable and openminded than William Bowley had proved to be, with whom he might resume the encounter. Indications that this was indeed the mood among the Shī'ī scholars of Lucknow are given in Bowley's reference to Sayyid Muḥammad's intention to set one of his disciples, Maulawī Taṣadduq 'Alī, to write a tract in reply to the missionaries, and in some later correspondence of the mujtahid which shows that after 1833 he was busy collecting Christian tracts and setting some members of his family and various disciples to enquire into particular issues.[1]

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1. ibid., p. 491; Sayyid Muhammad to Pfander, 7 Zi'l-qa'da,1258 A.H., in Sayyid Muḥammad Hādī, Kashf al-Astār (Lucknow, 1845), preface.

But until these investigations should be complete, and until a suitable Christian contact should be found, the mujtahid seemed content to let the encounter lie. Thus ended, in seeming isolation and inconsequence, his year-long first encounter with evangelical Christianity.

AGRA

The second phase of encounter took place in the city of Agra on the initiative of Carl Gottlieb Pfander who started preaching there in 1842. Agra only began to assume particular importance in British eyes in the 1830s when it was designated the seat of government for the North-Western Provinces. Yet the city had been an important centre of Mughal culture and influence since the sixteenth century. The Emperor Akbar had temporarily transferred his capital to nearby Fatehpur Sikri, and in spite of its rapid abandonment, and the return of the court to Delhi, the Agra fort and palace remained second only to Delhi as foci of imperial strength and dignity. The city carried the permanent mark of Mughal architectural achievement in its palaces and tombs, and the common usage of the name 'Akbarābād' was witness to its strong Mughal associations. Long after all vestiges of political significance had faded, cultural and religious bonds made Agra the home of many prominent Mughal aristocratic and 'ulamā families. The locality was also an important place of pilgrimage for Hindus, for the village of Mathura, situated on the Jamna a few miles from Agra, was sacred as the site of the incarnation of Krishna. Thus the British decision to make Agra a provincial capital was likely to bring the modernising thrust of the Bentinck administration to the heart of traditional religious concerns almost as much as in

Lucknow and Delhi.

Even before its designation as provincial capital Agra had been subject to some British influence. When the General Committee of Public Instruction had started its activities in the 1820s, Agra had been selected as the site of one of the three government colleges to be established in the Upper Provinces. The Agra Schoolbook Society was set up to provide materials for the lower level schools in the vicinity. The British administrative presence began to be felt more directly in the late 1830s with the establishment of the Board of Revenue, followed by the transfer of the Ṣadr law courts in the early 1840s. Shortly afterwards a government hospital was built in the city. Civil lines and cantonments were constructed to house the rapidly growing numbers of Company servants who were posted to the provincial capital. The city was becoming a magnet also for Indian aspirants to government service. Thus by the mid 1840s the face of traditional Agra was being transformed by the priorities and needs of the British ruling power.[1]

Parallel to the growth of the city as a centre of British 'official' activity was the growth of missionary interest in Agra. Evangelicals had felt optimistic about Agra from as early as 1814 when the preaching there of the Company chaplain, Daniel Corrie, and of 'Abd al-Masīḥ, Martyn's first convert from Islam, had caused several hundred conversions. However, the effects were short-lived,

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1. D. Bhanu, History and Administration of the North-Western Provinces, 1803-1858 (Agra, 1957); H.G. Keene, Handbook for visitors to Agra and its neighbourhood (Calcutta, 1874); S.M. Latif, Agra, Historical and Descriptive (Calcutta, 1896); The Bengal and Agra Annual Guide and Gazetteer for 1842 (Calcutta, 1842); W. Crooke, The North Western Provinces of India; their history, ethnology and administration (London, 1897).

and after 'Abd al-Masīḥ's death in 1826 the Agra C.M.S. station was neglected and ceased to exist in all but name until the late 1830s. By that time the generally more propitious atmosphere combined with particular local factors to suggest a renewal of activity. The main stimulus was the famine which swept the upper provinces of India in 1837 whereupon the C.M.S. decided to open an orphanage to house some of the many children left parentless by the disaster.[1] At this time the Home Committee of the C.M.S. was adamant in its wish to resuscitate and strengthen existing stations such as Agra and Benares rather than to open completely new stations in the upper provinces. Thus even though some of their missionaries and supporters on the spot would have preferred to establish a new mission in Delhi, the C.M.S. insisted on consolidating its position in Agra, and as a result the Agra mission expanded greatly during the next few years. Apart from the station in the heart of the city which grew up around the old 'Abd al-Masīḥ kā kaṭrā', a second station was opened at Sikandra, a few miles outside Agra. With permission from the government the 'Secundra orphanage' was established in a mausoleum which had been constructed for the tomb of the Emperor Akbar's Christian wife, and nearby were built a church, a school and living quarters for the missionaries.[2] In 1840 the Secundra Mission Press was opened to provide occupations for the now converted orphans as well as a means of printing Pfander's

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1. Missionary Register (July 1840), p. 335; (April 1841), pp. 213-218.

2. Letters concerning the usage of the tomb of Begum Mariam by the Agra Orphan Society, on the plea that 'the occupation of the building in this manner will not in any sense be obnoxious to the prejudices of the natives,' 19 March; 21 May 1839, in 'File relating to the buildings and gardens of Secundra, 1819-1843', Agra (Misc) 3/116. U.P. State Archives.

books and other tracts and translations of the Scriptures.[1] The circumstance of the famine thus gave rise to the first self-supporting 'Christian village' in the locality. Vital to its creation was the support of the Basel Missionary Society which had contributed the four new missionaries who joined the one existing C.M.S. missionary during the early years of this enterprise.[2]

During the 1840s the two 'city' and 'village' missions of the C.M.S. in Agra increased their activities, a significant initiative in the city being the founding of St John's College to counter the 'godless' education which the evangelicals felt was offered by the government 'Agra College'.[3] The city also became the headquarters of the Christian Tract and Book Society and the North India Bible Society. Yet the C.M.S. was not alone in supporting these organisations for in 1834 the Baptists had opened two small stations and in 1845 the American Presbyterians also decided to establish themselves in Agra. Since the Jesuit visits to Akbar's court at Agra in the sixteenth century there had been intermittent Catholic missions in the city. By the nineteenth century much of northern India was entrusted to the Capuchin order, and in 1846 Agra was designated a vicariate apostolic. At that date the Capuchin bishop tried to reassert the Catholic presence in the face of recent Protestant missionary expansion by building a large new cathedral. The atmosphere between Catholic and Protestant missions in Agra

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1. F.J. McBride, Sikandra 1840-1940 (Agra, 1940).

2. C.T. Hoernle, F.A. Schneider, F.A. Kreiss and C.G. Pfander.

3. J.P. Haythornwaite and T.D. Sully, St John's College Agra 1850-1930 (London, 1932); Pfander to Rev. H. Venn, 17 Feb. 1848, C.M.S. C.I. 1/0227/60.

was always cool, and on occasions, openly hostile.[1]

The Protestant missions were being drawn to Agra, reluctantly and consciously neglecting the traditional capital of Delhi, mainly because they felt that the strong presence of the British government in Agra augured well for their cause. The American Presbyterian Society, for example, justified its move to Agra in 1845 because, 'It is a large city on the Jumna; the seat of the northwestern Presidency, established within a few years, and consequently the centre of widely extended influence'.[2] When the C.M.S., after some controversy, and for similar reasons, had opted for Agra rather than Delhi there had already been some signs that the Agra government was unusually evangelical in composition. Indeed missionary histories tend to stress the support given to their cause by a core of N.W.P. officials, several of whom were later transferred to the Panjab, where it is considered that they gave the 'Panjab school' of administration a particularly Christian stamp.[3] It is therefore important to the understanding of the Muslim reaction to examine how such officials viewed their equivocal relations with the Company which employed them, and with the missionary societies which they supported.

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1. Padre Angelo, 'Prefect of the Mogul Mission', to Henry Martyn, in Journals and Letters of the Rev. Henry Martyn, II, pp. 48-49; Latourette, History, VI, p.87. There is evidence of friction between Catholics and Protestants in Agra in the correspondence columns of the Agra Ukhbar, 19 Feb. 1845. A letter from the Roman Catholic Bishop of Agra to Joseph Wolff in 1832 shows Catholic disagreement with Protestant missionary methods; J. Wolff, Researches, p. 314. At a later date the Rev. T.V. French referred to the threats of some Protestants in Agra to enact 'a Guy Fawkes scene' outside the Catholic Cathedral, H. Birks, Life and Correspondence of Thomas Valpy French, 2 vols. (London, 1895), I, p. 41.

2. Foreign Missionary Chronicle, XIV,3 (March,1846),p.82.

3. E. Stock, The History of the Church Missionary Society, 3 vols (London, 1899), II, p. 159.

The key 'official' was James Thomason who, after serving in the region since 1832, was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces in 1843, a post he held until his death in 1853. His father, J.T. Thomason, was one of the group of Anglican chaplains including Henry Martyn who, under Charles Simeon's inspiration, had been the first to see their role in India from a missionary perspective. James Thomason had in turn been educated under Simeon's care and his evangelical connections were perhaps stronger than those of any other highly placed official who was serving the Company in the 1840s. Yet his biographers have stressed Thomason's strict adherence to the neutrality principle.[1] William Muir, also an evangelical, found him to be 'rigid' in its observance even to an over cautious extreme, for fear otherwise of 'holding out false colours, enticing the people by the profession of strict religious neutrality, while in reality favouring Christianity at the expense of other religions'.[2] Lord Hardinge, Governor-General of India from 1846 to 1848, used Thomason as an example when he wanted to rebut insinuations that Company officials were infringing the neutrality principle.[3] On the other hand, the Protestant missionaries in Agra, especially those belonging to the C.M.S., certainly counted the Lieutenant-Governor among the staunchest

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1. R. Temple, James Thomason (Oxford, 1893); W. Muir, The Honourable James Thomason (Edinburgh, 1897). P. Penner's study, 'The James Thomason School in Northern India, 1822-1853' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, McMaster University) has not been seen.

2. Muir, op.cit., p. 81.

3. Hardinge, minute, 13 July 1847 in 'Copies of papers concerning the principle of non-interference with the religion of the natives of India', Dalhousie papers, GD45/6/131.

of 'friends of missions' because his regular church attendance and financial patronage of mission projects fulfilled their image of a 'Christian governor'.[1]

William Muir's comments on Thomason's too 'rigid' neutrality suggest that Muir himself might be regarded in missionary circles as an even more active supporter of their cause. Muir was the son of a Glasgow merchant and had served as Judge-Magistrate in various N.W.P. districts before becoming secretary to the Agra government in 1847.[2] His strong evangelical convictions, but scholarly interest in Islam, were to make him an important figure in the ensuing encounters. Friendly though he was to the Agra missionaries he also developed contacts with the learned Muslims of the city, Sayyid Aḥmad Khān among them. But even Muir, in spite of his hopes for evangelization of the Muslims, continued to hold firmly to the view that government 'religious policy should still be that of strict neutrality'.[3]

In principle, therefore, the leading Company evangelicals in N.W.P. were not prepared to put missionary objectives before their equally strong conviction that 'neutrality' was unfortunately

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1. J.P. Haythornwaite and T.D. Sully, St John's College Agra 1850-1930 (London, 1932), p. 9.

2. Sir William Muir (1819-1905). After education at Kilmarnock Academy, Edinburgh and Glasgow Universities and Haileybury, entered the Bengal Civil Service in 1837. Stationed successively in the districts of Kanpur, Bandalkhand and Fatehpur; secretary to N.W.P. government 1847; head of intelligence department at Agra during the Mutiny; Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Provinces, 1868-1874; Financial member of Viceroy's Council, 1874-1876; Council of India, 1876-1885; Principal of Edinburgh University, 1885-1905. DNB. Supplement 1901-1911, pp. 659-661.

3. W. Muir to C. Beadon, 19 Aug. 1857, in W. Coldstream (ed.), Records of the Intelligence Department of the Government of the North-West Provinces of India during the Mutiny of 1857, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1902), II, p. 131.

still necessary in the Indian situation. Nonetheless, it will be shown that others besides Muir played significant roles as mediators and commentators in the missionary encounters with the Muslims. This seeming inconsistency should be put in the context of the East India Company's directives on 'religious interference'. Although the exact origins of the neutrality principle were obscure, the necessity for its observance had been inculcated ever since 1813. Reminders were issued whenever the higher authorities considered that the officials in any province were overstepping its limits in their missionary zeal. However, although there was some concern over this issue in the Madras Presidency in the 1840s, the N.W.P. officials never received any rebuke.[1] This became even less likely after the Directors' despatch of 1848 left interpretation of the limits of 'interference' to the discretion of the local governments, for with Thomason at the helm in N.W.P. open rebuke would be very unlikely.[2] Furthermore, the individual officers were able to justify their actions before the higher authorities by making use of the distinction between the so-called 'public' and 'private' roles of Company servants. 'Neutral' when on official duties, they were nevertheless active on mission committees and in the inspection of mission schools after Company business was complete. Thus, the Agra which Carl Pfander reached in late 1841 seemed to present favourable prospects for evangelisation, and as the decade progressed missionary activities there were to receive an increasing degree of support from Company officials.

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1. Tweeddale, Minute, 24 Aug. 1846; Despatch to Madras, 23 March 1847, in P.P. (1852-1853) XXIX, appendix 2 to 6th Report from the Select Committee, pp. 189-192; Judicial Despatch to India, 21 April 1847, 'Non-interference of the servants of Government with the religion of the natives', para. 3.

2. Judicial Despatch to India, 19 Jan. 1848, 'Non-interference with the religion of the natives', para. 3.

Although Pfander had reached India in October 1838 he had been obliged to spend three years in uncertainty before he could take up a posting. When the Caucasus mission had been forced to close on the Tsar's orders, the Basel Society had sent several of the Shusha missionaries to India in the hopes of establishing a new station in Central India. Resources were not forthcoming to implement this plan, and as a result the services of Pfander and the other Germans were offered to the Church Missionary Society. In spite of the long connection between the two societies the transfer was fraught with difficulties over ordination and other matters, and even when agreement was reached in early 1840, the C.M.S. then had an internal disagreement on the question of posting them to Agra or to Delhi. The Calcutta Corresponding Committee of the C.M.S. felt that 'Mr. Pfander is peculiarly qualified to open a Mission at Delhi' because of his previous experience with Muslims, but the long-awaited final decision from London directed him to Agra to join the Basel team of Hoernle, Schneider and Kreiss.[1]

Anxious though he was to settle to his new work Pfander had made good use of his enforced sojourn in Calcutta. Just before leaving Shusha he had prepared new Persian editions of his books for Muslims which he completed for printing in Calcutta in 1839 and 1840. The first edition of his English tract on the ḥadīṡ was also published there in 1840. Meanwhile, he was studying Urdu

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1. Committee Minutes of the C.M.S., correspondence and resolutions on 28 May 1839, 14 April 1840. Vol. XVIII, G/C1. One committee member urged that the Shusha missionaries should open a Delhi mission, because 'the high Hindoostani of Delhi is half Persian', and they would therefore be well equipped to 'communicate with the Literate Mussalmans of the place', F. Wybrow, to Calcutta Corresp. Committee, Mirzapur, 1 June 1839, C.M.S. CI1/O327/15.

with a view to preparing Urdu editions of the same books. When this literary work was completed he visited some missionary stations in Lower Bengal. The final decision to post him to Agra did not distress him as he felt that the city's Mughal and Muslim traditions offered as much scope as Delhi for his skills. After breaking his journey for some months at Benares he reached Agra in December 1841.[1]

The recent expansion of the C.M.S. missions at Agra allowed each missionary to concentrate on particular activities. Thus while Hoernle and his wife ran the orphanage, Pfander could concentrate on preaching tours and on the distribution of his books in the hope of arousing some interest among the local Muslim population. He decided almost straightaway to try to make direct contact with some of the prominent 'ulamā of the region. The administrative needs of the provincial government were already attracting Indian aspirants to government service to come to Agra. There were considerable numbers of Muslims among them, for in the North-Western Provinces Muslims were to maintain their share of offices in the subordinate revenue and judicial services in the period up to 1857.[2] Furthermore, the retention of the Arabic and Persian departments in Agra College had ensured the presence of a number of Muslim professors and teachers, and the transfer to Agra of the ṣadr law courts required the constant services of Muslim law officers and pleaders. A recent study of Sayyid Aḥmad Khān has

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1. C.F. Eppler, D. Karl Gottlieb Pfander, ein Zeuge der Wahrheit unter den Bekennern des Islam (Basel, 1888), pp. 107-121.

2. P. Hardy, The Muslims of British India (Cambridge, 1972), p. 38.

drawn attention to the existence of an influential circle of such Muslims in Agra in the late 1830s and early 1840s, many of whom had occupational links with the British. Sir Sayyid had been appointed munṣif at nearby Fatehpur Sikri just before Pfander's arrival, and 'many eminent Muslim scholars and writers were connected with either Government College or with the Sadr Diwani 'Adalat'.[1]

Pfander commenced by writing letters to three Muslims whose names had recently come to his attention. By 1842 the missionary was a familiar sight in the bazaars of upper India and Pfander was not the first to take the initiative with such a correspondence. But his years in Persia and his knowledge of Muslim literary and social conventions allowed him to present his invitations in a manner which would encourage some response. The pattern of response, however, was unexpected, for although the three 'ulamā whom he had selected for their reputation for learning all made some acknowledgement of Pfander's request, two of them quickly withdrew from any show of interest and the third was to be overshadowed by other Muslim participants. His invitations ultimately did cause the 'stir' he had long hoped for on his missionary travels, but the defence of Islam was at first taken up in Agra only intermittently and reluctantly by members of the traditional 'ulamā class, yet much more avidly by certain members of the new Muslim 'service' class which was being attracted to the provincial capital by the prospects of government employment.

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1. C.W. Troll, Sayyid Ahmad Khan; a Reinterpretation of Muslim Theology (Delhi, 1978), pp. 61-65.

ENCOUNTER IN AGRA

The link with the earlier phase of encounter in Lucknow was established when Pfander selected for one of his correspondents the Shī'ī mujtahid, Maulānā Sayyid Muḥammad, whose identity and interests were known to him through the recently published accounts of the Wolff and Bowley encounters in the Christian Intelligencer. Pfander's initiative in writing to the mujtahid in July 1842 and in sending him four of his books prompted a reply in which five refutations of various missionary publications were enclosed.[1] The mujtahid promised that one of his relations would soon complete a refutation of Pfander's book on the Trinity, the Miftāḥ al-Asrār, which would be sent to him as soon as it was published. Pfander was highly gratified by this promising response and quickly replied to correct some of the mujtahid's 'misconceptions'.[2] But there was a lull in the correspondence until 1845 when the mujtahid addressed a second letter to Pfander to accompany the anxiously awaited refutation of the Miftāḥ.[3] After Pfander had studied this work

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1. C.G. Pfander to Sayyid Muhammad, Agra, 7 July 1842; Sayyid Muhammad to C.G. Pfander, 7 Zi'lqa'da, 1258 A.H. The tracts sent by the mujtahid were the following:- (i) Hakīm Mirzā Ghāzī al-dīn, refutation of 'Dalā'il-i wāfiya' in Arabic; (ii) Account of the mujtahid's debate with Wolff (probably the Persian account which was later translated into English to be published in the Christian Intelligencer; (iii) Correspondence and debate with Bowley; (iv) 'Refutation of Mr. Matkin's tract' (probably a reply to a tract written by 'Rankin' of the American Presbyterian mission); (v) A Hindi tract. This correspondence was published as a preface to Maulānā Muhammad Hādī's Kashf al-Astār (Lucknow, 1845), pp. 1-6, which was a refutation of Pfander's Miftāḥ al-Asrār. The enclosed tracts have not been seen, but (ii) and (iii) were incorporated into missionary replies.

2. C.G. Pfander to Sayyid Muḥammad, 13 Jan. 1843, loc. cit.

3. Sayyid Muḥammad to Pfander, n.d. (1845?).

he prepared a reply which was published in 1847.[1] From that date his contact with the mujtahid's circle ceased, but the episode had been crucial to the generation of a wider response from non-Shī'ī 'ulamā.

Initially the opening up of religious discussion had seemed equally satisfying to both the mujtahid and the missionary. Maulānā Sayyid Muḥammad felt that he had discovered a learned and receptive contact with whom the dialogue started by Wolff might be re-opened. In his first letter he noted that the literary quality of Pfander's books was superior to any missionary tracts he had encountered previously and he was effusive about the gift. Pfander, too, exulted in the interest shown by the mujtahid. First impressions, however, were misleading. When Pfander mistook the mujtahid's remarks about his Persian style as a compliment to his arguments, the latter was quick to emphasize that 'truth and falsehood are related to subject matter and meanings not to diction and construction', and that Pfander's works merely appeared to be superior to those of other missionaries because he had acquired the mercenary collaboration of some Persian scholars.[2] Nevertheless the very rebuttal of the compliment helps to explain why, in subsequent years, Pfander's challenge would be taken seriously by the 'ulamā of the North-Western Provinces. His painstaking efforts to adopt the idiom and form of Muslim religious publications were already successful enough to cause some surprise and alarm in traditional circles. Indeed the circulation of Pfander's books in both Persian and Urdu in Lucknow and the preparation and publication from the royal press

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1. Pfander, Ḥall al-Ishkāl (Agra, 1847).

2. Sayyid Muḥammad's second letter to Pfander, n.d.

in that city of a series of refutations marked the beginning of tract warfare between Islam and Christianity in northern India. As a result, transitory encounter between two individuals was replaced by sustained controversy which in time penetrated into Muslim religious and literary circles in many parts of the region.

This encounter marked an important stage in the internal development of the controversies, for the mujtahid immediately singled out the question of taslīs and tauhīd (trinity and unity) as the crucial area of disagreement between the two religions.[1] He made only scant reference to the theme of prophecy which had dominated his earlier encounter with Wolff, and it seems that during the intervening years of study and enquiry he had resolved that the main battle ground must be the claims of reason over revelation as a source of religious truth rather than the more narrow interests in prophecy on which he had concentrated in 1833. Thus he directed his nephew, Sayyid Muḥammad Hādī, to write a detailed reply to Pfander's book on the Trinity and the divinity of Christ.[2] In his own second reply to Pfander he set the tone for that refutation by rejecting the missionary's crucial statement that the nature of the Trinity doctrine was 'mysterious' and to be confirmed only by revelation and not by reason.[3] This was the

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1. Sayyid Muḥammad to Pfander, 7 Ẕi'l-Qa'da, 1258 A.H./10 Dec. 1842.

2. Sayyid Muhammad Hādī's book, Kashf al-Astār was published in Lucknow in 1845 in reply to Pfander's Miftāh al-Asrār. When he reviewed it shortly after publication, William Muir translated the full title of Hādī's book as, 'The Curtain drawn aside, to shew the "Key of Mysteries" (Miftah-ul-Asrār) shattered, and the Conceits of a certain Ecclesiastic refuted'.

3. Sayyid Muḥammad to Pfander, n.d. (1845?).

first time in India that the various Muslim and Christian arguments had been subordinated to an overriding philosophical argument about the role of reason in determining religious truth.[1] In Pfander's eyes the mujtahid's arguments reflected merely a spirit of 'shallow rationalism',[2] yet the reason-revelation debate was to become the dominant theme of controversy in the mid 1840s and was not superseded until the Muslim assertion of biblical 'corruption' was introduced with a new vigour and intensity in the early 1850s. Yet in spite of the importance of the Lucknow mujtahid's role the Shī'ī madrasa became suddenly silent on the question of Christianity after the publication of Hādī's Kashf, and Pfander's quickly produced rejoinder, the Ḥall al-Ishkāl provoked no further response. The reasons for the Shī'ī withdrawal are not known, but it may be surmised that apart from the mujtahid's feeling that Pfander had been fully answered, communal tensions in Oudh in the late 1840s and early 1850s may have militated against the kind of religious dialogue in which he had previously been interested. Furthermore, his own new judicial responsibilities were not only preoccupying him, but also bringing him into conflict with the British Residency.[3]

In contrast to the positive and sustained response of Maulānā Sayyid Muḥammad, the other two prominent 'ulamā who had been singled out by Pfander showed signs of a wary interest, but quickly withdrew without replying to his tracts. One of them was Kāẓim 'Alī, the sajjāda nishīn of Shaikh Salīm Chistī's tomb at

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1. The reason-revelation controversy between the 'ulamā and the missionaries is examined in detail in Ch. 5.

2. Pfander's report to the C.M.S. for Jan.-June 1845, Agra, 5 Aug. 1845, C.M.S. CI1/0227/46.

3. G.D. Bhatnagar, Awadh under Wajid 'Ali Shah (Benares, 1968), p. 74.

Fatehpur Sikri, a few miles outside Agra. This was one of the most important Muslim shrines in the North-Western Provinces, and Pfander considered its guardian to be 'the first and most learned Mussalman of the place'.[1] Although he was gratified to find that Kāẓim 'Alī responded with apparent interest to the Persian copies of the tracts, and even proposed a public discussion, nothing came of the suggestion. When Pfander visited him some months later he received him 'kindly', but refused any further discussion about religion.

Pfander did not know why the sajjāda nishīn suddenly changed his mind. However, references to him in British government records suggest that he may have been influenced by some troubles he was facing over his inherited rights of responsibility for the tomb of Shaikh Salīm Chīstī.[2] His eldest son, 'Abd al-Haiy, was quarrelling with him over the payments due to the heir of the dargāh. The tomb was maintained out of the revenue of six mu'āfī villages. After the British capture of Agra it had been established that the 'local agents', appointed by the British, should pass the revenues to the sajjāda nishīn for distribution among his family claimants. However, in 1842, the very time when Kāẓim 'Alī came into contact with Pfander, the Collector recommended to the Revenue Commissioner that the Fatehpur endowment should remain under British supervisory control, an opinion which was strengthened, he felt, by the

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1. Pfander, journal, 9 Jan. 1843, C.M.S. CI1/O227/36.
2. 'File relating to the Endowment and Khadims of the Fatehpur Sikri Durga 1819-1855', Agra (Misc.) 6/160, U.P. State Archives.

persistent family quarrels over its distribution.[1] It is possible that hope of soliciting British support in his quarrel with his son may have influenced Kāẓim 'Alī's withdrawal from contact with the missionaries. At a time when mu'āfīs were being investigated and resumptions of revenue-free lands were being considered, discretion would be advisable for prominent mu'āfī holders. It seems at least that the bitter family quarrel was monopolising his attention at this time. Although he showed no further direct interest, Kāẓim 'Alī sent Pfander's books to a friend, one Buzurg 'Alī who was living in Aligarh. During a subsequent visit to that town Pfander heard that Buzurg 'Alī had written the first draft of a reply and was then engaged on the revision.[2] But the finished work was never received. For whatever reasons, the local 'ulamā, after an initial show of interest, were reacting with traditional aloofness to Pfander's provocation.

The other 'ālim who had been singled out by Pfander followed a similar pattern of response. Sayyid Muḥammad Nūr al-Ḥasan was head of the Arabic department at Agra College where he received a salary of one hundred rupees a month and was the most senior Indian on the staff. His position in this anglo-oriental college did not sever his links with the traditional world of the 'ulamā and he was an important figure in Muslim circles in Agra, among his close contacts being Sayyid Aḥmad Khān.[3] On the other hand, Agra College was also

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1. The Collector referred to the 'bitter feeling which the two branches of the family of Shaikh Suleem Chistee evince towards each other to this day', Collector, Agra District, to Commissioner of Revenue, 12 April 1842, loc.cit.

2. Pfander, journal, 9 Jan. 1843, C.M.S. CI1/0227/36.

3. Troll, op.cit., p. 64.

encouraging English education and at this very time lectures on Western scientific principles were being planned.[1] Thus Professor Nūr al-Ḥasan was probably more familiar with European values and assumptions than were the other 'ulamā with whom Pfander tried to make contact.

Nevertheless, Nūr al-Ḥasan's pattern of response was almost identical. He sent Pfander a quick reply in which he promised to write a refutation. In this case Pfander heard rumours about the possible reasons for the non-fulfilment of this promise. Through his munshī he received the impression that the Professor feared that active participation in religious controversy might jeopardize his post at the government college.[2] During the 1830s the Committee of Public Instruction had certainly discussed the closing of the Arabic department. It had survived, but its numbers dwindled while the English department grew in strength.[3] On the other hand Pfander also heard that the Professor had stated that he was insufficiently knowledgeable about Christianity to write a refutation. This information was carried to Pfander by his munshī after he had overheard a group of 'ulamā discussing Pfander's books.[4] There is insufficient evidence to come to any firm conclusions about his motives, but as the dissemination of Urdu and Persian Bibles and

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1. J. Middleton, A Syllabus of the Lectures upon Experimental Philosophy, delivered at the Agra College, 3rd edition (London, 1857).

2. Pfander, journal, Aug.-Sept. 1842. This section of the journal was apparently not deposited in the C.M.S. archives, but selections were published in M.M. for 1843.

3. J. Kerr, A Review of Public Instruction in the Bengal Presidency from 1835 to 1851 (London, 1853), Part 2, pp. 182-3.

4. Pfander, journal, Sept. 1842.

tracts was only just beginning in the North-Western Provinces it would not be surprising for an 'ālim, such as Professor Nūr al-Ḥasan to express some hesitation about embarking on immediate refutation.

Thus Pfander's first attempt to engage the attention of those 'ulamā who were regarded as both prominent and 'respectable' was unsuccessful, except in the case of the Lucknow mujtahid. Nevertheless his letters and tracts had been passed on to other 'ulamā in nearby towns and villages, and in the mosques and colleges of Agra he was the object of considerable curiosity and speculation. In an indirect sense his objective was fulfilled, for during the next few months he was to receive unsolicited letters and pamphlets from 'ulamā who were not previously known to him, and in particular from scholars in the two cities of Lucknow and Agra.

Among these unsolicited responses was a letter from Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad Ja'far of Agra in which was enclosed a book in refutation of Christianity called Khulāṣa-i Ṣaulat al-Ẓaigham (An Abridgement of the Lion's Onset), which had been published in Lucknow in 1842. The Ḥāfiẓ explained that his brother, Maulāwī Sayyid 'Abbās 'Alī, had prepared the original manuscript several years before because he was perturbed by some missionary preaching in the Cawnpore region.[1] This book too, was probably a legacy of the stir in the eastern part of the North-Western Provinces at the time of the Wolff and Bowley encounters in 1833. Since that date there had been no direct contact between 'ulamā and missionaries, Maulawī Sayyid 'Abbās 'Alī had died, and the manuscript of the Ṣaulat had been forgotten until

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1. The S.P.G. had established a mission in Cawnpore at about this time.

Pfander's activities began to attract renewed attention in the early 1840s, for as the Hāfiz explained in his letter to Pfander,

> Till now we have not found any one among the Christians to whom we could have presented this extract and opened a discussion with him. However as your Highness has honoured this city with your presence and entered into various discussions with every one, and pays ... proper attention to the inquiry in the true religion, I thought it right to present it to you, requesting that you may read it with attention and impartiality, and if you were able to answer it, to favor me with your reply, which I then shall have printed along with my book.[1]

In this case it was Pfander who failed to fulfil the request, for he merely sent the Hāfiz some copies of his already published books. He seemed to underestimate the significance of the Saulat, but he may have felt it would be wasted labour to write a detailed reply to a work whose author was already dead. Yet it was the first book to show explicitly that some of the 'ulamā were undergoing a change of opinion about the missionaries, and instead of ignoring them as before, they were beginning to view their activities, and British rule generally, as a possible danger to Islam. William Muir, who as a government official was more sensitive than Pfander to the wider political repercussions of religious controversy, attached greater importance to this book than Pfander had done. Muir described it in 1845 as 'the most popular work against Christianity in the North-West Provinces', and he quoted the concluding paragraph of the work to demonstrate that the attitude of educated Muslims to the presence of missionaries was undergoing a deep change,

> In former times when Christians were not in power, and the noisy violence of their abrogated religion was therefore concealed, our Professors seldom turned their thoughts towards its refutation; but

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1. Hāfiz Muhammad Ja'far to Pfander, extracts translated in the latter's journal for 1843. Pfander made a summary of the contents of the Saulat, but the original has not been used.

> upon the learned of this age it is incumbent as a sacred duty, to use every endeavour for overturning their faith, otherwise these people by insidious efforts will gradually mislead whole multitudes.[1]

Up to this point the leading 'ulamā of the Agra region had seemed very reluctant to recognise the preparation of refutations as a religious obligation, but the circulation of a book which argued that such activity was actually a 'sacred duty' did in time help to change the climate of opinion. The Ṣaulat was also used as a source for arguments and examples by later controversialists.

In contrast to the long and detailed Ṣaulat, Pfander received a number of letters on specific points of Christian doctrine. One to which he paid particular attention was sent to him by a Lucknow 'ālim, one Sayyid 'Abd-Allāh Sabzawārī, and enclosed with it were a number of questions about the Trinity. These 'Ten Perfect Questions' Pfander answered, and later published both questions and answers as an appendix to the Ḥall al-Ishkāl, his comprehensive reply to all the refutations of the Trinity which he had received by 1846.[2] However, Pfander knew nothing about the author, and it can only be assumed that the ongoing discussion of Christianity in Lucknow learned circles had prompted the letter. The questions certainly showed the Lucknow emphasis on the priority of reason in religious discussion, but in comparison to the more detailed refutations of the Trinity which would be set in a philosophical framework, Sabzawārī's questions seemed purposely

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1. W. Muir, 'The Mahommedan Controversy', Calcutta Review, IV (Dec. 1845), reprinted in The Mohammedan Controversy (Edinburgh, 1897), p. 37.

2. Sayyid 'Abd-Allāh Sabzawārī, 'Ten Perfect Questions', English translation of questions and Pfander's answers, in Pfander correspondence, C.M.S. CI1/0227/59; in Urdu, C.G. Pfander, Ḥall al-Ishkāl (Agra, 1847), pp. 93-98.

designed to entrap the missionary in coils of verbal logic merely in order to reduce the Christian doctrines to absurdity.[1]

The letters, questions and enclosures of 'ulamā such as Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad Ja'far and Sayyid 'Abd-Allāh Sabzawārī were significant for their indication of a growing concern about missionary activities, a new readiness to attempt refutations, and a concentration on certain key points of disagreement. However, the Muslims who transformed a vague sense of disquiet into a more positive movement of refutation belonged to a group who frequented the Ṣadr Dīwānī 'Adālat in the capacity of vakīls, muḥarrirs and other posts associated with the running of the provincial courts of Agra. The involvement of such law officers gave the encounter its first open publicity since the Lucknow debate of 1833.

In September 1842 Pfander received a letter from two vakīls, Muḥammad Kāẓim 'Ali and Sayyid Raḥmat 'Alī. He replied immediately and received a second letter within a few days. After this there was a gap of some months until the vakīls wrote again in March 1843, and for the fourth and last time in June 1844.[2] Their first objective was to show that Christ's mission was to the Jewish nation in particular, not a general mission to the whole world. Other issues were then taken up, but even by the second letter Pfander was accusing his opponents of partiality and threatening to end the correspondence. When he felt that the tone and level of the debate could not be improved he suggested the appointment of arbitrators to judge the arguments, but the vakīls refused and the encounter ended abruptly.

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1. The themes of controversy and method of argument are examined in Chapter 5.

2. Pfander, journal for 1843-44.

These two *vakīls* were unknown both to the missionaries and to the evangelical civilians before the correspondence began. Pfander could discover nothing about their backgrounds, and William Muir merely surmised patronisingly,

> These writers are, we believe, *Vakeels* in the civil court at Agra; Kāzim Ali seems to be possessed of some intelligence and sharpness, but his talents do not rise above mediocrity.[1]

When Muir reviewed their contribution in 1845 all seven letters were available to him in manuscript form in Urdu, but their whereabouts are now unknown and they were not subsequently published. Later Muslim controversialists did not refer to their arguments nor acknowledge any influence from them. Their main contribution was tactical not theological, for the *vakīls* made the threat of Christianity a talking point in the law courts as well as in the mosques and *madrasas* of Agra, and amongst a professional, educated class of Muslims whose training in legal procedure and pleading made them adept in debate situations. It seems that it was probably their training as lawyers which led Pfander to accuse them of raising what, in his eyes, were merely sophistical objections to Christianity, for in his opinion they were using the skills of their profession to distort the issues.

But at the very moment in 1844 when this contact seemed to be breaking down irretrievably Pfander heard that another Muslim who was also employed at the *Ṣadr Dīwānī* court was interested in communicating with him. His name was Maulānā Āl-i Ḥasan, who was already known to William Muir as 'a man of very superior abilities, [who] holds a high place in Mohammedan society for

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1. Muir, *Mohammedan Controversy*, p. 33.

attainments and learning. He is an officer of some standing in the Sudder Dewany Adalut, N.W.P.'.[1] He had heard about the vakīls' wranglings with Pfander, and as he possessed a depth of Islamic scholarship which they seemed to lack, and indeed even in Muir's eyes he carried all the attributes of a highly respected 'ālim, he resolved to prepare a refutation of a new kind.

Maulānā Āl-i Ḥasan was to play a very important part in this phase of the controversies, from the point of view of theological argument and content, as well as his effect on the dynamic of the encounters. Attention will be paid to the themes of his published works in chapter five, but it is relevant here to try to assess his motivation and his place in the wider context of Muslim responsiveness to missionary activity. His father was Maulawī Sayyid Ghulām Sa'īd Khān of Mohan, a small town in the state of Oudh.[2] The family had migrated to India from Nishapur in Persia, and had taken service with the nawabs of Oudh. They were originally Shī'ī, but his grandfather, Sayyid Shāh Wajīḥ al-Dīn, had become a Sunnī under the influence of the Delhi shaikh, Sayyid Ḥasan Rasūl Numā.[3]

By the time that Āl-i Ḥasan was born, in either 1801 or 1807,[4] his father had lost his position in the nawab of Oudh's service.

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1. ibid., p. 35. At this time Āl-i Hasan was employed as a 'decree writer' in the Agra Ṣadr courts.

2. Imdād Ṣābrī, 'Ḥālāt-i zindagī-i Maulānā Āl-i Hasan Mohānī Ṣāḥib', in Āsār-i Raḥmat (Delhi, n.d.), pp. 5-19; Farangiyon kā jāl (Delhi, 1949), p. 239; K.H. Qadirī, 'Hasrat Mohānī: a study of his life and poetry', unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, London University, 1971.

3. Ṣābrī, 'Ḥālāt', p. 5.

4. Ṣābrī conjectures 1202 A.H. (A.D. 1807), whereas the order of the Ṣadr Dīwānī 'Adālat of 1846 which awarded him a munsifship gave his age as 45, thus his date of birth would be 1801.

Little seems to be known about his early education in Lucknow, but his family had close connections with the Farangī Maḥall in that city.[1] His biographer suggests that his boyhood was unremarkable, and he does not mention the names of any of his teachers.[2]

After marriage at seventeen, Āl-i Ḥasan settled in the town of Kasmandi in Lucknow District. However, his responsibilities as head of the family and the uncertain future of Oudh in the 1830s may have caused him to think of seeking employment outside the state of his birth. At some date in the 1830s he moved to Allahabad where the Ṣadr Dīwānī 'Adālat for the North-Western Provinces had recently been established. He served there as a muḥarrir, and when the Ṣadr courts were transferred to Agra in the early 1840s he moved on there as a decree writer.[3] Yet by 1845 he had evidently acquired sufficient reputation in the Agra courts to merit William Muir's attention and favourable comments.

About this time Āl-i Ḥasan took two important decisions. First, he decided to try to gain promotion within the British uncovenanted judicial service by sitting for the munṣif's examination. But almost simultaneously he also decided to join in the religious controversies. Eventually these two activities were to clash and in the end both were abandoned, but not before he had made a considerable impact through his encounter with Pfander.

His career ambitions are understandable in the light of his family's previous misfortunes in Oudh and the strong position

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1. Qādirī, op.cit., pp. 30-38.

2. Ṣābrī, 'Ḥālāt', pp. 6-7.

3. Ṣābrī, 'Ḥālāt', p. 7.

which Muslims were maintaining in the British subordinate services in the North-Western Provinces. He had already spent many years in a lowly and unlucrative clerical position in the British courts, but like some other minor officials of this type he had equipped himself with the skills and knowledge necessary for examination entry into the lowest grade of uncovenanted native judge. To be successful he also needed contacts in British civilian circles, and it seems probable that he was sponsored by John M. Ledlie who was later referred to by Pfander as being on friendly terms with Āl-i Ḥasan.[1] If he was successful in the examination his future prospects would seem to lie in the hope of promotion to the rank of Ṣadr Amīn.

Āl-i Ḥasan's second decision was to initiate a new stand against Pfander. In his opinion, missionary activity was in a different category from the other innovations which had taken place in the province since the beginning of British rule. For about two years his growing fear that Pfander's preaching would lead to the undermining of the faith of local Muslims must have conflicted with his ambition to become a judge in British service. Yet he managed for some time to combine preparations for entering public service with public hostility to Christianity. He engaged in a long correspondence with Pfander, which was published in a missionary magazine, the Khair Khwāh-i Hind, and he prepared a book of eight hundred pages in refutation of Pfander's arguments.[2] But his success in 1846 in the munṣif's examination was followed by his adoption by

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1. Pfander to Āl-i Hasan, 22 July 1844. In 1845 Ledlie was employed as assistant register in the Ṣadr courts at Agra.

2. Khair Khwāh-i Hind, an L.M.S. journal published at Mirzapur; Āl-i Ḥasan, Kitāb-i Istifsār (Lucknow, 1845).

the Sadr Dīwānī 'Adālat as a prospective munsif, and a few months later he was appointed to Fatehpur District in Allahabad Division.[1] After this he made no further contribution to the Agra religious controversies.

Āl-i Hasan's sudden withdrawal from the encounter may be explained by the distance of Fatehpur from Agra, and the lack of any missionaries in the immediate vicinity to re-activate his sense of alarm.[2] Pfander tended to assume that all his adversaries had been silenced by the comprehensive rejoinder he published in 1847. Āl-i Hasan may well have felt that further argument with Pfander was pointless. It is possible, however, that problems related to his employment may have influenced first, his withdrawal from contact with the missionaries, and later his decision to leave northern India altogether. Yet British officials were proud to claim that engagement in controversy did not harm an Indian in any way. When William Muir reviewed Āl-i Hasan's book in refutation of Pfander he congratulated the British system for its tolerance in allowing a well known Muslim controversialist to attain the position of judge.[3] Strict logic might indeed have demanded that a government

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1. Order of the Court of Sadr Dīwānī 'Adālat, N.W.P. listing the candidates who were awarded diplomas of fitness for employment as munsifs in the examination of January 1846, Agra, 14 Feb. 1846, in Agrā Government Gazette, Vol. VII, No. 7 (17 Feb. 1846), pp. 82-84; notification by the Sadr Dīwānī 'Adālat, N.W.P. of the appointment of 'Syud Al Hussūn, who has obtained a diploma, to be Moonsiff of the 2nd. or Jehanabad Division, in the District of Futtehpoor', 24 April 1846, in Agra Government Gazette, Vol. VII, No. 18 (5 May 1846), p. 175.

2. Later (1852) the American Presbyterians set up a mission in Fatehpur.

3. W. Muir, 'Biographies of Mohammed for India; and the Mohammedan Controversy', C.R. XVII (June 1852), p. 411.

neutrality policy which debarred a British official from Christian proselytism should also debar a Muslim in the Company's service from any such activity on behalf of his own faith.

However, far from gaining any promotion in the judicial service, Āl-i Ḥasan was dismissed in 1850. His dismissal followed the investigation of charges of corruption against fifteen Indian employees of the Ṣadr Niẓāmat court in Agra. They included a number of Āl-i Ḥasan's friends, notably Ghulām Imām Shahīd whose biography of the prophet Muḥammad, the Maulūd-i Sharīf, had already gone through several editions since its first publication in 1843.[1] William Muir noted in 1852 that both Āl-i Ḥasan and Ghulām Imām 'have been obliged to resign their posts, and the Company's service, in consequence of their having been implicated in the accusation brought against the ministerial officers of the court'.[2]

The corruption charges resulted from the suspicions voiced in 1849 by John C. Wilson, then Magistrate for the district of Moradabad, that the 'amala of the Ṣadr courts had long been extorting bribes to influence the decisions of the court. The Lieutenant-Governor gave Wilson special powers to investigate the charges. The suspects were tried by Wilson in Moradabad, but their appeals were subsequently heard in the Ṣadr court at Agra. The proceedings caused a considerable stir, for not only did the charges impugn the honesty of a number of prominent 'ulamā, but the British judges at the Ṣadr court also felt their own integrity to be in question. A number of these judges not only supported the reputations of the 'amala, but also did their best to prevent Wilson's enquiries and to secure the

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1. Ghulām Imām Shahīd, Maulūd-i Sharīf (Lucknow, 1843; Cawnpore, 1845; Agra, 1845); Hamid Hasan Qadiri, Dāstān-i tārīkh-i Urdū (Agra, 1948), pp. 228-232.

2. Muir, 'Biographies', p. 411.

release after appeal of some of the officers whom Wilson's court had previously found guilty.[1]

There is no doubt that the affair destroyed any hopes Āl-i Ḥasan might have held of further promotion within the British service, although the charges concerned his conduct prior to becoming a munṣif, while he was still a decree writer at the Ṣadr court. On 9 December 1849 he was made over for trial at Moradabad, where in March 1850 J.C. Wilson found him guilty of,

> taking a bribe of 50Rs. in the case of Mohun Lall appellant versus Abud Allee and Sajad Allee Respondent pending in the Sudder Dewanee Adawlat of Agra from the 20th July 1844 to 26th March 1845.

On 22 March 1850 he was sentenced 'to be imprisoned without labour and without irons for the term of 2 years'.[2] But he was then acquitted after an appeal in Agra in May 1850 during which the Ṣadr Judge, A.W. Begbie, had found 'not the slightest evidence which justifies the conviction of the appellants'. Begbie was supported by Judge H.W. Deane who recorded, 'I concur in Mr. Begbie's opinion that there is no proof in this case that Al Hussun took a bribe of 50 Rupees'.[3] After several months in prison Āl-i Ḥasan's release

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1. The corruption cases can be followed in the Judicial Proceedings (Civil and Criminal) of the North Western Provinces from 1849 to 1851. The Court of Directors was concerned at the implications of the affair which was mentioned in a number of despatches, notably a letter of 1 Oct. 1851 on the 'alleged corruption in the Omlah of the Sudder Court N.W.Provinces', in which the judges who had supported the subordinate officials were reprimanded, and horror was expressed that 'for many years the most open and flagrant corruption had prevailed throughout the native Department'. Despatch to India (Judicial), 1 Oct. 1851, paras. 2; 6.

2. J.C. Wilson, Magistrate of Moradabad, to Sec. to Govt., N.W.P., Moradabad, 29 Nov. 1849; Sec. to Govt., N.W.P., to J.C. Wilson, 8 Dec. 1849, N.W.P.Judicial (Civil), 8 Dec. 1849, items 8-9; 'Copy of an abstract statement of prisoners punished ... by the Sessions Judge of Zillah Moradabad at the Jail Delivery for the month of March 1850', case no.4, in N.W.P.Judicial(Criminal), 21 March 1851, item 372.

3. 'Mr. Begbie's minute of 18 April 1850'; 'Mr. H.W.Deane's minute of 1 May 1850', N.W.P.Judicial(Criminal), 21 March 1851, items 384-385.

was thus secured, but with no prospect of his resuming the office of munṣif from which he had been suspended since November 1849.[1] This was made clear by the Ṣadr court's resolution that Āl-i Ḥasan 'has been acquitted of that charge [bribery and corruption]; however the Court do not propose to reinstate him in his situation at Bindkee, or to appoint him to any other Moonsiffee'.[2]

For the Lieutenant-Governor and the Court of Directors had accepted Wilson's certainty that he had at last uncovered a sink of corruption in the courts of the North-Western Provinces. New vakīls were appointed and legislation was quickly prepared to ensure that prosecution of government officers would be easier in the future. The implication was that Āl-i Ḥasan and some of his friends had secured their release only because of the partisanship, and perhaps self-interest, of the Ṣadr judges. On the other hand it was alleged throughout the trials and afterwards that Wilson had used dubious methods to secure the original convictions. Begbie, for instance, criticized Wilson's intention of persuading Āl-i Ḥasan to turn Queen's evidence against his friends after he had received information from 'a party who knew Al Hussun well, that, if pardoned, he would disclose everything'.[3] The 'amala,

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1. 'Quarterly returns of subordinate judicial officials removed or suspended under the Sudder Court's orders ending 31st Dec. 1849', N.W.P.Judicial (Civil), 30 Jan. 1850, item 45.

2. Register, Ct. of Ṣadr Dīwānī, to Sec. to Govt.N.W.P., Agra, 28 May 1850, in N.W.P.Judicial (Civil), 29 June 1850, item 65.

3. J.C. Wilson, 'Final report of my proceedings connected with the delinquencies of the Amlah of the Sudder Deevanee and Nizamut Adawlut', Moradabad, 2 Sept. 1850, in N.W.P. Judicial (Criminal), 10 Oct. 1850, item 75; A.W. Begbie's minute of 18 April 1850, in N.W.P. Judicial (Criminal), 21 March 1851, item 384.

for their part, criticized Wilson for allegedly encouraging lower court officials, such as mukhtārs, to indulge their latent hostility towards their native superiors by inventing evidence against them. Āl-i Ḥasan, in particular, complained that the Magistrate had used 'certain harsh expressions on the occasion of his taking his deposition'.[1]

However, Maulānā Imdād Ṣābrī's retrospective account of the incident suggests that there was another dimension to the bitterness between Wilson and the 'ulamā he had convicted. In this reconstruction of events, which was partly based on reports in the Agra newspaper, the As'ad al-akhbār, it is implied that there was a direct connection between the instigation of the corruption charge and the missionary controversies of five years earlier.[2] For Ṣābrī suggests that the British civilian who was responsible for the charges was acting out of hostility to Āl-i Ḥasan because of the leading role he had previously played in the encounter with Pfander.[3] On this reading the incident might be seen as arising from the deliberate intention of some Company officials to victimize those Muslim judicial officers who had been speaking out for their own religion or defending it against missionary criticism. But apart from William Muir's brief reference to the reasons for the

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1. Abstract of evidence for the prosecution in case no.4 before the Moradabad magistrate in March 1850, enclosed in letter from Register to Sec. to Govt., N.W.P., 20 Feb. 1851, in N.W.P. Judicial (Criminal), 21 March 1851, item 372.

2. The As'ad al-akhbār began weekly publication in Agra in 1847. Its leading articles were frequently devoted to religious matters, and in 1853 its press published 200 copies of Ghulām Imām's Maulūd. Its editor, Muḥammad Qamar al-dīn, had earlier assisted Pfander with his translation work. The original issues referred to by Ṣābrī have not been seen, but the extracts concerning the corruption case are reproduced in Āsār-i Raḥmat, pp. 8-9.

3. Ṣābrī referred to the vindictiveness of a 'Mr Mokson', but it seems likely that he meant the Mr Wilson who had been in charge of the investigations and the trials at Moradabad, Firangiyon kā jāl (Delhi, 1949), p. 240.

'resignations' of Āl-i Ḥasan and Ghulām Imām, there seems to be no mention of the case in missionary records. The judicial proceedings certainly suggest that Wilson was particularly 'harsh' in his references to Āl-i Ḥasan. On the other hand Wilson does not seem to have been closely associated with missionary circles in the North-Western Provinces and the reasons for his alleged personal animosity remain obscure.

There is uncertainty also about Āl-i Ḥasan's movements after his acquittal in May 1850. While Muir described him as 'obliged to resign', it is clear that the government had no intention of ever employing him again. However, according to Ṣabrī he received his full salary for the period of his suspension but of his own accord refused reinstatement, preferring to return to his home where he remained without employment for several years.[1] It seems that he then managed to obtain occasional employment as a vakīl in Delhi, but that he finally accepted an invitation to take up a post in Hyderabad where he died in the Nizam's service in the early 1870s.[2] Thus the incidents in Agra which had involved conflict both with evangelical missionaries and with his judicial superiors, seem to have driven Maulānā Āl-i Ḥasan to take refuge in a distant Indian state, whose rulers, in spite of the subsidiary alliance with the British, were still managing to maintain the aura and patronage of a traditional Muslim court. Although the uncertainty of the data makes firm conclusions difficult, Āl-i Ḥasan's career demonstrates some of the ways in which the missionary and government presence might affect the choices which remained open

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1. Firangiyon kā jāl, p. 240.

2. ibid.

to an educated and ambitious Muslim.

There is no such uncertainty, however, about the importance of the contribution which Maulānā Āl-i Ḥasan made to the internal dynamic of the religious controversies with Pfander. His initial contact with Pfander had been arranged with the help of his civilian friend, John M. Ledlie, and that of Pfander's munshī. Although the initiative came from Āl-i Ḥasan, he asked the munshī to ensure that Pfander would appear to have started the correspondence.[1] Pfander therefore wrote first, but in his reply Āl-i Ḥasan maintained a show of studied reluctance by professing himself to be opposed to the idea of religious discussion.[2] In the end he agreed to participate if Ledlie were to be appointed arbitrator. The next few letters were taken up with an attempt to reach agreement about procedure and terminology, for Pfander adamantly refused to use the plural form of pronouns when referring to the prophet Muḥammad. Āl-i Ḥasan pointed out to him that Europeans always used the respectful forms to address Indian Muslims of high status but he refused to compromise for in his opinion,

> if anyone call himself a prophet, and it should be established that he is not a true prophet, it is not right to pay him reverence and honor. Therefore it is impossible to me to mention the name of Muhammad with the plural forms of verbs and pronouns.[3]

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1. The correspondence between Pfander and Āl-i Ḥasan was published in Roman Urdu and English in a series of issues of the missionary magazine Khair Khwāh-i Hind (Mirzapur) during 1844-45. Pfander later published it in Urdu in his Ḥall al-Ishkāl (Agra, 1847), pp. 1-62.

2. Āl-i Ḥasan to Pfander, 23 July 1844, Khair Khwāh-i-Hind (1844?), p. 165.

3. Pfander to Āl-i Ḥasan, 31 July 1844, K.K.-i H. (Jan. 1845), p. 3.

In the face of such adamancy Āl-i Ḥasan decided to overlook the question of honorifics and he moved on to discuss the crucial argument about the relationship between reason and revelation which had already been singled out by the Lucknow mujtahid in his correspondence with Pfander during the previous year. It is not likely that there was any direct contact between the mujtahid and the munṣif at this early stage and the similarities in their arguments probably reflected the general emphasis on rationalism in the madrasas of Lucknow. However, Āl-i Ḥasan adopted a more scholastic mode of argument in his refutation of Christianity than the mujtahid's circle had done, for he was determined to challenge Pfander's understanding of 'logical possibility' before proceeding to any discussion of religious doctrines and sources. In the eyes of Pfander and other evangelicals the munṣif's rules of 'axiomatic' and 'experimental' impossibility represented the most abstruse and spiritually empty expression of Islamic metaphysics. Yet in the course of ten letters written between July 1844 and February 1845 Āl-i Ḥasan urged Pfander to accept or reject his rules as a necessary preliminary to any further discussion.[1] A break in the correspondence during the winter of 1844-45 was explained when Āl-i Ḥasan wrote in February 1845 that he had spent the previous few months in his native state of Oudh. It is possible that during this visit he met and consulted with some members of the mujtahid's circle. At all events his sojourn in Oudh coincided with the long awaited publication by the mujtahid's nephew, Sayyid Muḥammad Hādī, of his refutation of Pfander's Miftāḥ, in which his denial of the Trinity was also based on rational premises. Certainly Āl-i Ḥasan

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1. Khair-Khwāh-i Hind, various numbers from late 1844 to July 1845; Ḥall al-Ishkal, pp. 1-62.

had made use of the interval to reformulate his own definitions of reason and the rules of possibility, for on his return to Agra he presented Pfander with the ultimatum of either agreeing with his restatement of the powers of reason or the discussion between them must end.[1]

Pfander, of course, could not accept the definition, and the correspondence therefore ended in stalemate before it had proceeded beyond preliminary skirmishes over terminology and definitions. Pfander's publication of the whole correspondence in Roman Urdu and English in the missionary magazine, Khair Khwāh-i Hind with an appendix in which he elaborated his own point of view annoyed the munṣif, partly because he felt it distorted the correspondence, and also because he suspected that Pfander was receiving government support for his publications.[2] However, after many months' preparation his own book was now ready, and he hoped that by launching it at this juncture he might undo the harm he anticipated from the circulation of Pfander's version of the correspondence.

Āl-i Ḥasan's book, the Kitāb-i Istifsār (Book of Questions) was published in Lucknow in 1845. Muir thought that he had been working on it for the past fifteen years, but as half of the 802 pages consisted of a refutation of the books recently published by Pfander and by other missionaries in the North-Western Provinces, most of the preparation must have been done since his employment at the Ṣadr Dīwānī court.[3] In his correspondence with Pfander

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1. Āl-i Ḥasan to Pfander, 4 Feb. 1845, K.K.-i H. (July 1845), p.63.

2. Pfander's 'notes to the Maulavi's letter', ibid.

3. Muir, 'Biographies of Mohammed', p. 89. Muir's copy of the Kitāb-i Istifsār is in Edinburgh University Library.

he had tried to challenge the philosophical assumptions underlying Christian beliefs, but his purpose in the book was more general and pragmatic. He divided the controversial issues between Muslims and Christians into three categories related to the Trinity, to the alleged alteration of the Scriptures, and to the prophethood of Muḥammad. He then posed his objections to the Christian viewpoint on each in the form of eighteen 'questions', which as in earlier books and letters in this format, were really statements and objections. The second half of the book contained answers to the Mīzān al-Ḥaqq and to other missionary publications. His refutation of the Trinity was based on the definition of logical impossibility which he had already urged Pfander to accept in the letters, and his argument that the co-existence of unity and plurality was a logical absurdity was adopted by the controversialists who took over his leadership in the 1850s.

Another new characteristic of the Kitāb was the basing of the age-old argument that taḥrīf ('corruption') had occurred in the Bible, on a detailed comparison of texts which was made possible for the first time in this region by Āl-i Ḥasan's private collection of Arabic, Persian and Urdu translations of the Bible. The mujtahid's circle had several Arabic versions available as early as 1833, but the munṣif possessed in addition, the Urdu translations which had been pouring off 'rival'missionary presses during the previous ten years.

Pfander was at first inclined to dismiss the Kitāb as yet another collection of old arguments, but he soon came to realize that its comprehensiveness and detailed references to European and Biblical sources would make it in the future, 'the storehouse

from which they provide themselves with weapons against the missionary and his message'.[1] This prognosis was correct, for although Āl-i Ḥasan disappeared from the scene of controversy almost as soon as his book was published, the Muslim leaders in the next phases of controversy in Agra and Delhi acknowledged their indebtedness to him for his preliminary study of the sources of Christian doctrine.

In spite of an apparent lull after the munṣif's departure in 1846 the stir which had developed in Muslim circles in Agra did not die down completely. Pfander assumed that he had silenced his critics by his publication of the Ḥall al-Ishkāl. Indeed the leading 'ulamā of Agra had so far refused to take up his challenge, the mujtahid's circle in Lucknow had withdrawn its interest, and the Muslim lawyers whose participation had escalated the encounter had also silently withdrawn. There was no further publication on either side until 1852. Pfander therefore referred to the intervening years as a 'lull', but he continued to preach and to prepare new editions of his books, and there is evidence that concern among the 'ulamā was merely quiescent. Indeed, a discussion took place in Agra in 1848, which although apparently insignificant in itself, nevertheless marked the watershed between the earlier and later phases of open controversy.

The 'ālim who proposed the holding of a public discussion in Agra, to be carried out according to precisely defined rules, was one Maulawī 'Alī Ḥasan of Lucknow, who was accompanied by 'a

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1. Pfander, Report for March/July 1847, Agra, 25 Aug. 1847, C.M.S. CI1/0227/48.

learned Hakim from Delhi'.[1] The discussion took place in a bungalow at the mission compound, in the presence of 'a large company of Muslims, some of them being of the most respectable of the city'.[2] One of the American Presbyterian missionaries was asked to act as a witness.

Pfander regarded this as 'the first verbal discussion' to be held with 'respectable and learned Muslims', yet the occasion did not receive the publicity which the subsequent 'great debate' in Agra was to attract in 1854. The 'ulamā were conceded the choice of using 'arguments from reason' or 'from revelation', but Pfander was clearly relieved when they specified the latter, thus, in his view, keeping the level of debate above 'useless logical wordfights and unfruitful metaphysical disputings ... [and] back on its proper ground, that of revelation'.[3] Yet there is an unwitting hint of things to come in Pfander's record, which reveals that whereas the Lucknow 'ālim wanted to focus on 'reason', it was the Delhi ḥakīm who pushed the discussion in the direction of 'revelation'. However, the latter's charge of the 'corruption' of the scriptures was traditional in form, and it is significant

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1. The only account of this meeting seems to be in Pfander's journal for 1848, C.M.S. CI1/0227/42. No references have been found to it in Muslim sources, nor have the 'ulamā who participated been further identified. There is some confusion in missionary sources between 'Alī Ḥasan and the Āl-i Ḥasan who had recently published the Kitāb-i Istifsār. Pfander's physical descriptions of the two establish beyond doubt that different 'ulamā were involved in the two controversies. Even William Muir, who had closer contacts with the 'ulamā than most British civilians, sometimes confused the identities of some of the participants in the controversies, e.g. in a supplement to his article on 'The Mohammedan Controversy' he described the Kashf al-Astār as written by 'Syud Ali Hassan, the Mujtahid of Lucknow'.

2. Pfander, journal for 1848, C.M.S. CI1/0227/42.

3. ibid.

that he did not make use of any of the European sources which by 1854 would be fuelling the 'ulamā's arguments.

The importance of the 1848 debate lies in its transitional character. It drew in 'ulamā from both Lucknow and Delhi, the two major but contrasting centres of Muslim scholarship. It was the first religious munāẓara of this type to occur in Agra but the audience was small, and it was not publicized. Finally, it generated both the 'reason' and 'revelation' arguments, but with the emphasis now passing to the latter although the formulation of the corruption accusations was still traditional. In contrast with most previous and subsequent encounters, the atmosphere was, according to Pfander's account, relatively friendly, and even momentarily humorous. His impression of the Lucknow 'ālim was of 'a venerable old looking man, with a long white beard and rather a friendly looking countenance', who, when the discussion was over, sent him a 'kind note'.[1] When the ḥakīm accused Pfander of forgetting the rules of Arabic logic he laughingly replied that perhaps he had never learned them. This retort caused 'a general smile' and brought the discussion to an end. The 'ālim did not fulfil his promise of paying Pfander a further visit, and the episode passed over without further remark in either 'ulamā or missionary circles. Yet the 1848 discussion contained some signs of the brewing storm which would break in Delhi some four years later.

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1. ibid.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PROCESSES OF ENCOUNTER:

(2) CONTACT AND CONTROVERSY 1848-1857

DELHI BEFORE THE 'STIR'

When the controversies were suddenly resumed in 1852 the arena was Delhi not Agra. Yet up to this date it had seemed that most of the 'ulamā of Delhi were still unaware of Pfander's publications and activities. Why had Delhi remained impervious to his influence, in spite of the current excitement in nearby Agra, and in spite of the earlier response in Lucknow? Up to the early 1830s the lack of concern in Delhi may be explained by the atmosphere created by the Metcalfe 'system' and outlook, and by the almost total absence of any missionary provocation.[1] Percival Spear's study of Delhi during the era of Mughal 'twilight' has shown that the first generation of British administrators of this 'Non-Regulation' territory was able to avoid the innovations which were characteristic of Lower Bengal and of some parts of the Upper Provinces. 'Metcalfe's system was to have no system; its essential principle was to preserve the old intact'.[2] The contrast between the Delhi territories and the 'regulation' provinces seems to be sufficiently marked to support the view that minimum interference in the traditional religious and cultural life of the region had been conducive to religious harmony in the city, and in particular among the 'ulamā.

Yet by 1832 even Metcalfe, nearing the end of his long association with the Mughal court, seemed to be losing sympathy

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1. See Chap. 1.

2. Spear, Twilight, p. 88.

with its situation. In that year he wrote to Bentinck, 'I have renounced my former allegiance to the House of Timur'.[1] By that date the Delhi Territory had been brought under the institutions and regulations by which the rest of the Upper Provinces were administered, and the explanation for the 'ulamā's continued isolation and unconcern is less obvious than before.[2] In Spear's view, however, the changes in personnel and even in methods of administration actually made little difference,

> The changes which followed Metcalfe's departure were not of any great importance. The system continued under his brother's long rule, and except for the momentary shock of Fraser's murder in 1835 Delhi was happy in having no history.[3]

Thus 'the Regulations were still held at bay' for at least another decade after 1832.[4] While Agra was being transformed into the focus of British power in the north, and was soon to be designated the new provincial capital for the North-Western Provinces, Delhi was being encouraged to decline into an administrative backwater. The office of the Delhi Resident had been abolished and the administration of the territory had been transferred to a Governor-General's Commissioner and Agent. The contemporary British view of Delhi was of a politically unimportant and fast declining city, whose traditional élites should be neither nourished nor abolished, but merely brought to terms with their demise. In this outlook lies the explanation for the continuation of the 'ulamā's non-concern about the trends of British policy for another two

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1. C.T. Metcalfe to Lord William Bentinck, 18 April 1832, in Spear, op.cit., p. 51; D.N. Panigrahi, Charles Metcalfe in India - ideas and administration 1806-1835 (Delhi, 1968), p. 13.

2. Panigrahi, op.cit., p. 158.

3. Spear, op.cit., p. 102.

4. ibid., p. 103.

decades after 1832.

Yet, in spite of the growing British disdain for all things Mughal, the religious and cultural life of the Delhi Muslims continued to thrive even as the political twilight deepened. Although a number of scholars had fled from Delhi in the eighteenth century, the patronage of the court had ensured that the traditional culture was maintained. The accession in 1837 of Bahādur Shāh Zafar placed on the throne of Delhi a king whose personal absorption in theological and mystical studies on the one hand, and in poetry on the other, provided a strong stimulus for the cultivation of those interests among the ashrāf citizens. The reign of the last Mughal king is thus identified as an era of great literary achievement, when the court mushā'aras were inspired by the verses of the rival poets Zauk and Ghālib, and of the king himself. The writings of the 'ulamā show no more awareness than the poems of the age, of the presence and activities of the foreign ruling power. The 'British peace' which initially had recreated conditions in which poetry and theology could thrive, continued through the 1830s and 1840s to facilitate their growth and flowering, irrespective of administrative innovations and interferences.[1] Until 1857 the presence in Delhi of many renowned 'ulamā continued to draw to the madrasas and khānaqahs of the city, scholars from all over the Muslim world, but in particular from the scholarly Muslim families of northern India.

A useful testing point for judging the extent and

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1. K.A. Nizāmī, '1857 se pehle kī Dihlī 'ulamā wa mash ā'ikh kā ijtamā', in Tārīkhī Maqālāt (Delhi, 1966), pp. 210-257; C.F. Andrews, Zak a Ullah of Delhi (Cambridge, 1929), pp. 4-10; 26.

nature of British influence on the Muslim learned and religious élites is provided by the history of the 'anglo-oriental' Delhi College. It is particularly significant also because the subsequent Muslim 'stir' was to start within this institution. The college had been opened in 1824 when the General Committee of Public Instruction responded to the request of its 'local agents' in Delhi to expend part of its newly available funds on a college which would attract students from families in the city which had been 'reduced by the political convulsions from affluence to indigence'.[1] It seems that British observers tended to exaggerate the extent to which political upheaval had devastated the madrasas of the city. At any rate, from its establishment in 1824 the college had a strongly Muslim stamp, although more than half of its students were Hindus. Although an English department was added in 1828 there was a strong emphasis in the syllabus on Arabic and Persian, and a high proportion of the Indian staff were 'ulamā. Considerable satisfaction was expressed with the attainments of the students in the report on the college for 1829.[2] How did this promising example of an 'anglo-oriental' educational synthesis fare during the subsequent two decades of 'Anglicist' emphasis, and what does its history during this era reveal about British relations with the Muslim élites of Delhi?[3]

It seems that in spite of the strong shift in emphasis

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1. J. Kerr, A Review of Public Instruction in the Bengal Presidency from 1835 to 1851 (London, 1853), part 2, p. 191.

2. ibid., p. 193.

3. For the history of Delhi College see 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, Marḥūm Dihlī Kālij, 2nd edition (Delhi, 1945); Dillī Kālij Urdū Maigazīn (qadīm Dillī Kālij nambar, 1953); Reports of the General Committee of Public Instruction, 1835-1842; General reports on Public Instruction in the North-Western Provinces, 1843-1855; Kerr, op.cit.

towards the study of English and of Western science, there were countervailing factors in the organisation of Delhi College, which at first prevented its new activities from causing any prolonged tension among the Muslims of Delhi. Certainly, although the demand for English classes did not seem to be as strong in the cities of the Upper Provinces as in Lower Bengal, the new English department in Delhi nevertheless proved to be increasingly popular in the 1830s and 1840s.[1] In addition, an emphasis was placed on Western science, including mathematics, astronomy and experimental science, which was stronger than in any other government college in the Presidency, apart from the Agra College.[2] During the same period the number of students studying Arabic was falling.[3] The refusal to grant any new student stipends after the Education Resolution of 1835 had caused a temporary decline in overall numbers, and the trend towards demanding tuition fees was hitting the Oriental classes harder than the English classes. A more direct threat to traditional Muslim interests seemed imminent when reforms were proposed to purge the syllabus of the Oriental Department of its religious and scholastic content in order to concentrate on the 'useful sciences'.[4] The changes which were introduced led the principal to maintain that the introduction of 'other subjects of instruction than those usually taught in Native Madressas, had tended to moderate the bigoted and illiberal

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1. Report of the General Committee of Public Instruction of the Presidency of Fort William in Bengal for the year 1835 (Calcutta, 1836), pp. 52-53; Kerr, op.cit., p. 200.

2. 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, Marḥūm Dihlī Kālij, p. 53.

3. In 1833 the highest Arabic class in the college contained only three students, Kerr, op.cit., p. 195.

4. Kerr, op.cit., p. 196.

spirit which mere students of Arabic and Persian Literature were apt to imbibe'.[1]

Yet if these trends and attitudes seemed likely to foster Muslim disinterest in the College, if not actual hostility towards it, the institution nevertheless seemed to maintain its high reputation among Muslims until 1852. Indeed it was reported in 1845 by the principal, Felix Boutros, that Muslim suspicion was lessening not increasing.[2] One reason was that its British patrons and supporters remained true to their original aim of using the institution as a means to placate the displaced Muslim élites of the city. Thus, even when the demand for Arabic declined, there was little pressure to close the department as there was in the same circumstances at Agra College. Indeed, the reports on the college contain frequent references to the need to guard against the likely detrimental effects on the Muslim intake of any policy changes. In 1847, for example, the Lieutenant-Governor rejected a proposal to make Hindi compulsory on the ground that the measure would not be 'regarded with favour by the Mahomedans who formed a large proportion of the pupils of the Institution'.[3] Instead of concentrating funds and interest on the English department and allowing the Oriental Department to atrophy, in the spirit of the 1835 Education Resolution, it was finally decided to synthesize the two departments in one institution under a common principal, but with separate staff. In this way Delhi College survived until 1857 as a genuine example of a thriving 'anglo-

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1. ibid., p. 200.

2. 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, op.cit., pp. 32-33.

3. Kerr, op.cit., p. 196.

oriental' college, in which the oriental element was by no means the subordinate concern.

The synthesis was seen at its best in the teaching of Western science which was introduced by Felix Boutros in the early 1840s, and was continued by Dr Aloys Sprenger after 1845. The teaching of science was not to be restricted to the English department but would be made available to the students of the Oriental Department by the preparation of vernacular translations. Initially, the intention was to translate European scientific works into Arabic, Persian, Hindi and Urdu, but in practice the concentration was on Urdu alone. An important innovation was the founding by the college lecturers, with the help of some senior students, of a 'Society for the Promotion of Knowledge in India through the Medium of Vernacular Languages'. The impact of the 'new learning', especially in science, was significant enough to give rise to the claim that on the eve of the Mutiny Delhi College was on the brink of a 'renaissance'.[1] The intention of the European educationalists who had urged the innovation was to transmit the scientific progress of the West in a form which would be easily assimilated by Muslim and Hindu students whose studies were already proceeding in an atmosphere of cultural harmony. Obviously there was a possibility of conflict between certain Western scientific principles and some of the traditional Islamic and Hindu scientific assumptions, and eventually tension between the college and the _'ulamā_ of Delhi would be initiated by just such a question. However, in the early enthusiastic years

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1. C.F. Andrews, _Zaka Ullah of Delhi_ (Cambridge, 1929), especially pp. 34-46; Spear, 'Ghālib's Delhi', p. 52, refers to 'something of a Muslim renaissance' beginning in Delhi College in the late 1840s and 1850s.

of the 1840s, when effort was still mainly focused on the actual task of translation, and on the collection and usage of scientific apparatus, the teaching of science seemed only to reinforce the sincerity of the College's concern for its Oriental department.

Another important factor behind the College's acceptance in learned circles in Delhi concerned the personality and skills of its principals. Felix Boutros, who was principal from 1840 to 1845, initiated the translation scheme and introduced the teaching of science.[1] His successor, Dr Aloys Sprenger, was a noted orientalist.[2] It is likely that Sprenger's personal contacts with the _'ulamā_ and his interest in Arabic and Persian literature, finally dispelled any suspicion of the College's intentions which still remained by the mid 1840s. This at least was the contemporary British view, for the education report of 1847-48 noted that Sprenger's knowledge of Arabic allowed him to enjoy 'peculiar facilities for obtaining an influence over the

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1. Felix Boutros (1806-64); 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, op.cit., pp. 146-147.

2. Aloys Sprenger (1813-93). Born in the Tyrol, studied medicine and oriental languages at Vienna University. After taking British nationality he joined the East India Company's medical service in 1843, but in 1845 he became principal of Delhi College. In 1848 he was appointed extra assistant Resident at Lucknow, where he catalogued the manuscript collections of the King of Oudh. In 1851 he returned briefly to Delhi, but was then appointed Persian translator to the government at Calcutta and principal of the Calcutta Madrasa. He was dismissed from the latter post in 1856 and returned to Europe where he became Professor of Oriental languages at Berne, and continued his Islamic researches and publications. Among his publications during his time in Delhi, Lucknow and Calcutta are the following: _Technical Terms of the Sufees_ (Calcutta, 1844); _English-Hindustani Grammar_ (1845); _Selections from Arabic Authors_ (Calcutta, 1845); _The History of Mahmud Ghaznah_ (Calcutta, 1847); _The Life of Mohammad, from original sources_ (Allahabad, 1851); _A Catalogue of the Arabic, Persian and Hindustany Manuscripts of the Libraries of the King of Oudh_, Vol.1 (Calcutta, 1854); various articles on Islamic subjects in the _Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal_ during the 1850s. _DNB_, LIII, pp. 425-426.

minds of the educated Mahomedans, who form the great majority of the upper classes in that city'.[1] His employers were later to have doubts about him and several years later he would be charged with dishonesty during his principalship of Delhi College.[2] More to the point, the publication of his Life of Mohammad in 1851 might cause the 'ulamā to have second thoughts about the scholar whose interest in their culture and religion had at first intrigued them.[3] But by then he had left Delhi, and during his principalship his apparent sympathy with the interests which were closest to the hearts of the 'ulamā, had helped to create an atmosphere in which challenging ideas might yet be transmitted without any sign of conflict. Not long after his departure the storm was to break in Delhi College.

There is some support for the success of the College's conciliatory role in the close connections which several prominent 'ulamā of the city had developed with the institution. Among them was Maulānā Mamlūk 'Alī, a member of Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz's circle and a leading 'ālim of the Madrasa-i Raḥīmiyya, who was also head of the Arabic department of Delhi College from 1833 until his death in 1851.[4] Maulānā Imām Bakhsh Ṣahabā'ī was a well known poet, scholar and teacher, who headed the College's Persian department from the 1840s until his death during the recovery of Delhi by the

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1. General Report on Public Instruction in the North Western Provinces of the Bengal Presidency, 1847-48, p. 2; 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, op.cit., pp. 147-148.

2. Lord Canning dismissed Sprenger from the Calcutta Madrasa in 1856 for an offence 'against honour and integrity' involving a debt to Felix Boutros. Canning, minute, 29 July 1856, Governor-General's minutes, Vol.83, Canning Papers, Sheepscar Library, Leeds.

3. A. Sprenger, The Life of Mohammad, from original sources (Allahabad, 1851).

4. 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, op.cit., pp. 151-152.

British in 1857.[1] Most significant for this study was the situation of Muftī Ṣadr al-dīn Āzurda, who was very prominent among the city's 'ulamā, and who also had a long connection with the College, first as examiner for the Arabic classes, and later as a member of the local governing committee.[2] The muftī subsequently took a part in the crisis which was to be provoked by missionary activity in 1852, but during the high peak of the College's success and harmony in the 1840s, it seems that he and several other 'ulamā of various backgrounds and affiliations, but all prominent and respected in the city, were willing to be identified with the educational activities of Delhi College. Among the Muslim aristocracy Nawāb Ḥāmid 'Alī Khān and Nawāb Ḥasām al-Dīn were invited to be members of the college's governing Committee.[3]

However, the seal of Delhi College's acceptance in Muslim ashrāf circles which the connection of the 'ulamā and aristocrats seems to indicate, should not be exaggerated. The education reports continued to stress that in spite of such occasional patronage, the original intention of attracting the sons of the displaced Muslim élites had never really been fulfilled. The

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1. ibid., pp. 152-153.

2. Maulānā Muḥammad Ṣadr al-dīn Āzurda (1789-1868), muftī of Delhi, ṣadr al-ṣudūr; T.U.H., pp. 247-49; G.C.P.I., 1836, p. 104; 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, op.cit., pp.115-16; E.I.², I, pp. 827-8.

3. Nawāb Ḥāmid 'Alī Khān was the son-in-law of Nawāb I'timād al-daula, an ex-minister of the King of Oudh, who had bequeathed 1 lakh 700 rupees for the benefit of Muslim education in Delhi. In return for allowing the diversion of this legacy for the upkeep of Delhi College's oriental department, Ḥāmid 'Alī Khān was invited onto the committee. 'Abd al-Haqq, op.cit., pp. 8-11; 115. Nawāb Ḥasām al-Dīn is described by 'Abd al-Ḥaqq as one of the umarā of the city.

Muslim students who made up 44 per cent of the roll in 1833-36, dropping to 34 per cent by 1855-56, were mainly from mercantile and service Muslim families.[1] The rare enrolment of the son of a nawab was always the occasion for comment, for the Muslim aristocracy continued to prefer private tuition. The sons of the 'ulamā were also taught privately, in some cases by the Delhi College lecturers in their own time,[2] and the many renowned traditional madrasas of the city continued to draw Muslim pupils in preference to the 'anglo-oriental' government college. Indicative of the attitudes of those learned Muslims who ignored the Delhi College are the comments of Alṭāf Ḥusain Ḥālī who was studying in Delhi in the early 1850s yet claimed that he never met a single student from Delhi College during this time. He commented that, 'in Delhi in the school in which I was enrolled, its teachers and students considered the graduates of the Delhi College merely ignoramuses'.[3] Nor were many of its Muslim graduates fulfilling the career hopes of its founders. Whereas the Calcutta Madrasa and the Calcutta Hindu College produced Deputy Collectors and munṣifs, Delhi College Muslim graduates were employed much more modestly, mainly as teachers, but also as dīwāns, vakīls, muḥarrirs, munshīs, merchants and writers.[4]

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1. Statistics based on reports on the College, submitted to the G.C.P.I. (1835-1842) and the General Report on Public Instruction in the North Western Provinces (1843-1855).

2. Sayyid Aḥmad Khān and Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī were both taught privately by Maulānā Imām Bakhsh Ṣahaba'ī.

3. Alṭāf Ḥusain Ḥālī, quoted in Hafeez Malik, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Muslim Modernization in India and Pakistan (New York, 1980), p. 51; cf. 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, op.cit., p. 8.

4. 'Statement shewing the employment of some of those students who have left the Government Colleges and Schools', appendix to G.C.P.I., 1839-40, p. clxxxii; for Muslim employment see annual reports on Delhi College in General Report on Public Instruction in the North Western Provinces of the Bengal Presidency, 1848-49, p. 67; 1849-50, p. 30; 1850-51, p. 34; 1851-52, p. 28.

The success of the college was therefore a qualified one, given the particular expectations of its founders. Nevertheless there is sufficient evidence to argue that just before the conversion crisis which occurred within its walls, Delhi College had achieved a considerable degree of acceptance and support among the ashrāf Muslims of Delhi. Some of the graduates of this era would later achieve literary distinction and respect,[1] its vernacular publications, especially in science, were the subject of interested comment, and members of its non-Muslim staff mixed with 'ulamā circles. Apart from Sprenger, one 'Master' Rām Chandra, a Hindu science teacher in the Oriental Department, was well known to the 'ulamā. Even among those who ignored or despised the institution there is no evidence of any strong or positive hostility. There were periodic withdrawals of Muslim students from the roll, but it seems that these reflected general trends in the whole Presidency rather than local grievances, as happened, for example, in most colleges after the Education Resolution of 1835. Minor frictions certainly occurred, when, for example, the College authorities refused to grant Friday as a half-holiday, yet this question was resolved amicably by a compromise allowing a shorter working day, which seemed to satisfy the 'ulamā.

A factor which was extremely important to the difference in atmosphere between Agra and Delhi in the 1830s and 1840s was the absence in the latter city of the strong Christian presence which was increasingly evident in Agra. The Delhi civilians were not noted for their evangelical sympathies. The Metcalfe family

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1. Among them were Nazīr Ahmad and Muhammad Zakā Allāh; C.F. Andrews, op.cit., pp. 37-38.

seems to have professed no more than a conventional concern for Christian observances. Charles Metcalfe's missionary biographer certainly found no cause to dwell on his subject's religious views.[1] A later biographer also left untouched the question of his religious views when examining Metcalfe's 'heritage and outlook'.[2] Among Metcalfe's subordinates and successors in Delhi city only John Lawrence is claimed by the evangelicals. Lawrence was posted to various rural districts between 1829 and 1842, and he was in the city itself from 1842 to 1846. Yet although Lawrence would later give strong support to the C.M.S. missions in the Panjab, he was not at this time associated closely with any missionary society. In any case 'he rarely talked on religious questions', a characteristic which was subsequently regarded as a 'shortcoming' by some of his more outspoken evangelical friends.[3]

Definition of the religious outlook of those Europeans who were more closely associated with Delhi College presents some difficulties. In the opinion of C.F. Andrews 'practically all the teachers' and 'most of the English servants of the East India Company' who were posted to the north, including Delhi, were 'religious men'.[4] To this factor he attributed the absence in the evolution of the Delhi College 'renaissance', in contrast to what had happened in Calcutta, of any 'direct tendency towards

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1. E. Thompson, The Life of Charles, Lord Metcalfe (London, 1937).

2. D.N. Panigrahi, Charles Metcalfe in India - ideas and administration 1806-1835 (Delhi, 1968).

3. R. Bosworth Smith, Life of Lord Lawrence, 6th ed., 2 vols. (London, 1885), II, pp. 206-7.

4. C.F. Andrews, op.cit., p. 40.

irreligion'. This view accords with the contemporary observation of 'Master' Rām Chandra that, in contrast to other government colleges where the Principals 'taught the native youths to despise all religion', Delhi College was 'peculiar' in affording opportunities for enquiry into matters of 'a religious nature' by both students and teachers.[1] On the other hand there is evidence that Dr Aloys Sprenger discouraged any tendencies towards Christian evangelism, and he subsequently refused to employ a lecturer who was about to become a Christian.[2] The founders of the S.P.G. mission and college in Delhi certainly stressed the positive 'exclusion' of religion from Delhi College in justification of their own new venture.[3] The conflict in these views may perhaps be accounted for by the differing religious outlooks of each commentator: on balance it seems likely that until Sprenger's departure, the Principal's adherence to the notion of religious neutrality was an important negative factor behind the college's acceptance in the city. Yet throughout the 1840s, even though direct evangelism was thus discouraged, an atmosphere which was conducive to scientific enquiry and experiment was nevertheless inherently favourable to the seeking out of information on religious questions. Furthermore, there was one

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1. 'Delhi; by a Native Christian', Christian Intelligencer (Nov. 1858), pp. 411-412.

2. Rām Chandra recorded that Dr Sprenger, who was by then principal of the Calcutta Madrasa, recommended him for a post, but 'when he heard of my turn towards Christianity he was quite against it ... he wrote to me that I would become quite useless by turning a Christian'. Rām Chandra's diary for 10 June, 1852, in E. Jacob, A Memoir of Professor Yesudas Ramchandra of Delhi, Vol. I (Cawnpore, 1902), p. 59.

3. Circular to advertise the proposal to found an S.P.G. mission in Delhi, 1852, among papers of the Rev. M.J. Jennings.

exception among an otherwise 'neutral' or religiously 'indifferent' European staff. J.H. Taylor, the longest-serving member of staff, had been secretary of the local committee when the College was established in 1825, was headmaster for many years, and finally took over the principalship in the 1850s.[1] Taylor exerted a consistent Christian influence, albeit in a very unobtrusive manner, and without any attempt at direct proselytism among his pupils. Over the course of thirty years, the respect he won as a teacher partly reflected his simple Christian life-style and a quiet determination to witness to his faith.

If evangelicalism was rare and unobtrusive among the Delhi civilians, the city was still failing to attract the resources of the various Protestant missionary societies even at the height of their sudden expansion over northern India in the 1830s and 1840s. This is surprising, for it was acknowledged policy to 'occupy' centres of traditional religious and cultural significance, yet Delhi unlike Benares, where there were several mission stations, had been passed over. In the case of the Church Missionary Society, Agra had been chosen, after some argument, in preference to Delhi, on the grounds that it was a growth point where British administrative activity would attract the kinds of educated and influential Indians who were envisaged as being susceptible to Christian influence.[2] When Carl Pfander had offered his services to the C.M.S. he had hoped he would be sent to Delhi because of the city's Muslim associations, but the society had

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1. 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, op.cit., p. 149.

2. See Chap. 3, p.133.

by this time decided for Agra.

Another reason why the expanding missionary societies by-passed Delhi was the knowledge that the city was already nominally occupied by the Baptist Missionary Society, for there was some reluctance to poach on already occupied territory. Such hesitancy is nevertheless surprising, because the Baptist Mission in Delhi was actually very weak. John Thomas Thompson, a Eurasian, had been sent to Delhi in 1818 by the Serampore Baptists, and he remained there until his death in 1850. He worked on his own for most of this period, and although he was an active bazaar preacher, his demeanour was not calculated to cause any deep reaction among his hearers.[1] He concentrated on Hindu evangelism, as most Baptists still did at that time, and he made frequent visits to places of Hindu pilgrimage, such as the Hardwar fairs. He seems to have felt no special interest in Islam, or in the Muslim population of Delhi, and during the thirty-two years he was preaching in the city there is no reference to any 'stir' caused by his activities. It was partly a case of familiarity breeding quiet contempt in some quarters, and even, some reports would suggest, a degree of amiable acceptance in others. No other missionaries joined Thompson, and no press was established. He did prepare some publications for printing in Calcutta, including some translations of parts of the Bible and some academic reference works, notably an Urdu-English dictionary. He opened a small mission school in the city, but it was intended for the children of low caste families, and neither this nor his other activities

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1. E.S. Wenger, 'Missionary Biographies', Vol. IV, pp. 41-42, unpublished MS, Carey Library, Serampore; Rev. J.T. Thompson's reports published in the Calcutta Missionary Herald.

made any impact on the learned classes. Although he seems to have had friendly personal contacts with some of the staff at Delhi College, he did not press his religious message upon them. He thus constituted no source of provocation in himself, and yet his very presence seems to have held off the attention of other missionary societies which might have been more provocative in their methods. Thus as late as 1850 the great city of Delhi lacked the missionary institutions - colleges, hospitals, orphanages and presses - which were being established in almost every other cultural, administrative and military centre in northern India.

When the Muslim 'stir' began, the Delhi 'ulamā stated that they had previously had no reason to feel alarmed about the Christian religion which was professed by their rulers. Certainly there is little evidence of 'contact', and none of 'controversy' before 1852. The Reverend Joseph Wolff had held discussions with some Delhi 'ulamā, led by Maulānā Muḥammad Isḥāq, when he had passed through the city in 1832, but his preaching had produced no long-term effects. More significantly, Pfander had visited Delhi in 1844, and had noticed a strong contrast with his reception in Agra, for in Delhi, he reported,

> The people behaved with much more propriety than I expected. The Musalmans sometimes showed their surprise or expressed their displeasure at what we said against the Koran and Muhammad, but they never showed such anger as they often have done at Agra, neither did ever a Mussalman or Hindu hoot or hiss when we left them, as is often the case there.[1]

During that visit Pfander went to the Jāmi' Masjid where he talked

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1. C.G. Pfander, Journal of a missionary tour, 26 Nov. 1844, C.M.S. CI1/0227/39.

with a group of 'ulamā in the presence of a crowd of about two hundred Muslims, and he also visited what he termed the 'principal Muhammadan Madrasa', probably the Madrasa-i Raḥīmiyya. He seized the opportunity to distribute some of his 'controversial books' to 'the learned Muhammadans', for he thought that they were 'new at this place'.[1] His comments show that up to 1844 the Delhi 'ulamā had not been brought into touch with Christian evangelism of Pfander's type. This visit made no apparent impact at the time, but it had taken him into the institutions where the stir would centre a few years later, and subsequent comments by some of the 'ulamā suggest that it was probably this first distribution of Pfander's books in Delhi which prepared the ground for the later reaction.

Yet for several years afterwards there was no visible effect, and the absence of any missionary impact on Delhi was vouched for as late as May 1852 when the Reverend M.J. Jennings, an evangelical Company chaplain who had recently been posted to the city, remonstrated against the previous neglect of Delhi and the resulting wasted opportunity for evangelism,

> The only thing we have done is to establish a College, where everything is taught but religion, which is carefully excluded. There was a Baptist Missionary, some years ago: this has been the only attempt to Christianize Delhi. The Roman Catholics and the Free Kirk have both meditated taking possession of this neglected city; but it is hoped, if an efficient Mission be established, they will be dissuaded from commencing on a pre-occupied field.[2]

Jennings' lament was to be followed by the opening in 1854

1. ibid.

2. Miss Jennings, 'Memoir of my Father, the Rev. M.J. Jennings, M.A.', unpublished typescript, Cambridge Brotherhood Library, Delhi.

by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, of a new mission station in the heart of Delhi. In the two years which elapsed before this mission was actually established the city was stirred by a series of incidents, focusing on Delhi College, which caused some of the 'ulamā suddenly to take notice of Christian missionary activities in the surrounding region.

THE REASONS FOR THE 'STIR' IN DELHI

Although it has been argued that the influential Muslims of the city either acquiesced in, or ignored, the existence of Delhi College, the religious crisis of the early 1850s was nevertheless connected with the new scientific teaching which had initially been so enthusiastically received in the college. When principals Boutros and Sprenger had encouraged the translation of European scientific works into Urdu for the use of students in the Oriental department of the college, a key role had been played by a lecturer by the name of Rām Chandra. This Kāyasth, from Panipat, was also at the centre of the ensuing religious controversies.[1]

In spite of the difficult family circumstances which interrupted his studies, Rām Chandra had gained a scholarship at Delhi College where his mathematical abilities were quickly recognised and he had been rewarded in 1844 by being appointed a

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1. Rām Chandra, subsequently named 'Yesudas' (1821-1880). For biographical details see A. de Morgan, editor's preface to A treatise on problems of Maxima and Minima, solved by algebra, by Ramchundra (London, 1859), pp. iii-xxiii; Ṣadīq al-Raḥman Qidwā'ī, Master Rām Chandra, qadīm Dihlī Kālij kī ek ahm shakhṣiyat (Delhi, 1961); E. Jacob, A Memoir of Professor Yesudas Ramchandra of Dehli, Vol. I (Cawnpore, 1902); 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, op.cit., pp. 48; 153-154.

science lecturer in the Oriental department.[1] He was personally responsible for most of the Urdu translations of scientific works which were made available in the late 1840s, and he later took credit for propagating the 'new science' among fellow Hindus and also among the Muslim students of the college. Recalling the first impact of his activity he wrote,

> These translations were introduced into the Oriental department as class-books; so that in two or three years many students in the Arabic and Persian departments were, to a certain extent, acquainted with English science: and the doctrines of the ancient philosophy, taught through the medium of Arabic, were cast into the shade before the more reasonable and experimental theories of modern science.[2]

His own original contribution was in the sphere of mathematics. A textbook which he prepared for publication in English, with the title A Treatise on Problems of Maxima and Minima solved by Algebra, initially received a cool and critical reception in Calcutta, but was subsequently recognised as valuable by a number of mathematicians in England.[3] However, his researches and teaching in mathematics did nothing to upset traditional presuppositions among his pupils or the learned in the city. If anything, the Treatise served to remind European mathematicians of the classical Hindu contribution to mathematical science. On the other hand, his 'natural philosophy' classes in the Oriental department provided one of the main channels through which Copernican

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1. His father who had been employed in the Revenue Service at Delhi, died when Rām Chandra was ten. His mother had five other sons to educate. Morgan, op.cit., p. xv.

2. Rām Chandra, quoted in Morgan, op.cit., p. xvi.

3. 1st. English edition, Calcutta, 1850, reviewed in C.R., XIV, No. 28 (Dec. 1850), pp. xxxii-xxxiii.

astronomy gradually came to the attention of Indian scholars in the mid-nineteenth century. It was thus over astronomy not mathematics that the concern of the 'ulamā first found expression.

In some other parts of the non-European world, including Japan and Turkey, the Copernican system had been received, if not thoroughly absorbed and accepted, during the late eighteenth century.[1] Yet Indian Muslim scholars were still immune from its influence until the text-books which were used in Delhi College brought the system to the attention of the students. In the Oriental Department the texts were studied in the Urdu translations prepared by Rām Chandra and others.[2] Dissemination of the new teaching was not limited to the lecture-room, for the ideas were also propagated through two journals which were published in Urdu, the bi-monthly Fawā'id al-Nāẓarīn (Useful to the Readers), and the Muḥib-i Hind (Friend of India).[3] He made no secret of the fact that it was difficult to find Indian subscribers for either journal, and they were kept artifically alive for the short years of their publication by the patronage of British officials in Delhi.[4] However, subscription figures for other vernacular

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1. Copernican theory was received in Japan between the late 1770s and 1808, in which year Shiba Kokan published the Explanations of Copernican Astronomy. However, some scholars, including Buddhists, continued to write anti-Copernican treatises long after this date. D. Keene, The Japanese Discovery of Europe, 1720-1830 (Stanford, California, revised edition 1969), pp. 85-88; Copernicus was first mentioned in Ottoman literature in the late 17th century, but was not widely received among Turkish scholars until the mid-nineteenth century, A. Hourani, Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age (London, 1970), p. 41. Henry Martyn had found in 1810 that his 'ulamā friends in Shiraz were unwilling to accept Copernican principles.

2. Among the English text-books on astronomy which were used in the Delhi and Agra Colleges in the 1840s and 1850s were, John Brinkley's Elements of Astronomy, 6th ed.(Dublin, 1845); Sir John Herschel's Outlines of Astronomy (London, 1849) and Joseph Guy's Elements of Astronomy, 5th ed.(London, 1834).

3. Rām Chandra, in Morgan, op.cit., p.xvi; Qidwā'ī, Master Rām Chandra, pp. 61-70.

4. Rām Chandra, in Morgan, op.cit., p. xviii.

journals were usually very low at this time, and it was common practice to circulate one copy of a journal from scholar to scholar. By this means and by hearsay, the 'ulamā of the city became gradually aware of what was being taught in the Delhi College science classes. Rām Chandra later congratulated himself that in the Fawā'id al Nāẓarīn not only 'notes of English science were given' but also 'the dogmas of the Mohamedan and Hindoo philosophers were exposed ... [and] many of the Hindoo superstitions and idolatries were openly attacked'.[1]

The first identifiable reaction occurred in 1848, when Sayyid Aḥmad Khān, who was then serving as a munṣif in Delhi, published a treatise in defence of traditional Muslim cosmology, entitled Qual-i matīn dar ibṭāl-i ḥarakat-i zamīn (Firm assertion with regard to declaring false the motion of the earth).[2] In later years Sayyid Aḥmad accepted the Copernican system, and refuted his own defence of the Ptolemaic cosmology, yet his leadership in 1848 of the initial traditional reaction against Western scientific teaching is a pointer to the probable attitudes of many of the learned Muslims of Delhi. Indeed Rām Chandra surmised that Sayyid Aḥmad was 'secretly assisted by some other celebrated moolwees of the city'.[3] Whether or not the College's science teaching had been directly responsible for precipitating the Qual, it was certainly responsible for the subsequent counter-action, for, 'a moolwee, and some higher students of the Arabic department, got

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1. ibid., pp. xvi-xvii.

2. Sayyid Ahmad Khān, Qual-i matīn dar ibṭāl-i ḥarakat-i zamīn (Delhi, 1848); Troll, op.cit., pp. 147-149.

3. Rām Chandra, in Morgan, op.cit., p. xviii.

up a sharp reply'.[1] When both sides had made their statements, the incident was apparently forgotten. Nevertheless, the origins of the subsequent religious tension may be traced to this dispute over astronomy, for it was the first occasion on which Islamic and European ideas had come into direct conflict, and the science department of the College, and in particular the lecturer Rām Chandra, who was to be prominent in the religious disputes, were at the heart of the tension. On the other hand, if subsequent events had not reinforced the _'ulamā_'s doubts, the incident would probably have been forgotten, for the rest of the college curriculum was not felt to be in conflict with Islamic principles.

But in 1852, 'Master' Rām Chandra, who was already closely identified with the College's support for Copernican principles, was baptised a Christian. His own account shows that the evolution of his acceptance of Christianity was very gradual. If anything it reinforces the view that direct evangelical pressure was still absent in Delhi. While he was a student at Delhi College, and after his first appointment as a lecturer, Rām Chandra seemed inclined to scoff at all religions, and at that time he reassured some _paṇdits_ and _'ulamā_ who were anxious about him that there was no danger of his conversion to Christianity.[2] He rejected the hesitant attempts made by the Baptist missionary, J.T. Thompson, and the College headmaster, J.H. Taylor, to encourage him to read Christian literature. Yet even in this stage of self-proclaimed agnosticism, some signs of spiritual unrest may be detected in his

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1. ibid.

2. ibid., p. xvii.

study, but rejection, of the 'Bengal reformers'.[1]

He later attributed the first awakening of an interest in Christianity to the chance witnessing of an Anglican service at St. James' Church in Delhi. Until this moment, he recalled, he had believed the European officers to be, like himself, sceptical about religion. 'It was then my conscientious belief that educated Englishmen were too much enlightened to believe in any bookish religion except that of reason and conscience, or deism'.[2] Suddenly he realized that the Company's servants were actually sincere Christians. After this, his own total acceptance of Christianity was a gradual process. He began to read the Bible which his colleague, Taylor, had given him years before, and he borrowed books on Christianity from a Captain Lewis and his wife. At the same time he studied the Qur'ān and the Gītā, and discussed particular questions with various paṇḍits and 'ulamā, the latter including Maulānā Ulfat Ḥusain, the Qāẓī of Delhi, with whom he would later engage in controversy, and Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī, who would later take up the defence of Islam against the missionaries.[3] His spiritual crisis came to a head around 1850, but an announcement of his conversion seems to have been delayed by a circumstance which was at the heart of much contemporary missionary concern about the obstacles to the evangelism of Hindus. Legislation was about to be enacted which would permit converts to retain their rights to

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1. Rām Chandra, Diary, 10 July 1852, 'Why I became a Christian', in Jacob, Memoir, p. 72.

2. Rām Chandra, in Morgan, op.cit., p. xvii.

3. Jacob, Memoir, p. 45 n.

inherit property.[1] The property question seems to have been a very real issue for Rām Chandra whose early marriage to a deaf and dumb girl from a wealthy family had been arranged to off-set his own family's sudden impoverishment.[2] At all events, in his retrospective account of his conversion, he did not attempt to hide the fact that he feared to declare himself a Christian until he had made sure of alternative financial resources, specifically through the publication of his mathematical treatise.[3] It seems that he had decided on baptism before March 1851 when he visited Calcutta to try to get the book re-published, but adverse reviews, and delays in decisions about re-publication, caused him to remain 'in great distress of mind' until the summer of 1852.[4] He finally decided to be baptised without waiting any longer to hear how the book had been received in England where it had been sent for scrutiny by an eminent mathematician, Professor Augustus de Morgan of London University. Thus, on 11 July 1852, 'Master' Rām Chandra, and Dr. Chaman Lāl, a Hindu sub-assistant surgeon,[5] were baptised

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1. Missionaries had long been urging the Government of India to legislate on the question of inheritance so that converts to Christianity might retain their property. Others felt that such interference would infringe the Company's 'neutrality' policy, thus the changes were not fully enacted until April 1850. J.W. Kaye, Christianity in India (London, 1859), pp. 455-464.

2. Jacob, Memoir, p. 5.

3. 'The difficulties of debts and of marrying my daughters in Delhi on becoming an open Christian troubled me greatly', Rām Chandra, Diary, 10 June 1852, in Jacob, op.cit., p. 59.

4. Rām Chandra, in Morgan, op.cit., p. xxi. His Treatise had been criticised as 'schoolboy-like' in C.R. XIV, No. 28 (Dec. 1850) pp. xxxii-xxxiii.

5. Chaman Lal (1815-1857), a Kāyasth who was educated in Delhi and Agra Government Colleges, Duff's College and the Govt. Medical College in Calcutta. He worked as a sub-assistant surgeon in Delhi and was killed in Delhi in 1857.

in St. James' Church in Delhi, where he had earlier experienced his first insight into Christianity.

The baptism of these two educated and well-known Hindus caused considerable excitement in Delhi. The British authorities feared an outcry and made careful plans to prevent any disturbance at the church by measures which included the appointment of a bodyguard composed entirely of Muslims, for whom, it was supposed, the conversions were a matter of indifference.[1] Yet British patronage of this significant baptism was not disguised. The Commissioner, Thomas Metcalfe, and several senior officials, including A.A. Roberts (magistrate) and John Gubbins (judge) were present at the service. Rām Chandra's godparents were the Captain and Mrs. Lewis who had earlier lent him books on Christianity, and the civil surgeon, Dr. Ross. According to the chaplain, the Reverend M.J. Jennings, thousands flocked to watch the ceremony, but rioting was averted by the precautionary measures.[2] An account of the baptism in the Calcutta Christian Observer stated that 'the news ran like wildfire through the place', and that it aroused horror and speculation among the Hindus of the city.[3] There were immediate withdrawals from Delhi College, suggesting that the College was felt to be the main source of Christian influence. The education report for 1852-53 noted that 'for more than a month previous to the baptism, boys were prevented entering the College from the

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1. M.J. Jennings, 30 July 1852, in Miss Jennings, 'Memoir of my Father', p. 29.

2. ibid.

3. Calcutta Christian Observer, New Series XIII, 153 (Sept. 1852), p. 428.

violent agitation that prevailed throughout the City on that subject', and 'some of the boys were sour and discontented for some weeks after the conversion of Professor Ram Chunder'.[1]

On the other hand, the significance of the incident was perhaps exaggerated in the British reports. No disturbances actually occurred and the Delhi College roll was to recover its former strength by the beginning of the next year. The baptisms of 1852 were not the prelude which was feared to a mass conversion of educated Hindus, and there were no similar conversions in Delhi until after 1857. Furthermore, on the face of it there seemed to be no reason for the Muslims in the city to share even the temporary anxiety which was obvious among the Hindus. Yet the focus on Master Rām Chandra, who had already been involved in giving the 'ulamā one cause for concern, and was at this very moment creating yet another, seemed to awaken among some of them, an as yet unformulated anxiety about the new trends which were becoming apparent in Delhi College.

For during the time when Rām Chandra was preparing for baptism, he had come into direct confrontation with a prominent Delhi 'ālim. Together with a Hindu who was said to be a teacher at Amritsar Government College, Rām Chandra had written a letter to the Qāẓī of Delhi, Maulānā Ulfat Ḥusain, with whom he had

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1. General Report on Public Instruction in the North-Western Provinces for 1852-53 (Agra, 1853), pp. 40-41.

previously discussed religious questions.[1] The letter had challenged the evidence for the prophet Muḥammad's splitting of the moon. The controversy over miracles which ensued was in some respects reminiscent of Henry Martyn's miracle controversy with the 'ulamā of Shiraz forty years earlier, but it also reflected the rationalism and scepticism which the study of Western science was by this time inculcating in Delhi College.[2] On this occasion Rām Chandra was challenging a particular Muslim miracle, but the implication could be drawn that all claims to divinity and prophethood must be substantiated by historically acceptable tests. This open attack on a leading Delhi 'ālim by two Hindu college lecturers was already annoying the 'ulamā when Rām Chandra's baptism rendered him, in their eyes, a potentially much more dangerous enemy.

Up to this point the disputes on scientific and religious questions, and even the conversions and baptisms, had been a specifically Delhi affair. A link was then forged with the earlier controversies in Agra, when the C.M.S. missionaries in

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1. Rām Chandra's biographer and son-in-law, Edwin Jacob, attributed the main responsibility for the letter to Rām Chandra for, 'The appendix only appears to have been written by someone else, but the rest of the tract appears to me to be Ramchandra's own work ... A resident of Delhi declares it to be Ramchandra's writing, while another says the Hindu combatant was a teacher in the Government College of Amritsar and he was assisted in the argument by Ramchandra of Delhi. There was, as far as I know, no Government College in Amritsar in 1850-54'. Jacob, Memoir, p. 46.

2. No copy of the correspondence has been seen but it was reviewed in the report of the Agra Christian Tract and Book Society, for the year 1852, and in the Missionary, III, 4, (April, 1853), p. 118.

that city decided to publicize the miracle dispute. William Muir, who now held the important position of Secretary to Government, and who seven years earlier had published an article about the 'Mohammedan Controversy' in the Calcutta Review, now decided to edit the letters between the Hindu lecturers and the Qāzī. They were published in 1852 by the Agra Tract and Book Society in a compilation called Bahs mufīd al 'ām fī tahqīq al-Islām (A dispute, which is useful for everybody, on the investigation of Islam). Muir added advice on how Christians should respond to the miracle controversy, and he also pointed out what he held to be further shortcomings in Islam. Important also was the addition of an appendix in which he published a letter from a Karachi Muslim who had admitted doubts about the truth of Islam. 'Abdallāh Athim, who was from Amballa in the North-Western Provinces, had come into contact with a C.M.S. missionary while he was working in Sind. He chose to express his religious doubts in the form of twenty-three questions about Islam which he sent to some prominent 'ulamā in Delhi and in other cities, stating that

> I was born a Mohammedan and, at my twenty-fourth year, am still of the same religion: but I now perceive by the exercise of my intellect, that the Mohammedan religion is false, and the Christian true: because there is no proof whatever of the inspiration of Mohammed ... Therefore I am urged by the fear of future punishment to ask the sages of Islam, if their religion be really true, to prove it to me ...[1]

The Agra missionaries were eager to disseminate these

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1. Translated by W. Muir and quoted in his 'Biographies of Mohammed for India; and the Mohammedan Controversy', pp. 98-99. 'Abdallāh Athim's 'Questions' were later published separately as Chand sawālāt Islām kī bābat (Ludhiana, 1867), pp. 1-8. For biographical details on 'Abdallāh Athim see Missionary Register (London, 1855), pp. 347-349.

questions along with the miracle controversy as evidence that the Christian message was at last beginning to penetrate among educated Muslims as well as among Hindus. For this very reason the 'ulamā also took these so-called 'Karachi questions' very seriously. Karachi might be far distant, but 'Abdallāh Athim really belonged to the North-Western Provinces and to the ashrāf category of Muslims. After his conversion in 1853 he returned to his homeland to take up a position in Government service. The baptism of an educated Muslim, and the capital which the missionaries tried to make out of it, caused the Delhi 'ulamā to begin to question their previous lack of concern about the missionary activity which was taking place on their doorstep.

The Agra missionaries certainly considered that it was the publication of the Baḥs mufīd al-'ām, and in particular its appendix, the 'Karachi questions', which transformed the situation for the Delhi 'ulamā. The format of Pfander's books, which were already circulating in the city, was a conscious imitation of Muslim religious publications, and of the Baḥs too it was commented, 'the whole has been lithographed, and got up, as much as possible, in the style and appearance of Native publications'.[1] The results were immediately gratifying from the missionary point of view, for the report of the Agra Christian Tract and Book Society commented the next year,

> It created a powerful stir among the followers of the Prophet in all the places where copies had been circulated, but especially at Delhi, Ludhiana, Furrukhabad and Agra.[2]

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1. 4th report of the Agra Christian Tract and Book Society, for the year 1852, in Jacob, op.cit., p. 47.

2. ibid., p. 49

It is also clear that Rām Chandra became, after his open commitment to Christianity in July 1852, an important channel of communication between Delhi and the missionary base in Agra. It was he who obtained copies of the 'ulamā's replies to give to Pfander and to other missionaries.[1] He circulated the Bahs, and watched and reported on its effects,

> I have distributed copies of the pamphlet to learned Muhamedans, young and old. The majority of them appear frightened with these publications and other circumstances, which have produced a spirit of enquiry in the minds of some of their young, yet learned, brethren.[2]

He elaborated on the 'other circumstances', for

> The late conversion, the fact of some young men having a leaning towards Christianity, and lastly the distribution of the Mizan-ul-Haq, the Qazi's discussion pamphlet etc., at this juncture, are undoubtedly the reasons which have caused so much stir in Delhi about religious subjects.[3]

The final irritant was the actual opening of the S.P.G. mission station, support for which had been greatly increased in India and Britain by the Hindu conversions. The arrival of the new missionaries intensified the growing Muslim sense of unease, for it was reported in 1854, shortly after the opening, that 'the establishment of the Mission has already had the effect of stirring up the Mussulmans to opposition'.[4]

The impact of these events on different categories of

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1. Rev. W. Kay, in conversation with Maulānā Rahmat Allāh Kairānawī, Agra, 9 Jan. 1854, recorded in Wazīr al-Dīn, 'Taqrīr-i dil pazīr (Khairabad, 1875), p. 4.

2. Jacob, Memoir, p. 49.

3. ibid., p. 52.

4. 'The Delhi Mission', in Missionary, IV (1854), p. 83.

Muslims in Delhi during the year 1852-53 can be reconstructed from the missionaries' reports, for which the main source of information was again Rām Chandra, but with corroboration and supplementation from later comments by some of the 'ulamā. The most immediate impact was felt, not surprisingly, in Delhi College. The immediate, but temporary, drop in numbers when Rām Chandra was baptised might be regarded as the spontaneous panic reaction of both Hindu and Muslim families with sons in the College. Overall attendance recovered in 1853, but the proportion of Muslim students was lower in the 1850s than ever before.[1] In line with this, Rām Chandra's reports suggest that the conversion crisis was actually more sustained among the Muslims than it was among the Hindus, although both converts had been Hindu. In fact there were no more baptisms of students or lecturers of either community before 1857.[2] Yet a number of Delhi College students were seen to be wavering, and a handful who were students at this time did actually profess themselves Christians after 1857. Among these students was a Hindu, Tārā Chand, who was baptised in 1859 and subsequently ordained.[3] The 'ulamā seemed to have immediate grounds for concern, for a Muslim student was suspected of coming under Christian influence, and he was brought to the attention of those 'ulamā who had close connections with the College in an effort to

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1. 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, op.cit., pp. 48; 52.

2. However, there was at least one Muslim conversion in the city. Jennings reported 'obtaining another convert to Christianity of good family, a Mahomedan and a Syad', whom he sent to Calcutta for baptism. M.J. Jennings, 14 May 1853, in Miss Jennings 'A Memoir of My Father'.

3. Rev. Tārā Chand, S.P.G., debated with Muhammad Abu'l-Manṣūr and Muhammad Qāsim Nanautawī in Delhi in the late 1860s and 1870s.

counteract the influence. Rām Chandra suggested that the stir in the College was considerable,

> a student of the first Arabic Class of the College, is taunted and avoided as an infidel and a Christian. Two or three more are reading these books in private, and, of course, fear to be known as enquirers after truth.[1]

According to Rām Chandra, Muftī Ṣadr al-Dīn 'Azurda', a prominent Delhi scholar who had examined the Arabic classes at the College for many years, and who had always supported its activities, was foremost in the attempt to dissuade the waverer from conversion. He was apparently successful, although Rām Chandra's comment that the muftī 'is not inclined to engage in the unpleasant disputation which may end in defeat', suggests that as yet those 'ulamā with strong College connections, were loathe to bring their criticism into the open. The sense of unease was clearly growing, but it was still so restrained in its expression that the Government education reports for these years reflect no awareness of the 'ulamā's concern.

But the stir was soon reflected in the rumours that various scholars in the city were preparing answers to the missionary publications. Significant among these was the rumour that Sayyid Aḥmad Khān, the munṣif who four years earlier had published the astronomical tract which had unleashed the first dispute over the College's science teaching, was now about to publish a refutation of the missionary tracts. Rām Chandra, who knew Sayyid Aḥmad, had given him copies of Pfander's Mīzān al-Ḥaqq

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1. Rām Chandra, in Fourth Report of the Agra Christian Tract and Book Society, for the year 1852. C.F. Andrews indicates that Ẕakā Ullāh was groundlessly suspected of being on the point of Christian conversion at this time, op.cit., p. 60.

and some other works on Christianity and Islam. Among these were the Baḥs mufīd al-'ām and a history of the Church, in Urdu, by William Muir, who was already known to Sayyid Aḥmad from his time in Agra as a munṣif. Rām Chandra commented that he had heard that Sayyid Aḥmad was,

> already printing a small pamphlet showing the errors of the Bible Chronology. I am positively told that he is going to compose a work proving the corruption of our present Bible.[1]

The certainty with which Rām Chandra transmitted this hearsay is particularly interesting in the light of Sayyid Aḥmad Khān's subsequent, post-Mutiny, writings on Christianity when he opposed the view expressed by other 'ulamā that the Bible contained numerous examples of 'literal corruption'.[2] Thus, in the sphere of religious as well as scientific controversy, the foremost 'modernist' of the late nineteenth century was rumoured to have been still in agreement with the more traditional 'ulamā in the immediate pre-Mutiny era. Rām Chandra proffered his own interesting, but unsubstantiated, views about the ulterior reasons which he felt were prompting Sayyid Aḥmad to come forward at this moment as an opponent of Christianity. He thought that the Ṣadr Amīn wanted to ingratiate himself with some of the orthodox Delhi Muslims who had recently objected to his preparation of a book showing, in Rām Chandra's words, 'that the English and Muhamedan laws are identical'.[3] Although this was mere hearsay, the existence of

1. Rām Chandra, Fourth Report, in Jacob, Memoir, p. 51.

2. Sayyid Ahmad Khān, The Mohomedan Commentary on the Holy Bible, English & Urdu. Part 1 (Ghazipur, 1862),7th discourse.

3. Rām Chandra, Fourth Report, in Jacob, op.cit., p. 52.

such rumours suggests that by this time many varied aspects of the British administrative and value systems were being argued about within 'ulamā circles in Delhi, and that individuals were beginning to declare their views.

The missionary provocation also came to the attention of some Muslim aristocrats, including the heir-apparent, Mirzā Fakhr al-Dīn. The channel of communication is uncertain. Rām Chandra reported that the Karachi questions 'have also been forwarded to the heir apparent of the King of Delhi by a European gentleman' whose identity remains unknown.[1] What is more certain is that Mirzā Fakhr al-Dīn was subsequently influential in seeking out those 'ulamā who would be willing to reply to the missionary tracts, for this is corroborated in Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī's works.[2] The death of the prince in 1856 may have deprived the 'ulamā of an important source of patronage and support for their anti-missionary publications, for at least one of the early refutations was published with his help.[3] On the other hand, the claim of one of Rām Chandra's descendants that 'these Delhi religious discussions also became the table-talk of the Court of the so-called pauper Emperor Bahadur Shah of Delhi' seems far-fetched, especially in its accompanying suggestion that the King himself made an attempt to induce Rām Chandra to embrace Islam instead of Christianity.[4]

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1. ibid., p. 50.

2. ibid.; Maulānā Rahmat Allāh Kairānawī, preface to Azālat al-Shakūk, quoted in Imdād Ṣabrī, Āṡār-i-Raḥmat (Delhi, 1967), p. 345.

3. One of the accounts of the Agra debate of 1854 was published in Delhi with the prince's assistance. Al baḥṡ al-sharīf (Delhi, 1270 A.H./1854-55).

4. Jacob, Memoir, p. 55.

Dependence on Rām Chandra's letters and reports for a reconstruction of the Delhi scene from 1852 to 1854, tends to an exaggerated view of the crisis and of his own role in it. Nevertheless, the degree of change which was suddenly taking place can be corroborated from the Reverend Carl Pfander's reports, and more significantly, from the statements of some of the _'ulamā_ who were present in Delhi at the time. When Pfander returned to India in 1853, after a leave which he had spent in Europe, he was told about recent events in Delhi. The contrast between his surprised comments in 1853, and his comments on his visit to Delhi in 1844 when he had remarked on the pacifity of the _'ulamā_ compared to those in Agra, reflects the changes which had taken place during his absence.

> The Muhammedans are in a considerable agitation and that especially so at Delhi. I intend to go there, as soon as I can, to make myself personally acquainted with the movement there. One in the south of India has written against my books, and others, I am told, are doing so in these parts, so I shall probably be obliged to take up again the controversy.[1]

What in Rām Chandra's words amounted to a 'stir', and in Pfander's to a 'movement', is confirmed on the Muslim side by the emergence in defence of Islam, of those _'ulamā_ who would indeed force Pfander to 'take up again the controversy', whether he really wanted to or not.

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1. Pfander to Major Straith, Agra, 4 March 1853, C.M.S. CI/O227/21.

EMERGENCE OF A NEW LEADERSHIP AMONG THE 'ULAMĀ

Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī, who came forward to challenge Pfander in this crisis, belonged to an ashrāf family of north Indian Muslims which had cherished a long association with the former Mughal ruling power.[1] Raḥmat Allāh was descended from Shaikh 'Abd al-Raḥmān Gāzrūnī who had entered India with the army of Sultān Maḥmūd in the eleventh century, and had settled at Panipat, near Delhi.[2] During the period of Mughal ascendancy a member of the family, Ḥakīm Muḥammad Aḥsān, had been given the jāgīr of Kairana as a reward for medical services to the Emperor Akbar. The family retained the lands at Panipat, but lived after this at Kairana. During the reigns of Jahāngīr and Shāh Jahān, the ḥakīm's son, Muqarrab Khān, who was also a royal physician, served the empire in a number of high mansabdārī appointments.[3] It is not known how the family fared in the troubles of the eighteenth century when the Mughal hold over northern India was disintegrating. When the British took over control of the north from the Marathas in the early nineteenth century, the region around Kairana experienced a series of administrative experiments until the district of Muzaffarnagar

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1. For Rahmat Allāh's genealogy and biography see preface to Muḥammad Taqī 'Usmānī, Bā'ibil se Qur'ān tak 2 vols (Karachi, 1968), I, pp. 179-212; Imdād Sābrī, Āṣār-i Raḥmat (Delhi, 1967), pp. 56-ff.; Muḥammad Sālīm, Ek mujāhid me'mār (Mecca, 1952).

2. J.M. Douie, Gazetteer of the Karnal District (Lahore, 1892), p. 173. The 'Makhdumzadas' of Panipat, 'Abd al-Raḥmān's descendants, are described as one of the four important estate owners of Panipat.

3. H. Beveridge (ed.), The Tūzuk-i-Jahāngīrī (London, 1909), I, pp. 27-28, 167, 215, 224, 226, 303, 332; Nawāb Samsām al-daula Shāh Nawāz Khān, Ma'āsir al-umarā (Calcutta, 1890) III, pp. 379-382; 'Usmānī, Bā'ibil se Qur'ān tak, I, p. 181.

was established in 1826.[1]

Rahmat Allāh was born in Kairana in 1818 (1233 A.H.). Until he was twelve he studied at home with his father, Khalīl Allāh, who was also an 'ālim. He was then sent to continue his studies with various scholars in Delhi and Lucknow. In Delhi he attended for a time the madrasa of Maulānā Muhammad Hayāt.[2] According to Maulānā Imdād Sābrī, Rahmat Allāh was also taught by Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī at the Madrasa-i Rahīmiyya.[3] It seems probable, however, that his personal contacts with a number of eminent scholars were of more significance than a period of formal enrolment at any particular madrasa. Among his private teachers were Maulānā Imām Bakhsh Sahbā'ī who was employed as a Persian lecturer at Delhi College in the 1840s, and Maulānā Hāfiz 'Abd al-Rahmān Chistī.[4] At some uncertain stage during his studies he went for a time to Lucknow where he was taught by Muftī Sa'ad Allāh.[5] By then he was deemed to have acquired the initiation into the various

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1. H.R. Nevill, Muzaffarnagar: A Gazetteer, Vol.III of District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh (Allahabad, 1903), pp. 125-126; 186-187.

2. Maulānā Muhammad Hayāt was from the Panjab and was attached to the khānaqāh of Shāh Sābir Bakhsh of the Chistī order. K.A. Nizāmī, '1857 se pehle', p. 234; Sayyid Ahmad Khān, Āsār al-sanādīd (Delhi, A.H.1263/1847), pp. 41-42.

3. Imdād Sābrī, Āsār-i Rahmat, p. 123.

4. ibid.; 'Abd al-Haqq, Marhūm Dihlī Kālij, pp. 152-153.

5. Maulānā Muftī Sa'ad Allāh belonged to Muradabad, had studied in Delhi, and in 1829 began to teach in the Madrasa Shāhī at Lucknow. He served as muftī until the annexation of Oudh when he moved to the Rampur court. Imdād Sābrī, Āsār-i Rahmat, pp. 119-121; Hāfiz Ahmad 'Alī Khān, Tazkira-i Kāmilān-i Rāmpūr (Delhi, 1929), pp. 151-154.

branches of traditional Islamic learning which were usual for a Sunnī <u>'ālim</u>. He was drawn back to Delhi by 1841 to take up the post, previously held by his own father, of <u>mīr munshī</u> in the service of the Mahārājā Hindū Rāo. Deaths in the family, including those of his wife, father and son, then caused him to return to Kairana where he established a <u>madrasa</u> and occupied himself mainly with teaching, but he continued to make frequent visits to Delhi. Until he received the request, in 1852, to take up the missionary challenge, it seems that Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh's youth and early manhood were not untypical of many <u>'ulamā</u> of <u>ashrāf</u> background who had sought knowledge and inspiration at various <u>madrasas</u> and from several renowned scholars, before settling down to a life of teaching in a small-town and familiar environment.[1]

Raḥmat Allāh later made several references to the reasons which prompted him to take up Maulānā Āl-i Ḥasan's discarded mantle as the leading 'refuter of Christianity'. In the preface to his last book, the <u>Iẓhār al-ḥaqq</u>, he described graphically the sequence of events which had transformed the outlook of the <u>'ulamā</u> and then drawn them into controversy. He distinguished between an initial stage, after the British annexation of the north, when Muslims felt no fears about the new regime, and a second stage when, in his view, the Company abandoned religious neutrality in favour of giving support to missionary activities. Thus,

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1. For examples of other north Indian Muslims of Raḥmat Allāh's generation who sought knowledge in this manner see D. Lelyveld, <u>Aligarh's First Generation</u> (Princeton, 1978), p. 53.

> for a time the ordinary Muslims shrank from listening to their preaching and from studying their books and pamphlets, therefore neither did any Indian _'ālim_ pay any attention to the refutation of those pamphlets. But after some time had passed there began to be a weakening in some of the people of the aversion they had felt, and some of the illiterate people were in danger of stumbling. Therefore some of the scholars of Islam turned their attention to their refutation.[1]

Raḥmat Allāh's own diagnosis confirms in general the missionaries' observations about the impact of their activities and the build up to the crisis of the early 1850s. His emphasis on the absence of religious proselytism as the touchstone of the 'British peace' during the early years of British rule accords with recent studies of the twilight years of Mughal rule. On the other hand, Raḥmat Allāh was more specific than most other commentators in pinpointing the exact date when he felt that the atmosphere had begun to change. This, he said, was forty-three years after the conquest of 'Hindustan'. Assuming that he was referring here to the British victory over the Marathas in 1803, the year in question would be 1846.[2] In the wider context of Company and missionary policy this was not a particularly significant year, but from the pers-

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1. Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī, _Izhār al-haqq_, written in Arabic, first published in two parts (Constantinople, 1284 A.H./1867); Urdu translation edited by Muhammad Taqī 'Usmānī, 2 vols (Karachi, 1968), I, p. 221. _cf._ French translation, ed. P.V. Carletti, _Idh-Har-ul-Haqq,_ 2 vols (Paris, 1880), I, pp. lxxxi-lxxxii.

2. In the Urdu translation the period of non-interference was described as lasting 'for 43 years after the commencement of British rule in Hindustan', _Izhār al-haqq,_ I, p. 221. _cf._ French translation, 'pendant quarante-trois ans de leur domination dans le pays, aucun de leurs savants ne s'est occupé d'inviter les habitants à embrasser leur religion', Carletti, I, p. lxxxi.

pective of a Delhi _'ālim_ it might well seem so, being the year when the religious controversies reached their first climax in Agra and the year of publication of Āl-i Ḥasan's and Sayyid Muḥammad Hādī's refutations.

His diagnosis is significant also for its stress on the fears of the _'ulamā_ for the faith of the 'ordinary Muslims' and the 'illiterate people'.[1] Examination of the encounters in Agra and Delhi up to 1852 has shown that the crisis was actually occurring among the educated. It would seem then that the Delhi _'ulamā_ really had more to fear from the indirect effects of Western education than from the direct effects of Pfander's bazaar preaching. However, part of the effectiveness of Pfander's books was the way they seemed to speak to both audiences so that by 1852 Raḥmat Allāh felt a degree of concern for both the learned and the illiterate among his fellow Muslims. In any case, his repeated emphasis on the 'illiterate' partly reflected, as did his constant repetitions of his own unworthiness to reply, the literary conventions which would be considered appropriate for the task in hand.

In some of his other books Raḥmat Allāh referred more specifically to the aspects of missionary activity which were the cause of concern. In the introduction to the _I 'jāz-i 'Īswī_ he singled out the 'taunts' made by the missionaries against Islam and the prophet Muḥammad.[2] In the _Azālat al-shakūk_ he explained how the receipt of the 'Karachi questions' had alarmed

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1. 'āmm musalmān'; jāhil-i 'awām', _Izhār_, I, p. 221. _cf._ 'les ignorants' Carletti, I, p. lxxxii.

2. Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī, _I 'jāz-i 'Īswī_ (Agra, 1271 A.H./1854-55), p. 2.

the Delhi 'ulamā, resulting in the request of the heir-apparent, Mirzā Fakhr al-Dīn, that he should prepare a reply.[1] The factors he chose to emphasize certainly bore the particular stamp of a Delhi-based 'ālim who had only recently been made aware of trends which in fact were more long-standing in other parts of the province. However, although in Raḥmat Allāh's eyes the 'Karachi questions' were of much deeper significance than the conversion of Rām Chandra, his analysis of recent events broadly corroborates the missionary interpretation.

Raḥmat Allāh's first efforts were directed towards replying to Pfander in kind. Between 1852 and 1855 he prepared three lengthy books in answer to Pfander and other missionaries, one of which included a reply to the 'Karachi questions'.[2] During this time he also wrote a short tract on the Trinity, and he was working on several other books, some of which were to remain

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1. Kairānawī, preface to Azālat al-shakūk, quoted in Imdād Ṣābrī, Āsār-i Raḥmat, p. 345.

2. Raḥmat Allāh's early books were:

   (i) Azālat al-Auhām (the destroyer of imaginations), in Persian (Delhi, 1269 A.H./1852-3), pp. 464. A reply to Pfander's Mīzān al-Haqq. Āl-i Hasan's Kitāb-i Istifsar was printed on the margins of this book. According to Muhammad Taqī 'Usmānī it was written at the request of Shāh 'Abdal-Ghanī. See Iẓhār, p. 184.

   (ii) Azālat al-Shakūk (the destroyer of doubts) in Urdu, comprising 1116 pages divided into 2 volumes (Delhi, 1269 A.H./1852-3). Later republished, Vol. I, Madras, 1326 A.H./1908; Vol. II published by Rahmat Allāh's son, Maulānā Sanyā 'al-Dīn. This book contained a reply to the 'Karachi Questions'.

   (iii) I'jāz-i 'Īswī (the Miracle of Jesus), in Urdu (Agra, 1271 A.H./1854-55), pp. 600. This book contains the charge of taḥrīf (the 'corruption' of the Bible).

in manuscript form.[1] If he envisaged his Muslim readership to be mainly fellow 'ulamā who were concerned to prevent less learned Muslims from falling under Pfander's influence, it is clear from his own comments that he was writing also for his missionary adversaries. In the Izhār al-Haqq, which he wrote in 1864, after he had left India, the explanation which he gave for writing in both Persian and Urdu showed his awareness of the linguistic background of his missionary readers as well as that of the north Indian Muslims,

> the reason for my writing in two languages [Persian and Urdu] was that the first language was extremely familiar among the Indian Muslims, and the second language was actually their mother tongue, and the padres who were residing in India and were going about preaching were certainly expert in the second language and were somewhat acquainted with the first language, except that padre who held the religious debate with me [Pfander] who was more expert in the Persian language compared to Urdu.[2]

Rahmat Allāh was reflecting a growing trend among north Indian prose writers in the middle of the nineteenth century in his increasing usage of Urdu, and indeed his retention of Persian was avowedly only because of the unusual linguistic background of his main missionary adversary.

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1. Asahh al-ahādīs fī ibtāl al-Taslīs (Most clear sayings in refutation of the Trinity), planned to be part of the Azālat al shakūk, but extracted and published separately. Republished Delhi 1875. This edition has been used because a copy of the first edition could not be located. Pfander had read the first edition of the Ibtāl by early 1854. For list of Rahmat Allāh's other works see Imdād Sabrī, Āsār-i Rahmat, p. 334. In the preface to Azālat al-shakūk he gave details about the writing and publication of his early books.

2. Kairānawī, Izhār, I, p. 223.

In another respect too, Raḥmat Allāh's controversial works reflected changing literary modes. His first publications followed the traditional format of Islamic theological works, one of them amounting to over a thousand pages. Pfander confessed that even after several months he was unable to master the Azālat al-Auhām in detail.[1] For his part, Raḥmat Allāh was scornful about the slightness of Pfander's own volumes which seldom amounted to more than one hundred and fifty pages. Yet his own 'refutation of the Trinity' was likewise a tract - a mere seventy-five pages and a new departure from the previous weighty volumes, reflecting Raḥmat Allāh's growing sense of the new need to make a rapid impact on a wider readership.

In setting out to answer Pfander's claims Raḥmat Allāh made use of traditional Muslim arguments against Christianity, but there were some important new ingredients. If the format of the tract on the Trinity was new, the line of argument was essentially that already used against Pfander by Āl-i Ḥasan and Sayyid Muḥammad Hādī, for Raḥmat Allāh also concentrated his attack on the irrationality of the Christian doctrine and utilized part of Āl-i Ḥasan's Istifsār in his own work.[2] However, the most significant new feature in his refutations was the new emphasis he gave to the traditional Muslim argument that the Christian scripture had been 'corrupted'. Whereas earlier

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1. Pfander, report for year ending 30 Sept. 1854, C.M.S. CI1/0227/52.

2. The Ibṭāl al-Taslīs contained several references to Āl-i Ḥasan, and one section was an almost word-for-word borrowing from the Istifsār.

refutations had based the charge mainly on Qur'ānic evidence, Raḥmat Allāh made an important innovation in turning to recently published European critical and sceptical works for his most telling evidence. This basis of argument was to prove of crucial importance in the ensuing debate at the climax of the crisis. Although it was already adopted in some of the written refutations which Raḥmat Allāh had prepared before that event,[1] the missionaries thought that the originality was contributed not by the 'ālim himself, but by an associate who had meanwhile come forward to assist him in the counter-attack on Pfander.

The part played in the controversies by this associate, a medical doctor by the name of Muḥammad Wazīr Khān, is both important and puzzling. At the time when he became involved with the missionaries Dr Wazīr Khān was employed as a sub-assistant surgeon at the Thomason Hospital in Agra. It seems that he had probably acquired his knowledge of Christian sources before he was appointed to the North-Western Provinces, but there is little certain information about his early life. He was born in Lower Bengal, and it is possible that he had begun his studies at the Committee of Public Instruction's anglo-vernacular school at the old nawābī capital of Murshidabad.[2] In 1843 he gained admission to the Medical College of Bengal where he qualified in 1845 and

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1. Notably in the I'jāz-i 'Īswī, where taḥrīf is the main theme.

2. Wazīr Khān belonged to an Afghan family settled in Bihar at Azimabad, near Patna. Ṣabrī, Farangiyon kā jāl, p.243. In Īst Indiyā Kampanī aur bāghī 'ulamā (Delhi, n.d.), pp. 27-28 Shāhabī states that he spent some time at Murshidabad.

in December 1845 he was designated Sub-Assistant Surgeon.[1] Several secondary accounts suggest that he then proceeded to a London hospital, but this has not been confirmed.[2] It is important, for some of these accounts also suggest that it was during such a visit to England in the 1840s that Wazīr Khān came into contact with European works of Biblical criticism, and that he also studied Hebrew and Greek.[3] Without confirmation of any such direct link with Europe more weight should perhaps be attached to the effects, during his years at the Bengal Medical College, of his exposure to Western medical practices, but also to the whole spectrum of influences which were newly at work in 'renaissance' Calcutta. Furthermore, in Calcutta were situated the headquarters of several Protestant missionary societies, and a number of missionary colleges and schools. There are no references in Wazīr Khān's correspondence to the controversies in the 1820s between the Baptist missionaries and Rājā Rām Mohan Roy

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1. Three students named 'Wuzeer Khan' were admitted to the Bengal Medical College in 1843, two on 2 Sept. and the third on 2 Nov. One of them had previously studied at Delhi College. All three were described as of 'good' character and conduct when they qualified in 1846, 'List of First Class students of the Secondary School for final examination in the Medical College, Session 1845-46', in Annual Report of the Medical College of Bengal: Session 1845-46, p. 16. Although little is known about his entry to Medical College and his student years, later correspondence confirms Wazīr Khān's graduation and appointment.

2. e.g. Shahābī, op.cit., p. 28. The known dates of his admittance to the Bengal Medical College (1843) and his first Indian appointment (1845) render a visit to Europe unlikely. Furthermore his name does not appear in lists of medical students going to London or in London teaching hospital records. Thus his whereabouts for the six months between his designation and actually taking up his first appointment (i.e. Dec. 1845-June 1846) are not known.

3. Shahābī, op.cit., p. 28.

and other Calcutta Hindus. Nevertheless, the environment in which he acquired his higher education would be likely to give him more awareness of the nature and extent of Protestant missionary activity, and more access to recent European publications, than would be available to a Delhi College student at the same date. Comments during the ensuing controversies indicate that some of the N.W.P. 'ulamā valued his assistance partly because of his unusually good grasp of the English language.[1]

In 1845 the newly qualified Dr Wazīr Khān was appointed to be Sub-Assistant Surgeon at the jail hospital at the district station of Damoh in the Saugor and Nerbudda Territories. He arrived in Damoh in June 1846 and remained there for five years. The posting seems to have had no bearing on his subsequent role in the religious controversies, for the Muslim population of the district was very small, there was no missionary activity in the vicinity, nor were the local civilians noted for any evangelical sympathies.[2] In 1851 he was transferred, with no increase in salary, to the provincial capital of Agra where his skills and conscientiousness quickly earned him a good reputation at the hospital.[3] When a medical school was attached to the Thomason

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1. Wazīr al-Dīn, Taqrīr-i dilpazīr (Khairabad, 1875), p. 3.

2. Damoh was ceded from the Marathas to the British in 1818 and became a district headquarters in 1838. From 1843 to 1853 the Saugor and Nerbudda Territories in which it lay were administered by an Agent to the Governor-General. At the beginning of the 20th century the Muslim population of the district was estimated as 3%. R.V. Russell (ed.) Damoh District Gazetteer (Allahabad, 1906), pp. 21; 36.

3. J. Thornton, Sec. to Govt., to W.H. Tyler, Commissioner of Agra, Simla, 28 June 1851, Letters written to Commissioner of Agra, Agra (Judicial), U.P. State Archives.

hospital in 1853 Wazīr Khān taught Materia Medica in addition to his other duties.[1] In 1853 he received praise for his contribution to the success of the local vaccinating programme, and in 1854 the Lieutenant-Governor made particular mention of Wazīr Khān's services.[2]

Yet in 1854 this efficient Sub-Assistant Surgeon also became publicly involved in the 'ulamā's counter-attack on Pfander. The precise connections between Dr Wazīr Khān and Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh have not been traced. It seems likely that the doctor and the 'ālim met on one of the latter's periodic visits to 'ulamā friends in Agra.[3] One account suggests that Wazīr Khān sent for Raḥmat Allāh from Kairana because of his concern about Pfander.[4] Yet it is clear from the examination of the emerging crisis in Delhi that by this time Raḥmat Allāh was already aware of Pfander's activities. It is possible, moreover, that there was a more long-standing link between them. However, little is known for certain

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1. D.G. Crawford, History of the Indian Medical Service: 1600-1913, 2 vols (London, 1914), II, pp. 262; 443.

2. Dr John Murray, Civil Surgeon, Agra, 'Vaccine Report' for 1852-53, May 1853, in Letters written to the Commissioner of Agra, 1854, Agra (Judicial), U.P. State Archives. In July 1854 William Muir, Sec. to Govt., instructed the Agra Commissioner 'that Wazeer Khan the Sub Assistant Surgeon, who has exerted himself in a praiseworthy manner, and the Subordinate Establishment, be made aware of the satisfaction of His Honor with the results attained.', in 'Letters written to the Commissioner of Agra', loc.cit. In the 'Returns of Sub-Assistant Surgeons educated at the Medical College' for the years 1846 to 1852 Dr Wazīr Khān was consistently described as 'satisfactory', 'good and qualified', appendix no. B1, Annual Report of the Medical College of Bengal, Sessions 1846-1852.

3. In the preface to one of his books, Rahmat Allāh referred to Wazīr Khan as 'one of my friends', Idh'-har -ul-Haqq, I, p.lxxxiii.

4. Shahābī, op.cit., p. 28.

about Wazīr Khān's religious affiliations within Islam. Company and missionary sources suggest that he became an important figure in Ṣūfī circles in Agra, and it is possible that he was assisting to run an Urdu newspaper which frequently published articles on Islamic subjects.[1] Maulawī Imād al-Dīn, who converted to Christianity after the Mutiny, singled out Dr Wazīr Khān among other prominent Muslims, as having been responsible for asking him to preach against the missionaries in the royal mosque at Agra.[2] Imād al-dīn's retrospective account also suggests that Wazīr Khān was engaged in urging others to adopt his own ṣūfī practices, for 'the person who entangled me in this calamity [mysticism], came to Agra as Sub-assistant surgeon'.[3] Certainly rumours during 1857 led some Agra officials to suspect Wazīr Khān of being closely involved in Ṣūfī activities, which in their eyes, were a precursor to engaging in conspiracy against the government.

Whatever the previous connections between them, by the end of 1853 Wazīr Khān and Raḥmat Allāh had come together in Agra. Raḥmat Allāh's book, the I'jāz-i 'Īswī, which was published in Agra at this time, already bore the mark of Wazīr Khān's knowledge of recently published Biblical commentaries and sceptical works. Then, at the beginning of 1854, the traditional 'ālim and the Western-educated doctor decided to join their complementary skills and knowledge in a carefully planned counter-offensive against Pfander.

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1. In 1851 the editorship of the Qutbal-akhbār was transferred to 'Vuzeer Khan and Ahmud Khan', Selections from the Records of Government, North-Western Provinces (Allahabad, 1868), IV, 'Native Presses', p. 67.

2. Rev. Imād al-dīn, 'A Mohammedan brought to Christ, being the autobiography of a native clergyman in India', in C.M.I., new series, VI (March 1870), p. 72.

3. ibid., p. 71.

THE AGRA DEBATE OF APRIL 1854

Ten years afterwards Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh stated that he and Dr Wazīr Khān invited Pfander to debate with them in order to make it perfectly clear,

> that the reason for the Muslim 'ulamā's lack of attention was not that they are unequal to and unable to refute the Christian padres' pamphlets, as was the claim and thought of some Christians.[1]

A missionary from another society in Agra commented that the 'ulamā now regarded Pfander as 'the fortress that must be taken, before the enemy in these quarters could be silenced'.[2] Yet after their decision to issue a challenge there was a delay and a diversion caused by Pfander's absence from Agra when Raḥmat Allāh first tried to visit him in January 1854. On that occasion he came face-to-face, instead, with Pfander's colleague, the Reverend Thomas Valpy French, who had been employed in Agra since 1851 as the principal of the newly established St John's College. French was less experienced than Pfander, and less knowledgeable about Islam, but also very much less convinced that 'controversy' was a suitable method for dealing with the 'ulamā.[3] However the

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1. Iẓhār al-Ḥaqq (Karachi, 1968), I, p. 222.

2. Rev. T.G. Clark, journal, Agra, 22 May 1854, extracts published as 'Agra-Discussion betwixt Mohammedan Doctors and the Missionaries', in Home and Foreign Record of the Free Church of Scotland (Oct. 1854), pp. 64-66.

3. Thomas Valpy French (1825-1891). Son of an Anglican clergyman, educated at Reading and Burton grammar schools and Rugby, and at University College, Oxford, where he gained a first in 1846. M.A. and ordination 1849; joined CMS 1850; Principal of St John's College, Agra, 1851-58; Dera Ismail Khan, 1862-63; Principal of Divinity College, Lahore, 1869-74; Bishop of Lahore, 1877-87. H. Birks, Life and Correspondence of Thomas Valpy French, 2 vols (London, 1895); E. Stock, An Heroic Bishop. The Life-Story of French of Lahore (London, 1913).

discussion which ensued in French's bungalow was important because of its effects on the subsequent public debate which was postponed until Pfander's return to Agra.

French agreed to talk with Raḥmat Allāh for two hours on the 9th January, and again on the 11th January. Raḥmat Allāh was accompanied on both occasions by Dr Wazīr Khān, and also by another 'ālim, one 'Alī Muḥammad Khān, and by Maulawī Wazīr al-Dīn who made notes on the proceedings. French too, had some assistance, for staying with him at the time was a close friend from his Oxford days, the Reverend William Kay, a good Hebrew scholar who had been appointed Principal of Bishop's College in Calcutta.[1] Although French would defer to Kay on textual problems, the latter was not fluent in either Urdu or Persian. Thus French, who had been resident in north India for only three years, had his first experience of dealing with the 'ulamā's charges.

News of these discussions did not carry beyond the participants own circles at the time they occurred. Wazīr al-Dīn's verbatim account was not published until 1875 at a time when a later generation of 'ulamā was anxious to stem a revival of missionary preaching against Islam.[2] There are no missionary

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1. William Kay (1820-1886). Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford and 'Pusey and Ellerton Hebrew scholar'. Ordained 1843; Principal of Bishop's College, Calcutta, 1849-64; Grinfield lecturer on the Septuagint, Oxford, 1869. Contributed to various commentaries and to a revision of the Old Testament. His most important publication is considered to be a translation of the Psalms (Calcutta, 1863). DNB, XXX, p. 250.

2. Maulawī Wazīr al-Dīn, Taqrīr-i dil pazīr (Khairabad, 1292 A.H./ 1875). The sub-title explains that the tract contains a word-for-word account of the conversations which took place in Agra between Maulawī Rahmat Allāh and padres French and Kay. Wazīr al-Dīn described himself as a shagird of Raḥmat Allāh's, who had preserved the record and was now (1875) having it published at the request of Maulawī Iltifāt Ḥusain, 'in order to benefit the ordinary followers of Islam'.

accounts with which to compare the Taqrīr-i 'dil pazīr, and the Muslim compiler was openly exultant about French's apparent inability to cope with the 'ulamā's arguments. However, although this one available source may have been affected both by hindsight and more than usual partiality, it is useful for showing that the 'ulamā were already prepared with the arguments on 'abrogation' and 'corruption' which they would subsequently use in the public debate. The Taqrīr indicates that Wazīr Khān took the initiative in drawing support from his knowledge of early Church history and Christian commentaries. He then made use of this private meeting in January to find out the missionary definitions of 'abrogation' and 'corruption' in order to refine his own attack. It is in this account too that his proficiency in English is made apparent.[1] The missionaries, on the other hand, do not appear to have used the four-month interval before the public debate to consider the 'ulamā's objections in more detail. It is possible indeed that French deliberately refrained from giving Pfander a full account of the encounter on his return to Agra, for there are hints in the Taqrīr that French and Kay may have been nursing some resentment at Pfander's habitual dominance of the 'Muslim controversy'.[2] Certainly when the same criticisms were brought forward in April the missionaries gave the impression that they were hearing them for the first time.[3]

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1. Taqrīr, pp. 3; 11-14.

2. ibid., p. 6.

3. During these months French's correspondence with the CMS shows him to have been mainly preoccupied with College affairs, although a few days before the April debate he requested a Hebrew Bible and a copy of Michaelis's commentary. French to CMS, Aligarh, 5 April 1854. CMS, CI1/O109/5.

When Pfander returned to Agra, Rahmat Allāh inquired whether he would participate in a full scale munāzara. His envoy was Maulawī Muhammad Amīr Allāh, who served as mīr mukhtār to the Raja of Benares.[1] Having received an affirmative answer, Rahmat Allāh then wrote to Pfander on 23 March. During the next fortnight 'ālim and missionary exchanged nine letters each.[2] Almost daily, brief, business-like notes were exchanged in which the subject-matter and procedure of the proposed debate were considered. Pfander recorded that by 8 April they had reached agreement by a process of 'mutual propositions and concessions'.[3] Later this veneer of harmony would be shattered when the bitterness occasioned by the outcome of the debate caused the participants to look back to identify further grounds for controversy in these preliminary letters.[4] However, for the moment the correspondence had fulfilled Rahmat Allāh's intentions, for it was at last agreed that he and Pfander should meet on 10 April for the first session of what was envisaged as an ongoing public discussion of issues vital to their two religions.

In the event, after only two days the 'Agra debate' brought the twenty-year era of encounter and controversy to a sudden climax and to an abrupt end. The 'ulamā considered it a

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1. 'Usmānī, Bā'ibil se Qur'ān tak, p. 186.

2. The letters exchanged before the debate are contained in Wazīr al-Dīn, Al-bahs al-sharīf fi asbāt al-naskh wal tahrīf (Delhi, 1270 A.H./1854), pp. 4-19.

3. Pfander to CMS, Agra, 1 May 1854.

4. Letters between Pfander and Rahmat Allāh, 11-23 April 1854; tract by Mahmūd Jān, points 1-9, in Al-bahs al-sharīf.

victory for their cause and a fulfilment of their intention to silence Pfander. Dissemination of this news was essential to its further realization, so their published accounts of the debate were detailed and repetitive. Accounts in both Persian and Urdu were published simultaneously from presses in both Agra and Delhi. Sayyid 'Abd-allāh Akbarābādī edited a two volume account, part one of which, the Mubāhasa-i mazhabī (Religious Discussion), was published in Agra in 1854.[1] In addition to a report of the two-day debate, it contained the correspondence which had passed between Pfander and Rahmat Allāh both before and immediately after the debate. The second part, entitled Murāsalāt-i mazhabī (Religious Correspondence), contained some letters which Pfander and Dr Wazīr Khān exchanged after the debate. This volume was published a few months after the first.[2] A separate record was prepared for publication by Maulawī Wazīr al-Dīn who had compiled the as yet unpublished account of the earlier private discussion between French and the 'ulamā. The Al-bahs al-sharīf consisted of an account of the debate, comments on it by one Mahmūd Jān, and copies of two fatāwā which had been issued soon afterwards by some Delhi 'ulamā.[3] There were also

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1. Sayyid 'Abd-Allāh Akbarābādī, Pahlā hissa mubāhasa-i mazhabī kā, in Urdu (Agra, 1270 A.H./1854); in Persian (Agra, 1271 A.H./1854-55). Sayyid 'Abd-Allāh was a government translator in Agra.

2. Sayyid 'Abd-Allāh Akbarābādī, Murāsalāt-i Mazhabī: Dūsrā hissa mubāhasa-i mazhabī kā, in Urdu (Agra, 1271 A.H./1854-55).

3. Wazīr al-Dīn, Al-bahs al-sharīf fī asbāt al-naskh wal tahrīf (A noble disputation in proof of abrogation and corruption), in Persian (Delhi, 1270 A.H./1854). Apart from these separately edited accounts which are to be found in many libraries in India, parts of each were sometimes bound together under a new title. e.g. a compilation in Sobia Inter-College, Agra, in the library of the Anjaman-i Muhammadiya, which bears the title, 'Mubāhasa Wazīr Khān wa Padri Pfander', contains the whole of the al-bāhs al-sharīf as well as the letters between Wazīr Khān and Pfander.

some further letters between Raḥmat Allāh and the missionaries. Briefer reports appeared in various Urdu and Persian newspapers, notably the Agra-based Maṭba'al-akhbār and the As'ad al-akhbār.[1]

In comparison, the missionary coverage of the debate was sparse indeed. It was acknowledged in missionary circles that the event, if not actually a disaster, had not been helpful to their cause. However, Pfander, the principal participant on the Christian side, did not share this attitude, and in an effort to maintain the momentum he prepared a further rejoinder. This work, the Ikhtitām dīnī mubāḥaṡa kā (Conclusion of the Religious Debate), was published in Agra the following year.[2] Included in it was some of the correspondence which Pfander had had with both Wazīr Khān and Raḥmat Allāh after the debate, but the book was a commentary and a rejoinder rather than an exact record of the encounter. There seems to have been no attempt on the missionary side to provide a verbatim account. Pfander merely provided a summary of what had happened in his letters to the CMS and the Basel missionary headquarters, extracts from which were published in the journals of both societies.[3] There were some references to the debate in various Calcutta missionary journals, and an

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1. The original newspaper articles have not been seen. The intention to announce the 'victory' in the newspapers was stated during the debate. Bā'ibil se Qur'ān tak, p. 192; Al baḥṡ, p. 31.

2. C.G. Pfander, Ikhtitām dīnī mubāḥaṡa kā (Agra, 1855).

3. 'Movements among Mahommedans', CMI, V (Nov. 1854), pp. 251-258; 'Eine öffentliche Disputation mit den Muhammedanern in Agra', M.M., No. 4 (1854), pp. 73-80.

article which Pfander prepared for the Khair Khwāh-i Hind was attacked by the 'ulamā as a mis-representation of events.[1] Missionaries from other societies who had attended the debate also made brief comments on it, but none felt disposed to provide the degree of detail which the 'ulamā were meanwhile devoting to the subject.[2] For the telling reason that the Muslim participants had every reason to relish publicity, while the missionaries for once wanted to shun it, the extant accounts are much fuller on the Muslim side.

The 'ulamā chose to emphasize in their accounts the status as well as the numbers of those who attended. They listed prominent local 'ulamā and Muslim citizens who had been present, including the imām of the Jāmi' Masjid in Agra, Maulawī Qamar al-Islām, and Muftī Riyāẓ al-Dīn, Maulawī Ḥaẓūr Aḥmad, Maulawī Sirāj al-Ḥaqq and his father Faiẓ Aḥmad Badāyūnī.[3] Maulawī Amīr Allāh, who had been sent by Raḥmat Allāh to discuss the holding of a debate, was also present. Immediate publicity of the favourable outcome was ensured by the attendance of Munshī Khādim 'Alī, the editor of the Urdu newspaper, the Matba'al akhbār, and Muḥammad Qamar al-Dīn, editor of the As'ad al-akhbār.[4] Other

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1. 'Mohammedan Discussion at Agra', Missionary, IV (1854), pp. 171-174; Christian Intelligencer (June 1854), pp. 191-198. The article in K.K.-i H. has not been seen, but was referred to by Raḥmat Allah in a letter to Pfander on 23 Zi'lḥij 1270/16 Sept. 1854.

2. Rev. T.G. Clark of the Free Church of Scotland Mission wrote an account which was published under the heading 'Agra-Discussion betwixt Mohammedan Doctors and the Missionaries', in Home and Foreign Record of the Free Church of Scotland (Oct. 1854), pp.64-66.

3. A list of the 'ulamā who attended is given in al-baḥs al-sharīf, p. 20. Muftī Riyāz al-Dīn and Faiẓ Aḥmad Badāyūnī both spoke briefly during the debate.

4. These newspapers and their editors are discussed in Imdād Ṣabrī, Tārīkh-i Ṣaḥāfat-i Urdū (Delhi,1953),I,pp.299-311; 332-333, and in Selections from the Records of Government, North Western Provinces, III (Agra, 1855) 'On the Native Presses' pp. 237-306. Muḥammad Qamar al-Dīn had formerly been employed by Pfander as a translator.

sources show that a number of other prominent 'ulamā also attended the debate.[1]

Pfander and French seem to have had the support of some other missionaries, notably the Reverend T.G. Clark of the Free Church of Scotland Missionary Society. But it seems that the Agra-based American and Baptist missionaries did not attend, and there was probably some doubt in missionary circles, even beforehand, about the wisdom of encouraging such a confrontation. Afterwards, the 'ulamā made more capital of the presence of British government officers than they did of missionary attendance, for in their eyes the victory seemed to have been gained in the face of government support for the missionary cause. Certainly the strength of government representation was remarkable even taking into account the known evangelicalism of several of the Agra officers. Present of course was William Muir, Secretary to Government and consistent friend of missions, but particularly interested in what he termed 'the Mohammedan controversy'. At least three other civilians whom French classed as 'friends of our mission' were also present for part of the proceedings. They were Mosley Smith, a judge at the Ṣadr Dīwānī and Niẓāmat courts in Agra, George Christian, secretary to the Ṣadr Board of Revenue,

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1. After the debate Raḥmat Allāh objected to Pfander's version of events which had been published in Khair Khwāh-i Hind. A list of Muslim witnesses was then compiled to give weight to their own version. The list included the following in addition to those already named:- Muḥammad Asad Ullāh (chief Qāẓī), Ḥāfiz Khudā Bakhsh, Muḥammad Amjad 'Alī (vakīl-i sarkār, Agra), 'Imād al-Dīn (later converted to Christianity), Muḥammad Ja'far Bakhsh Qadīrī, Muḥammad 'Abd al-Shahīd Kolwī, Sayyid Ḥāfiẓ Faẓl Ḥuṣain.

and H.S. Reid, the Inspector of Government Schools.[1] J.P. Ledlie, who had acted as a go-between in the earlier encounter with Āl-i Ḥasan, was also listed among the visitors.

Apart from the participants and their guests, the debate attracted a large audience, which was estimated variously as comprising between two hundred and six hundred on the first day, rising to a thousand or more on the second day.[2] Clearly there was some exaggeration in these reports, for the compound where the meeting was held could not have held such numbers. The Reverend T.G. Clark's account suggests that there was a preponderance of Muslims among those who had forgathered,

> Already the natives, both Mahommedan and Hindu, were trooping in groups, that could not all gain access to the building, the scene of the discussion, a school-house of considerable dimensions. Within, about a hundred and fifty, chiefly Mussulmans, squatted in silent decorum on the floor, or, fringing the company on the outskirts at every accessible opening, were waiting the arrival of our friends, anxious for the commencement.[3]

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1. French felt that the Agra civilians in general were favourable to the mission cause and among others, mentioned Muir, Smith, Christian and Reid, as ready to 'help and countenance us in various ways', T.V. French, n.d., in H. Birks, The Life and Correspondence of Thomas Valpy French, 2 vols (London,1895),I,pp.37-38. Mosley Smith, appointed to Bengal 1828, Civil and Sessions Judge at Meerut and officiating Judge of the Ṣadr Dīwānī and Niẓāmat 'Adālat, NWP,Nov.1853. George Jackson Christian, appointed to Bengāl 1844, Secretary to the Ṣadr Board of Revenue, NWP,1852. Subsequently served under John Lawrence in the Panjab. H.S. Reid, as Inspector of Government Schools he had recently published a Report on Indigenous Education and Vernacular Schools for eight districts in Agra division (Agra,1852).

2. Muslim estimates of attendance were considerably higher than those of the missionaries, e.g. Al-bahs , p.32. cf. Pfander's estimate that the 'native attendants' on the first day were 'about one hundred', and on the second day, 'more than double that number'. 'Movements among Mahomedans', p. 254.

3. Rev. T.G. Clark, Agra, 22 May 1854, in Home and Foreign Record of the Free Church of Scotland (Oct. 1854), p. 66.

The arguments which the 'ulamā used on this occasion to confound the missionaries so effectively on the charge of the 'corruption of the Scriptures' will be examined in detail in chapter six. Reference to the substance of the debate will be made here only to demonstrate its effects on the pattern of encounter and controversy. During the preliminary correspondence it had been agreed that although the debate would initially take place for two hours on two days during Easter Week, the meetings would then proceed more intensively on four days each week during the subsequent month. This arrangement was a compromise between Pfander's need to attend to his Easter Week duties, and Raḥmat Allāh's wish to proceed rapidly because he wanted to leave Agra to attend to other concerns.[1] The debate was thus envisaged as a lengthy, but once-and-for-all encounter, in the course of which all the controversial issues which had been raised in previous encounters would finally be resolved.[2] They had agreed on five separate subjects for discussion, to be debated in the following order - naskh (abrogation), taḥrīf (corruption), tas̱līs̱ (Trinity), risālat-i Muḥammad (prophethood of Muḥammad), and the Qur'ān. The order of the proposed discussion thus gave the 'ulamā the chance to take the offensive first. At first they had agreed to allow discussion of Muḥammad's prophethood the third place on the agenda which would have given Pfander some chance to retaliate.

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1. Pfander to Rahmat Allāh, 31 March 1854; Rahmat Allāh to Pfander, 1 April 1854; Pfander to Raḥmat Allāh, 3 April 1854; Rahmat Allāh to Pfander, 4 April 1854, in Al-baḥs̱ al-sharīf, pp. 15-17.

2. The contention which circulated afterwards, and has been incorporated in some secondary accounts, that the 'loser' would convert to the 'victor's' faith, finds no mention in any of the sources. See Bāi'bil se Qur'ān tak, I, p. 186.

However, this had been modified after Raḥmat Allāh had insisted that it was more logical to finish the discussion of the Trinity before turning to Muḥammad.[1] Pfander demurred, but finally gave in, thus ensuring that the 'ulamā would be able to present all their most fundamental objections to Christianity before there would be any chance to turn the tables. In the event, the debate broke up after discussion of only 'abrogation' and 'corruption', yet Raḥmat Allāh's persistence and astuteness in establishing a procedure which was favourable to his objective was certainly important to the outcome.

The debate was publicized, and remembered long afterwards among Muslims, as the occasion when the Christian missionaries admitted the corruption of the Bible. The proceedings had opened with a discussion of the meaning of abrogation during which the 'ulamā had merely tried to establish that Pfander's statement in his Mīzān al-Ḥaqq on the Muslim view of abrogation was mistaken, and that the missionaries should accept in principle that the abrogation of certain commandments in the Old and New Testaments was possible.[2] Having established this point they left it 'unproved' for the time being in order to press on with their more important charge on the corruption of the Scriptures. Pfander had always denied the existence of any alterations in any copies of the Bible, apart from some 'copyists' errors' in

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1. Raḥmat Allāh to Pfander, 1 April 1854, Al-baḥs, pp. 15-16.

2. Al-bahs, pp. 20-28; Bā'ibal se Qur'ān tak, pp. 186-189. For Pfänder's understanding of abrogation see 'Wage der Wahrheit', pp. 30-45 and Mizan (1867), pp. 4-10.

some editions.[1] On this occasion, however, he had to face 'ulamā who were provided with citations from Urdu translations of the Bible which seemed to indicate discrepancies between various books of the Old and New Testaments, as well as between various translations of the same passage. Some of the passages which were quoted had already been put forward at the earlier discussion with French, but it seems that the missionaries had not conferred after that meeting. Pfander seemed to be taken by surprise and he was obliged by the weight of evidence to admit the existence of what he now chose to call 'mistakes' (ghalaṭ). He insisted as adamantly as ever, however, that such mistakes could not affect the crucial doctrinal revelations contained in the Bible which had never suffered corruption of any kind.[2] This claim was undermined in the eyes of most of those present, and the debate reached its climax, when Dr Wazīr Khān read a verse from the New Testament concerning the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, which Pfander admitted was indeed an interpolation.[3]

Pfander's admission was all-important to the Muslims because they considered that the identification of only one

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1. Al-bahs, p. 28; cf. 'Wage der Wahrheit', p. 61; Mizan (1867), pp. 18-19.

2. In the earlier conversation with French and in the April debate, Wazīr Khān pointed to 'mistakes' in the genealogy of Christ as it was recorded in Matthew 1.17, but although Pfander then acknowledged these errors, he continued to deny that they constituted corruption. Al-bahs, p. 33.

3. The crucial verse was from the First Epistle General of John, 5.7: 'For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one', Al-bahs, p. 31; Bā'ibal se Qur'ān tak, pp. 191-192. There was no reference to this stage in the argument in the account published in the CMI.

alteration of this kind gave them grounds for doubting the entire contents of the Bible. Their outlook reflected the emphasis in Islam on the literal perfection of the Qur'ān, but was given particular weight at the Agra debate by the device of asking for an immediate legal judgment on the matter. Thus the mufti̇̄ and the English judge who were among the guests, were invited to comment. Muftī Riyāẓ al-Dīn gave the opinion that if an error is detected at any place in a document, doubt is thereby cast on the validity of the entire document.[1] Mosley Smith, the judge of the Ṣadr courts, chose to remain silent.[2] It may be supposed that he was not conversant with recent Biblical criticism, but it is not known anyway why he had chosen to attend the debate. The English judge's obvious embarrassment certainly played a part in disconcerting the missionaries and at Pfander's request the debate was soon afterwards adjourned until the next day.

The second day added little that was new to the argument. As far as the Muslims were concerned, Pfander's crucial admission of one example of taḥrīf, followed by the muftī's verdict, meant that the victory was already won. Pfander attempted to retrieve lost ground by arguing that the Qur'ān contained proof that the Gospels were in their original form in the prophet Muḥammad's time, but the Muslims found his argument unacceptable and moved the centre of discussion back to the previous day's admission. The 'ulamā produced several more examples of what Pfander was now obliged to call 'ordinary corruption', his distinction resting on

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1. Al-baḥs̤, pp. 31-32; Bā'ibal se Qur'ān tak, I, p. 192.

2. ibid.

the assertion that such unimportant minor alterations had not affected the central spiritual doctrines of Christianity. French, however, although agreeing with Pfander that no crucial doctrine had been affected, was clearly prepared to admit to many more examples of 'various readings' than was his colleague.[1] Pfander then maintained, as he would continue to do, that the burden of proof lay on the Muslims to produce a copy of the Bible which contained the uncontaminated passages.[2] The two-day debate came to an abrupt end when Pfander announced that unless the 'ulamā would accept his condition he would discuss with them no more. He later admitted in a letter to the Church Missionary Society, that this ultimatum was a mistake on his part, for it allowed the Muslims a ready pretext to claim that he was afraid to continue with the other points for discussion.[3] The 'ulamā certainly did take maximum advantage of his public admission of corruption and of his seeming unwillingness to continue the debate.

Crucial to this outcome had been Dr Wazīr Khān's knowledge of the Bible and of early Church history, and in particular his familiarity with some recently published works of textual criticism.[4]

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1. Al-baḥṣ, p. 37.
2. Al-baḥṣ, p. 39; Bā'ibal se Qur'ān tak, p. 194.
3. 'Movements among Mahommedans', p. 257.
4. Among the European works cited by Wazīr Khān and Rahmat Allāh were the following conservative commentaries: T.H. Horne, An Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, 3rd ed. (London, 1822); M. Henry and T. Scott, A Commentary upon the Holy Bible (London, 1831-35); G.D'Oyly and R. Mant, Notes, Practical and Explanatory to the Holy Bible (London, 1840). They also referred to Eusebius's History of the Church. However, although the missionaries were disconcerted by Wazīr Khān's possession of D.F. Strauss's Life of Jesus, 3 vols, London, 1846), the 'ulamā did not quote directly from this or from other reputedly 'extreme' critical or sceptical works during the debate. Their access to, and usage of, Western criticism, will be examined in detail in Chap. 6.

He was more aware than the missionaries were themselves of the state of opinion in the theological departments of the European universities which were in the forefront of the critical movement. In contrast, both Pfander and French were obliged to follow up the doctor's charges by urging their home missionary societies to send them the works Wazīr Khān had cited during the debate and some suitable replies to the critics and sceptics.[1]

Yet, in spite of the temporary setback, Pfander was only too willing to re-enter the fray. Within a few hours of the ending of the debate he had written a further letter to Raḥmat Allāh, and during the next fortnight they exchanged four letters each, at two to three-day intervals.[2] Pfander reiterated that no further progress could be made until the Muslims provided proof for their assertion that the Bible was corrupt, by showing him a copy of the unaltered text. Raḥmat Allāh replied that since Pfander had already admitted, during the course of the debate, the existence of seven or eight alterations, the burden of proof must lie with him.[3] Both parties seemingly wanted to continue the discussions, but only on their own terms, and throughout the correspondence there are signs of the eventual complete breakdown in communication. Raḥmat Allāh complained that Dr Wazīr Khān

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1. Pfander requested from the CMS, Paine's Age of Reason, Strauss's Life of Jesus, Carlyle's 'book against Christianity', 'the best refutations of these works', the best book on the 'apparent contradictions' in the Old and New Testaments, and the 'best work on the Evidences of Christianity'. CMS, CI1/O227/23.

2. The correspondence is contained in Al-baḥṡ al-sharīf, pp. 41-60.

3. Raḥmat Allāh to Pfander, 19 April 1854; Pfander to Raḥmat Allāh, 18; 21 April 1854.

had not been given a chance to express his point of view as fully as had Pfander's 'second', Thomas Valpy French.[1] Although Pfander seemed amenable to the principle of arranging a further discussion to remedy this grievance, neither side would agree to sign the written accounts of what had taken place so far.[2] They made mutual accusations of deliberate falsification of the record. Here their misunderstandings partly reflected a fundamental difference in outlook, for whereas the 'ulamā insisted on, and indeed prepared, a painstaking verbatim record of the proceedings, Pfander made no attempt to do so, preferring instead to give a synopsis to which he added his own retrospective comments. This drew the charge that he had deliberately omitted some of the points made by the 'ulamā, and of thus distorting the conclusions which might be drawn from a study of the published accounts.[3] For his part, Pfander cast suspicion on Raḥmat Allāh's motives by insinuating that the 'ālim had deliberately misquoted a text in one of his letters prior to the debate.[4] Communication was broken off at the end of April when Pfander decided that Raḥmat Allāh's posing of ten new questions represented a deliberate attempt 'to entangle the question as it now stands'.[5] He felt justified

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1. Raḥmat Allāh to Pfander, 13 April 1854. According to the account in the Al-baḥs al-sharīf Pfander had tried to prevent Wazīr Khān from replying to French's explanation about various readings, preferring Raḥmat Allāh to answer instead. Al-baḥs, p. 37.

2. Pfander to Raḥmat Allāh, 18 April 1854.

3. Raḥmat Allāh to Pfander, 13 April 1854.

4. Pfander to Raḥmat Allāh, 11 April 1854.

5. Pfander, quoted in 'Movements among Mahommedans', in C.M.I., V (Nov. 1854), p. 257; Pfander to Raḥmat Allāh, 21 April 1854.

in this action because a satisfactory answer would require the writing of another complete book. The 'ulamā, however, could not see any obstacle to his embarking immediately on this task and therefore accused him of merely contriving an excuse to escape from the challenge. This answer Pfander described as 'an angry and somewhat impudent letter', and it was followed by silence between them until the following September.[1]

Meanwhile, however, Pfander had been studying books on both Christianity and Islam in order to retaliate from strength. He decided to send copies to Dr Wazīr Khān in the hope that he would study them and translate them into Urdu before sending them back. Wazīr Khān refused the offer, but Pfander's initial letter of 15 May led to a correspondence between them which lasted until the middle of August.[2] The letters are important for supplying more information than the debate records reveal about Dr Wazīr Khān's knowledge of Christianity. Although the 'ulamā had carried the works of D.F. Strauss to the debate, only scant reference had been made to his views. In his correspondence with Pfander, Wazīr

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1. ibid., Rahmat Allāh to Pfander, 23 April 1854.

2. The Muslims published the correspondence in full in, Dusrā hissa mubāhasa-i mazhabī kā (Agra, 1271 A.H./1854-55) pp. 202. Pfander chose to include only his own 10th letter in his Ikhtitām dīnī mubāhasa kā (Agra, 1855), pp. 125-152 (cf. Dusrā hissa, pp. 90-112). Ten years later Rahmat Allāh Kairānawī quoted from the correspondence in the introduction to his own final work on the controversies, in order to point out Pfander's ignorance in calling Dr Wazīr Khān a 'dahriya', Idh-har-ul-Haqq, ed. Carletti (Paris, 1880), I, pp. cxxxv-vii.

Khān took the opportunity to present additional Straussian objections.[1] However, the depth of bitterness between the two correspondents was soon revealed by the introduction of personal abuse, and after the exchange of fourteen letters each, there was no further exchange.

When communication between Pfander and Raḥmat Allāh was resumed in September it was provoked by the latter's anger with the missionary references to the debate which had appeared during the summer, notably in the journal, the Khair Khwāh-i Hind.[2] By this time Raḥmat Allāh had returned to Kairana, but when he received a copy of the journal article from Dr Wazīr Khān he decided to re-open the correspondence to point out important omissions, and to complain that Pfander had changed his mind about the number of alterations he was prepared to admit in the Bible.[3] When the maulānā's first letter, which he sent in the care of the thānedār of Muzaffarnagar, elicited no response, he wrote again, ensuring safe delivery this time by asking Wazīr Khān to give it to Pfander.[4] On the same day Raḥmat Allāh also wrote to the Reverend Thomas Valpy French.[5] It seems that Pfander had in fact received the first

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1. Wazīr Khān to Pfander, 1 June 1854, Dusrā hissa, pp. 16-18. Pfander offered Wazīr Khan a translation of a German reply to Strauss, on which the doctor expressed surprise that Pfander had not been ready with such replies during the debate. He then gave a detailed exposition of Strauss's arguments on particular passages in the Gospels.

2. The September letters were compiled by Amīn al-Dīn, a pupil of Raḥmat Allāh's, and were included in Al-bahs al-sharīf with an explanation of why Raḥmat Allāh had resumed the correspondence.

3. Raḥmat Allāh to Pfander, 3 Zī'l-ḥijja 1270 A.H./27 Aug. 1854.

4. Raḥmat Allāh to Pfander, 23 Zī'l-ḥijja 1270 A.H./16 Sept. 1854.

5. Raḥmat Allāh to French, 23 Zī'l-ḥijja 1270 A.H./16 Sept. 1854.

letter, but had already decided that further correspondence was pointless until the 'ulamā had published their own full accounts. When he did decide to reply his letter crossed with Raḥmat Allāh's second attempt to draw him out. He confined his answer to a brief note, enclosing Raḥmat Allāh's letter unanswered, and repeating the view that for the moment further correspondence was futile.[1]

Having failed to draw Pfander into any further statement, Raḥmat Allāh tried to achieve his end, and perhaps to divide his adversaries among themselves, by approaching French separately. He asked French in his letter, whether he still held to the statement he had made during the debate on the number of 'corrupt' passages in the Bible, or whether he agreed with the revised statement in Pfander's published article. This question seemed crucial, for the 'ulamā had realized that although French had played a subsidiary part in the debate, his later and more liberal theological education had made him more aware than Pfander of the implications of Higher Criticism.[2] The reply French sent to Raḥmat Allāh certainly opened the door for the 'ulamā to reassert more vigorously than before the completeness of their victory in the debate. For French, although he disclaimed any particular authority on the matter, and conscious that he was still struggling with the language, replied that while the minimum number of alterations agreed on by Biblical scholars was four or five, there was as yet

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1. Pfander to Raḥmat Allāh, 11; 27 Sept. 1854.

2. French's theological studies at Oxford in the 1840s and his subsequent evolution to an acceptance of mild critical views will be examined in Chap. 6.

no such agreement on the maximum number.[1] In their exultation over this answer the 'ulamā might be forgiven for judging the missionary cause to be in complete disarray as they hastened on with their own publications.

During the subsequent months the correspondence, accounts and commentaries made their appearance in various editions from presses in Delhi and Agra. The extent of the interest that had been aroused among educated Muslims is shown by the commentaries and fatāwā which were appended to the records and letters. While Raḥmat Allāh and Wazīr Khān both seemed ready to withdraw from any further direct involvement, at least for the moment, others were ready to oversee the publications and to add their comments. One Maḥmūd Jān compiled fifty-six 'points' in criticism of Pfander's arguments in the letters, and a pupil of Raḥmat Allāh's, Amīn al-dīn, also took up the task of further criticism and commentary.[2] However, in the hands of lesser 'ulamā the tone became more scurrilous, and the encounter degenerated rapidly into an exchange of derisive remarks. To this final stage belong the constant accusations that Pfander had 'run away' from the 'ulamā, and that his books on Islam resembled Luther's diatribes against the

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1. T.V. French to Rahmat Allāh, 5 Sept. 1854. Later French was to be known as the 'seven-tongued clergyman of Lahore', for from his first arrival in India he had devoted himself to the acquisition of Urdu, Hindi, Persian and Arabic, as well as the Sanskrit to which he had been asked to give most attention. Yet in 1854 he was still considerably less fluent than Pfander in Urdu, and a year later he recorded his intention of acquiring enough Arabic to read the Qur'an in the original for the purposes of debating with the 'ulamā. Birks, Life, I, pp. 21, 45.

2. Mahmūd Jān's tract was included in the Al-bahs al-sharīf. Amīn al-Dīn's comments are interspersed among the correspondence in the same compilation.

Pope.[1]

The publishers of the Muslim accounts were anxious to establish the authenticity of their own versions by securing the support of other prominent 'ulamā in Agra and Delhi. Amīn al-Dīn's compilation of the September letters was followed by the names and seals of fourteen 'ulamā who had been in attendance for at least part of the debate, and were ready to attest the Muslim published versions.[2] After the debate questions had been sent to some 'ulamā in Delhi, who had not been present, asking them for a final and higher opinion on the status of the extant copies of the Bible. Two answers were given. One fatwā decreed that only the words of God which had been revealed directly to Christ should be included in the Injīl, and only those books which were confirmed by the Qur'ān should be accepted. This decree carried the seals and signatures of Muḥammad Karīm Allāh, Shāh Aḥmad Sa'īd and Farīd al-Dīn.[3] The second fatwā issued from Delhi stated that the passages in the Qur'ān which showed the corruption of the Bible indicated changes of both words and meanings in the original manuscripts as well as in later

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1. Amīn al-Dīn's source for his comparison between Pfander and Luther seems to have been the Catholic Herald, a Calcutta journal which was available in Agra by this time. See Chap.6.

2. Amīn al-Dīn's tract, p. 50, loc.cit.

3. ibid., pt.56.
Muhammad Karim Allāh was described as living and teaching at the Lālchāh madrasa at Delhi. For biographical details see, T.U.H., p.397; Sayyid Ahmad Khān, Āsār al-ṣanadīd, (reprinted, Delhi,1965), p.560.
Shāh Ahmad Sa'īd was identified as the sajjāda nishīn of his father, Shāh Abū Sa'īd, at the khānaqa of Shah Ghulām 'Alī in Delhi; Asār, pp.469-473.
Farīd al-Dīn was a teacher at the Jāmi' Masjid in Delhi.

translations.[1] Appended were the signatures of Nawāzish 'Alī, Muḥammad Ẓiā al-Dīn, Muḥammad Quṭb al-Dīn Khān, Muḥammad Naẓīr Ḥusain Sayyid and Muftī Raḥmat 'Alī Khān.[2]

Thus, by the end of 1855 the news had been broadcast by every available means - traditional fatāwā as well as modern newspaper reports - that Raḥmat Allāh's charges against the Bible and against Pfander's books, had been upheld. After the debate Raḥmat Allāh returned to Kairana where he was involved in his other religious and educational concerns until the risings of 1857. Dr Wazīr Khān remained in Agra, but he made no further contacts with the missionaries. His state of mind and activities from 1855 to 1857 can only be conjectured. He continued to earn the praise of his hospital superiors but nevertheless applied for a transfer, preferably back to his previous isolated post at Damoh. He suggested Aligarh as an alternative, but all his requests were ignored.[3] Although he gave ill health as the reason

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1. The second answer pointed out the absence of any proof for the authenticity of the contents of both Testaments, and referred to a number of passages in the Qur'ān and in Muslim commentaries which indicated alterations by the Jews and Christians of both 'words' and 'meanings' in the original manuscripts as well as in later translations. For context of these accusations see Chap. 6.

2. Nawāzish 'Alī was identified as a teacher at the Madrasa -i Dar al-Huda which had been recently built by the merchant, Shaikh Husain Bakhsh.
Muḥammad Ẓiā al-Dīn was a madrasa teacher in Delhi.
Muḥammad Quṭb al-Dīn Khān, Muḥammad Naẓīr Husain Sayyid and Sayyid Raḥmat 'Ali Khān, the muftī of the royal court, were all prominent Delhi 'ulamā. See Sayyid Ahmad Khān, Āsār al-Ṣanādīd (Delhi, 1965), pp.557-558; 578-579;582.

3. Wazīr Khān to John Murray, Civil Surgeon, Agra, 27 Sept. 1854; Murray to H. Unwin, Commissioner, Agra, 29 Sept. 1854, in 'Letters written to Commissioner of Agra, 4.2.54-22.12.54', No.147, Agra (Judicial), U.P. State Archives. Dr Murray had apparently given Wazīr Khān leave from his hospital duties to enable him to participate in the debate. Letter from Pfander to Raḥmat Allāh, 31 March 1854, Al-baḥs, p. 15.

for the request, it is possible that the religious controversies had embittered him so deeply against the missionaries that he wanted to remove himself from the provincial capital where their presence could no longer be ignored. Yet it was at this time that Wazīr Khān seems to have become an important figure among the Agra Muslims, and British officials would suggest later that his main preoccupation during 1855 to 1857 was with activities which would lead to his involvement in the risings of 1857.

It seems that the 'ulamā had withdrawn from further controversy of their own accord, and because they felt their case had been proved and the results widely publicized in the locality. However, the removal of the main source of provocation also played a part. For at the end of 1854 Pfander was transferred to Peshawar, a decision which he strongly opposed because he wanted to 'finish' the controversies with the Muslims. When the Calcutta committee of the CMS refused to consider his plea for a year's delay, he tried to accept the transfer philosophically by suggesting it would be salutary for the 'ulamā to be made to realize that other missionaries could take over his leadership.[1] But after his departure, his colleague, the Reverend Thomas Valpy French, whose dissidence has already been suggested, seemed grateful for the chance to abandon the 'controversial' approach to the Muslims, and to concentrate instead on other methods of evangelism, notably the development of St John's College in Agra as a centre of higher and Christian learning. Although he had mentioned in letters both

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1. Pfander to H. Venn, Peshawar, 22 Feb. 1855, CMS CI1/O227/56.

to the 'ulamā and to the CMS that he planned a further literary contribution to the controversies, French did not publish any such work.[1] Pfander's Ikhtitām, published in Agra in 1855 remained the only direct rejoinder on the missionary side.[2]

It seems that William Muir, the evangelical Secretary to Government, who had previously given firm support to Pfander's methods, was also reconsidering the situation. He had kept silent during the debate, and afterwards he seemed to feel, like French, with whom he was on very friendly terms, that a process of re-education was needed rather than a face-to-face challenge on shaky ground. Muir's final contribution to this stage of the encounters shows his change in emphasis. He published in Agra in 1856 a work entitled, The Testimony Borne by the Coran to the Jewish and Christian Scriptures.[3] His stated intention in this study was to move the centre of discussion away from the Bible and back to the Qur'ānic sources in order to show their confirmation of the Christian revelation, taking care to, 'illustrate and explain those passages as far as possible from a Mussulman standpoint and with frequent reference to the Mahometan Commentators'. He was writing, he said, 'primarily for the Mussulmans of India', and in particular for 'the opponents of Mr Pfander'.[4] He planned

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1. French to H. Venn, Dholpur, 1 Feb. 1855, CMS, CI1/O109/6; Birks, Life, I, pp. 42-61.

2. Ikhtitām dīnī mubāḥaṡa kā (Agra, 1855).

3. W. Muir, The Testimony borne by the Coran to the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, 1st ed. (Agra, 1856), 2nd ed. (London, 1860).

4. Muir to Sec. Religious Tract and Book Society, Naini Tal, 7 April, 1856. B.F.B.S., 'Foreign Correspondence, 1804-1856. India (Inwards), 1856'.

translations into Urdu, Persian and Arabic, but only the Urdu edition was completed at this time.[1] In this and his subsequent publications, notably his Life of Mahomet, which was published in 1858, Muir was consciously contributing to Pfander's 'controversies', but he now chose to avoid direct confrontation, preferring to take up historical and textual themes.[2]

In the Christian as well as in the Muslim camp, the participants who had been active during the previous three years, had withdrawn from direct encounter by the end of 1855, and there was to be no resumption of the controversies before the risings of 1857 engulfed the North-Western Provinces. Yet when revolt spread to Kairana and Agra in the summer of 1857, both Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh and Dr Wazīr Khān would be implicated in 'rebel' activity.

1. Shahādat-i Qur'ānī bar kutub-i rabbānī (Lucknow, 1860).

2. W. Muir, The Life of Mahomet and History of Islam, 4 vols. (London 1858-61), I, preface.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE THEMES OF CONTROVERSY

(1) REASON AND REVELATION

TRADITIONAL AND NEW ELEMENTS IN THE REASON-REVELATION CONTROVERSY

Examination of the processes of encounter, and identification of the participants, have already necessitated some brief references to the principal arguments which were used during the various phases of the controversies. However, in this and the final chapter, closer attention will be paid to the theological arguments in order to assess the significance of their adoption at this particular time, and to place them in the wider context of the history of encounter between Islam and European and Christian thought. Although controversy raged over a number of other questions, two charges were prominent in the Indian replies to Pfander. The first, which will be considered in the present chapter, was the attack on the 'irrational' nature of the doctrine of the Trinity and the belief in the divinity of Christ.

When Pfander first became aware of the _'ulamā_'s response to his book on the Trinity, the _Miftāḥ al-Asrār_ (Key of Mysteries), he called it 'rather a new line of argument, which may be called the rationalistic line of attack'.[1] However, although the priority which was now attached to the arguments was newly important in the context of Protestant encounter with Indian Islam, the _'ulamā_ were engaged in reviving from a traditional stock of polemic the most fundamental and widely known objection to Christianity. For from the early preaching of Islam, objections to the Trinity had been at the heart of the verbal contests between Christendom and and the expanding forces of Islam. A survey of mutual images

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1. Pfander to Rev. J. Innes, Simla, 24 Aug. 1846, CMS CI1/0227/15.

has shown that 'the Islamic denial of the Trinity seemed to be the basic point of difference between the religions'.[1] It was quickly recognized that the Christian doctrines of Christ's sonship and divinity and the trinitarian mystery of 'three in one and one in three' conflicted irreconcilably with the Muslim concept of _tawḥīd_ (divine unity). The Qur'ānic anathema on _shirk_ (association in the godhead) was soon directed at these central doctrines of Christianity.

Although the centrality of the Trinity question to the forming of mutual images is relatively well documented, it seems that written exchanges between Muslims and Christians were rare in the early centuries of Islam, and evidence about the occurrence of some of the most significant was anyway only rediscovered in the late nineteenth century. Scholarship in the Christian West endured an 'age of ignorance' during which images of the Muslims, their prophet and beliefs were formed around unfounded and often scurrilous notions.[2] It was in the heart of the Muslim world itself that a Christian Arab, resident at the court of the 'Abbāsid caliph in the mid ninth century compiled the first recorded comprehensive treatise in defence of Christian doctrine. This 'Apology of al-Kindī' which remained unknown to the Christian West for a thousand years after its compilation, commenced,

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1. N. Daniel, _Islam and the West: the Making of an Image_ (Edinburgh, 1960), pp. 175-176.

2. R.W. Southern, _Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages_ (Cambridge, Mass. & London, reprinted 1978), pp. 14-33. Also M. Rodinson, 'The Western Image and Western Studies of Islam', in J. Schacht and C.E. Bosworth (eds.), _The Legacy of Islam_, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1974), p. 13.

significantly, with a statement on the Trinity.[1] Not until the twelfth century did Western scholars attempt such an enterprise for themselves. Inspired by the example of Peter the Venerable, a group of scholars at Toledo in Spain began the process of collecting, translating and studying Arabic manuscripts which would later allow a more knowledgeable image of Islam to emerge in Europe.[2] Peter's 'Summary' of Islamic doctrine commenced with an exposition of the Muslim view of the Trinity. He wrote of the Muslims that, 'their first and greatest error to be cursed is that they deny the Trinity in the unity of the Godhead'.[3] A century later when the Catalan, Raymon Lull, determined to carry the Christian message to North Africa, he too placed the Trinity doctrine at the centre of his preaching.[4] These intermittent Christian 'defences' had been stimulated, directly or indirectly, by awareness of Muslim hostility to the doctrine.[5]

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1. W. Muir, The Apology of Al-Kindy (London, 1882), a paraphrase and commentary on a work written in Arabic in defence of Christianity against Islam by one 'Abd al-Masīh ibn Ishāq, al-Kindī, at the court of Al-Ma'mūn, in A.D. 830.

2. J.Kritzeck, Peter the Venerable and Islam (Princeton, 1964).

3. 'Summa totius haeresis Saracenorum' in Kritzeck, op.cit., p. 117.

4. R. Sugranyes de Franch, Raymond Lulle, Docteur des Missions (Schöneck - Beckenried, 1954).

5. Sugranyes de Franch shows the depth of Lull s knowledge of Islam, and the adaptation of his arguments to the Muslim mind. Op.cit., pp. 59-61; 79-80.

Yet the 'new' element in the mid nineteenth century polemic consisted, according to Pfander, in the 'rationalistic' mode of argument rather than the focus of argument on the doctrine itself. In this too, the Indian 'ulamā were drawing on a long and important heritage of rationalistic theological debate. The reception of Greek thought, especially Aristotelian logic, at the 'Abbāsid centres of culture and religion in the 9th and 10th centuries played an important part in determining the speculative and philosophical element which was to mark the subsequent development of Islamic theology. The emergence of the Mu'tazalites was to give a permanent place to speculative theology in the internal debates between Muslim scholars of differing standpoints.[1] These trends were paralleled in the Christian world, albeit at a later date, by the reception of the Greek corpus of knowledge and the consequent struggles to reconcile the conclusions of reason with revelation. In the intermittent interchanges which took place between the two worlds, polemical works by both Muslims and Christians show the central concern with the 'nature of God', and also a predominantly rationalistic method of argument and apology. On the Muslim side the great 12th century theologian, al-Ghazālī, based his refutation of the divinity of Christ on rational principles of exegesis,[2] and on the Christian side Raymon Lull attempted to 'prove' the Trinity by 'necessary reasons'.[3]

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1. W. Montgomery Watt, Islamic Philosophy and Theology (Edinburgh, 1979), pp. 58-70.

2. Muhammad ibn Muhammad, Al-Ghazālī, Réfutation excellente de la divinité de Jésus-Christ d'après les Evangiles, trans. R. Chidiac (Paris, 1939), p. 8.

3. Daniel, Islam and the West, p. 178; R. Sugranyes de Franch, Raymond Lulle, pp. 74-78.

Pfander, however, would have had no knowledge of the history of medieval encounter between the two religions, for few of these medieval treatises were known to European scholars of his day.[1] What is surprising, nevertheless, is his assertion that the method of argument employed by the Lucknow 'ulamā was entirely new since it is known that he was aware of the encounters which had taken place between the Jesuit missionaries and some Indian 'ulamā at the Mughal court during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Arnulf Camps' study of Jerome Xavier's method of disputation in the work of apology he wrote after his visit to the Mughal court shows that Xavier had adopted a rational form of argument to prove that Christianity is the only true religion.[2] Camps argues, however, that Xavier purposely adopted rational arguments as part of a debate technique which he deemed to be appropriate for his imaginary Muslim opponent, 'a philosopher', notwithstanding his own personal conviction that reason could not demonstrate such 'mysteries' as the Trinity, for in Xavier's words, 'in their very essence they are above human reason'.[3] If this was so, then Xavier and Pfander were actually remarkably close in their basic attitudes to the role of reason. However, the only

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1. In the course of discussing the medieval legacy in the 1840s, William Muir stated that there had been scarcely any contribution on the Christian side before the Jesuit visits to the Mughal court. Muir was later responsible for the rediscovery of Al-Kindy's 'Apology'.

2. A. Camps, Jerome Xavier S.J. and the Muslims of the Mogul Empire: Controversial Works and Missionary Activity (Schöneck-Beckenried, Switzerland, 1957). Xavier's treatise was called 'Fuente de Fida' and was translated into Persian as the 'Ā'īna-yi ḥaqq-numā'. (The Truth-showing Mirror).

3. ibid., pp. 96-101.

source from which Pfander might have obtained any knowledge of the Jesuit-Mughal encounter did not mention Xavier's emphasis on scripture and indeed criticized heavily his reliance on his 'own ingenuity'. For it was Professor Samuel Lee's translation to which Pfander had access, and Lee, in a spirit of Anglican pique at what he considered 'Jesuit casuistry', had used his editorial freedom to insinuate that Xavier laid insufficient emphasis on 'the plain and unsophisticated declarations of the Holy Scriptures'.[1] But if Lee's account of the Jesuit arguments over-emphasized and distorted their reliance on the argument from reason, it seemingly had no effect on Pfander who acknowledged he had read Lee's book but did not comment on Xavier's interchanges with the Muslim 'philosopher'. Certainly Pfander's own writings show no influence from Jesuit sources. It seems then that neither the subject of debate nor the method of argument actually were new, but merely appeared to be so to a Pietist priest whose upbringing and education had sheltered him from rationalist polemics in eighteenth century Europe, and whose subsequent study of Islam had failed to bring to his close attention the medieval and Mughal polemical works in which the argument from reason had frequently been stressed by both Muslims and Christians.

On the other hand it is arguable that certain characteristics of the controversy which ensued between Pfander and the 'ulamā in the years 1844 to 1847 did combine to mark a new and important phase in Muslim-Christian encounter in India. Examination of the books and letters which were written during this period will

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1. Lee, Controversial Tracts, p. xli. See Chap. 2 for examination of Samuel Lee's views.

reveal a more meticulous adherence to arguments from reason than was characteristic of either the medieval European or the Mughal treatises. This was indeed Islamic scholasticism at its point of furthest remove from Pietist 'heart religion'. The 'new' mode of argument was subsequently incorporated into treatises written by Sunnī 'ulamā, but the Shī'ī 'ulamā of Lucknow were responsible for first formulating the objections to Pfander's books on a rational basis, and for then maintaining the argument. In his first reply to Pfander in 1842, the mujtahid, Sayyid Muḥammad, had identified the main quarrel between Muslims and Christians as the Trinity question,[1] and in his second letter he had briefly, but firmly, stated the ground for Muslim non-acceptance of the Trinity in terms of the priority of reason over revelation,

> What is considered to be absolutely impossible by the intellect it is not possible that it should come in the divine revelation or be strung in the string of the divine secrets.[2]

Some Shī'ī scholars argue that such an emphasis on the role of reason was a particular characteristic of Shī'ī theology. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, for example, asserts that this Shī'ī proclivity 'made possible the vast development of the Islamic philosophy and the intellectual sciences from the beginning'.[3] Yet the mode of argument adopted by the mujtahid's family seemed to owe more to the emphasis which was placed on reason in the madrasas of Lucknow

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1. Sayyid Muḥammad to Pfander, 7 zi'l-qa'da, A.H. 1258./10 Dec. 1842.

2. Sayyid Muḥammad to Pfander, n.d. (1845?).

3. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, preface to 'Allamah Sayyid Muhammed Husayn Tabataba'i, Shi'ite Islam (London, 1975), p. 15. Also p. 107.

than it did to the Shī'ī identity of its first proponents. It is usual to trace these rational inclinations of the Lucknow-educated 'ulamā to the influence of the Dars-i Niẓāmiyya curriculum of studies which was introduced by the Farangī Maḥallī family of scholars in Lucknow in the eighteenth century.[1] Whereas scholars in Delhi continued to emphasize the study of the Qur'ān, tafsīr and ḥadīs̤, the distinctive feature of the Niẓāmiyya curriculum was the attention paid to ma'qūlāt, the rational sciences of logic and philosophy.[2] Although there were no rigid requirements for students to fulfil in evidence of their completion of the curriculum, and many moved from scholar to scholar, and from city to city, to pursue the various branches of religious knowledge, it seems that the rational emphasis embodied in the Dars-i Niẓāmiyya blueprint was imbibed by many of those 'ulamā, both Sunnī and Shī'ī, who had spent a considerable part of their initial years of theological study in the city of Lucknow. Thus unbeknown to Pfander, an important reason for the sudden emergence of a seemingly new mode of argument, reflected a, by then, century-old emphasis within Islamic theological studies in Lucknow.

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1. S.M. Ikram, Muslim rule in India and Pakistan, 2nd edition (Lahore, 1966), p. 516; Ziya-ul-Hasan Faruqi, The Deoband School and the Demand for Pakistan (London, 1963), p. 29; B. Metcalf, 'The Madrasa at Deoband: A Model for Religious Education in India', M.A.S., XII, 1 (1978), pp. 117-118. For a suggestion that the emphasis which the Dars i-Niẓāmiyya placed on the rational sciences has been exaggerated see F.C.R. Robinson, article 'Farangī Maḥall', EI², supplement 1982, p. 293.

2. Faruqi, op.cit., p. 28; Metcalf, op.cit., pp. 117-118; S.M. Ikram, Muslim Civilization in India (New York & London), p. 280; Faruqi's examination of the Dars-i Niẓāmiyya shows that students were expected to study only one collection of Traditions and two works of commentary, but eleven works of logic and three of philosophy. op.cit., p. 29.

On the missionary side the circulation of Pfander's Persian translation of the Miftāḥ certainly acted as the immediate catalyst in bringing to the attention of the 'ulamā the Christian emphasis on the Trinity. Furthermore, the beginning of the rationalist attack coincided with the first publication of the complete Urdu Bible, and each subsequent refutation showed closer knowledge of an ever increasing range of translations of the Bible in the three 'Muslim' languages of northern India. In this series of controversies, particular use was made of the Christian creeds, at first from the paraphrases earlier in the century of the English King James' Prayer Book made by Martyn's munshī, Jawād Sābāṭ, but later from the various Urdu and Persian translations of the Prayer Book which were published in Calcutta and at other presses in northern India.[1] This was the moment when dissemination of the scriptures by the missionaries first showed itself to be a double-edged weapon, for some of the 'ulamā were beginning to see the multiplicity of translations as a proof not of Christian strength, but of weakness. Joseph Wolff had noted in 1833 that the mujtahid's followers had 'Arabic bibles' and Martyn's Persian New Testament, but twenty years later Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī would base his refutation of the Trinity on a dozen 'rival' Arabic, Persian and Urdu translations, on the Book of Common Prayer, and also on William Muir's recently published Masīḥī kalīsā kī tārīkh (History of the Christian Church) which acquainted him with 'heretical'

1. Sābāt had used the King James Prayer Book published in 1603. Apart from this Rahmat Allāh Kairanawī referred to an Anglican Book of Common Prayer published in London in 1818. Urdu translations included a Prayer Book published in Calcutta in 1828.

views on the Trinity.[1] Awareness of the internal history of the church and of the early heresies, was to affect the subsidiary arguments which were proffered in refutation of the Trinity. Newly acquired knowledge about later sectarian divisions within Christendom would prompt Raḥmat Allāh to point out to his Protestant opponents the 'logical absurdity' of the Trinity doctrine in Muslim eyes, by reminding them of the Protestant attitude to the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation.[2] By the 1850s therefore, the collection and study of Christian texts and histories, which had been started by the Lucknow mujtahid in 1833, was being newly utilized to point out inconsistencies in, and disagreements about, the scriptural references to the Trinity and to the divinity of Christ to which Pfander had attached primary importance in the Miftāḥ.

The refutations of this period constituted a conscious and a real response to Christian preaching of a type which was unusual in earlier ages, for most previous treatises had presented arguments which had been aimed at merely imaginary opponents. For Peter the Venerable's 'summary' and 'refutation' were never translated into Arabic and were not utilized in debate in his own lifetime or later. Even though the Jesuits had undoubtedly engaged in religious debate at Akbar's court, Xavier's 'Fuente de Fida' was an imaginary dialogue with a 'philosopher' and an orthodox

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1. W. Muir, Masīhī kalīsā kī tārīkh (Agra, 1848). Listed in the IOL catalogue, but now missing, and seemingly unobtainable elsewhere.

2. Rahmat Allāh Kairānawī deemed transubstantiation to be impossible and irrational. He based his own account of the Christian sacrament on an account which Jawād Sābāt had obtained from a seventeenth century Latin work of Lodovico Marracci. Ibṭāl, pp. 32-33.

mullā. In contrast, the encounters in the 1840s certainly took place, and the *'ulamā* utilized whatever knowledge they possessed about other recent real encounters to fuel their own arguments. Thus the earlier intermittent encounters in northern India, which had seemed to leave no permanent mark at the time they had taken place, assumed a new significance as a source from which a new generation of *'ulamā* might draw arguments and examples. The main source of this type was Jawād bin Sābāṭ, Henry Martyn's one-time *munshī*, 'Nathaniel', who had argued with the *'ulamā* in the Christian cause, but had later returned to Islam.[1] He was regarded as a particularly valuable 'inside' source, and it seems that his books, including at least one in refutation of Christianity, were in circulation among the *'ulamā*.[2] Joseph Wolff saw a copy of his refutation in the possession of a Kashmiri *'ālim* in the early 1830s, but ten years later Pfander 'never could procure a copy of it'.[3] He was particularly anxious to do so since he had discovered that the *'ulamā* who were currently writing on the Trinity were quoting long passages of Sābāṭ's refutation on points of Christian doctrine which seemed especially perplexing to them. Sayyid Muḥammad Hādī and Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī, for example, quoted Sābāṭ's explanation of the Christian meaning of the 'two natures' in Christ, the relationship between the descent into hell and salvation, and

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1. See Chap. 1, pp.82-84.

2. Sayyid Muhammad Hādī and Rahmat Allāh Kairānawī referred to Sabat's refutation of Christianity, and parts of it were incorporated into the *Saulat al-Zaigham*. However none of his works has been located.

3. Pfander, Journal, Agra, 1843.

his criticism of the 'triangle' analogy for the Trinity.[1] It seems that long passages of Sābāṭ's work had also been incorporated into a more recent 'abridgement' of Muslim objections to Christianity which had been sent to Pfander in 1843, and this was also quoted by the 'ulamā.[2] They made use, too, of all available tracts, reports and hearsay remarks resulting from other intermittent encounters with missionaries in the region. Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī, for example, quoted from an Urdu tract by William Smith and C.B. Leupolt, the Dīn-i Ḥaqq kī Taḥqīq, which had been published in Allahabad in 1842. Pfander and Muir were critical of this publication, although Leupolt was a C.M.S. missionary, because in their view it compared Islam, Hinduism and Christianity in a manner they considered to be very superficial. The 'ālim was quick to take advantage of this same weakness, and made capital of the admission in the Taḥqīq that the Trinity cannot be explained rationally.[3] The 'rationalist' counter-attack of the mid 1840s thus owed a considerable debt to earlier and ongoing, but hitherto unco-ordinated controversies.

The reason-revelation controversies provide some pointers to the stance of the 'ulamā within Islam, and to their knowledge of, and attitude to, other religious systems. In the first refutations Shī'ī and Sunnī authors preferred to refer to the commentators and historians associated with their own sect, but as the polemic evolved there was a drawing together of resources

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1. Sayyid Muhammad Hādī, Kashf al-Astār (Lucknow, 1845), p. 192; Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī, Ibṭāl al-taslīs (Delhi, 1875), p. 24.

2. Sayyid 'Abbās 'Alī, Khulāsa-i-Saulat al-Zaigham (Lucknow, 1842), quoted by Kairānawī in Ibṭāl, p. 25.

3. ibid., p. 10, where Chap. 5 in part 3 of the Taḥqīq is quoted.

which seemed to override sectarian differences. Among the refutations of this period only the Kashf al-Astār, written by the mujtahid's nephew, bore a strong Shīʿī mark. For Sayyid Muḥammad Hādī supported his arguments by references to Shīʿī theological and historical works, notably Muḥammad Bāqir-i Majlisī's Ḥayāt al-Qalūb, interpreted a number of Old Testament prophecies in favour not only of the prophet Muḥammad but on occasion, ʿAlī or the mahdī, and made digressions in praise of ʿAlī.[1] Attitudes to Ṣūfism were sometimes implicit in the discussions on the Trinity, for Pfander had provoked some sort of statement on this question by arguing that the Muslim mystics had reached an intuitive understanding of trinitarianism. In the course of denying this claim Sayyid Muḥammad Hādī referred to the Ṣūfīs as being outside the pale of true Islam, heretics, renegades and 'evil mystics'.[2] The munṣif, Āl-i Ḥasan, on the other hand, made no direct comments on Ṣūfism, but quoted from Ṣūfī scholars in support of his own views, and described his view of the possible relationships between different forms of existence in terminology which seems to indicate his own acceptance of the Ṣūfī stages of being.[3] Although the anti-Christian publications are not very revealing on the sectarian affiliations of their authors, yet it seems that by the early 1850s there was a drawing together of ʿulamā from diverse stances within Indian Islam in order to counter the new threat from Christianity.

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1. Kashf, pp. 116-122.

2. Kashf, pp. 206-213.

3. Kitāb-i Istifsār, e.g. pp. 27; 35-37.

However, the encounters of this phase show scarcely any awareness that similar arguments were being conducted elsewhere in India. Although the role of reason and the doctrine of the Trinity had been central to the Calcutta debates of the 1820s between Hindus and Baptists, Pfander made no comments about this.[1] Yet, the Shī'ī 'ulamā seemed more aware than Pfander of recent events in Calcutta, for Sayyid Muḥammad Hādī chose to challenge Pfander's account of Hindu doctrines by drawing on information from Muslim sources and by questioning some local Brahmins about recent re-evaluations within Hinduism.[2]

The reason-revelation controversies suggest then that some of the 'ulamā were being newly impelled by a mixture of curiosity and hostility to examine recent views on Christianity and, to a lesser extent, on Hinduism. Nevertheless the traditional roots of their arguments were still very strong, and their works show scarcely any awareness of an outside and changing world. Whereas Pfander associated the spread of Christianity with scientific progress and frequently made references to technological changes, the Muslim tracts of the 1840s were narrowly theological and seemingly written in a political and scientific vacuum. Apart from one reference to the Chinese opium wars and one to the Company's rule in India, the Kashf al-Astār was devoid of contemporary allusions. Indeed, in spheres where Islam provided traditional

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1. On missionary contacts with Hinduism in Calcutta, S.D. Collet, The Life and Letters of Raja Rammohan Roy, ed. D.K. Biswas and P.C. Gangoli (Calcutta, 1962), pp. 111-153; M.A. Laird, 'Ram Mohan Roy and the Christian missionaries', an unpublished paper presented to a symposium to commemorate the bicentenary of the birth of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, held at the India Office Library and Records, London, 29 June 1972; M. Mohar Ali, The Bengali Reaction to Christian Missionary Activities.
2. Kashf, pp. 202-205.

and firm guidelines for their thinking, the 'ulamā who initiated the reaction to Pfander were completely out of touch with thought systems other than their own. Sayyid Muḥammad Hādī's references to astronomy show that he was unaware of the Copernican revolution. Thus when Pfander used the planetary system as an example of a 'mystery' which is accepted although it is beyond the full comprehension of human reason, Hādī criticized him for denying the fixity of the planets in the sky,

> ... it is astonishing that he denies the actual existence of the heavens and thinks the stars to be suspended in the air, and he abandons the verses of the Bible on account of flimsy doubts created by his co-religionist astronomers.[1]

At this date, 1845, the scorn Hādī poured on Pfander would have been shared by most Indian 'ulamā of all sectarian persuasions. Yet it has been shown that Delhi was currently experiencing a period of inquiry, and hitherto unfamiliar scientific principles would soon be the subject of controversy there. In 1848 Sayyid Aḥmad Khān would publish in Delhi his Qual-i matīn dar ibṭāl-i ḥarakat-i-zamīn (Firm assertion with regard to declaring false the motion of the earth). Yet by 1860 he had renounced this view in favour of the Copernican principles of astronomy and in subsequent publications he explained how scientific observation had exposed the errors in the traditional view.[2] As early as the mid 1840s there had been one or two dissident voices in Delhi and also in Lucknow. William Muir noted

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1. Kashf, p. 44.

2. Sayyid Ahmad Khān, Qual-i matīn dar ibṭāl ḥarakat-i zamīn (Delhi, 1848); C.W. Troll, Sayyid Ahmad Khan - a Reinterpretation of Muslim Theology (New Delhi, 1978), pp. 146-160. See Chap. 4.

in the review of the 'Mahommedan controversy' which he wrote in 1845, that 'a learned Hindu resident of Lucknow, well versed apparently in Arabic philosophy', had expressed his own objections to the traditional Muslim cosmology and had also claimed that 'a sect of Mahommedan philosophers profess the same belief'.[1] It has been shown that the beginning of religious controversy in Delhi was closely connected with the scientific stir in Delhi College where Rām Chandra, the Hindu lecturer in European science together with one of the Muslim lecturers in the Arabic department, had expressed objections to Sayyid Aḥmad Khān's Qual-i matīn.[2] It seems that the 'anglo-oriental' government colleges in Delhi and Agra where European science classes had been introduced in the 1840s, played an important part in initiating the challenge to traditional astronomy.[3] Hindu scholars and students were more receptive, and the penetration into Muslim learned circles outside the colleges was slow. Certainly the mujtahid's circle in Lucknow had not been made aware of this stir by the time that Hādī published his refutation of the Trinity. He thus ridiculed Pfander with full confidence and scorn, unaware that fellow 'ulamā would soon be forced to face the challenge which Copernican principles presented to Islamic cosmology.

The 'ulamā and the missionaries thus began to debate the rival claims of reason and of revelation in a setting which bore the strong mark of traditional concerns and medieval

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1. W. Muir, C.R. IV (Dec. 1845) p. 470.

2. Rām Chandra, quoted by Augustus de Morgan, editorial preface to A Treatise on Problems of Maxima and Minima, solved by Algebra (London, 1859), p. xviii.

3. See Chap. 4.

scholasticism. The significance to be attached to the Trinity doctrine, the Biblical passages which would be cited, and the rules of reason which would be adhered to by the 'ulamā, were redolent of earlier treatises on the relationship between Islam and Christianity. Their encounter took place against a traditional Muslim view of the universe, and events in the rest of India and in the world did not consciously impinge. It was, nevertheless, the beginning of an era of real change for the Muslims of British India, and the signs of challenge and re-evaluation are also noticeable in the records of the encounters. The new characteristics reflected various facets of the new British interest in civilizing and modernizing India. In particular, the dissemination of Western learning and Christian literature through the college and missionary presses, was drawing to the 'ulamā's attention the vulnerability as well as the nature, of certain Christian doctrines.

THE REASON VERSUS REVELATION DEBATE IN THE 1840s

The characteristics of the controversy between Pfander and the Lucknow 'ulamā which occurred in the mid 1840s will be examined against this traditional, but in some important respects, changing and unique background. It was shown in the second chapter that the Reverend Carl Pfander held the steadfast Pietist conviction that 'arguments from the heart', not 'arguments from reason' must constitute the only valid test for religious truth. The circulation of the Persian edition of his book on the Trinity, the Miftāḥ al-Asrār, was the provocation which set in motion the 'ulamā's claims for reason. Pfander's standpoint will be examined in more detail

before the Muslim response is analysed.

In Pfander's view the nature of God is a 'mystery', which has been partially revealed in scripture, but is unfathomable by means of the human reason.[1] He stressed the subordination of reason to revelation by stating firmly, 'we regard the Scriptures as the master, and reason the subject ... reason is not the sovereign, but the subject of the Scriptures'.[2] His denigration of reason conveyed the notion of 'weakness', 'impotence' and 'limitation'. Although his view was determined by his evangelical interpretation of the 'fall', in his books for Muslims he usually simply stated his belief that human reason is 'limited' without any explanation of the cause. In a letter to an 'ālim he simply stated, 'God alone is omniscient, and man's reason is limited, is finite'.[3] He referred in the Miftāḥ to the 'small and weak intellect of the human being', which is 'impotent and helpless'.[4] On occasion, however, he made a more explicit connection between 'sin' and the impairment of reason, urging repeatedly in the Miftāḥ that 'the measuring rod of truth is not in the limited and sinful human intellect'.[5] However when the 'ulamā provoked him by their own insistence on the subordination of revelation to reason, Pfander was obliged to elaborate on the causal connection between 'sin', the 'fall' and 'limited' reason. In reply to a Muslim assertion that man possesses 'pure' or 'perfect' reason Pfander

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1. Pfander, Miftāḥ, in Urdu (Agra, 1850), p. 4.
2. Pfander to Āl-i Ḥasan, 14 Aug. 1844.
3. Pfander to Āl-i Ḥasan, 3 Sept. 1844.
4. Miftāḥ, p. 5.
5. Miftāḥ, p. 36.

felt it incumbent upon him to present the full evangelical explanation,

> I deny, that this reason is either _pure_ i.e. free from error, or that it is _perfect_, able to know and to judge all things. Before the fall, in man's original state, reason possessed these properties, but in consequence of sin it has become impaired, darkened and subject to error; and all men being sinners, there is now therefore no pure or perfect reason in any one. The sayings of the Philosophers about the power and purity of reason are false.[1]

In the heat of the argument Pfander sometimes wavered between denying reason any role at all in determining religious truth, and placing arguments from reason in a third and subordinate category below 'arguments from the heart' and what he termed 'arguments from history'. He thought that the misunderstanding between himself and the _'ulamā_ was partly caused by the latter's failure to appreciate the various senses in which the term 'reason' might be used. In his view it was subordinate to other types of argument, and was not itself an independent type of argument, for it was merely a 'tool' or 'instrument' to assist the perception and understanding of revelation,

> In a religious discussion reason has only there two offices: _first_, that it should by argument ascertain whether the book which men call the word of God, is in truth the word of God or not. _Second_, that it should ascertain the meaning and contents of the word; not that it should become the ruler of the contents and say, such and such a thing is impossible and absurd ...[2]

The _'ulamā_, on the other hand, stood at the opposite end of the spectrum. During the controversies they repeated

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1. Pfander's notes to Āl-i Hasan's letter of 4 Feb. 1845, _Khair Khwāh i Hind_, New Series, No. 7 (July 1845).

2. Pfander to Āl-i Hasan, 14 Aug. 1844, _Khair_, 3rd series, No. 1 (Jan. 1845).

frequently and categorically to Pfander that reason is prior to revelation. The mujtahid's nephew commenced his refutation of the Trinity with a clear statement on the relationship between reason and revelation,

> ... the affirmation of scriptural proof depends on rational argument ... so whatever is proved and established through rational reasoning it will stand proved through scripture also ... and what will be impossible by reasoning it is impossible to affirm that through revelation as revelation is subservient to reason.[1]

In his view, an opinion shared by the other 'ulamā also, any conflict between reason and revelation should be resolved by a figurative interpretation of scripture.[2]

The Muslim writings on this theme were characterized by the definition of laws or rules of 'logical possibility' by which scriptural texts and religious doctrines should be judged. This methodology was one of the legacies from the reception of Greek logical categories into Islamic theology during the 'Abbāsid period. The 'ulamā defined three categories of existence to one of which all phenomena must conform - wājib al-wajūd (necessarily existent); mumtana' al-wajūd (its existence is impossible); mumkin al-wajūd (its existence is possible).[3] Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī explained wājib al-wajūd as,

> that [condition] when, without consideration of any external factor, and any fault, and any cause, and with consideration only to its essence, its existence is necessary, and its non-existence is impossible, and this [condition] is restricted to the essence of God.[4]

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1. Sayyid Muḥammad Hādī, Kashf, p. 16.

2. ibid., p. 17.

3. e.g. Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī, Ibṭāl, p. 18; Hādī, Kashf, p. 37.

4. Ibṭāl, p. 18.

On the other hand, the category of mumtana' al-wajūd made 'non-existence obligatory', for in Raḥmat Allāh's words, 'it does not in any way possess the capacity for existence'.[1]

The adherence to these categories of possible and impossible existence laid the basis for the Muslim attack on the Christian doctrines of the Trinity and the divinity of Christ. Whereas God alone was wājib al-wajūd, the 'ulamā held that all 'created things', including human beings, were in the category of mumkin al-wajūd - possibly or potentially existent. However, an attempt to associate a human being such as Christ in the godhead, was an act of shirk which involved the associating together of wājib and mumkin categories, thus positing a 'conjunction of contraries', which was logically impossible. When refuting the divinity and Trinity doctrines the 'ulamā did not always introduce their charges by a complete and explicit reference to the wājib, mumtana' and mumkin categories, but their persistent emphasis on the accusation that the Trinity involved 'a conjunction of contraries' which was 'logically impossible' or 'absurd' was implicitly derived from this philosophical source. One of the most important refuters stated that he was omitting the philosophical basis for his argument only because it was difficult to explain, but he added that if Pfander asked him about it he would give an explanation.[2]

But in Pfander's eyes these categories of existence were irrelevant to his quest for religious truth, and he urged

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1. ibid.

2. Āl-i Ḥasan, Istifsār, p. 16.

the 'ulamā to recognise that such rules were applicable only to the created world - 'the world of mundane things', and not to the nature of God. In his view God's revealed word could break any apparent rules of logical possibility, for the 'ulamā had mistaken the nature of the test which should be 'spiritual' not 'rational', and should be established by 'internal, experimental and historical arguments'.[1]

The 'ulamā, on the other hand, consistently re-affirmed the rules, modifying them only to define more closely particular examples of 'seeming' and 'actual' impossibility. Sayyid Muḥammad Hādī acknowledged that sometimes 'the human intellect fails to do its function' and thus fails to understand, for instance, how astronomical instruments are constructed or how the Chinese fire ships function.[2] Similarly, Āl-i Ḥasan defined four types of phenomena, three of which seemed to be impossible, but which further examination proved to be possible. These were, things seemingly impossible on account of the observer's mechanical ignorance, such as the manufacture of a mirror; natural phenomena the understanding of which is beyond the average human being's power, such as the nature of the wind; the superseding of the apparently impossible by a miracle, such as the division of the Red Sea. However, after conceding some ground to the weakness and limitation of the ordinary human intellect, both these authors re-affirmed even more strongly that the final category of 'actually impossible' remained distinctly 'mumtana'. Āl-i Ḥasan concluded

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1. Pfander to Āl-i Ḥasan, 25 Sept. 1845.

2. Hādī, Kashf, p. 37.

his discussion of this question brusquely and impatiently,

> the conjunction of contraries ... belongs to the fourth category. If salvation depends on believing such impossibilities then I do not want any more answers to questions from you. Only write this much to me, that "to accept what is rationally impossible, i.e. the 4th category, is correct according to our religious laws, nay it is necessary", because then believing everywhere what is rationally impossible will be right according to your religion, so then you will have no grounds to object to anything in any other religion, let alone in Islam.[1]

Āl-i Ḥasan's anger and impatience were somewhat contrived, for by the time he published this ultimatum in his book Kitāb-i Istifsār (Book of Questions), he was already very well acquainted with Pfander's likely answer. For two years earlier he had engaged in an intense and detailed correspondence with Pfander on this very question of the priority of reason or revelation. The twenty-two letters which they had exchanged between July 1844 and February 1845 had focused on the validity of general rules of possibility, and they constitute the starkest illustration of the unbridgeable gulf between the Muslim and the missionary standpoints.[2]

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1. Āl-i Ḥasan, Istifsār, p. 45.

2. The correspondence was conducted in Urdu. Pfander subsequently translated the letters into English, and they were published in English and Roman Urdu in a missionary journal the Khair Khwāh-i Hind at the L.M.S. mission press in Mirzapur. Cuttings from the journal which were annotated in Pfander's hand are deposited with Pfander's correspondence at the C.M.S. archives. The quotations used in the text are from this annotated English version. The cuttings do not always contain full publication details. No complete series for the Khair Khwāh-i Hind has been identified for these years. Pfander later published the original Urdu correspondence, entitling it 'Murāsalāt Kashīsh Pfander Ṣāhib wa Maulawī Sayyid Āl-i Ḥasan Ṣāhib', in Ḥall al-Ishkāl (Āgrā, 1847), pp. 1-62.

After preliminary skirmishes over procedure, Āl-i Hasan had informed Pfander that 'it is necessary that I should ascertain, whether there is any rule of reason on which Mussalmans and Christians are agreed'. He then defined two types of 'impossibility', and asked Pfander to give his opinion on them.

> First kind of impossibility - Logical impossibility. It is this, that reason of its own accord knows that never, by any means a certain thing is possible; and this is called "impossible" and "absurd". It is of two kinds. First axiomatic. i.e. that its impossibility should be manifest to reason without thought or difficulty, as the coexistence of contraries; for instance existence and non existence, and reason without difficulty knows that it is impossible that both can exist together. Secondly, demonstrable, i.e. its impossibility may not be without thought, obvious to reason, as an infinite series, i.e. numberable (successive) existences without beginning or end. For although this does not self evidently appear impossible, yet by argument from analogy, reason pronounces it impossible.
>
> Second kind of impossibility - Experimental impossibility. It is this that from decisive reasons it should appear impossible, not that its possibility would be contrary to reason, as for instance, we say it is impossible for a man to travel 1000 coss in one hour, and to break through this impossibility, is said to be, "contrary to experience".
>
> Question.
> Is this logical impossibility, and experimental impossibility, according to the meaning above mentioned in the opinion of your honor , anything or not? If not, please to write so, and if it is, then supposing that by rejecting an experimental impossibility I am forced to believe a logical impossibility, must I then, according to reason, reject the belief in the experimental or the belief in the logical impossibility?[1]

In reply Pfander re-asserted the inapplicability of 'arguments of reason and philosophy' to religious questions,[2] but he was

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1. Āl-i Hasan, 4th letter to Pfander, 2 Aug. 1844, Khair Khwāh i Hind, 3rd series, No. 1 (Jan. 1845); cf. Hall al-Ishkāl, pp. 9-10.

2. Pfander, 5th letter to Āl-i Hasan, 8 Aug. 1844, Khair, ibid.; cf. Hall, pp. 10-11.

nevertheless pressed to provide a fuller answer. He then stated his reasons for rejecting 'universal' rules of impossibility,

> ... we also regard real contradictions impossible: for instance, that an individual thing in that individuality should be at the same moment existent and nonexistent. But we deny that in reason there is any such power and capability as at all times to point out and establish a contradiction: for instance we say that man is free and again, that he is not free. Another instance; in the Divine nature there is a Unity and there is a Trinity. Again, God is personal and is still omnipresent ... Now this apparently is a contradiction, and is impossible; but in fact it is no contradiction it is even true. So that logical impossibility does not prove a universal rule. And in like manner experimental impossibility is not an absolute impossibility or a universal rule. As if tomorrow a person were born who could travel 100,000 coss in an hour, experimental impossibility too would be rendered futile even as according to former experience it was impossible that a carriage should travel without horses and oxen; but is now possible and it now travels 20 or 30 coss in one hour by steam. Thus logical and experimental impossibility with your Honor's meaning, is not in my opinion to be admitted.[1]

This answer did not satisfy Āl-i Ḥasan who urged Pfander to meet the point more precisely by defining his own categories of logical impossibility.[2] Pfander was reluctant because he felt he had already given a direct and full answer, but confessing that he found the meaning of the original question 'obscure' he provided a loophole for further discussion by requesting clarification of the question.[3] Āl-i Ḥasan agreed to elaborate,

> I ask: in the opinion of your Honor is this an approved principle, that whatsoever is a logical

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1. Pfander, 5th letter to Āl-i Ḥasan, 14 Aug. 1844, Khair, ibid., cf. Ḥall, pp. 12-14.

2. Āl-i Ḥasan to Pfander, 6th letter, 18 Aug. 1844, Khair, ibid.; cf. Ḥåll, pp. 14-16.

3. Pfander, 7th letter to Āl-i Ḥasan, 24 Aug. 1844, Khair, New Series, No. 4 (April 1845); cf. Ḥall, pp. 16-17.

> impossibility or a real impossibility, can never happen nor be true? And further: are some of the logical impossibilities axiomatic and some demonstrable, or is the case this, that some of the logical impossibilities are to be received, and others not, and further, are all the logical impossibilities axiomatic or are all demonstrable? In the first case suppose that one says, today a bullock spoke like a man, that is he related an experimental impossibility: and suppose again, that if I did not believe his account, I were then forced to believe in the occurrence of a logical impossibility as an infinite series or the coexistence of contraries. Must, in this case the belief in the occurence [sic] of an experimental impossibility be rejected, or the belief in a logical impossibility?[1]

When he received this elucidation Pfander professed to feel that it had removed 'at least to a certain degree, the doubts I had about the meaning of the question contained in your Honors Epistle of the 2nd Aug.'[2] Yet a year later when William Muir reviewed the controversy in the Calcutta Review, he chose the reference to the 'speaking bullock' to show the difficulties in comprehending the munṣif's meaning.[3] But the problem was mutual, for when Pfander added to his revised reply a disquisition on the priority of 'arguments of the heart' and 'historical arguments' over 'logical arguments', Āl-i Ḥasan in turn complained that 'some of it I was unable to understand'.[4] It is clear that the evangelical missionary and the scholastic 'ālim were each offering types of argument and using terminology, which reflected their own religious background

1. Āl-i Hasan, 7th letter to Pfander, 26 Aug. 1844, Khair, ibid.; cf. Ḥāl, pp. 17-18.

2. Pfander, 8th letter to Āl-i Ḥasan, 3 Sept. 1844, ibid.; cf. Ḥall, pp. 18-23.

3. 'Pfander's faculties must have been sadly puzzled to make out the learned Maulavi's meaning', W. Muir, 'The Mahommedan Controversy', in C.R., IV, No. 8 (1845), p. 449.

4. Āl-i Hasan, 8th letter to Pfander, 9 Sept. 1844, ibid.; cf. Ḥal, pp. 23-25.

and reasoning systems, but which rendered them mutually unintelligible in confrontation with each other. Even after the question had been posed a second time Pfander confessed that he could not see any necessary connection between the two parts of the munsif's original question. Nevertheless, he embarked on a further reply, explaining afterwards to his Christian readers, 'as he probably would have considered this as though I were unable to answer his question, I thought it better not to put off the reply any longer'.[1]

In his renewed effort to come to terms with the munsif's question, Pfander still rejected any universal rules of 'logical impossibility', urging as before that 'scripture' not 'reason' constituted the true test, for 'seeming impossibilities are believed on the authority of revelation'.[2] Neither of them mentioned the Trinity in this essentially theoretical preliminary joust, but subsequent encounters would show that both were conscious of the likely application of the arguments. On 'experimental impossibility' Pfander still refused to be categorical, arguing that the answer would depend on the type of phenomena under consideration,

> yes: some experimental impossibilities remain always so, and some do not. The former are the miracles. We call such an event a miracle as has been neither brought about by means of man's wisdom or power, nor in any other way except directly by the power and might of God. The latter that is that experimental impossibility which has been found such in consequence of the imperfect state of science and the arts will not always remain so. But as sciences and arts advance, then it often happens that what formerly was believed to be an experimental impossibility becomes possible, as for instance, the

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1. Footnote to the published version of Pfander's 8th letter, Khair, ibid., p. 38.

2. Pfander, 8th letter to Āl-i Hasan, 3 Sept. 1844, Khair, New Series, No. 4 (April 1845); cf. Hall, pp. 18-23.

> throwing of a heavy ball a great distance by gunpowder, or the driving a carriage by steam ...[1]

Although he had followed through the munṣif's question in order to avoid the imputation that he was unable to answer, his reply shows that the presuppositions behind the question were as irrelevant to Pfander as at the beginning of the correspondence, and he continued to chide, 'what need is there to discuss such subjects', in a vain attempt to move the basis of discussion to his own chosen ground of scriptural authority.[2] For his part, the munṣif, to Pfander's surprise, declared himself at last satisfied by the missionary's reply, for 'this is a correct answer, such as I was looking for from the first'.[3] But in Pfander's view Āl-i Ḥasan was now insinuating an acquiescence to his 'universal rules' which he had certainly not intended to imply in his answer,

> When I ... in answer to your Honor's question, wrote to you to reject that which is contrary to reason (or which is a logical impossibility) it is clear that I did not mean to say that logical impossibility is a general rule. I meant only that impossibility which is founded on an actual contradiction, and to the contrary of which nothing has been said or hinted at in the word of God. If therefore your Highness have, for your own purpose, given those words a general sense, then you have made a mistake, and I disclaim such meaning altogether. I must beg your Honor not to explain my words according to your own ideas of wishes, but to take them in the sense used by me, else you will act unfairly.[4]

When he received this reply from Pfander it seems that Āl-i Ḥasan at last realized the irreconcilability of their standpoints,

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1. ibid.

2. ibid.

3. Āl-i Hasan, 8th letter to Pfander, 9 Sept. 1844, Khair, ibid.; cf. Ḥāl, pp. 23-25.

4. Pfander, 9th letter to Āl-i Hasan, 12 Sept. 1844, Khair, New Series, No. 5 (May 1845); cf. Ḥāl, pp. 25-28.

and the futility of any further attempts to find common ground,

> Formerly I thought, that the cause why your Honor did not fully understand my first question lay in the manner of my writing, and that for that reason your Honor had said, that logical impossibility was not a general rule. I have however now been convinced that your Honor has fully understood the question but still you say, that it is no general rule. From this I understand your view to be as follows: that, to reject that which cannot be (or which cannot occur) according to reason is no absolute or general principle; for sometimes (under certain circumstances) it may be right to believe in its occurrence i.e. to believe that which according to reason cannot be, or which is contrary to reason. If such be your view, then your Honor will not be able to bring an argument against any one. All arguments are only of two kinds; they are either arguments from reason, or they are not. If they are not arguments from reason, then they are of no use whatever ...[1]

Pfander also realized that they had reached an impasse, and he wrote again merely to affirm his own stand on experimental and historical arguments above arguments from reason, which he regarded as irrelevant unless the munṣif could prove reason to be 'omniscient' rather than 'limited' and 'defective'.[2] When Āl-i Ḥasan sent a further short note to query his meaning Pfander deemed that he was now merely 'spinning out the discussion' to no avail.[3] For several months after this he heard no further word from the 'ālim and it later transpired that he had spent the winter of 1844 in Lucknow where he had family connections. On his return to Agra in February 1845, Āl-i Ḥasan decided to make a last attempt to secure Pfander's agreement to his rules by stating them again 'in a more explicit

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1. Āl-i Hasan, 9th letter to Pfander, 16 Sept. 1844, Khair, ibid.; cf. Ḥall, pp. 28-30.

2. Pfander, 10th letter to Āl-i Hasan, 20 Sept. 1844, Khair, New Series, No. 6 (June 1845); cf. Ḥall, pp. 30-32.

3. Pfander, 11th letter to Āl-i Hasan, 25 Sept. 1844, Khair, New Series, No. 7 (July 1845), cf. Ḥall, pp. 33-34.

manner', in case 'your Honor may perhaps not have fully understood me'.[1] In this final exposition he laid a new emphasis on the very point which Pfander had denied, claiming the omniscience of 'pure', 'perfect', or 'abstract' reason. His last words amounted to an ultimatum,

> To conclude - if your Honor, having understood my meaning, will give me a reply unmixed with other matter then I shall go on with the discussion. But in case your Honor should even now not be able to understand me, or having understood me, should answer in the same way as hitherto: "that logical impossibility is not a general rule", then I do not wish for any answer from your Honor; but beg to say, that between your Honor and myself there is no common ground for carrying on a discussion.[2]

In the circumstances, Pfander recognised the pointlessness of continuing the correspondence, but he secured the last word by publishing some 'notes to the Maulawi's letter' in which he repeated his denial of 'perfect' or 'pure' reason in mankind.[3] The confrontation ended in disharmony as well as impasse, for Āl-i Ḥasan, insinuating that Pfander had the support of the East India Company, feigned an obsequious pose, 'you must always keep your gracious eye upon me, for your Honor is, so to say, one of the rulers and I one of the subjects'.[4] Pfander, imbued with the certainty of his own message, reacted with exaggerated claims about the imminent collapse of the Muslim world in the face of Christian preaching,

> Such abundant fruit has the teaching of the Gospel produced, that there are now at this moment twice as many Christians as there are Muhammadans, and the Christians are now superior in learning, in

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1. Āl-i Ḥasan, 11th letter to Pfander, 4 Feb. 1845, Khair, ibid. cf. Ḥāl, pp. 34-38.

2. ibid.

3. Notes to the Maulawi's 11th letter, ibid.

4. Āl-i Ḥasan, 11th letter.

> arts, in civilisation and in political power to all the other nations of the earth ... Christianity will supersede all other religions and fill the whole earth.[1]

The eight month-long correspondence between Pfander and Āl-i Ḥasan had served merely to reinforce the rigidity of argument and outlook on each side. But the record of the encounter is useful in allowing a detailed examination of the contrasting philosophical and methodological assumptions held by Pfander and an early opponent at the stage when debate was still limited to methods and criteria of argument. In this preliminary contest the revelation-reason controversy had been thrown into sharp and dramatic relief.

THE 'ULAMĀ AND THE ATTACK ON THE TRINITY

The Muslim concern to define rules of possibility and impossibility was the preliminary to several painstaking refutations of the Trinity and the divinity of Christ on the ground of rational impossibility. The first and most detailed reply to Pfander's exposition of the Trinity doctrine in the Miftāḥ al Asrār was Sayyid Muḥammad Hādī's Kashf al-Astār, which was prepared at the request of the mujtahid of Lucknow after he had received in 1842 Pfander's first letter, together with a Persian copy of the Miftāḥ. The author, the mujtahid's nephew, said he was motivated also by his sense of concern for 'ordinary unlettered Muslims'.[2] Yet the Kashf, which he had laboured on for nearly four years, was a work in

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1. Notes to the Maulawi's 11th letter, ibid.

2. Hādī, Kashf, pp. 3-4; 227.

high Persian, with many interpolations in Arabic, suitable no doubt for fellow 'ulamā, but scarcely so for the 'general public' whose needs he ostensibly had at heart. Also, Hādī's practice of incorporating Pfander's Miftāḥ, word for word, into his own work, rendered it cumbersome and repetitive. Rather surprisingly William Muir praised this format of Hādī's as an 'oriental' formula which should be adopted by the missionaries for their own works, yet subsequent Indian refutations of the Trinity made scant reference to the Kashf.[1] It seems that the delay in publication had caused its author's efforts to be forestalled by those of other 'ulamā in Agra who had more direct contacts with Pfander, and who were prepared to write in Urdu, and in a less elevated style.

Nevertheless, even if the Kashf was ill-adapted to meet its patron's expectations, it was the initial interest and concern of the Lucknow 'ulamā which then stimulated the subsequent stir in Agra.[2] Indeed, all the other refutations of the Trinity which reached Pfander during this mid 1840s period had a Lucknow connection. In sharp contrast to Hādī's laboured treatise was a brief 'letter from a Musalman of Lucknow', also written in Persian, and subtitled 'Here are ten perfect questions on the Trinity'.[3] Pfander received the letter in 1845, but although he knew the author to be one Sayyid 'Abdallāh Sabzawārī, he could discover nothing more

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1. Muir, 'The Mahommedan Controversy', in C.R., IV, 8 (1845), p. 467.

2. See Chap. 3.

3. Sayyid 'Abdallāh Sabzawārī, 'Ten Perfect Questions', English translation of questions and Pfander's answers in Pfander correspondence, C.M.S. CI1/O227/59. Also published in Urdu in Ḥall al-Ishkāl, pp. 93-98.

about his religious affiliations. Sabzawārī professed to share with Hādī a concern for Muslims 'high and low' who might be disturbed by Pfander's book on the Trinity.[1] His ten succinct questions on the nature of the Trinity pre-supposed the rational laws which Āl-i Ḥasan was currently drawing to Pfander's attention. He focused on the ways in which the Trinity doctrine broke those laws, in Muslim eyes, by questioning the inter-relationship of the persons in the Trinity which he viewed as logically impossible. Some of his questions on, for example, the relationship of Mary to the persons of the Trinity, were very familiar to missionaries in India from their bazaar preaching, Sabzawārī's contribution being to incorporate them in a written 'questionnaire' form.[2] But he made no further reply to Pfander's answers, and it was only Pfander's decision to publish the questions in his own comprehensive reply to all the anti-Trinitarian works he had received by 1846, which ensured the transmission of Sabzawārī's questions and their subsequent quotation by other _'ulamā_. In the early 1850s, for example, Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī quoted some of Sabzawārī's questions in his own refutation of the Trinity after reading them in Pfander's _Ḥall al-Ishkāl_ (Solution of Difficulties).[3]

Meanwhile, the _munṣif_, Āl-i Ḥasan, employed in Agra, but with close connections in Lucknow, had been following up his own abortive correspondence with Pfander by the preparation of a comprehensive refutation of Christianity, one part of which was a

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1. _Ḥall_, p. 93.

2. Sabzawārī's concern with Mary reflected centuries of Muslim misunderstanding when it was commonly understood that the persons of the Trinity were God, Mary and Jesus.

3. _Ibṭāl_, p. 20.

refutation of the Trinity, based on the logical premises he had already asserted in the correspondence. In four 'questions' on the Trinity, he argued the rational impossibility of a 'limited' being such as Christ, being co-existent with the omnipotent and omniscient God, queried the Christian statements on the Trinity in the Athanasian creed, denied that the Old and New Testaments contain clear testimony to the Trinity, and asserted the rational absurdity of Christ's incarnation and descent into hell.[1] Āl-i Ḥasan's refutation of the Trinity seemed to lack the direct thrust of his earlier letters. Possibly the monumental task he had set himself in attempting a long and comprehensive work on Christianity blurred the edges of his rational attack on this specific doctrine. The Kitāb-i Istifsār (Book of Questions) comprised 802 pages, subdivided into eighteen 'questions', of which only thirty pages and four questions dealt directly with the Trinity. Yet the Kitāb was written in Urdu, and in a much simpler style than Hādī's Kashf, and it was afterwards utilized by other 'ulamā, notably by Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī who incorporated Āl-i Ḥasan's first question on the Trinity word-for-word in his own refutation.

By 1846 Pfander felt it was incumbent upon him to attempt a reply to the new rationalist attack on the Trinity. The Ḥall al-Ishkāl, which he published the next year, reiterated his views on the relationship between reason and revelation, but at the same time ensured further publicity for the views of his protagonists by quoting long sections of Hādī's and Āl-i Ḥasan's refutations and the whole of Sabzawārī's letter.[2] The subsequent silence from

1. Āl-i Ḥasan, Kitāb-i Istifsār, pp. 16-46.

2. Pfander, Ḥall, pp. 1-160.

these quarters he wrongly interpreted as a sign of mortification and acknowledgement of defeat, but it has been shown in Chapter Four that the 'lull' noted by Pfander, was actually the calm before the storm, for in the early 1850s sporadic conversions and rumours of some further 'questions' on Christianity, caused some Delhi _'ulamā_ to begin to feel deep concern about Pfander's influence. Among Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī's first anti-missionary publications was a tract entitled _Ibṭāl al-Taslīs_ (Refutation of the Trinity), which he was requested to separate from a longer work he had been preparing in answer to Pfander.[1]

The strength of Raḥmat Allāh's refutation was partly that it made good the weaknesses of his predecessors, whose initiatives he acknowledged in his own work. If Hādī's attack was too elevated and pedestrian, Sabzawārī's too brief and unsustained, and Āl-i Ḥasan's blurred by the simultaneous consideration of other 'questions', Raḥmat Allāh managed to draw on the strengths of each of their arguments for his own tract on the Trinity. Understanding was assisted by a preface in which he discussed ten premises which his readers should absorb before proceeding to his main arguments. Most of the ten clarified the rational criteria on which the rest of the refutation would be based, but he also included references to the Christian assumptions which he considered his readers must understand before they could judge the arguments.[2] In the preface he also attempted to distinguish between arguments which would appeal to the learned and those suitable for a less

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1. Rahmat Allāh Kairānawī, _Aṣaḥḥ al-aḥādīs fī ibṭāl al-taslīs_ (Dèlhi, 1853).

2. ibid., pp. 9-19.

educated audience. An important feature of his work was his familiarity not only with previous refutations, but also with the most recent translations of the Bible, with early Church history and with doctrinal disputes within Christianity. The Indian _'ulamā_'s knowledge of Christianity from the 'inside' thus achieved a new significance with the emergence of Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī. His sixty-four page tract on the Trinity was potentially the most effective rejoinder to Pfander's _Miftāḥ_ which had as yet been produced in northern India. In the event it was not fully put to the test, because at the very moment of its publication Raḥmat Allāh diverted his attention to the question of _taḥrīf_ (corruption), which would bring the controversies to their climax and to their sudden end. Nevertheless, the study of Christian sources and commentaries which had gone into the preparation of the _Ibṭāl_ was a necessary preliminary for the emergence of the _taḥrīf_ argument.

DISPUTES ON THE NATURE OF GOD

These refutations of the Trinity which were written by the Indian _'ulamā_ contained two main types of objection to the Christian belief in 'trinity in unity'. The first and the most important in the eyes of the _'ulamā_, was to demonstrate, on the basis of their rational methodology, the logical impossibility of the Christian doctrines. The second was a consequence of Pfander's equally persistent emphasis on revelation. Although they did not accept his criterion, the _'ulamā_ nevertheless sought to undermine his argument by showing the weakness of the testimony he had presented, mainly from the Bible but also from the _Qur'ān_, in

support of the doctrines of the Trinity and the divinity of Christ. Both types of objection will be examined here.

Pfander held that the Bible had given man sufficient knowledge about the 'mysterious' nature of God for him to accept the Trinity without any further questioning. The doctrine, though only 'hinted at' in the Old Testament, was stated in the New Testament sufficiently clearly, and at the moment of salvation the believer would at last reach a full understanding.[1] It was no matter if, until that time, he saw through the glass but darkly, for 'as long as we are in this world it is absolutely impossible that these mysteries should be completely and fully revealed to us servants'.[2]

However, the emphasis of the 'ulamā on the categories of existence, and their objection that 'trinity in unity' involved an impossible 'conjunction of contraries', forced Pfander into attempts to explain the nature of the godhead, although to do so was, in his own terms, both unnecessary and impossible. In so doing he fell into the 'ulamā's trap, because further explanation only confirmed in their eyes, the very illogicality which they had objected to in the first place. At the heart of their mutual incomprehension lay the problem of defining in intelligible, if not acceptable, terms, the relationships between the hypostases of the Trinity, and between the divine and human attributes of Christ. As the term 'divine mystery' excited only the scorn of the rationalist 'ulamā, Pfander adopted the term, 'a special connection' (khāṣ 'alāqa) to explain the relationship between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit

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1. Pfander, Miftāḥ (Agra, 1850), pp. 5-7.

2. ibid., p. 5.

which, he contended, was unlike any other known relationship and therefore immune from the charge of a 'conjunction of contraries'. He was at pains too, to correct their misunderstandings about Christ's nature. After the circulation of the first edition of the Miftāḥ, when Sayyid Muḥammad Hādī had criticized Pfander for not showing how Christ could be both divine and human, the revised edition explained,

> that relationship which there is between divinity and humanity in Christ is not a kind of penetration (halūl), nor a union (ittahād), but it is a special relationship (khāṣ 'ālaqa), whose nature is among the divine mysteries, and of a kind which is outside and invisible to the search of reason.[1]

In Pfander's eyes, therefore, God was able to make himself manifest to men in ways which defied the ordinary laws of possibility, and there was no problem in accepting the incarnation of Christ as his Son, and the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the godhead. He urged them to accept the wonder of the incarnation on the testimony of the gospels, for,

> this word (Kalma) was with God and was God, in the beginning, that is, before the creation of the world. And he was made manifest thereby from his pure nature, as if he was born from him, just as the human word is also born from his spirit and is made manifest. Only with this difference, that the word of God is not separated from his nature in respect of time and place, because God's nature is outside the limits of time and place ... God also put his own form in his eternal word, that is, his son, and he has indicated and made manifest in that word, himself, as if it were a mirror of the invisible, pointing out himself. And through this word, the whole world was created, and he made himself manifest to his people.[2]

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1. Miftāḥ, p. 16.

2. ibid., pp. 20-21.

But Pfander's explanation of the 'making manifest' of a 'special relationship' and its confirmation by revelation did not satisfy any of his Muslim opponents. All of them probed his statements on the Trinity, demanding further elucidation, and arguing that there were logical inconsistencies in the way he had explained it. In his fourth question, Sayyid 'Abdallāh Sabzawārī asked,

> Did his Majesty Christ exist before he was born of Mary or not? And is he eternal or created? If eternal, of what nature is the connection of the Eternal with the Created, i.e. with the body born from Mary; is it of the character of Penetration or Decent [sic], or like the connection between Soul and Body, or different from it? But however this may be, there ariseth another question, namely: if the soul of Jesus has been actually connected with the body has a similar connection taken place between that body, and the Father and the Holy Ghost or not? If a connection with the eternal soul and spirit of Jesus with the body, born of a woman, has taken place, and the Father and the Holy Ghost have entered into no such connection then the fact of a difference or variety is established, and if all three have become connected with the body, then it follows that the Father, and the Holy Ghost are like Jesus, the sons of Mary?[1]

Pfander made no attempt to work through the coils of verbal logic in which Sabzawārī here tried to entrap him, but instead simply re-affirmed the basis of his own credo,

> ... about the actual nature of his connection with the body born from Mary nothing can be said, as this mystery has not been explained in the Gospel ... In reference to the actual character of the Divine Nature, man is bound to receive and believe, with all humility, whatever God has revealed in his word, though he may be unable to understand the mysteries thus revealed.[2]

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1. Sabzawārī, 'Ten Perfect Questions', Pfander correspondence, CMS CI1/0227/59, and Haḷ, p. 94.

2. ibid., pp. 96-97.

The other 'ulamā, however, refused to leave the matter thus, and pressed him persistently to specify more exactly the nature of the 'connection'. Sayyid Muḥammad Hādī objected that in using the term 'special connection', Pfander must show the precise inter-relationships in terms of analogous processes in the phenomenal world. He, and subsequently, Raḥmat Allāh, queried whether the Christians understood the connection in terms of the 'penetration' (ḥalūl), already posited in Sabzawārī's question, or as a 'union' (ittaḥād). Their own view was that all known methods of connection, including 'penetration' and 'union', involve inequality and distinctions between the elements, and therefore the conjunction of the hypostases by any of these methods must, according to their previously established logical rules, be an 'impossible' conjunction of contraries. It seems that whatever Pfander might answer, any definition of the nature of the Trinity would be met by the 'ulamā as irrational. Their arguments differed in detail but the main objections were consistent and repetitive. A frequent emphasis was to point out that Christ, belonging in his humanity to the category of existence which was 'possible', was consequently 'dependent' and 'limited', and therefore incapable of conjunction with God, the 'necessarily existent', who was incapable of limitation. Sayyid Muḥammad Hādī's statement of this was typical of the argument employed in the other refutations,

> the union between two entities in their nature is impossible. Especially the union between the eternal and the temporal which necessitates the endowment of essential existence with the qualities of potential existence and vice versa. The penetration of an entity into an entity is a sign of shortage and dependence. And it is not compatible with the glorious God.[1]

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1. Kashf, p. 74.

Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī, exploring the proposition of the godhead as a 'compound' of three elements, also stressed the incompatibility of 'separation' and 'dependence' with the omnipotence which belongs to divinity,

> if God is composed of three separate elements and the element of the son becomes separated from the compound, and becomes a man in the world and lives there, then both those other elements will become useless. And when the element of the son amalgamates with the Father, and the element of the Holy Spirit becomes separated, and is living in the world with men and the disciples and the Christians, then the elements of the Father and the Son will be useless without the Holy Spirit. So it follows from this that God's nature will be defective and weak and useless.[1]

Kairānawī had read the previous refutations, and also Pfander's final rejoinder in the Ḥall al-Ishkāl, and his own objections showed the influence, in particular, of the arguments which had been used in the Kitāb-i Istifsār and the Ṣaulat al-Ẓaigham. From the latter he seems to have drawn the emphasis he placed on pointing out, and satirising, the arithmetical 'absurdity' of the belief in 'trinity in unity', for

> when one is a third of three, if three is the essence of one, it follows that one is a third of its own self, and the absurdity of this is self-evident ... if it is impossible, then it is impossible everywhere, and if it is possible, then it is possible everywhere, and there is no rational difference between the collection of unity and trinity and other collections.[2]

On this basis, Raḥmat Allāh, like several of the 'ulamā before him, tried to reduce the doctrine of the Trinity to absurdity by implying that the Christian neglect of logic would allow others to claim the divinity of the virgin Mary in a quaternity, or the

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1. Ibṭāl, p. 25.

2. Ibṭāl, p. 20.

twelve apostles and Christ as a godhead symbolised by a thirteen-pointed star.[1]

If most of Raḥmat Allāh's arguments were traditional and derivative, he added a new dimension to the controversy by his analysis of the Trinity in terms of the statements contained in the Christian creeds. This enabled him to avoid the narrow constraints imposed by arguing only in terms of Pfander's own definitions, which in the eyes of the 'ulamā, were anyway vague and evasive. He copied the whole of the Athanasian Creed into the ninth section of his introduction, and then drew on its statements to support his subsequent arguments.[2] Although he acknowledged Jawād bin Sābāṭ as his source, he also referred to several recent editions of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer, showing that he had consulted the creed himself.[3] Raḥmat Allāh's conclusions were not new however. Examination of each verse of the creed only led him to reaffirm the traditional Muslim verdict on the illogicality and blasphemy of worshipping, 'one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity'. But the creed provided new terminology, and therefore a new possibility of resolving the problem, so far not satisfactorily met by Pfander, of defining the nature of the godhead and the process of incarnation in terms which would be comprehensible to Muslims. Raḥmat Allāh thus subjected to particular scrutiny the terms, 'made', 'created', 'begotten' and 'proceeding'

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1. ibid., pp. 24-25.

2. ibid., pp. 15-16; 23-24; 26-32. Raḥmat Allāh had studied the Athanasian Creed in the Anglican Book of Common Prayer, but was seemingly unaware that it was not widely used outside the Anglican Church, and that its inclusion in that prayer book had been criticized on account of alleged mistranslation. For origin and history of the creed see F.L. Cross (ed.) Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church (London, 1957), pp. 98-99.

3. Ibṭāl, pp. 16-17. Among the editions he cited was one published in London in 1818.

in the context of the statement in the Athanasian Creed which in Muslim eyes, was crucial,

> So are we forbidden by the Catholic religion: to say, There be three Gods, or three Lords ... So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons: one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts.[1]

He argued that 'real unity' precluded the 'real differences' implied in the creed's distinction between the acts of 'begetting' and 'proceeding', thus the words of the creed merely reaffirmed Muslim criticisms about the 'dependence' and 'weakness' of the Son and the Holy Spirit in respect to the Father, and their difference from each other. Hence the Trinity doctrine remained impossible, for,

> to be convinced of the equality of the arrangement of the three, in spite of acknowledging the emanation of the Son and the Holy Spirit, is to be convinced of the collection of contraries.[2]

Thus discussion of the Trinity in terms either of Pfander's own definitions, or of the Christian creeds, had reached an impasse by 1853. Pfander could not define the 'mystery' beyond asserting its uniqueness and its confirmation in revelation. The _'ulamā_ had objected on the main ground that the nature of God must conform to the logical requirements appertaining to its own category of _wājib al-wajūd_. The series of publications between 1845 and 1853 on the theme of the logical inconsistency of the doctrines of Trinity and divinity had not brought any narrowing of the gulf between Pfander and the _'ulamā_ which had been so apparent at the end of his earlier correspondence with Āl-i Ḥasan. The analogies

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1. 'The creed of St. Athanasius', in J.H. Blunt (ed.) _The Annotated Book of Common Prayer_ (London, 1903) p. 218.

2. _Ibṭāl_, p. 28.

with numerical 'plurality' and with compounds, which Hādī, Sabzawārī and Kairānawī had examined, remained in Pfander's eyes, totally irrelevant to the question.

Yet in spite of his constantly reiterated certainty that there is no analogy for the nature of God in the created world, Pfander had, even in the first edition of the Miftāḥ, moved part way towards his adversaries by arguing that although no analogy can 'prove' the Trinity, certain analogies may show that the doctrine is 'in conformity with', and not 'opposed to' reason. In subsequent editions he modified and withdrew some of his examples, because the 'ulamā had rejected them as false analogies, and Christian sympathisers, notably William Muir, had urged the danger of acknowledging analogies in general, and had pointed out the weakness of some of the examples which Pfander had used.

His analogies were of two main types. First he discussed types of phenomena in the created world which 'shadow forth' the trinitarian principle and provide a 'ladder' by which the believer can ascend to an understanding of the Trinity itself. Thus, the arrangement of the transitory world is a schoolroom for the intelligent seeker after truth, in which he learns his first knowledge about the eternal and spiritual world'.[1] Pfander was following a long line of Christian apologists in proffering this kind of analogy. The comparison of the Trinity to a triangle, and to the composition of 'body, soul and spirit' in man, was a theme of William Bowley's bazaar preaching in the early 1830s, and Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī referred to the usage of the triangle analogy

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1. Miftāḥ, p. 45.

in Henry Martyn's time. It was also a feature of some medieval defences of the Trinity.[1]

Pfander argued that every created thing has 'three real attributes' which are intrinsic to its existence. The first example was light and heat in fire, where,

> although there is a real distinction between the fire, light and heat, yet in reality it is one substance and essence ... and so it is a visible type and example for the omnipresent and invisible God. And in the way that the invisibility and hidden nature of light is made manifest through its brightness, and its heat has an effect, so the invisible God has manifest himself in his eternal word, and acts through the Son and the Holy Spirit.[2]

Further illustrations were 'spirit, soul and body' in the human being, and 'being, mind and will' within the human mind, thus allowing Pfander to conclude,

> it is clear that the human being and every intelligent being will not only be one, but it is necessary that he is made up of a kind of trinity ... thus it is necessary that the truthseeker who has accepted the trinitarian nature of the human being should acknowledge the Trinity, because he who believes only in unity will be denying the knowledge and will which are in the nature of God ... then according to the false and contrary thought of such a person, God remains merely an idea, or a being without intelligence, knowledge and will, and God forbid, even less than man - He will be no more God.[3]

If Pfander's usage of this type of argument shows the point at which he came nearest to answering the 'ulamā in their own idiom, it is significant to see to what extent he subsequently retracted. In the Persian edition of the Miftāḥ which had been circulated in northern India in the late 1830s he had added an analogy between the Trinity and a circle, in which,

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1. Daniel, Islam and the West, p. 177.

2. Miftāḥ, pp. 45-46.

3. ibid., pp. 46-47.

> although the geometrical figures are in the circle, yet it cannot be measured, because it has no end or beginning ... And if you want to understand, measure the surface circumferenced by the circle, it will not be possible except by the triangle on which are based all the figures of the said knowledge. And only through that, these can be measured and comprehended. That is why the triangle is the basis and the key of geometry and mathematics. So we can use this as a simile for the deep and subtle point that God ... can only be recognised through the manifestation of the Trinity.[1]

This passage was completely omitted from the revised Urdu edition of the Miftāḥ which was published in Agra in 1850. Pfander was possibly influenced by the criticisms of both 'ulamā and Christians. On the one hand, Sayyid Muḥammad Hādī, in his detailed refutation of the Miftāḥ, had objected to all Pfander's analogies on the ground that they did not prove his point, for 'there is nothing about this combination of the actual trinity and the actual unity at one and the same place in the examples quoted by you'.[2] He then made a specific attack on Pfander's argument in making the circle-triangle analogy, claiming that he was basing it on false geometrical premises.[3] Hādī's criticism was probably not the only factor which caused Pfander to have second thoughts, for the 'ālim had applied almost equally strong and hostile criticism to the other analogies, yet he scarcely modified them in later editions. On the other hand, William Muir had also singled out the circle analogy for particular criticism when warning Pfander about the need for caution in using any such analogies. Muir had commented,

> There is no serious objection to bringing forward instances of plurality, in unity, for the simple

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1. Quoted by Hādī in Kashf, p. 172.

2. Kashf, p. 184.

3. ibid., pp. 187-189.

> object of proving it not to be impossible: nay, if care be taken to make it known that they are not used as direct analogies, they may prove beneficial in displaying the inability of man to fathom mysteries infinitely short of the sublime doctrine of the Trinity: but the above expressions go beyond this and assert that nature directly points out the doctrine; and from this we dissent as unfounded, and as giving the adversary a needless advantage. We will not take it upon ourselves to say which of the illustrations might safely be retained but we think that of the circle to be decidely reprehensible: that figure is stated to be an emblem of the Deity, having neither beginning nor end; and the fact that trigonometry is the key to its measurement and comprehension, is represented as an illustration of the Trinity by which alone the Divine nature can be understood. Such exemplifications only pave the way for the blasphemy of our opponents.[1]

Other missionaries in the field were expressing similar doubts about such arguments at approximately the same time. C.B. Leupolt, a C.M.S. missionary from the same Pietist fold as Pfander, commented on William Bowley's use of the triangle analogy, 'these may illustrate, but cannot prove the Trinity. The Trinity is a revealed mystery; and if we desire to prove it, we must have recourse to Revelation'.[2]

Although Pfander had chosen to ignore some of Muir's other 'friendly' criticisms of his books, he seems to have felt the force of this attack from both sides, for he completely removed the circle analogy, and in the next edition he played down the degree of significance which should be attached to analogies in general, concluding the discussion with a return to his own original statement that there is nothing in the created world which is comparable to God's nature,

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1. Muir, 'The Mahommedan Controversy', in CR. IV, 8 (1845), pp. 439-440.

2. C.B. Leupolt, Recollections of an Indian Missionary (London, n.d.) p. 88.

> ... nothing is found among created things which is exactly similar to that Trinity, but they are only a sign and an indication of it ... and for this very reason these examples are deficient and faulty allegories. Yet a wise and intelligent man will understand this much from them, that 'plurality in unity' is not absurd, and for this reason the possibility of there being 'trinity in unity' will come near to his thought and understanding...[1]

Pfander's second type of analogy was with non-Christian religious and philosophical systems in which he observed a trinitarian concept. His argument here seems dangerously close to an acknowledgement of the 'ulamā's claim that reason is the pointer to religious truth, for in introducing the subject Pfander had written,

> that doctrine [the Trinity as stated in the Gospels] only explains and gives details of that idea which man, when he thinks deeply about the holy nature of God, and pays attention to the attributes of created things, will arrive at through his own conjecture.[2]

He illustrated this argument by reference to several religious systems, concentrating in particular on Hinduism, Platonism and Islamic mysticism. In the case of the Hindus and the Platonists he felt uncertain whether the learned men of each persuasion had reached their knowledge of the trinitarian nature of God by reasoning processes or by contact with the Jews. Sayyid Muḥammad Hādī, however, considered that Pfander had completely misunderstood both systems, commenting that the authorities he himself had consulted on Plato's school of thought did not bear out Pfander's conclusions.[3] He also denied the validity of Pfander's interpretation of Hinduism as an example of a pagan religion which

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1. Miftāḥ, p. 48.

2. Ibid.

3. Miftāḥ, pp. 49-50; Kashf, p. 199.

nevertheless recognises the principle of trinity in unity. It is significant that although Pfander's diaries of his preaching tours in rural areas of the North-Western Provinces reveal the characteristic evangelical distaste for Hindu polytheism, he was ready to point out to Muslims that in the Upanishadic era the Hindus had recognized trinity in unity.[1] Hādī was scathing, for his own consultation of Muslim authorities on Hinduism led him to conclude that Pfander was totally misinformed. He stressed that Hinduism was interpreted in many different ways, and that even among the Hindu sects which appeared to worship Brahma, Vishnu and Siva there was no concept analogous to Trinity, for,

> I have enquired of some of the Brahmins in face to face conversation, and they have admitted that they do not believe these three to be their divine beings, but they take them to be the favourites of God ... It is a matter of regret and grief that when the Hindus and Brahmins in India are believers in the divine unity, and think of him as the ineffable being, yet the Christians, who call themselves the people of the Book, and believers in the revealed religion, are caught in the whirlpool of trinity, and have drowned themselves in the depths of polytheism.[2]

But Hādī reserved his full wrath for the missionary's views on Ṣūfism. Pfander had quoted from Kashānī, Jīlānī and Jāmī[3] in support of his argument that the 'stages of manifestation'

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1. Miftāḥ, pp. 48-49.

2. Kashf, p. 205.

3. 'Abd al-Razzāq Kashāni (d. 1329). Pfander may have been acquainted with Kashānī's works on Ṣūfism through the translations of Tholuck and Sprenger. See E.I., new ed., I, pp. 88-90; 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (1077-1166), founder of the Qādiriyya order. E.I., new ed., I, pp. 69-70; Nūr al-Dīn Jāmī (1414-1492) E.I., new ed., II, pp. 421-422.

sought by the Muslim mystics implied a trinitarian concept.

> So according to these sayings, the Muslim philosophers have also explained the holy nature of God with a sort of trinity, because they have differentiated the essence from knowledge, and knowledge from the power of purpose and action, and they affirm that God is only reached in the stages of first and second manifestation, and the heart of the worshippers will only get rest and peace by means of that manifestation.[1]

Hādī, who was very critical of the Ṣūfīs, whom he blamed for the breakdown of religious laws and whom he called 'evil mystics',[2] was nevertheless adamant in his reply that none of the Ṣūfī orders held a trinitarian concept of God. If some of them conceived of 'plurality in unity' it was, in Hādī's view, a 'multiplicity' not a 'trinity', for

> the whole of the universe according to their evil opinion becomes a divine phenomenon and endowed with the attributes of the essential existence, as is stated by some of their acknowledged authorities in some of their tracts.[3]

In Hādī's eyes, the Ṣūfīs like the Christians, had forsaken true monotheism but in a pantheistic rather than a trinitarian direction, so that,

> the orders of the mystics, although outwardly they pay lip service to the word of Islam, yet they have adhered themselves falsely to Islam, and are among the heretics of Islam.[4]

He therefore thought it unjustified for Pfander to appeal to orthodox Muslims by asserting the acceptance of the trinity notion by heretical Ṣūfīs. He proceeded to show his distaste for Ṣūfism by quoting the sayings of renowned mystics such as Biṣṭāmī, Rūmī and Shams of Tabriz in order to demonstrate the blasphemy of their

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1. Miftāḥ, p. 54.
2. Kashf, pp. 206-213.
3. ibid., pp. 207-208.
4. ibid., p. 210.

concept of union with God.[1] At this point the refutation degenerated into an attack on Ṣūfī beliefs and practices. Hādī was so carried away by his anti-Ṣūfī invective that he failed to relate his concluding virulent comments to his original aim of criticising Pfander's usage of Ṣūfī testimony.

In spite of Pfander's disclaimer that he was trying to 'prove' the doctrine of the Trinity from the testimony borne to it by other religions, but was merely appealing to them to show its conformity with both reason and intuition, Hādī's reply shows that the 'ulamā were hostile to any such line of argument. Thus, Pfander's foray into their territory had been unavailing, and although in the later editions of his books he retained the sections on analogies from the created world, and from other religious systems, and made only minor concessions to the objections of Hādī and other critics, it was clear that he preferred his own chosen ground of scriptural revelation.

However, the 'ulamā had made it clear early and firmly that they rejected Pfander's standpoint that 'the proving of these things will not be argued from the human reason and from the sciences of this world, but only from the words of Christ, and from the clear verses of the Injīl and the Taurāt'.[2] Yet they nevertheless thought it necessary to challenge both the Biblical testimony which formed the core of the Miftāḥ, and Pfander's claim that the Qur'ān, without the conscious realization of the prophet

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1. ibid., pp. 211-212; Abū Yazīd al-Bistāmī (Bāyazīd), d. c. 874; Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (1207-1273); Shams-i Tibrīzī (13th century), See E.I. 1st ed., IV, pp. 744-745; new edition, I, pp. 162-163; II, pp. 393-397.

2. Miftāḥ, p. 4.

Muḥammad, contained testimony to the divinity of Christ.[1]

Their attitude to Pfander's claims about Biblical revelation reflected traditional Islamic views about the 'people of the book' and their scriptures, but was reinforced by their rational outlook. For convinced as they were that divine revelation cannot contradict the laws of reason, they held that a figurative interpretation must be arrived at when a contradiction seems apparent. Thus the doctrines of the divinity of Christ and the trinity of the godhead, which Christians accepted in a 'real' sense, the _'ulamā_ would regard only as figurative.[2] However, in their view, neither the Old nor the New Testaments contained any clear and emphatic testimony to the doctrines, in either a 'real' or a 'figurative' sense. Certain traditional Muslim attitudes to the Bible supported this conclusion. They regarded some of the passages cited in proof of the doctrines as later interpolation by interested parties, and parts of the New Testament they rejected as inherently untrustworthy, because the writers of the Epistles and the Acts were not, in their view, writing under inspiration. Thus Sayyid Muḥammad Hādī was contemptuous of much of the testimony which Pfander derived from the New Testament, for in his view reliance on the Acts of the Apostles was comparable with reliance on an 'uninspired' collection of Shī'ī traditions, such as the _Ḥayāt al-Qalūb_.[3] Āl-i Ḥasan too was sceptical about the authors of the Acts and the Epistles, because 'it is not known who these men were nor

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1. ibid., p. 3.

2. Sayyid Muḥammad Hādī, _Kashf_, p. 17.

3. _Kashf_, p. 92, 122.

what kind of men they were', therefore, 'nothing of the Christians' meaning emerges from the sayings of the disciples'.[1] They reserved a particular dislike for St. Paul whose whole testimony was regarded as uninspired[2]. Thus much of Pfander's Biblical testimony was immediately unacceptable to his adversaries.[3]

The point on which all the 'ulamā were adamant was that the scriptures did not mean what Pfander claimed they meant. In making this assertion they commanded in the 1840s, a new source for supporting their claims in the various Arabic, Persian and Urdu Bibles which were being circulated by the missionary societies at work in the region. Their challenge to Pfander's interpretation of the Bible would prove to be significant beyond their present conflict over the Trinity.

If the 'ulamā could show that the Bible did not contain clear testimony to the doctrines in dispute, then Pfander's claim for the priority of revelation above reason might be undermined. However, in Pfander's perspective, the partial and gradual revelation of divine mysteries which could only be fully known in the next world, precluded any such full and clear statement.[4] The meaning of the doctrines was beyond the present understanding of sinful man. Therefore the doctrine of the Trinity was merely 'alluded to' in the Old Testament, but was more 'clearly stated and revealed in the

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1. Istifsār, pp. 41-43.

2. e.g. 'None of Paul's words are ever worthy of being taken aṣ proof because he is not one of the disciples', Āl-i Ḥasan, Istifsār, p. 43.

3. The reasons for the 'ulamā's denial of the inspiration of parts of the New Testament are examined in Chap. 6.

4. Miftāḥ, p. 5.

gospels'.[1] The 'ulamā, not accepting any such necessity for gradual revelation, claimed that Pfander's explanations were anyway inconsistent. Thus they seized on a passage in the Miftāḥ in which Pfander had said that the word 'Trinity' was not actually to be found in the New Testament.[2]

Pfander had placed evidence from Christ's own words before any other kind of Biblical testimony for both the divinity and the Trinity doctrines. The 'ulamā agreed with him on this point, reflecting here the significance attached within Islam to the words and traditions of one who is held to be a prophet. But they denied that Christ's statements in the New Testament amounted to a claim to divinity. Āl-i Ḥasan and Raḥmat Allāh both criticized Pfander for 'deducing' the divinity of Christ without any firm testimony. Āl-i Ḥasan examined each of the New Testament passages proffered by Pfander, but concluded, 'there is no benefit to the divinity of Christ ... to be had from the aforementioned sayings of Christ'.[3] In the introduction to the Ibṭāl al-Taslīs, Raḥmat Allāh asserted that, 'Christ never clearly said that I am God'.[4] On the contrary, he argued, the words of Christ indicated his subordination to God and his human weakness. He was a man of special qualities, and a prophet sent by God, but he was not divine.

This emphasis on Biblical evidence for Christ's humanity and weakness reinforced the conclusions already arrived at by rational investigation, that human nature, being mumkin al-wajūd

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1. ibid., p. 43.

2. ibid., p. 35; cf. Kashf, pp. 133, 146.

3. Istifsār, p. 4.

4. Istifsār, pp. 25-27.

(possibly existent), is of necessity 'limited' and 'weak'. The case was supported by New Testament references showing that Christ had denied that he was either omnipotent or omniscient, and demonstrating his subordination to the 'Father', and his condition of human weakness. Āl-i Ḥasan drew from the 1814 Persian translation of the New Testament several such passages, emphasizing in particular the phrase in St. John's Gospel, '... that the world may believe that thou has sent me' (John 17. 21), for in the eyes of the 'ulamā one who was thus 'sent' must be subordinate to the 'sender' and therefore could not be divine.[1] Stress was also laid on the evidence for Christ's physical weakness, including his exhibition of fear before the crucifixion, his 'weakness' in praying to God for deliverance, and his dependence on food and drink.[2]

An important facet of the same argument was the emphasis which was placed on the non-uniqueness of Christ. Pfander had commenced the Miftāḥ with a claim for Christ's 'superiority' to all other prophets, but the 'ulamā argued that although in some respects Christ was indeed 'superior' to most other men, he had been equalled and emulated in certain qualities by other prophets, and in certain cases, by other ordinary men. Some of the characteristics

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1. ibid., p. 28. Among other passages, the following verses from the Gospels of John and Mark were cited as evidence of Christ's human weakness and hence of the impossibility of his divinity: 'The son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do', John 5. 19; 'I can of my own self do nothing', John 5. 30; 'Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father', Mark 13. 42.

2. Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī, Ibṭāl, p. 52.

which the 'ulamā considered to be critical here were not accepted as such by Pfander. The power to perform miracles, and more than that, to perform miracles of a 'superior type', was an age-old subject of dispute between Christian and Muslim controversialists, which had been revived during the Henry Martyn era of encounter. In Pfander's eyes, however, it was not a crucial test, and he was even less likely to appreciate any force in the 'ulamā 's argument that Christ was not unique, in 'being born without a human father'. Yet in the opinion of the 'ulamā, Adam and Eve were 'equal' to Christ in this respect, indeed Adam was 'superior' in being born without either father or mother.[1] Thus the epithets which had been applied to Christ in both Testaments, which Pfander understood as indications of his divinity, had been used of other prophets, and sometimes of ordinary men, to indicate notions of 'goodness' and 'wisdom', but certainly not 'divinity'. Among these terms were 'khudā' (god), 'rab' (master) and 'ibn-allāh' (son of god).[2]

In denying Christ's divinity, the 'ulamā were thus at pains to lay stress on the Biblical testimony which seemed to point to his 'humanity'. At no point did they make any effort to come to terms with Pfander's explanation of the 'two natures' in Christ, or with the 'perfect God and perfect man' of the Athanasian Creed. It seems that their attacks on Biblical testimony were pre-determined by the conclusions they had already reached on logical grounds, making them unable to give any real consideration to the passages

1. Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī referred to a conversation between Jawād Sābāt and an Armenian bishop in which Christ's lack of a human father was compared to Adam, Eve and the angels. Ibṭāl, p. 30.

2. e.g. 'the deduction of the divinity of Christ from the word ibn-allāh is altogether wrong'; 'Jesus was called rab ... and the meaning it signified was bazorg (respected), Āl-ī Ḥasan, Istifsār, pp. 24, 31-32, 38-39.

to which Pfander wished to draw their attention. Realizing that they had missed his real message, he therefore revised his explanation of the divine and human attributes of Christ for the second edition of the Miftāḥ, and also tried to re-state his explanation in his book Ḥall al-Ishkāl (Solution of Difficulties).[1] But although Raḥmat Allāh read both editions of the Miftāḥ, as well as the Ḥall, his own discussion of the Athanasian Creed shows that the Christian understanding of the godhead was as meaningless and illogical to him as it had been to his predecessors.[2]

Discussion of these doctrines naturally centred on the New Testament, but the Old Testament was also important because Pfander had argued not only that Christ's status was foretold in the Old Testament, but also that the Trinity doctrine was hinted at there. The 'ulamā's response reflected traditional Muslim attitudes, and a long history of Muslim-Christian controversy over 'prophecy'. Those prophecies which Pfander had used in testimony of Christ's prophethood, sonship and divinity they applied instead to Muḥammad's mission. Conclusive for Sayyid Muḥammad Hādī was the foretelling of a great and glorious leader which found fulfilment in Muḥammad's successful military campaigns, but not in the humble circumstances of Christ's life and death.[3] Hādī's Shī'ī concern was evident in his application of one of the disputed prophecies to the mahdī instead of to Christ.[4] All the 'ulamā reminded Pfander of the passage in Deuteronomy which threatened dire punishments to

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1. Miftāḥ (1850), pp. 15-16; Ḥall al-Ishkāl, pp. 105-106.
2. Ibṭāl, pp. 23; 27-32.
3. Kashf, pp. 115-116; 122.
4. ibid., p. 120.

those who set up false prophets and followed false gods.[1] The implication was clear. If Pfander chose to distort the Old Testament in Christ's favour and to worship him as divine, then in the eyes of the 'ulamā he was guilty of the gravest of sins. All stressed the rigidly monotheistic emphasis of the Taurāt, which in their view contained no hint of Christ's divinity or of the doctrine of the Trinity. Raḥmat Allāh remonstrated,

> This question [the Trinity doctrine] on which salvation is made dependent, plainly was not mentioned anywhere at all [in the Taurāt], not to speak of it being repeated and insisted on.[2]

The 'ulamā thus considered that they had proved Pfander guilty of interpreting both Testaments of the Bible in a flagrantly inaccurate way. Sayyid Muḥammad Hādī and Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī tried to complete the undermining of his faith and his scholarship by also pouring scorn on his claims as an Islamic scholar and on his knowledge of Arabic. Their attack was provoked by Pfander's claim in the introduction to the first Persian edition of the Miftāḥ, that the Qur'ān contains testimony to the divinity of Christ.[3] In support of his argument he quoted two verses from the Qur'ān in which Christ's conception was described as the result of the 'breathing' of God's 'spirit' into Mary and the 'conveying' into her of God's 'word'.[4]

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1. Deuteronomy 13, 1-5, '... And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death ...'; e.g. Āl-i Ḥasan, Istifsar, p. 18.
2. Ibṭāl, p. 13.
3. Quoted in Sayyid Muḥammad Hādī, Kashf, p. 21.
4. The two verses were: (i) 'And Mary, the daughter of Imran, who preserved her chastity, and into whose womb we breathed of our spirit', Sura LXVI, al-Tahrīm (Prohibition), Sale, The Koran, II, p. 449. (ii) 'Verily Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, is the apostle of God, and his word which he conveyed into Mary, and a spirit proceeding from him', Sura IV, al-Nisā' (the Women), Sale, The Koran, I, p. 126.

Sayyid Muḥammad Hādī criticized this claim, arguing, as he had in respect to Biblical testimony, that Adam had also been created by the 'breathing' of God's spirit, and that Pfander had ignored the rest of the second verse which contained a strong condemnation of trinitarianism, for 'he has left a major part of that verse unquoted so that he can grind his own axe'.[1] He pointed out that the word 'spirit' had been used in the Qur'ān in several different senses, and it was therefore totally unjustified to cite its usage in reference to the birth of Christ as evidence of his divinity.[2] In the light of such criticism Pfander modified his claim in the second Urdu edition of the Miftāḥ which was published in Agra in 1850. Although he no longer asserted that the Qur'ān actually testified directly to Christ's divinity, he still maintained that the two Qur'ānic references to the 'breathing' of God's 'spirit' into Mary, proved that Muslims should regard Christ to be of 'high status' and superior to other prophets, and in his view this status amounted to divinity.[3] However,he omitted from the second edition some grammatical evidence which had been attacked by Hādī, and also a claim, based on a tradition in the Ḥayāt al-Qalūb, that 'some Muslims say' that the 'spirit' in the two aforementioned verses referred to the angel Gabriel and not to God. Sayyid Muḥammad Hādī had denied that any Muslim commentators held this view about these particular verses.[4] In the new edition Pfander added an explanatory

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1. Kashf, pp. 22-24. The verse continues: 'Believe, therefore, in God and his apostles, and say not, there are three Gods; forbear this it will be better for you. God is but one God. Far be it from him that he should have a son!' ibid., p. 126.
2. cf. T.O'Shaughnessy, The Development of the Meaning of Spirit in the Koran (Rome, 1953).
3. Miftāḥ, pp. 2-3.
4. Kashf, p. 21.

statement about the Qur'ān's seeming inconsistency in both testifying to, and denying, Christ's divinity, but this only resulted in bringing down further criticism upon his head. For he now asserted that Muḥammad must have heard from some Christians the statements about Christ's divinity in the gospels of Luke and John, in particular the title 'word of God', so he 'wrote it in the Qur'ān for their satisfaction, and thus without knowing or understanding it, he testified to our meaning'.[1]

When Raḥmat Allāh resumed the attack on the Miftāḥ in 1852, he compared these first and second editions, criticized in greater detail the same points which Hādī had objected to in the first edition, and ridiculed Pfander's new statement that Muḥammad had testified to Christ's divinity without realizing he was doing so.[2] He was also scornful of Pfander's open publication of a 'revised edition', for in 'purging' his original statements he felt he was merely following those Christian translators and commentators who had already made alterations in the Bible.[3]

It seems that the 'ulamā's criticisms found their mark, for although there was no further edition of the Miftāḥ in Pfander's lifetime, a later 'thorough revision' which was published in English, moderated still further Pfander's statement on the Qur'ān. In this edition the unique status of Christ was still emphasized, but it was acknowledged that 'it is true that the Qur'ān denies Him the

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1. Miftāḥ, p. 3.
2. Ibṭāl, pp. 53-62
3. ibid., p. 58.

divine title'.[1]

Apart from their attack on Pfander's interpretation of particular Qur'ānic verses, Sayyid Muḥammad Hādī and Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī both criticized Pfander's command of Arabic. Raḥmat Allāh concluded the Ibṭāl al-Tasliṣ by pointing out errors in the way Pfander had written the hijra dates of publication at the end of the various editions of his books, and some crucial grammatical mistakes he had made when interpreting key verses of the Qur'ān.[2] His final word was to advise Pfander to become a student at a madrasa in Agra where he would be able to master Arabic thoroughly before attempting any further Qur'ānic exegesis.[3]

The debate on the divinity of Christ and the doctrine of the Trinity then petered out in an atmosphere of mutual recrimination and misunderstanding. Pfander's final statements on the question were contained in his Ḥall al-Ishkāl which had already been published in 1847. In this work he had repeated the arguments he had used in the Miftāḥ, and had answered particular criticisms in the Kashf al-Astār and the Kitāb-i Istifsār with which he felt he must take issue. When Raḥmat Allāh's Ibṭal al-Tasliṣ was published in 1853, Pfander read it, but prepared no further reply because he felt it contained 'nothing new'.[4] This was correct in so far as Raḥmat Allāh merely re-affirmed the rational criteria which had been stressed by his predecessors, and re-affirmed their conviction

1. W. St. Clair Tisdall, Miftāhu'l-Asrār (the Key of Mysteries), a treatise on the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity (London, 1912), pp. 5-7.
2. Ibṭāl, pp. 57, 63-64.
3. ibid., p. 64.
4. 'Movements among Mahommedans', C.M.I., V (Nov. 1854), p. 254.

that neither the Bible nor the Qur'ān contained testimony to the Christian doctrines.

Pfander had realized by this stage that he had failed to convince the 'ulamā that acceptance of the divinity of Christ, his death by crucifixion, and atonement, were necessary to obtain salvation from sin. In the writings of this generation of 'ulamā the degree of horror at the idea of God's physical fatherhood which had marked many earlier Muslim controversial treatises, was overshadowed by expressions of distaste for the idea of Christ's crucifixion and descent into hell.[1] Although Sayyid Muḥammad Hādī had dissected the rest of the Miftāḥ in great detail, he gave only cursory attention to the final section in which Pfander had expounded the relationship between sin, Christ, and salvation.[2] None of these 'ulamā would undertake a reply to the Ṭarīq al-Ḥayāt, the work in which Pfander had given a full exposition of the same theme, and Hādī explained his reluctance on account of its blasphemous references to the sins of the prophets.[3] It was clear that Pfander was unable to overcome Muslim horror at the evidence of shirk which they saw as implicit in these essential Christian doctrines. In their view the confirmation of the divinity and Trinity doctrines as both irrational and unsubstantiated in scripture, made it unnecessary to embark on an examination of the sin and salvation question which could only be distasteful to them.

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1. Sayyid Muhammad Hādī, Kashf, pp. 229-230; Āl-i Ḥasan, Istifsār, 4th question, pp. 45-46.

2. Kashf, pp. 227-232.

3. ibid., pp. 4-5.

Knowing by then that he could not move them on the reason-revelation issue, Pfander felt that the only way out of the impasse was to reinforce his own adherence to Biblical testimony by asserting the integrity of the texts which indicated the doctrines. The *'ulamā*, too, were ready to change the focus of controversy, but unbeknown to Pfander, their search for textual evidence against the Trinity had meanwhile also been providing them with new fuel for the age-old Muslim charge that the Christian scriptures had been 'corrupted'.

CHAPTER SIX

THE THEMES OF CONTROVERSY

(2) THE CORRUPTION OF THE SCRIPTURES

THE TRADITIONAL MUSLIM CHARGE OF CORRUPTION OF THE BIBLE

In the early 1850s when Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī chose to change the emphasis in his counter-attack on the missionaries from the 'irrationality' of the Christian scriptures to their 'corruption', the significant new ingredient in his argument was the support he drew from European sources. From the early days of Islam, Muslim scholars had argued that the 'people of the Book', notably the Jews but also the Christians, had corrupted either the text or the meaning of their scriptures, mainly for the purpose of removing any references to the coming of the prophet Muḥammad. However, until Raḥmat Allāh started to point out that certain Western Biblical critics admitted the occurrence of corruption, the charge was based on Qur'ānic testimony.

Muslim scholars had not agreed, however, on the nature of the Qur'ānic charges, which until the mid nineteenth century took three main forms.[1] Of the three types of charge, the most widely held view was that many passages of the Old and New Testaments had been altered by omission or interpolation. In support of this accusation of taḥrīf-i lafẓī it was usual to cite the Qur'ānic admonition against the Jews 'who transcribe corruptly the book of the law with their hands, and then say, This is from God.'[2] However,

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1. The outline of the divergent views on taḥrīf is based on article 'taḥrīf', in S.E.I., pp. 560-561.

2. 'And woe unto them who transcribe corruptly the book of the law with their hands, and then say, This is from God: that they may sell it for a small price. Therefore woe unto them because of that which their hands have written; and woe unto them for that which they have gained.' Sūra II, The Cow, in Sale's translation, The Koran, 2 vols (London, 1801), I, p. 16. Sale commented in his footnote to this verse, 'Mohammed again accuses the Jews of corrupting their scripture', ibid., note d.

most of the other Qur'ānic references to tahrīf did not specify any textual changes, but referred imprecisely to those who 'knowingly hide the truth', and who 'pervert' or 'wrest' the true meaning of the text.[1] Such verses thus formed the basis of the second, but less widely held view, that the Jews and Christians were guilty not of textual alteration, but only of deliberate misunderstanding of the meaning of the purely preserved texts, behaviour which resulted, it was argued, in tahrīf-i ma'nawī.

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1. Among verses in the Qurān which were held to indicate either deliberate 'hiding' or 'mis-reading' of the true meaning of the text, or unspecified 'perversions' of the text, are the following:

   'And who is more unjust than he who hideth the testimony which he hath received from God ... They to whom we have given the scripture, know our apostle, even as they know their own children; but some of them hide the truth against their own knowledge', Sūra II, 'The Cow', Koran, I, pp. 26-27.

   'O ye who have received the scriptures, why do ye clothe, truth with vanity, and knowingly hide the truth', Sūra III, 'The Family of Imran', ibid., p. 69. Sale commented on this verse, 'The Jews and Christians are again accused of corrupting the scriptures, and stifling the prophecies concerning Mohammed', ibid., note x.

   'Say: Who sent down the book which Moses brought, a light and a direction unto men; which ye transcribe on papers, whereof ye publish some part, and great part whereof ye conceal?', Sūra VI, 'Cattle', ibid., p. 172.

   'And there are certainly some of them who read the scriptures perversely, that ye may think what they read to be really in the scriptures, yet it is not in the scripture; and they say, This is from God; but it is not from God.' Sūra III, 'The Family of Imran', ibid., p. 71.

   'they [the children of Israel] dislocate the words of the pentateuch from their places, and have forgotten part of what they were admonished,' Sūra V, 'The Table', ibid., p. 132.

   'they [the Jews] pervert the words of the law from their true places', Sūra V, 'The Table', ibid., p. 138.

Yet in neither category were the Biblical passages in which corruption was alleged to have occurred specified by chapter and verse. The vagueness of the accusations thus left the way open for commentators to support either or both viewpoints.[1] Uncertainties about the meaning of the Qur'ān seem to have been reinforced by an apologetic problem which was implicit in the charge of ṭaḥrīf-i lafẓī. For it was soon realized that advocacy of the charge of large-scale, deliberate ṭaḥrīf-i lafẓī might result in inconsistencies when arguing with Christians. If the Old and New Testaments were held to be unreliable mainly because of textual changes, then it would be difficult to support the Muslim claim that the prophethood of Muḥammad was foretold in the scriptures of the Jews and the Christians. Consequently, although the occurrence of large-scale ṭaḥrīf-i lafẓī continued to be the most pervasive form of the charge, some Muslim polemicists preferred to adopt a 'milder' middle stance in which they agreed that some textual alterations had indeed occurred, but on a limited scale which had no detrimental effects on the passages in the Bible which were alleged to foretell Muḥammad's prophethood.[2] Nevertheless the ṭaḥrīf

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1. Some verses seem capable of indicating both ṭaḥrīf-i lafẓī and ṭaḥrīf-i ma'nawī. e.g. 'Of the Jews there are some who pervert words from their places; and say, We have heard, and have disobeyed; and do then hear without understanding and meaning, and look upon us: perplexing with their tongues, and reviling the true religion,' Sūra IV, 'Women', ibid. p. 103. Yet although Muslim commentators have used this verse as testimony for both charges, Sale considered the reference was not to ṭaḥrīf, but to Jewish bantering of Muḥammad. ibid., note m.

2. S.M.I., p.561.

question continued to be raised whenever and wherever Muslims and Christians argued about the bases of their faith. Certainly Pfander was aware in the 1820s, when he was preparing his first draft of the Mīzān al-Ḥaqq that the taḥrīf charge must be answered in any book for Muslims.[1]

However, during the early encounters between Protestant missionaries and Indian 'ulamā the question was not central to the argument. The Lucknow mujtahid, Sayyid Muḥammad, did not choose to develop this theme with Joseph Wolff, although recognition of the place of taḥrīf in Muslim-Christian controversy was indicated when it was listed as a subject for further discussion 'if the door of correspondence continue open.'[2] During discussion of other questions, such as prophecy and the Trinity, it was apparent nevertheless that these 'ulamā assumed, without any need for proof, that the traditional taḥrīf-i lafẓī charge was justified. The assumption of corruption underlies every other argument against the Trinity in Sayyid Muḥammad Hādīs' Kashf al-Astār.[3]

Even though the taḥrīf charge remained of only subsidiary concern to the Shī'ī 'ulamā, the accounts of the early encounters show why, and to what extent, the charge remained traditional in form when it was occasionally made explicit.[4] These 'ulamā tended

1. Pfander, MS 'Wage der Wahrheit', pp. 46-86.
2. Muḥammad 'Alī, pamphlet, in CI. (Nov. 1838), p. 489.
3. Kashf, pp. 127-128.
4. It is possible that the mujtahid's preoccupation with the prophecy theme in his encounter with Wolff might have led him, like earlier polemicists, to avoid explicit accusations of taḥrīf for fear of detracting from the force of his own argument that Muhammad was foretold in the Christian scriptures. The ambivalence of this stance was shown when one of the Shī'ī pamphlets reiterated the general charge of corruption but argued that nonetheless many 'glad tidings and allusions' to Muḥammad still remained in the Bible. Muḥammad 'Alī's pamphlet, CI. (Nov. 1838), p. 490.

to support the unspecific Qur'ānic accusations by asserting dogmatically the 'necessary' characteristics of divine inspiration, revelation and prophethood. The mujtahid, for example, assumed that any account of events in the Old Testament which contradicted the Muslim belief in the necessarily 'sinless' character of a true prophet was in itself a sufficient 'proof' of corruption.[1] His nephew, Sayyid Muḥammad Hādī was repeating an age-old Muslim attitude to the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles when he rejected them as 'uninspired', and in preferring St. Matthew to the other gospels he provided no evidence for his assertion.[2] These accusations showed little knowledge of the historical context in which corruption was alleged to have taken place. Hādī seemed eager to blame the Indian missionaries, personally, for particular textual alterations. Thus Wolff was suspected of altering the wording of the Daniel prophecy and Pfander had interpolated passages in the texts of the gospels in order to derive evidence for the sonship and divinity of Christ, thereby corrupting the text to support Christian claims.[3]

At this stage, although the 'ulamā had some Arabic and Persian translations of the Bible they were insufficiently familiar with the various translations to use them in support of the traditional Qur'ānic and dogmatic accusations of taḥrīf. Pfander chided Hādī for showing no knowledge of the languages and manuscripts of the

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1. 'An account of the Rev. Joseph Wolff's interview with the Syud Saheb', C.I. (Oct. 1838), p. 446.

2. Kashf, pp. 82; 92.

3. Kashf, p. 69. cf. 96; 124-126.

Bible. Yet when the 'ulamā began to embark on just such a study Pfander would be unprepared for the new evidence they then brought forward.

THE INDIAN 'ULAMĀ AND NEW SOURCES FOR THE CORRUPTION CHARGE

When Āl-i Ḥasan and Raḥmat Allāh took up the corruption charge Western sources replaced Qur'ānic testimony in support of the traditional accusation of large-scale taḥrīf-i lafẓī. It will be shown that traditional Muslim assumptions about the nature both of revelation and the means to verify testimony, would still be drawn on implicitly and explicitly, but it was the sudden recourse to Biblical and critical evidence, which rendered the 'ulamā unanswerable by missionaries who were either hostile to, or out of touch with, the new critical assumptions.

The munṣif Āl-i Ḥasan was the first 'ālim to draw on a collection of Bibles in order to re-assert the taḥrīf charge. Discussion of the missionary attention to the translation and publication of the Bible in the languages of north India as well as in Persian and Arabic, and of the rivalry which developed between various translators and societies, has shown the ready availability by the 1840s of translations of parts of the Bible.[1]

The translations and editions which Āl-i Ḥasan actually used are listed in appendix A.[2] By the early 1850s Raḥmat Allāh had acquired a number of other translations of the Bible which had been published during the intervening decade.[3] More remarkable was his acquisition of Biblical commentaries, works of criticism,

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1. See Chap. 3 , pp.156-159.

2. pp. 466-468.

3. See appendix A, pp.468-471.

histories and encyclopaedias. Although the Lucknow Shī'īs had possessed some English books, Wolff had been unable to elicit their titles. Āl-i Ḥasan quoted from only one general reference work, a Universal History by one James Tytler.[1]

In the introductions to two of his books on taḥrīf Raḥmat Allāh listed the extensive and varied Western sources he had consulted. He distinguished carefully between the publications of 'believing' and 'unbelieving' Christians, realizing that the missionaries would find the criticism of the former group more painful than that of the latter. In the category of mulḥidīn (unbelievers) were the works of various European Deists, rationalists and sceptics, notably Toland, Chubb, Spinoza, Paine, Reimarus, Voltaire and Rousseau. The Life of Jesus by the radical German critic D.F. Strauss was also placed in this list.[2] His numerous references to the works of English 'believing' theologians included

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1. The 'History' referred to by Āl-i Hasan seems to be Tytler's revision of 'Mr. Salmon's' New Universal Geographical Grammar ... and the History of all the different Kingdoms of the World (Edinburgh, 1778).

2. Among the publications of mulḥidīn mentioned by Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī, the following have been identified:

   John Toland (1670-1722), Amyntor, or a Defence of Milton's Life (1699); Thomas Woolston (1670-1733), six pamphlets (1727-1749); Thomas Chubb (1679-1747), The Posthumous Works of Mr. Thomas Chubb, 2 vols (London, 1748); Anon., Ecce Homo, or a Critical Inquiry into the History of Jesus Christ, being a Rational Analysis of the Gospels (London, 1813); David Friedrich Strauss (1808-1874), The Life of Jesus (London, 1846).

   The 'works' of the following authors were mentioned without specifying particular titles:

   Benedict de Spinoza (1632-1677); Thomas Paine (1737-1809); Henry St. John, 1st Viscount Bolingbroke (1678-1751); Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694-1768); Francois Marie Arouet de Voltaire (1694-1788); Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778).

Henry Matthew, Thomas Scott, Nathaniel Lardner, George D'Oyly, Richard Mant, and with most emphasis, T.H. Horne.[1] Other Anglican theologians included William Paley, Samuel Horsley and Bishop Richard Watson.[2] Among English non-conformist works was Adam Clarke's commentary,[3] and American non-conformist criticism was represented by Andrews Norton's The Evidences of the Genuineness of the Gospels.[4] There were references to the works of a number of well-known German 'critical' theologians, including the pioneers, J.D. Michaelis and T.G. Eichhorn.[5] Raḥmat Allāh distinguished

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1. Raḥmat Allāh consulted the following editions of their commentaries: A Commentary upon the Holy Bible extracted from Henry and Scott, Religious Tract Society, 6 vols (London, 1834); N. Lardner, Works, 10 vols (London, 1827); G.D'Oyly and R. Mant, Notes, Explanatory and Practical, to the Holy Bible (London, 1848); T.H. Horne, Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, 3rd ed., 4 vols (London, 1822).

2. William Paley, View of the Evidences of Christianity, First published 1794. Rahmat Allah cited an edition of 1850 which has not been traced; S. Horsley, Biblical Criticism on the first fourteen Historical Books of the Old Testament, 4 vols (London & Edinburgh, 1820); R. Watson, A Collection of Theological Tracts, 6 vols (Cambridge, 1785).

3. Adam Clarke, The Holy Bible, with Commentary, 3 vols (London, 1810). Raḥmat Allāh used an edition published in London in 1851.

4. A. Norton, The Evidences of the Genuineness of the Gospels, 3 vols (Boston, 1837-44).

5. Michaelis (1717-1791) and Eichhorn (1752-1827) are considered to be the founding fathers of the German critical movement. But it will be shown that although Raḥmat Allāh made frequent references to various German Biblical critics he had not studied their publications at first hand.

Roman Catholic works of criticism from those of Protestants, listing among his sources, Thomas Ward's Errata of the Protestant Bible, and the Calcutta journal, the Catholic Herald.[1]

Apart from these theological works he had also consulted some histories and encyclopaedias. Notable among ecclesiastical histories were the fourth century History by Eusebius,[2] J.L. von Mosheim's Institutes of Ecclesiastical History,[3] and the History of the Christian Church in Urdu which had recently been published in Agra by Pfander's civilian supporter, William Muir.[4] As well as the sixth edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, Raḥmat Allāh consulted the Penny Cyclopaedia which had been published by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge in 1835, and 'Doctor Rees' New Cyclopaedia'.[5]

At first glance Raḥmat Allāh had access to an impressive array of theological and historical literature and would seem to have been in the forefront of 'ulamā in all parts of the Muslim world in his acquisition and usage of such publications. Examination

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1. Thomas Ward, Errata of the Protestant Bible: or the Truth of the English Translations Examined (London, 1688). Rahmat Allāh possibly used a corrected and revised edition of the Errata which was published in Dublin in 1807, or a Philadelphia edition of 1824.

2. Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea (263-339) An Ecclesiastical History to the year 324 of the Christian era (London, 1838).

3. J.L. von Mosheim, Institutes of Ecclesiastical History, first published in English in 1765 and republished frequently in the nineteenth century.

4. William Muir, Masīhī Kālīsā kī tārīkh (History of the Christian Church), Urdu (Agrå, 1848).

5. The New Cyclopaedia has not been identified.

of the ways he used them in supporting his accusation of corruption will show that his knowledge of some of them was second-hand, and in some instances, superficial, but the concern here is merely to ascertain his possible channels of communication.

His own account suggests that publications of this kind were easily available to him, for, 'all these works are to be found in great number in a country which is under the English domination, as is India.'[1] Yet Āl-i Ḥasan had not used such sources even though he was in close touch with British civilian circles in Agra. It seems that by 1850 the missionary presence in the North-West had combined with the Anglicist policies of the Company to encourage the purchase of works of theological and historical interest, some of which were donated to the college libraries of the region. In some cases it is possible to verify the existence of a library copy of a particular publication which Raḥmat Allāh had used and to discover from whom the volume was originally obtained. Several of the key commentaries and histories were in the libraries of the anglo-oriental colleges in Delhi and Agra, or were listed in the education reports as course books for those colleges.

Among the theological works mentioned by Raḥmat Allāh, Henry and Scott's 'Biblical Commentary', Horsley's 'Biblical Criticism', Richard Watson's answer to Thomas Paine and William Muir's Urdu history of the church, were in the Agra College collection by 1855. This library also had a number of Urdu and Persian translations of parts of the Old and New Testaments, and other theological works, such as Leland's 'Deistical Writers' which Raḥmat Allāh used when

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1. Raḥmat Allāh, introduction to Idh-har-ul-Haqq, ed. Carletti (Pâris, 1880), I, p. lxxxviii.

replying to Pfander's views on the Trinity. There was also a two volume edition of Sale's Koran and sets of all the encylopaedias which Rahmat Allāh had consulted.[1] A number of these publications were also used as text books in Delhi College, including the ubiquitous Paley's Evidences, and parts of 'Tytler's Universal History', the main secular European authority which Āl-i Hasan had consulted.[2]

The catalogue of the Agra College library also indicates the donors of some of the volumes. The Lieutenant-Governor, James Thomason, had bequeathed a large part of the collection, including the Encyclopaedia Britannica and the Penny Cyclopaedia, but also some of the key theological works.[3] A number of other volumes were gifts from William Muir.[4] It seems possible that the evangelical civilians in Agra were providing an indirect but important channel of communication between the 'ulamā and some of the 'critical' evidence which was then used to confound the missionaries. On the other hand it is not known for certain whether Rahmat Allāh or Dr Wazīr Khān actually ever used the Agra College library. There were several 'ulamā on the staff who may have acquainted them with its contents, and the library rules which were printed with the catalogue indicate that access was granted to non-students.[5] The missionaries

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1. Catalogue of English, Oriental and Translated Works in the Library of the Agra College at the close of 1854, 3rd ed. (Agra, 1855), pp. 76-79; 107-109.

2. 'Abd al-Haqq, Marhūm Dihlī Kālij, p.89, indicates that 'Tytler's Universal History, 1st and 2nd book' was studied in the English department in 1849.

3. Thomason bequeathed Horsley's 'Biblical Criticism', Leland's 'Deistical Writers' and Muir's 'Early Church History'.

4. Apart from his own works, Muir donated an unidentified 6 vol. 'History of the Church of Christ' which may have been Mosheim's.

5. Catalogue of English, Oriental and Translated Works.

tended to assume that it was Wazīr Khān's Calcutta medical education which had acquainted him, before his transfer to Agra, with European sceptical thinking, for the government colleges in Calcutta had a reputation among evangelicals for inculcating 'infidelity'.[1] However, although the doctor's thorough knowledge of English, and contacts outside the North-Western Provinces certainly helped him to play a key role in assisting Raḥmat Allāh, most of the source material he would actually work on was already accessible in Agra and Delhi if the 'ulamā chose to search for it in local libraries.

The missionaries were anyway partly responsible themselves for pointing the 'ulamā in the direction of the Biblical commentaries. Their own library at St. John's College in Agra could not rival the government college library at this date and T.V. French lamented that it did not possess a comprehensive theological collection.[2] On the other hand the 'ulamā used to greatest effect the 'conservative' commentaries written by 'believing' Christians, which Pfander himself had recommended to Āl-i Ḥasan in 1847 in order to try to silence his charges of corruption. Raḥmat Allāh followed the advice all too closely, for it was in these recommended 'conservative' commentaries that he claimed to find the vital evidence for the reformulated charges.[3]

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1. Joseph Wolff had earlier noticed the popularity of Paine's Age of Reason and the works of Voltaire among Hindu students in Calcutta, who had 'turned infidels'. Wolff blamed 'a wretched merchant of Boston' for sending to Calcutta, 'either from a vile speculation, or satanical spirit of infidelity ... a whole cargo of copies of Paine's Age of Reason'. Researches and Missionary Labour, p. 429.

2. T.V. French to H. Venn, Aligarh, 5 April 1854. CMS CI1/O109/5.

3. C.G. Pfander, Hall al-Ishkāl, p. 155. Among the authors he recommended to Āl-i Ḥasan were Horne, Lardner and Paley.

Another new feature of the use of Christian sources was Raḥmat Allāh's access to Roman Catholic publications. Although Protestant-Catholic and Sunnī-Shī'ī quarrels had often been utilized in earlier Christian-Muslim controversy, Raḥmat Allāh was the first to relate the taḥrīf question to sectarian differences within Christianity. There is some uncertainty however about how he obtained the Catholic works on taḥrīf. After the 1854 debate Pfander made bitter recriminations against the Agra Catholics for deliberately assisting the 'ulamā by lending them books which contained the required evidence. The basis of Pfander's suspicion against the Bishop of Agra was the extreme bitterness of Dr Wazīr Khān's references to Protestantism which he felt was alien to Muslim attitudes generally.[1] T.G. Clark of the Scottish Mission in Agra supported Pfander in his suspicion of the Bishop, asserting that,

> a main encourager, a main assistant even of these wretched victims of a miserable imposture is, on good grounds, known to be the Romish bishop here, or one of his agents, who furnished them with books.[2]

Certainly relations between the Protestant and Catholic communities in Agra had been tense in recent years,[3] but there is no evidence, on the other hand, of personal contacts between the 'ulamā and the Catholic missionaries and Clark did not reveal his 'good grounds' for the charge. Even T.V. French, who shared the suspicion, admitted that although 'the Romish priests' were trying to 'win over' the

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1. Pfander argued that 'the Muhammedans generally show a much greater regard for Protestants than for the image worshipping Roman catholics, whenever they are aware of this distinction'. Letter to Venn, Agra, 12 June 1854.

2. Clark's account of the debate published in Home and Foreign Record of the Free Church of Scotland (Oct. 1854), p. 66.

3. Chap. 3, p. 188, note 1.

Protestant converts, 'I never hear of their attempting to proselytize from Hinduism or Mahomedanism.'[1] Without any evidence of contact between the Catholics and the 'ulamā in Agra, it could be assumed that the Protestant charges reflected ill-informed sectarian venom. Certainly Raḥmat Allāh's access to some of the Catholic literature can be accounted for without supposing a conspiracy at work, although his access to other works in this category remains a mystery. One of his most important sources for satirising Luther's attitude to the Papacy was the Catholic Herald, a Calcutta publication which was available in the Library of St. Xavier's College in Calcutta, but also in St. Peter's Cathedral in Agra. On the other hand there is no means of identifying his access to Thomas Ward's Errata of the Protestant Bible which provided him with evidence about Catholic accusations of 'wilful corruption' by Protestants.

Although uncertainties remain in the identification of the channels of communication for some of their sources, Raḥmat Allāh and Wazīr Khān stand out among Muslims in the mid nineteenth century for the extent of their contacts with recent theological publications in the West. Before examining their treatment of these sources, the stance of the Agra missionaries on the implications of Biblical criticism will be considered.

THE AGRA MISSIONARIES AND BIBLICAL CRITICISM

The missionaries, although all ill-prepared to meet the 'ulamā's new arguments, showed considerable differences in their

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1. T.V. French to Mr. Chapman, Mathura, 8 Nov. 1856. CMS CI1/O109/13.

understanding of, and reaction to, the conclusions of the biblical critics. The differences between them partly reflected the attitudes of their home churches and missionary societies to new and controversial theories about the text and chronology of the Bible, but also some idiosyncracies peculiar to the individuals within the Agra group.

The pioneering studies which marked the beginning of the critical movement had been carried out during the second half of the eighteenth century by a handful of continental scholars, notably the French medical doctor, Jean Astruc, and the German professors of theology, Johann David Michaelis and Johann Gottfried Eichhorn.[1] Eichhorn was to receive the greater credit for his studies of both testaments, which opened up the techniques of 'higher criticism', but he acknowledged his own debt to Michaelis as the 'father' of Old Testament criticism.[2] The new characteristic of their methodology was the subjection of the biblical manuscripts to rigorous investigation by applying the principles of historical

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1. Jean Astruc (1684-1766). His main contribution was, <u>Conjectures sur les mémoires originaux dont il parait que Moyse s'est servi pour comparer le livre de la Genèse</u> (Brussels, 1753).
   J.D. Michaelis (1717-1791). Born and educated at Halle, professor at Göttingen. An important contribution to New Testament study was <u>Einleitung in die göttlichen Schriften des Neuen Bundes</u> (Göttingen, 1750).
   J.G. Eichhorn (1752-1827). Taught at Jena and Göttingen Universities. His two outstanding contributions were, <u>Historisch-Kritische Einleitung ins Alte Testament</u>, 3 vols (Leipzig, 1780-83); <u>Einleitung in das Neue Testament</u>, 5 vols. (Leipzig, 1804-12), <u>E.B.</u> (1974) III, p. 812.

2. In an essay on Michaelis, Eichhorn acknowledged, 'Of the criticism of the Old Testament in Germany, he must be considered in the most proper sense of the word, the father', J.G. Eichhorn, <u>An Account of the Life and Writings of John David Michaelis</u>, trans. by Professor Patton (Edinburgh, 1835) p.26. Recent studies of the beginnings of biblical criticism emphasize Eichhorn's own contribution. e.g. W. Neil, 'The criticism and theological use of the Bible, 1700-1950', in S.L. Greenslade (ed.) <u>The Cambridge History of the Bible: the West from the Reformation to the Present Day</u> (Cambridge, 1963), p. 273.

enquiry which were already being used for the study of secular history by other scholars of the Enlightenment era. In so doing they confirmed a long held suspicion that certain books of the Bible could not be attributed to their assigned authors, nor were they compiled at the dates traditionally ascribed to them. Eichhorn postulated instead that the Pentateuch had been composed from two separate sources and that the extant four gospels were derived from a single original gospel which was no longer in existence.[1] Although conservative theologians would continue to assert the plenary inspiration of the Bible and the literal accuracy of its entire text, chronology and authorship, the problem, henceforward, for liberal theologians who had come into touch with the views of Eichhorn and his successors was not the denunciation of the various source theories, but their satisfactory resolution.

During the first half of the nineteenth century German scholars continued to play the leading part in this process. When a consensus was finally achieved later in the century the key figures such as K.H. Graf and Julius Wellhausen were also German.[2] In the intervening years the critical challenge to the traditional view of the scriptures had caused a number of internal crises, but apart from the uproar over the publication of D.F. Strauss's Leben Jesu in 1835, which threatened to deny any historical basis to the New Testament, the German churches seemed able to receive the new theories without necessarily isolating their upholders as heretics.

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1. He also challenged the authenticity of the Second Letter of Peter and questioned the authorship of Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus.

2. Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918). Completed the work of K.H. Graf in establishing a 'four-document' hypothesis which divided the sources of the Pentateuch into four strands.

In Germany evangelicalism and criticism were able to come to full tide without the clash which finally occurred in Britain.

Various factors combined to soften the impact of the critical challenge. On the one hand, a number of outstanding theologians, notably F.E.D. Schleiermacher (1768-1834), created a bridge by expounding an idealistic faith in Christ which seemed to transcend the question of the textual inerrancy of the Bible. Thus liberal theology and critical scholarship were gradually 'mediated' to the churches of Germany by devout and respected theologians and absorbed in most quarters without serious rupture. Secondly, the universities of the German states were marked by a secular outlook which allowed considerable freedom of opinion. Although a number of university theologians were dismissed from their chairs on suspicion of holding extreme 'rationalist' or 'critical' views, most managed to find a more congenial rostrum in another university. De Wette, who was hounded from Berlin, was nevertheless acceptable to Basel University, where he continued to combine a devout Lutheran outlook with important contributions to the ongoing debate on the question of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.[1] With considerable freedom of opinion on religious questions, most of the German and Swiss universities combined high academic standards in languages and history. Although biblical conservatism also had its advocates, the atmosphere in German academic circles was supportive to the assertion of views which clashed with traditional assumptions about the Bible.

Yet Carl Pfander, the German missionary who provoked the renewal of the Muslim charge of Biblical corruption in north India, was unusually resistant to the findings of the German critics.

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1. See chap. 2, p. 114, note 5.

It is difficult to distinguish how far he actually was isolated from critical thinking, and how far he consciously suppressed critical theories which he knew about, but which he knew to be harmful to the Christian cause in argument with Muslims. The Pietist circles in which he was bred were not inveterately hostile to critical scholarship. Indeed the Württemberger Pietist, J.A. Bengel (1687-1752) had preceded Michaelis in the collection and collation of biblical manuscripts, and the publication of his Gnomon Novi Testamenti in 1742 after a lifetime of textual study, was later acknowledged as a milestone in the emergence of the critical outlook in Germany.[1] If he was soon overshadowed, elements of Bengel's critical apparatus were adopted by the next generation of biblical scholars in Germany. Yet Pfander's comments on the Bible when addressing Muslims showed no awareness of this legacy within his own Pietist fold. Nor did he seem to be influenced by those 'mediating' theologians of his own generation who had succeeded in combining deep evangelical piety with a cautiously critical attitude to the Bible. F.E. Tholuck, for instance, was acknowledged by Pfander as an evangelical influence, but not, it seems as a mediator of mild critical scholarship as he is generally

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1. In 1734 Bengel had published the Novum Testamentum Graecum which was followed by the Gnomon Novi Testamenti (Tübingen, 1742). In F.E. Stoeffler's opinion 'Bengel set the tone for all subsequent efforts in the area of text criticism', German Pietism during the Eighteenth Century (Leiden, 1973), p. 101.

held to have been.[1] Possibly Pfander's years at the Basel missionary seminary where the authorities seemed to wish to protect the students from critical influences, had the overriding influence on the hardening of his attitude to even mild criticism. Certainly as the years passed, Pfander, isolated in the Middle East and India, became increasingly entrenched in his biblical conservatism. This conclusion emerges from a comparison of his defences of the inerrancy of the Bible in the various editions of his Mīzān al-Ḥaqq, notably the German draft of 1829, the revised Urdu edition of 1850, and an English edition of 1867 which incorporated his last revisions before his death.[2] Over this time span of nearly forty years, a period which was crucial in the reception of critical assumptions in Germany, Pfander continued to assert that the currently available translations of the Bible agreed exactly with the biblical manuscripts of the pre-Muḥammadan era. He concluded in his final revision,

> Now if the MSS of a date previous to that of Mohammed and those which were written subsequently should be compared with the modern copies now in use among the Jews and Christians, their perfect agreement will be evident, and thus the fact, that at no time have they ever been altered or corrupted will be proved ... the Old and New Testaments have, neither in the time of Mohammed nor before his time, - in fact have never at any time been changed or altered.[3]

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1. For Pfander's acknowledgement of Tholuck's influence see chap. 2, pp.115;136. Tholuck's outlook has been described as 'an expanded Pietism that found room for Biblical Criticism', A.L. Drummond, German Protestantism since Luther (London, 1951), p. 128. His reply to Strauss's Leben Jesu shows his acceptance of a historical-critical method. A. Tholuck, The Credibility of the Evangelical History; illustrated with reference to the "Leben Jesu" of Dr. Strauss, English translation (London, 1844).

2. MS 'Wage der Wahrheit', 1829; Mīzān al-Ḥaqq (Agra, 1850), pp. 23-47; Mizan ul Haqq (London, 1867), pp. 11-22.

3. Mizan (1867), pp. 17-22.

Pfander rested his argument first on the logical unlikelihood of tahrīf, and second, on the historical non-occurrence of any such alterations as the Muslims asserted had happened. He attached great weight to pointing out to his Muslim critics the existence in European libraries of codices compiled in the fourth and fifth centuries, and also directed their attention to the works of the early church Fathers. He considered these sources provided visible evidence of the consistency of the original manuscripts with the early translations, and also with later printed editions of the Bible.[1] Yet although the core of this defence was historical it contained no references to any of the recent contributions of the biblical critics, and there were few modifications in the later editions to take account of ongoing scholarship.[2]

In fact the editions of the Mīzān which were prepared for Muslim readers in the 1830s and 1840s give an even more conservative impression than did the original German draft of 1829. For Pfander deliberately omitted from these Persian translations the very passages in the original manuscript which had come closest to an admission that the extant copies of the Bible might contain a number of 'mere clerical errors.' For in the margin of the manuscript he indicated that the passage on 'various readings'

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1. In the German draft of 1829 and the Urdu edition of 1850 Pfander argued that the existence of the Codex Vaticanus (4th century AD), the Codex Alexandrinus and the Codex Ephraemi(5th century AD) in European libraries testified to the claim that there were no alterations in the Bibles currently circulating in the Muslim world. By 1867 the discovery of the 4th century Codex Sinaiticus by Tischendorf in 1844 had provided a further source which he used in his revision.

2. William St. Clair Tisdall, who revised the Mīzān al-Haqq for republication in 1910, stressed to William Muir that he too was 'not an admirer' of 'the Higher Criticism'. 'Letters relating to Sir William Muir, 1813-1902', in Additional Sir William Muir papers'(Gen.2020-2).

(Verschiedenheit der Lesearten) should be excluded from the Persian translation.[1] It seems then that he may have been more aware of current researches than he was prepared to reveal in the account he chose to present to Muslims. However, even in the 1829 manuscript he had discounted any harmful findings. In chapter three he had drawn attention to the efforts both of devout scholars and of some unidentified 'enemies of Christianity', followers of the 'proud delusions of their reason' who had undertaken to investigate 'whether the Holy Scriptures of the Christians are still the same as they were in the beginning'. Yet in spite of their collation and study of 'all the old manuscripts', 'all the old translations' and 'all the writings of the early Church Fathers', he reiterated that neither group had in fact discovered anything harmful to the authenticity of the Bible,

> in the end neither party, after years of laborious work, not even those who were hostile to the Gospel could find anything other than that as a result of the repeated copying out of the Holy Scriptures, the negligence of the copiers in the manner of writing the words, in the positioning of the words, some variations had crept in; that here and there a word or a few words had been omitted, and that the translators, nearly all of whom translated from the original language, sometimes read a word differently from the original and thus also translated it differently ... But not a single place could be found in the New or the Old Testaments ... as a result of which this 'various reading' should so misrepresent a doctrine, a commandment, a promise, a prophecy, a historical fact, so that the meaning of the Holy Scriptures is quite unaffected by it, and remains undistorted ... the New and Old Testaments, which are now extant, are the same and exactly the same, as they were in the beginning when given by God.[2]

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1. 'Bei Übersetzung ins Persische diesem Passus weggelassen', MS 'Wage', p. 70.

2. MS 'Wage der Wahrheit', pp. 70-74. Pfander here called the unbelieving critics, 'die Feinde des Christenthums'.

It seems that Pfander's omission of this passage in the Persian edition, although resulting in the deliberate exclusion of any acknowledgement of critical activities, and reflecting his awareness after several years preaching to Muslims that any suspicion of uncertainty about the status of the revealed word would provoke attack, nevertheless did reflect his own certainty that textual study had not actually resulted in any evidence against the integrity of the Bible. For the distinction he made in this passage between mere clerical errors which had occurred during frequent re-translation and copying, and the deliberate taḥrīf which the Muslims were claiming, was consistently upheld by him even after the Agra debate. It seems that this was where Pfander was determined to stand, irrespective of any critical re-evaluations. He was not completely unaware, it seems, of the efforts of the critics, but was totally unsympathetic and closed to the conclusions of those German critics who by 1830 had acknowledged more substantial forms of corruption, including deliberate interpolation by believing Christians.[1]

However, the precise state of Pfander's knowledge in this area is difficult to determine. In 1847 he recommended to Āl-i Ḥasan some 'conservative' Biblical commentaries, at least one of which acknowledged 'wilful corruption' by Christians.[2] Yet in 1854 he

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1. e.g. J.D. Michaelis argued that orthodox Christians as well as heretics had 'now and then' corrupted the true reading of a passage. Among other examples Michaelis cited the verse, 1 John 5.7 which when brought forward at the Agra debate was the example of interpolation which finally left Pfander speechless. Introductory Lectures to the Sacred Books of the New Testament, Eng. translation (London, 1761).

2. T.H.Horne, An Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, 3rd ed. (London, 1822), II, p. 331.

seemed genuinely surprised to find that the Agra 'ulamā had been studying these and other more radical works, and his subsequent requests for the purchase of recent critical commentaries in England and Germany in order to examine the case more deeply for himself, add to the impression that he was in fact an out-of-touch evangelical missionary who had indeed been caught unaware by the 'ulamā's access to recent critical literature.

The other Protestant missionaries who participated in the taḥrīf controversy, Thomas Valpy French and William Kay, were Anglicans and recent graduates of Oxford University. It is usual to stress the hostility of British theologians to German biblical criticism in the early nineteenth century, even though a century earlier English Deism had influenced German biblical scholarship, and in spite of advances by British geologists which proved to be crucial in the reassessment of biblical chronology.[1] Certainly British scholars made little contribution to the early phase of textual study and criticism. Benjamin Kennicott was perhaps the most notable figure in the eighteenth century, yet his work on the Hebrew Old Testament was soon dismissed as 'feeble' by Eichhorn.[2]

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1. Among studies which stress British fear and neglect of German liberal and critical theology are, O. Chadwick, The Victorian Church (London, 1966) Part 1, 'Neology', pp. 528-530; M.A. Crowther, Church Embattled: Religious Controversy in Mid-Victorian England (Newton Abbot, 1970), chap. 2, 'The Threat from Germany', pp. 40-65; A.L. Drummond, German Protestantism since Luther (London, 1951), pp. 138-139.

2. Benjamin Kennicott (1718-1783). His main work was the Vetus Testamentum Hebraicum cum Variis Lectionibus, 2 vols (Oxford, 1776-1780). He worked for 30 years on the Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament and engaged in a written controversy with Michaelis. D.N.B. (1892) XXXI, pp. 10-12. Eichhorn, while acknowledging his initiative, scoffed at 'the feeble essay of Kennicott', in his Account of the Life and Writings of John David Michaelis, Eng. trans. (Edinburgh, 1835), p. 26.

Alexander Geddes, a Roman Catholic scholar, was ahead of his contemporaries in planning a new translation of the Bible 'from corrected texts of the original, with various readings, explanatory notes, and critical observations'.[1] He was one of the few British scholars in the late eighteenth century to show any understanding of German scholarship, and one of those whose work would later be taken up by Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh. Yet Geddes was forced by the unpopularity of his views to leave his own translation plans incomplete.[2]

After the death of Geddes there were scarcely any British theologians who were of sufficiently liberal inclination and in sufficient command of German, to keep in direct touch with advances on the Continent. Nor did translation into English succeed in keeping pace with German scholarship, although the availability of Michaelis's key works by the 1820s, and those of some of the 'mediators' such as Tholuck, indicate that the ban on German 'neology' has been exaggerated in some accounts.[3] Many publishers were unwilling to handle such works, but the Chapman Press and the

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1. Alexander Geddes (1737-1802), The Holy Bible, or the Books Accounted Sacred by Jews and Christians, Vol. 1 (London, 1792); Address to the Public, on the Publication of the first Volume of his New Translation of the Bible (London, 1793), pp. 4-6.

2. D.N.B. (1890) XXI, pp. 98-100.

3. The British Library catalogue includes the following translations of Michaelis's works: Introductory Lectures to the Sacred Books of the New Testament (London, 1761); Introduction to the New Testament, translated with additional notes by H. Marsh, 4 vols (Cambridge, 1793-1801); Commentaries on the Laws of Moses, trans. by A. Smith, 4 vols (London, 1814); The Burial and Resurrection of Jesus Christ according to the four Evangelists (London, 1827).

Edinburgh firm of T. and T. Clark undertook contracts of this nature.[1] Even the much feared Strauss finally found a translator and a publisher ten years after the crisis he had provoked in Germany.[2] Yet publications of this kind remained occasional, there were important gaps, and the process of selection was erratic. Thus the key works of Bengel and Eichhorn were not translated into English until the second half of the nineteenth century.[3]

In contrast, while German criticism remained suspect, there were frequent re-editions of a number of conservative, pre-critical commentaries, most of which had been compiled by Anglican clergymen. Some of the most popular of these, among them 'Henry and Scott' and 'D'Oyly and Mant', would be taken up by Raḥmat Allāh in confirmation of his taḥrīf charge, yet the reading public in early nineteenth century England turned to them to confirm conservative certainties on such crucial issues of the day as the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, the creation of the world in six days, and the occurrence of an universal flood.[4]

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1. Chapman's Quarterly Series was advertised as 'intended to consist of works by learned and profound thinkers, embracing the subjects of theology, philosophy, biblical criticism, and the history of opinion'. T. & T. Clark started to publish their 'Students' Cabinet Library of Useful Tracts' which included translations of Tholuck's works, in 1835.

2. The Life of Jesus, critically examined. Translated from the fourth German edition by Marian Evans (George Eliot) 3 vols (London, 1846). There had been earlier 'pirate' translations of the Leben Jesu but this was the first which was easily accessible to the English clergy.

3. Although there were abridgements of Eichhorn's Old Testament studies, his complete works did not appear in England till the late 19th century.

4. eg. A Commentary upon the Holy Bible, from Henry and Scott, published by the Religious Tract Society in 1831, opened with the statement that Genesis 'is the first book of the Pentateuch or five books of Moses, and was undoubtedly written by him.'

However even when conservatism was at full tide, there were individuals inside and outside the universities who were willing to abandon the bastions of plenary inspiration and verbal inerrancy. Among them were the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the Bishop of St. David's, Connop Thirlwall, and Thomas Arnold, headmaster of Rugby School.[1] But it was not until the late 1850s that the advocates of a more liberal attitude to the Bible can be identified as a distinct wing within the Anglican establishment. A series of crises in the early 1860s over the publication of Essays and Reviews, Darwin's Origin of Species, and the Old Testament researches of Bishop John William Colenso, finally established the precarious position of a 'Broad Church' liberal attitude to the Bible which paved the way for the eventual reception of critical assumptions in Britain by the end of the century.[2]

Among these first exponents of 'Broad Church' views a number were closely associated with Oxford University, but their open identification with critical views postdated the years when the two Agra missionaries were at Oxford. In the 1840s when French and Kay were students, unreformed Oxford was at a low ebb academically, and although it was a centre of religious revivalism, and most of its graduates were also ordinands, the university seemed particularly hostile to critical scholarship. Divided on all other issues, Tractarian and Evangelical stood together in holding German criticism at bay.[3] The atmosphere in the 1840s was, if anything,

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1. Crowther, Church Embattled, pp. 66-81.
2. ibid.
3. V.H.H. Green, Religion at Oxford and Cambridge (London, 1964), p. 308.

more unreceptive than in recent decades. Edward Pusey, who was Professor of Hebrew while French and Kay were at Oxford, was by this time hostile to the very German critics for whom in his own youth he had shown considerable admiration. While studying in Germany, he had come into contact with both Eichhorn and Schleiermacher, and had returned to England an advocate of their attitudes to the Bible. Yet Pusey soon regretted his 'youthful experiment', and 'forced to choose between desertion of the liberal camp ... and abandonment of revelation to rationalist wolves', he chose the former, remaining for the rest of his life a pillar of conservatism on textual questions.[1]

It was in Pusey's Oxford that French and Kay served their theological apprenticeships. William Kay played a very minor role in Agra compared with Pfander and French, yet he illustrates the Anglican 'conservative' stereotype in a missionary situation. His participation was a chance affair for he was on a short visit to his friend French when the 'ulamā first called at his bungalow in order to seek out Pfander. After the ensuing discussions Kay returned to Bishop's College, Calcutta, where he was principal, never again, as far as is known, to dabble in Muslim controversy. His brief participation nevertheless serves as a gauge of Anglican attitudes, for French chose to defer to Kay on that occasion because of his reputation as a Hebrew scholar under Pusey's guidance at Oxford.[2] The conservatism of Kay's replies to the 'ulamā can be

1. Edward Bouverie Pusey (1800-1882). Regius Professor of Hebrew at Oxford, associated with the Oxford Movement from 1833. His evolution from a liberal to a conservative stance on textual questions is discussed in L. Prestige, Pusey (London, 1933), p. 28. There is no recent biography. Chadwick, Victorian Church, Part 1, p. 530, supports Prestige's comments.

2. In 1842 Kay had been elected Pusey and Ellerton Hebrew Scholar.

set in the longer perspective of biblical conservatism in mid-nineteenth century England by noticing the stance he subsequently took in the critical controversies of the 1860s when the question of the Old Testament sources had finally been forced into the open. For in 1865 William Kay, who had by then returned to Oxford, published Crisis Hupfeldiana, ostensibly a reply to the German critic Hermann Hupfeld's criticism of Genesis, but also an attack on the recent publication by J.W. Colenso of his first volume of Old Testament Studies.[1] Kay reasserted at this juncture his support for the Mosaic authorship of the entire Pentateuch.[2] He demonstrated in this work that although he had travelled by a different academic and missionary route to Agra, he had remained as staunchly resistant as had Pfander to any suggestion of biblical error.

In contrast to Pfander and Kay, Thomas Valpy French, the third of the trio, stands out as an evangelical who in spite of a similar academic background to Kay's, proved with the passing of time to be increasingly receptive to mild critical conclusions. Significantly, Dr. Wazīr Khān seemed fully aware of this difference, and tried to direct his critical and historical evidence at French instead of at Pfander, in the expectation that French would more readily admit the force of the Muslim argument.[3]

French might have seemed no more likely than the other

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1. W. Kay, Crisis Hupfeldiana; being an examination of Hupfeld's Criticism on Genesis, as recently set forth in Bishop Colenso's Fifth Part. (Oxford and London, 1865). Hupfeld's Die Quellen der Genesis und die Art ihrer Zusammensetzung had been published in Berlin in 1853.

2. Crisis, introduction.

3. Chap. 4, p. 291.

missionaries to favour a liberal stance. His upbringing in a country parsonage is said to have been 'conducted on the strictest lines of the then prevailing Evangelical School'.[1] However his school years at Rugby just before Thomas Arnold's death had put him in the orbit of one of the few liberal English theologians in the 1830s. In later years French recalled that 'Rugby did more to fix my character than Oxford,' and spoke of 'having caught something of Arnold's independence'.[2] At Oxford as undergraduate and ordinand from 1843 to 1850 French sought the companionship of likeminded evangelicals and seems to have made no impression outside this circle. Later he stressed the influence of Pusey's Hebrew lectures upon him, but the views he imbibed would have been those of the 'conservative' Tractarian who by then regretted the 'liberal' excesses of his youth.[3]

It seems from the available evidence that when French left Oxford for India almost immediately after ordination he was, in spite of his brief encounter with Thomas Arnold, scarcely more initiated into the complexities of biblical criticism than were most Anglican clergymen of his day. The difference in his outlook which

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1. Comment by Rev. G.P. Pownall, a friend of French's, quoted in Birks, Life and Correspondence of Thomas Valpy French, I, p. 7.

2. T.V. French to Mrs. French, 30 Oct. 1858, in Birks, op.cit., I, pp. 11-14.

3. French called Pusey 'one of the great saints of this century, though in some points certainly to be condemned', and on his death declared his pleasure 'that I used to attend his Hebrew lectures thirty-five years ago.' Frenbh to Mrs. Gregg, 2 Jan. 1883; to Edith French, Karachi, n.d. in Birks, op.cit., II, pp. 175-176.

is certainly discernable only a few years later, suggests an open-minded readiness to explore new situations in all areas of his experience, rather than any direct acquaintance with critical works.[1] A hint of this outlook, unusual in Protestant missionaries of his generation, was captured in a seemingly naïve remark he made soon after he had settled in Agra, 'I am determined to like everything native that is not positively harmful.'[2] His more accommodating attitude to new influences and ideas was later nurtured by the catholicity of his reading which included theological and historical works by professed liberals.[3] His journey in his middle years to an acceptance of 'mild' critical conclusions is supported by a close friend's comment that French had studied the 'modern German expositors' among whom the mild critic, Franz Julius Delitzsch, 'was a great favourite with him.'[4]

After the Agra debate French was responsible for admitting to the 'ulamā that apart from many hundreds of acknowledged various readings, Christian theologians were still in a state of uncertainty about some passages in the Bible.[5] His honesty on that occasion

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1. However French's biographer, Herbert Birks, was of the opinion that it was his 'Oxford scholarship' which gave him the edge over Pfander in the taḥrīf controversy at the Agra debate, ibid., I, p.72.

2. ibid., p. 44.

3. A furlough reading list drawn up by French included works by Carlyle, Milman, Burke, Bunsen, Niebuhr and Bengel, ibid., pp. 167-168.

4. Franz Julius Delitzsch (1813-1890). Translated N.T. into Hebrew and published commentaries on Genesis, Psalms and Isaiah. It seems that Delitzsch, like French who admired him, moved gradually through his lifetime from an initial aversion to criticism, to 'large concessions to it in his last years'. E.B. 11th ed. (New York, 1910) VII, p. 964.

5. T.V. French to Raḥmat Allāh, 5 Sept. 1854, in Al-baḥṣ al-sharīf.

reflected the perplexity of an open-minded theologian, inexperienced in controversy with Muslims, who nevertheless knew himself to be in an uncomfortably equivocal position about the implications of critical scholarship for the question under discussion. His reluctance to take up Pfander's mantle throughout the rest of his long residence in India stemmed from scholarly realization that the basis of the old defence was shaky and a growing sense that the controversial approach was anyway inappropriate for opponents whose own certainties he respected. French thus stands apart from Pfander as more liberal in his own attitude to the Bible, and more tolerant of his adversaries.

THE PLACE OF WESTERN CRITICISM IN THE 'ULAMĀ'S NEW TAḤRĪF CHARGE

The new form of the *taḥrīf* charge proved difficult for the Agra missionaries to deny, precisely because the *'ulamā* were drawing their evidence from Christian sources. They extracted passages from the various critical and historical works to which they now had access, in order to find support for the occurrence of alterations, both accidental and deliberate, in the original Hebrew and Greek manuscripts as well as in later translations of the Bible. Pfander's persistent defence that even if minor clerical 'errata' could be detected, the essential doctrines of Christianity were unharmed, was under threat, for the admissions of the Christian critics seemed to reinforce the *'ulamā*'s own certainty that revelation, necessarily synonymous with the inspired word of God, must be preserved in the state of verbal perfection in which it was originally pronounced.

The munsif, Maulānā Āl-i Ḥasan, supported his charge of taḥrīf in his book, the Kitāb -i Istifsār, mainly by comparing a number of recent translations of the Bible in order to show 'various translations', findings which he set in the context of Muslim dogmatic assumptions about the nature of inspiration and the actions to be deemed worthy of true prophets.[1] But he also initiated the practice of drawing on Western critical sources by using the preface (muqaddama) to an Arabic translation of the Bible which had been published in the seventeenth century, to show that its Roman Catholic patrons and compilers had admitted corruption in the Bible. This translation had been prepared, and printed with the Latin Vulgate, by scholars working for the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide.[2] The initiative had been taken in 1625 during Pope Urban VIII's pontificate, but the new translation was not ready for publication until 1671. The translation had been supervised at first by Sergius Risius, the Maronite Archbishop of Damascus, but after his death various other scholars had taken over the task. It seems that the Arabic Bible of 1671 circulated widely and Āl-i Ḥasan indicated in the 1840's that this translation was easily available in India. In recent years there had been re-editions in 1822, 1831 and 1848.[3]

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1. Kitāb-i Istifsār, pp. 46-165.

2. Biblia Sacra Arabica Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide jussu edita, ad usum Ecclesiarum Orientalium; additis e regione Bibliis Latinis Vulgatis ... Typis ejusdem Sacrae Congregat. de Propaganda Fide, 3 vols (Rome, 1671).

3. Darlow and Moule, Historical Catalogue, II, pt. 2, pp. 66; 70-71.

Such weight did Āl-i Ḥasan attach to the contents of the muqaddama that he copied it out entire in the Istifsār, added his own Urdu translation beneath the Arabic, and commented on it in detail.[1] His discussion provides some basis for an assessment of his treatment of this, his only intensively used Western critical source. Although it is not known from whom he obtained his copy, his information about its compilation and publication is borne out in general by the data given in the British and Foreign Bible Society catalogue, except that he attributed the composition of the preface to the Pope himself, and he seemed unaware that an interval of over forty years had elapsed between the initiation and the completion of the project, by which time Urban VIII was dead.[2] The utility of the

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1. Kitāb-i Istifsār, pp. 72-84.

2. The B.F.B.S. catalogue describes this Bible as 'the editio princeps of the complete Bible in Arabic, apart from the text given in the Paris and London Polyglots. A careful revision of the version collated from various Arabic MSS., and compared with the original Hebrew and Greek, and certain Oriental versions. Edited by permission of Urban V [sic], and under the direction of the College De Propaganda Fide, by Sergius Risius (Sarkis Er-Rizzi), the Maronite Archbishop of Damascus, who had come to Rome in 1624, bringing with him many MSS. of the Arabic Scriptures. His assistant Philip Guadagnolo bore the whole burden after Risius' death in 1638, and completed the O.T. in 1647 and the N.T. in 1650. This first impression, however, was withdrawn - though a few copies survive - as it did not agree sufficiently with the Vulgate. The further revision was entrusted to Abraham Ecchellensis ... and Louis Maracci. They finished their task in 1664, but it was not till 1671 that the Bible was at last published, in three volumes containing the Arabic text and the Latin Vulgate printed side by side. The reception of this revised Arabic Bible in the East was at first unfavourable, owing to the changes introduced in the text; but the version eventually won general acceptance among Arabic-speaking Christians.' Darlow and Moule, Historical Catalogue, II, pt. 2, p. 66.

muqaddama for Āl-i Ḥasan's argument was the admission that mistakes had occurred not only in subsequent translations of the Bible, but also in the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts. In Āl-i Ḥasan's eyes this vindicated the Qur'ānic accusation of taḥrīf-i lafẓī and he attached great weight to its Papal authority. The basis of his argument was the section in the muqaddama in which the compiler had explained the existence of 'errata',

> you may find perhaps, o reader, in some examples or editions of the aforementioned books, both Latin and Arabic, as also Greek and Hebrew, something corrupt or deficient,[1] either from the carelessness of the scribes and typographers, or from the less accurate skill of the translators.[2] Indeed scarcely any book exists, however complete and perfect, in which any error, or lighter corruption[3] does not occur.[4]

As well as this general admission, it was also explained that in spite of the years of effort which had just been expended, some errors probably remained in the new Arabic translation, which the reader was advised to correct for himself.[5] It is clear that the seventeenth century translators, like Pfander two hundred years later, were confident that any errors, however numerous, were all accidental clerical mistakes which had occurred during translation and copying, and none of them was serious enough to justify the

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1. In the Latin 'Praefatio ad Lectorem', described as 'aliquid corruptum aut mancum'.

2. ibid., 'vel ex incuria Scriptorum & Typographorum, vel ex minus accurata Interpretum solertia'.

3. ibid., 'levior corruptela'.

4. Preface to the Biblia Sacra, para 3.

5. ibid., para 7.

rejection of any biblical book as 'simply and absolutely corrupt.'[1]

Āl-i Ḥasan was exultant, however, because the inclusion of the original Hebrew and Greek manuscripts in the admission supplied him with a reply to Pfander's constant taunt that his lack of knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek languages, and the 'ulamā's failure to produce for inspection an unaltered copy of the Bible, left the charge of taḥrīf unproven. Papal authority now seemed to override these objections.

The admission was rendered even more damaging in Āl-i Ḥasan's eyes by the explanation given in the muqaddama for the decision to retain some grammatically incorrect forms in the new Arabic translation. These were justified, according to the compiler, because the original prophetic revelations had also been manifested in idiomatic rather than grammatically accurate phraseology in order to conform to common usage, for,

> the Holy Spirit did not wish to confine the fullness of the divine words within the bounds of grammatical rules, rather he set forth to use the holy and celestial mysteries without the foolish ornaments of human eloquence and elegance, in plainer and easier words, that not to human strength and industry, but to divine power and wisdom, the great and worthy work of our salvation and the conversion of the whole world to the faith of Christ may be attributed.[2]

Āl-i Ḥasan scoffed at what seemed to him a blatant rationalization of errors, and indeed this explanation was sure to beg many questions when picked up by Muslims whose own concept of divine inspiration and certainty of the perfect eloquence of the Qur'ānic revelation would only cause them to regard ungrammatical intervention by the Holy Spirit

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1. ibid., para. 3.

2. ibid., para. 9.

as yet further justification for their suspicions of the integrity of the Biblical text.[1]

Pfander's replies to Āl-i Hasan's treatment of the muqaddama appeared in the Hall al-Ishkāl and in the revised Urdu edition of the Mīzān.[2] But here he could do no more than reiterate that the essential Christian doctrines were unharmed, and counter-charge that numerous comparable errors could also be found in the Qur'ān as Shī'ī sources attested. He felt that in any case Āl-i Hasan had deliberately distorted the meaning of the preface, for not content with translating the simple admission that 'a little' corruption had actually occurred, the 'ālim had implied that many more examples might yet be found. All he could do was chide Āl-i Hasan for making such statements about the original manuscripts of the Bible without first learning Hebrew and Greek. He made no further rejoinder until Rahmat Allāh's renewal of the tahrīf charge in the early 1850s.

By that date the 'ulamā were armed with evidence from the newly acquired Christian commentaries and histories. Although the list of these publications is certainly impressive, and it seems at first glance that these north Indian 'ulamā were in closer touch with Western thought in the 1850s than were most Muslim scholars in the Near and Middle East, Rahmat Allāh was familiar only at second-hand with those works which had been published in

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1. Kitāb-i Istifsār, pp.83-84.

2. Hall al-Ishkāl, pp.147-149; Mīzān al-Haqq (1850), pp.42-43.

European languages other than English. Thus his references to Benjamin Kennicott's work on the Old Testament manuscripts which had been published in Latin were obtained from T.H. Horne's Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures.[1] His apparent familiarity with the leading German critics, which caused such surprise in missionary circles in 1854, was also second-hand. His knowledge, for example, of Eichhorn's important hypotheses about both Testaments was derived from a number of other critical works in English, including the Evidences of the American Unitarian scholar Andrews Norton, who was relatively liberal in his own criticism, but nevertheless disagreed strongly with Eichhorn on several important points.[2] Similarly, the views of Michaelis which appear at many places in Raḥmat Allāh's works may be traced variously to Horne's Introduction, to the publications of other English commentators, and to works of general knowledge, such as Rees's New Cyclopaedia.[3] Other German critics cited frequently by Raḥmat Allāh from English commentaries, included J.S. Semler, J.M.A. Scholz, K.G. Bretschneider and W.M.L. de Wette.[4]

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1. e.g. Idh-Har-ul-Haqq (ed. Carletti, 1880),I,p.83; cf. Iẓhār al-Haqq (1968), I, p.456. For Kennicott's views on errors in Chronicles, Joshua and Kings, as quoted by Horne, see Introduction (1839),II,p.572.

2. e.g. Idh-Har, I,p.153-162; cf.Iẓhār, I,pp.563-571, where Raḥmat Allāh quotes and discusses Eichhorn's views on the important question of the common sources of the Gospels, on the basis of Andrews Norton's The Evidences of the Genuineness of the Gospels (Boston, 1837) I,pp.7-16.

3. e.g. Idh-Har, I,pp.139-140; cf. Iẓhār, I, pp.543-546, where Raḥmat Allāh's citation of Michaelis's views on the inspiration of the Gospels, Acts and Epistles was obtained from Vol.XIV of 'Rees's Cyclopaedia', which he described as 'a work published by Dr. Rees and several other English scholars, and carrying great authority.'

4. I'jāz; Iẓhār, passim.

Yet like Sayyid Aḥmad Khān who also cited more than sixty European authors in defence of his own views on the Bible, while drawing heavily and directly from only three or four, Raḥmat Allāh too had studied in detail only a handful of such publications, all of them in English.[1]

It is significant too, that although the missionaries reported that the 'ulamā took copies of the Leben Jesu of D.F. Strauss to the Agra debate, there were no direct references to Strauss on that occasion, nor did Raḥmat Allāh do more than list his book in the 'I'jāz-i 'Īswī as the work of a mulḥid or unbeliever.[2] Yet the edition they had procured was the English translation by George Eliot which had been published in London in 1846, and correspondence between Pfander and Wazīr Khān shortly after the debate establishes that the doctor had read it sufficiently thoroughly by then to be ready to embark on a further dispute about the Gospels which would centre on Strauss's views.[3] Pfander tried to refuse this challenge on the ground

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1. cf. R.G. Schaefer, 'Studies in Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan's use of some Christian writers in his Biblical Commentary', unpubl. M.A. thesis, Hartford Seminary Foundation, Connecticut, 1966.

2. An observer at the Agra debate, the Rev. T.G. Clark, commented, 'But what piles of books are these on the table before them? Horne, Michaelis, Strauss, and other authors of England and Germany.' Home and Foreign Record of the Free Church of Scotland (Oct. 1854) p.66; I'jāz-i 'Īswī (Agra, 1853) p.7.

3. Wazīr Khān to Pfander, Agra, 1 June 1854, in Dusrā ḥiṣṣa mubāḥaṣa-i mazhabī kā (Agra, 1271 A.H.) pp.15-18.

that Strauss would be an enemy of Islam as much as of Christianity, but the incident reinforces the impression that it was the medical doctor, not the 'ālim, who was actually in direct touch with radical criticism. Wazīr Khān informed Pfander on that occasion that he had studied the works of Paine, Voltaire, Spinoza and Bolingbroke, and that among recent Western publications on Islam he had read the 'lives' of Muhammad by Sprenger and Washington Irving.[1] In contrast, Raḥmat Allāh had all along expressed some reluctance to press the views of the mulḥids, ostensibly because of their offensiveness to all revealed religion, but it seems likely that accessibility and language difficulties also limited his own choice of critics more than he cared to admit. Thus his treatment of the more conservative sources on which, for a variety of reasons he drew most heavily, should be at the centre of any evaluation of his methods. His use of histories and other works of general knowledge, and his initiative in invoking Catholic testimony against alleged Protestant corruption will also be considered.

The missionaries criticized the 'ulamā on the main ground that they were ransacking commentaries which upheld, overall, the authenticity of the Bible, in order to extract, out of context, phrases which seemed to support the occurrence of taḥrīf.

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1. Wazīr Khān to Pfander, 20 May 1854, in Dusrā Hissa, pp.5-6. Sprenger, The Life of Mohammad (Allahabad, 1851); Washington Irving, Life of Mohammed (London, 1850).

A missionary account of the Agra debate captured their sense of grievance at this procedure,

> ...these Mahommedan doctors, having got a hint of some awfully damaging matter, as was suggested, to be found in the works of such authorities as Horne and others, went a-fishing in these dark waters, and brought up, for our utter confusion, in their confident calculations, the confession of "various readings". This was the heel of Achilles, that had failed to get dipped in the Styx, and these archers longed to draw their bow upon it. Alas! day after day, and night after night, by the toil of the lamp, one among them, the sub-assistant surgeon already mentioned, a shallow but imposing man, laboured to misunderstand what Horne says, ransacked every book within his reach from which the admission of "various readings" might be plausibly construed into the announcement of irremediable corruption; and, placing the results of his researches in the possession of the molwi, or Mahommedan teacher, a man of smooth and not unpleasing tongue, he was now in expectation of finally overwhelming the Christian cause.[1]

If his missionary opponents at the time were scornful of these methods, a recent evaluation of Sayyid Aḥmad Khān's study of the Bible has suggested that neither Sayyid Aḥmad nor Raḥmat Allāh had an inside understanding of the methods of biblical research which were being employed by European scholars by that time.[2] Certainly Raḥmat Allāh had never made any secret of the fact that he was concerned only to extract passages which seemed to support the taḥrīf charge, for from a Muslim perspective proof of any alteration, however slight, and whether 'wilful' or accidental, must undermine the

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1. Rev. T.G. Clark, in Home and Foreign Record of the Free Church of Scotland (Oct. 1854) pp.65-66.

2. Troll, op. cit., p.85.

authenticity of any claim to inspiration. He was therefore impervious to the missionaries' insistent reminder that the commentators who acknowledged 'wilful corruption', also distinguished between a relatively small number of 'various readings', none of which harmed essential doctrines, and the much larger number of 'errata' caused by mistakes in transcription and translation which could easily be rectified. Thus although he quoted in detail Horne's definitions, which in turn were dependent on Michaelis, Raḥmat Allāh dismissed their distinctions, asserting that from the Muslim point of view all alterations, however caused, and in whatever form, belonged to the category of corrupted passages,

> we call it taḥrīf of those books, whether the Christian people say that it occurred intentionally through the wickedness of dishonest people, or whether, in respect of the loss of continuity of words it occurred through scribes' mistakes, or as a result of the conjectures of the people doing the corrections, because in our definition there is a common meaning for all kinds of literal taḥrīf whether it occurred intentionally or unintentionally.[1]

The jubilation of the Muslim observers at the Agra debate when Pfander admitted that one passage of the New Testament had been interpolated, should be understood in the context of this definition of taḥrīf which Raḥmat Allāh had already published in his I'jāz-i Īswī.[2]

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1. I'jāz-i Īswī (1853) pp.3-4.

2. ibid; al-bahs al -sharīf, p.31. cf.Chap.4, pp.284-285.

Unshakeable in his adherence to this definition, he was quite unapologetic about his methods of selective quotation from the Western commentaries, and his performance as a biblical scholar can only be assessed within the narrow limits imposed by his own stated objectives and criteria, and in comparison with the tentative efforts of his predecessors.

In his published works Raḥmat Allāh invited his readers to check his sources, and for the most part he supplied them with the bibliographical references which would make this possible, so that 'if anyone was to doubt the authenticity of my citations, he has only to check them in the same books from which they are taken.'[1] He warned, however, that difficulties in rendering English quotations into Urdu had sometimes necessitated paraphrasing rather than exact quotation.[2] P.V. Carletti, who subsequently edited a French translation of the Iẓhār al- Ḥaqq, commented on his usually high level of accuracy in quotation, although he did detect a few lapses, some certainly accidental and some which appear to have been deliberate.[3]

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1. Idh-Har, I, pp. lxxxviii-ix; cf. Iẓhār, I, p.230. In the I'jāz he listed the sources he had used, with dates and places of publication, on pp.4-6.

2. I'jāz, p.4.

3. Idh-Har, I, p.257, note 1.

Rahmat Allāh's usage of T.H. Horne's, An Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures offers fullest scope for evaluating his methods, for, like Sayyid Aḥmad Khān, who later cited Horne in support of the opposite conclusion that the Bible had been subjected not to taḥrīf-i lafẓī but only to taḥrīf-i ma'nawī, he drew on it more frequently than on any other commentary. Horne is normally classified with the 'conservative' Anglican commentators of the early nineteenth century.[1] His Introduction was his most well-known work, but its reputation seemed to rest less on any originality, than on its reasuring stance on most of the critical questions of the day. After first publication in 1818 it quickly established a place, along with Paley's Evidences, as required reading in the English universities.[2] This reputation explains Pfander's readiness in 1847 to recommend the Introduction to the 'ulamā, even though there is reason to think that he may not have read it himself at that date. Examination of the four volumes of Horne's original work,

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1. Thomas Hartwell Horne (1780-1862). Educated at Christ's Hospital and St. John's College, Cambridge. Librarian in the Department of Printed Books at the British Museum, after periods as a barrister's clerk, a farmer and a London curate. Apart from his Introduction, his Complete Grazier (London, 1805) also drew attention. D.N.B. (1891) XXVII, p.364; S.A. Cheyne, Reminiscences, Personal and Biographical of Thomas Hartwell Horne (London, 1862); Schaefer, op.cit.

2. First published in 4 vols in 1818. New editions in 1821, 1822, 1823, 1825, 1828, 1839, 1846, 1856, 1860, and 1869, after which interest lapsed because of advances in the reception of biblical scholarship in Britain. Horne had made considerable modifications and corrections in each new edition.

and of the changes he made in later editions, shows why, once they were aware of its existence, the 'ulamā seized upon the Introduction and quoted from it extensively. For although Horne continually asserted the authenticity of the Bible, he nevertheless admitted a number of cases of 'wilful corruption' by orthodox Christians, and although his own final conclusions were eminently conservative, he had in the course of his study quoted extensively from a wide range of the pioneering and radical German critics before coming down on the side of caution.

Apart from using Horne to familiarize himself with the views of the German scholars, Raḥmat Allāh took up in detail Horne's own admissions of corruption which were contained in the chapter, 'On the various readings occurring in the Old and New Testaments.'[1] A key indictment which he adopted was Horne's statement that

> some corruptions have been designedly made by those who are termed orthodox, and have subsequently been preferred when so made, in order to favour some received opinion, or to preclude an objection against it.[2]

There was some ambiguity in Horne's stance on 'various readings', for although, like Pfander, he continually asserted that such

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1. Introduction (1822) II, pp.322-356.

2. ibid., p.331. Examples of corruptions of this kind given by Horne were Mark 13.22; Luke 1.35; Luke 22.43; 1 Cor. 15.5; Matt. 1.18.

corruptions had not affected any essential doctrine and were therefore unimportant, the attention he nevertheless paid to 'wilful corruption' as a significant cause of various readings might certainly give the impression that he considered that the perpetrators were malicious, and that the effects were more than trivial.[1] However, in an effort to avoid any appearance of inconsistency, Horne felt it necessary to add a post-script to his discussion, reminding the reader that the various readings, including those caused by 'wilful corruption', were nevertheless harmless.[2] But such explanations only added to the impression of special pleading, and formed in themselves further grist to Raḥmat Allāh's mill, for he exulted to have discovered, in a work respected by his opponents, the crucial admission he sought. In this instance, Horne's own statements, and some inconsistency between the various volumes and editions, seem to have left his work open to the interpretation which Raḥmat Allāh chose to put upon it.

In most cases Raḥmat Allāh quoted accurately from Horne and from other commentaries, taking care to indicate where authors he had quoted at second-hand differed in viewpoint from

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1. ibid., pp.331-332.

2. 'In page 126 of the preceding volume, and also in page 322 of the present volume, it has been stated, that the hundred and fifty thousand various readings, which Griesbach's critical edition of the New Testament in said to contain, in no degree whatever effect the credit and integrity of the sacred text; and also that the very worst manuscript extant would not pervert one article of the Christian faith, or destroy one moral precept; these variations being mostly of a minute and sometimes of a trifling nature.' ibid., p.355, note.

the commentator whose work he was actually using. In this spirit he distinguished between the views of Eichhorn, and those of Norton who had quoted Eichhorn at length only to criticize his conclusions on the New Testament.[1] Occasionally however, his habit of extracting views which seemed to support his own argument irrespective of any wider context of discussion, led to misrepresentation. Thus in discussing critical opinions on particular passages in the Gospels, he suggested that the weight of scholarly opinion was against the authenticity of the story of 'the woman taken in adultery' as recounted in St John's Gospel. However, in citing Horne to support this view, he completely omitted the passage in which Horne, after evaluating opinions on both sides, had concluded that on balance 'the evidence is in favour of the genuineness of the passage in question.'[2] Raḥmat Allāh's truncated quotation in the Iẓhār suggested quite misleadingly, that Horne held the opposite opinion.[3]

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1. Idh-Har, I, p.160 (cf. Iẓhār, I,pp.568-569) where Rahmat Allāh commented, 'Norton, writing to defend the authenticity of the Gospels, tried to refute the opinions of Eichhorn, after having cited them; with what success he did it, those who have read his work will know.'

2. Horne had commented on John 7.53-8.11, before coming down in favour of the passage, 'Its authenticity has been questioned by Erasmus, Calvin, Beza, Grotius, Le Clerc, Wetstein, Semler, Schulze, Morus, Haenlein, Paulus, Schmidt, and various other writers... and its genuineness has been advocated by Drs. Mill and Whitby, Bp. Middleton, Heumann, Michaelis, Storr, Langius, Dettmers, and especially by Staeudlin.' Introduction (1822) IV, p.310, note 1.

3. Rahmat Allāh omitted the list of scholars who favoured the passage and ignored Horne's comment, '...it is found in the greater part of the manuscripts ... that are extant, though with great diversity of readings.' Introduction (1822), p.310, note 1; Idh-Har, I, p.245; cf. Iẓhār, II, pp. 78-79.

Another distortion of meaning occurred when Raḥmat Allāh quoted from an article on 'Inspiration' in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, which had included a cautious comment to the effect that certain scholars had queried the notion of 'plenary inspiration'. Raḥmat Allāh conveyed this to his readers as evidence that Christian scholars do not uphold the belief, whereas the overall tendency of the article had been, in spite of the caveat, in support of the opposite conclusion. In this case he had isolated and used only the sentences which seemed to supply the evidence he required without any acknowledgement of the tendency of the rest of the article, and in following his usual selective policy to an extreme, he had seriously distorted the views expressed in his source.[1] Carletti later identified a number of passages where Raḥmat Allāh had seemingly misquoted or misunderstood his sources, but it is as difficult in many cases to distinguish 'wilful' from accidental error in the 'ulamā's own writings as it was in the biblical manuscripts they were attacking. The problem

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1. The article on 'Inspiration' took a conservative stance, maintaining that traditional 'evidences' of the truth of Christianity establish the 'superintendent inspiration' of the evangelists and apostles by God. Although authorities who had questioned this view were named, the conclusion favoured the upholding of 'plenary inspiration' while decisive evidence remained lacking. E.B. 6th ed. (Edinburgh, 1823) XI, p.274. Idh-Har, I, p.139; cf. Iẓhār, I, pp.542-543.

is compounded by mistakes which were made in identifying the particular editions of commentaries and histories which the participants had used. Carletti, for instance, found Raḥmat Allāh guilty of misquoting passages of Horne, when in fact the editor was himself at fault in not procuring the 1822 edition of Horne's Introduction on which the ālim had based his quotations.[1] In an earlier stage of the controversies Āl-i Ḥasan and Pfander had found themselves unnecessarily at odds because they were arguing about different editions of the same European history.[2] In this case Pfander thought that Āl-i Ḥasan was distorting his Western sources when the fault actually lay in an inaccuracy in the source itself.

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1. Between 1822 and 1839 Horne had changed his verdict completely on the authenticity of certain details concerning the account of Elijah and the ravens, at the earlier date expressing scepticism at the possibility of unclean birds feeding the prophet, but affirming 17 years later that God's intervention might certainly render this possible. cf. Introduction (1822) I, p.639; (1839), II, pt.1. p.629. Raḥmat Allāh cited the earlier edition correctly. Idh-Hār, I, pp.99-100, note 1.

2. Pfander had objected to Āl-i Ḥasan's citation of James Tytler's 'History' to support his assertion that Islamic rule had spread over most of Europe in the early phase of Arab expansion. The 1778 edition of Tytler's work does refer to the reduction of 'most parts of Spain, France, Italy, and the Islands in the Mediterranean' by Islam, but it seems probable that Pfander had checked in the 1782 edition which reversed the emphasis, stressing instead the repulsion of Islam from Europe. cf. Kitāb-i Istifsār, pp.231-232; Ḥall al-Ishkāl pp.102-3; Tytler's revision of Mr Salmon's New Universal Geographical Grammar... and the History of all the Different Kingdoms of the World (Edinburgh, 1788) p.534 (1782) p.566.

Indeed, the 'ulamā of this period began to draw increasingly on ecclesiastical and secular histories, as well as on commentaries to seek evidence for their claims about the historical circumstances in which corruption was alleged to have taken place. Whereas Āl-i Ḥasan had been content to refute Pfander's arguments for the existence of manuscripts dating from the first centuries after Christ on the ground that their physical survival was impossible,[1] Raḥmat Allāh, benefiting from his reading of Horne, Lardner and other commentators, moved the focus of his attack to the doubts he knew to exist among reputable European theologians and historians about the dating of the Codex Vaticanus and the Codex Alexandrinus.[2] It thus suited his argument to accept Michaelis's opinion, which he had encountered in Horne's Introduction, that the Codex Alexandrinus could not have been written earlier than the eighth century, a view later found to be erroneous, but seemingly effective for the moment for undermining Pfander's crucial argument that the existence of these codices proved that corruption had not occurred in the pre-Muḥammadan era.[3]

The ecclesiastical histories which were drawn on to supplement the charges, ranged from the fourth century Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius, to an English translation of Mosheim's Institutes. Raḥmat Allāh also referred frequently to William Muir's

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1. Istifsār, p.449
2. Idh-Har, I,pp.314-321.
3. ibid., pp.319-320.

recently published Masīḥī Kalīsā kī tārīkh, and it seems that the appearance of this ecclesiastical history in the Urdu language at the height of the controversies as a reflection of Muir's wish to assist the missionary cause, had the opposite effect to that intended. For Raḥmat Allāh in his books, and Wazīr Khān during both debates, were enabled to display detailed knowledge of the dates and decisions of the great Church councils, and to emphasize disagreements over time, and between Christian sects, about the canon of the Bible.[1] They laid stress, in particular, on disagreements among Christians about the apocryphal books, the existence of which undermined, in their eyes, any missionary argument about inspiration. If certain books had been excluded from, but later admitted to the canon, and if Catholics and Protestants still disagreed on the canon, then the rest of the books of the Bible were suspect in their eyes.[2] From the same sources information

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1. Published Agra, 1848. Although no copy of this book has been found, Rahmat Allāh's lengthy quotations from it give some indication of the contents. In the Ibtāl al-Taslīs he referred several times to Muir's Tarīkh, quoting comments from Pliny and Tacitus on the early Christians (pp.5-6) and a description of the Greek and Roman world before the birth of Christ (p.34). In the Izhār the view that Origen had said it was legitimate to forge books and attribute them to the apostles, was attributed to book 3 of Muir's Tārīkh.
   Idh-Har, I, cxxvii.

2. e.g. Rahmat Allāh's references to the Church Councils in, I'jāz, pp.21-23; Idh-Har, I, pp.5-6; 213-215.

about the Fathers of the early Church, and about heresies in the first centuries of the Christian era, enabled these 'ulamā to retaliate to Pfander's argument in the Mīzān that all historical sources of this kind confirmed the authenticity of the Bible, by asserting instead that both the Patristic and the pagan literature of the period contained testimony to corruption.[1] In pressing historical objections of this kind against Pfander's 'historical' defence, Dr Wazīr Khān took a leading part, showing in particular, a close knowledge of the details of conciliar history.[2] However, although the 'ulamā made effective use of their newly acquired historical data, it will be shown that their method of historical reasoning was still based firmly on traditional Muslim criteria of evidence.

The final category of Western source for consideration is the Roman Catholic literature from which Raḥmat Allāh drew allegations of corruption of the scriptures by Protestants, evidence of disagreements between the two sects on the status of various biblical books, as well as accounts which exposed Protestant leaders to ridicule. The scarcely veiled hostility which existed between the Catholic and Protestant communities of Agra had probably already brought some of

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1. e.g. Rahmat Allāh's discussion of the significance of the testimony of Clement and Ignatius, which he based on references from various commentaries and histories. Idh-Har, I, pp.172-181.

2. At the January debate with French and Kay, Wazīr Khān used his knowledge of conciliar history to refute the missionary argument that all the Christian churches were in agreement on the canon of the New Testament. Taqrīr-i dil pazīr,pp.12-13.

these matters to the 'ulamā's attention, but it is likely that access to the histories and other works of general knowledge had reinforced their awareness of the post-Reformation divisions within Christianity. Raḥmat Allāh made particular use of polemical books and journal articles by Catholic authors from which he could adopt direct accusations of corruption. Among these, Thomas Ward, in his Errata of the Protestant Bible, had made it his declared object to prove Protestant corruption of the scriptures. In this case there could be no question of misrepresentation, for the 'ulamā need do no more than extract his arguments and examples in support of their own similar accusations, for in Ward's view,

> Our quarrel with Protestant Translators is not for trivial or slight faults, or for such verbal differences, or little escapes as may happen through the scarcely unavoidable mistakes of the Transcribers or Printers: No! we accuse them of wilfully corrupting and falsifying the Sacred Text, against points of Faith and Morals.[1]

In this category Raḥmat Allāh also referred to a Catholic work which had been translated into Urdu as the Mir'āt al ṣadīq (Mirror of Truth), by one Thomas Inglis, from which he quoted satirical accounts of alleged attempts by Luther and Calvin to perform miracles.[2]

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1. Thomas Ward (1652-1708), a Presbyterian farmer's son who, after conversion to Catholicism, served in the Papal guard. He wrote several polemical works against Protestantism, including Errata of the Protestant Bible: or the Truth of the English Translations Examined (London, 1688). The quotation is from a revised Dublin edition of 1807, p.25. D.N.B. xx, p.797. Raḥmat Allāh used Ward's Errata to show, among other discrepancies, that Luther disputed the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. (I'jāz, p.10), and that Zwingli and other important Protestants disputed the inspiration of Paul's epistles, Idh-Har,I, p.151. Although he did not give full references to the Errata, his comments were certainly in the spirit of Ward's own polemic.

2. According to Raḥmat Allāh, published in Urdu in 1815. Idh-Har, I, pp. 120-121. Although he gave page references to this edition, the translation has not been traced.

In similar vein he drew on recent issues of the Catholic Herald to demonstrate the bitterness of the relationship between the Papacy and Luther at the time of the Reformation, extracting passages so abusive in tone that they could only have the effect of setting the leaders of both parties in an equally unflattering light.[1] Historical accounts which emphasized textual disagreements were reinforced by observation of the local missionary scene, for Raḥmat Allāh also referred in the Iẓhār to the recent publication in Agra of an account of a munāẓara between a Catholic and a Protestant missionary which had centred on the doubtful status of some passages in the book of Isaiah.[2] Yet if sectarian recrimination was a new feature of the 'ulamā's counter-offensive in the 1850s, Pfander had already led the way by referring to Shī'ī accusations against the Sunnīs for alleged alteration of the text of the Qur'ān.[3]

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1. e.g. From an issue of the Bengal Catholic Herald for 1845 Rahmat Allāh quoted the following extract from Vol. 7, fol. 451 of Luther's Works: 'The Pope, and his Cardinals, are a company of desperate, profligate rogues and rascals, traitors, liars and the very sink of the wickedest men living - They are full of the worst of devils that are to be found in hell: full, full I say; and so full, that they do nothing but spit, and blow devils through their nostrils.' cf. Catholic Herald, IX, 20 (15 Nov. 1845) p.278; I'jāz, p.30.

2. A polemical work apparently published in Agra in 1852, but not identified. For reference, Idh-Har, I, p.24.

3. Mīzān (1850) p.24.

ISLAMIC ASSUMPTIONS IN THE TAHRIF CONTROVERSIES OF THE 1850s

Examination of the new Western ingredient in the controversies has shown that in spite of the 'ulama's seeming familiarity with a wide range of recent publications, their reading and selection was determined mainly by their polemical preoccupations. It remains to be seen to what extent they contined to argue, whether explicitly or implicitly, from Islamic assumptions. In their treatises, in comparison with those of earlier date, there was certainly less direct reference to the Qur'anic suras which were traditionally held to testify to tahrif.[1] Nor was there much recourse to hadis collections or tafsir for support for their arguments.[2] Yet if biblical and European testimony almost entirely replaced Qur'anic testimony, certain key assumptions which underlay the rest of the arguments, were essentially Islamic. Among these, two may be singled out as particularly influential. First, was the 'ulama's adherence to a view of inspiration which caused them to reject several books of the Bible as inherently unauthentic, with scant attention to the missionaries' defence. Second was their stipulation that any alleged historical occurrence must be verified by tracing its isnad, or'chain of authorities', before its account could be accepted.

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1. cf. above, pp.363-364. During the Agra phase of the controversies the 'ulama cited the Qur'an only in reply to Pfander's counter-argument that the Qur'an contained reminders of the authenticity of the Bible. e.g. MS. 'Wage' pp.48-49; Kitab-i Istifsar, pp.442-448.

2. However among other authorities for the view that the authenticity of the biblical books should be decided in the light of the Qur'an, Rahmat Allah cited the tafsir of Mazhari, a hadis collected by al-Bukhari, and a work of Fakhr al-Din Razi. Idh-Har, I, pp. 164-169; cf. Izhar, I, pp.572-82.

The difference between the missionary and 'ulamā understanding of 'inspiration' was crucial to their failure to come to any real understanding on textual questions. Although many Protestants continued throughout the nineteenth century to insist that every word of the Bible was the directly revealed word of God, many of the Anglican commentators and critics, including some who were conservative on other questions, distinguished between passages which they believed had been revealed under full inspiration, and others which, although attributable to prophets and holy men, were not inspired.[1] The 'ulamā, on the other hand, demanded that any book with a claim to scriptural status, must be shown to contain only the directly revealed word of God, transmitted to mankind through a prophet designated for this purpose who must be free from sin.[2] Certainly, during the early phase of controversy in north India, when the taḥrīf charge was not yet central to the argument, the 'ulamā participants had nevertheless made it clear that they took for granted that the Bible in its present form could not be regarded as an inspired

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1. J.W. Burgon was unusual by the mid 19th century in holding that 'every Book of it, every Chapter of it, every Verse of it, every word of it, every syllable of it, (where are we to stop?) every letter of it, is the direct utterance of the Most High.' Inspiration and Interpretation: Seven Sermons preached before the University of Oxford (Oxford and London, 1861). In contrast, T.H. Horne held that the authors of the biblical books, 'sometimes wrote only as faithful historians, and at other times as prophets under the influence of divine inspiration'. Introduction, (1822), I, p.131.

2. Muslims believe that every syllable of the Qur'ān is God's word, revealed to the prophet Muḥammad. Whereas the term waḥī (revelation) is used of messages communicated from God to mankind through a prophet, and the term ilhām, of messages revealed to an individual, the 'ulamā usually used the latter when denying the 'inspiration' of various books in the Bible. e.g. 'Bā'ibal ilhāmī nahīn hai', a chapter heading in Iẓhār, I, pp.537-612. For definitions of 'inspiration' see 'Ilhām', S.E.I., p.162; 'Wahy', S.E.I., 622-624; D.I., article 'Inspiration', pp. 213-214.

and divinely revealed book.[1]

In the mid 1840s Maulānā Āl-i Ḥasan showed that his revival of the taḥrīf charge was to be firmly based on these traditional Muslim criteria. He stressed, on the one hand, the 'mixing' in the Pentateuch of the words of ordinary men who were not prophets, and whose identity he now knew to be disputed, with the 'word of God', and on the other, pointed out biblical accounts which implied the sinfulness of some of the prophets. On both counts he concluded that many passages in the extant copies of the Pentateuch could not be inspired.[2] It seems that his comments reflected his own painstaking study of the Arabic, Persian and Urdu translations of the Bible, for apart from the muqaddama to the 1671 Arabic Bible, he acknowledged no direct assistance from the biblical critics. The Islamic framework of his thinking was illustrated by the analogies he drew between the status of the Pentateuch as a tafsīr, or mere 'commentary' which had been badly translated from Arabic into Urdu, and the Gospel accounts as malfuẓāt or mere 'sayings' of holy, but nevertheless, uninspired men.[3]

When, shortly afterwards, Raḥmat Allāh brought a battery of Western critics to support his own charge, the difference between the Christian and Muslim understanding of 'inspiration' was sharpened.

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1. Above, p.367.

2. In the 5th 'question' of the Kitāb-i Istifsār, Āl-i Hasan disputed the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, citing passages in which Moses was referred to in the 3rd person, and events which must have occurred after Moses' own death (pp.46-53). In the 7th 'question' he argued that passages recounting the disobedience and covetousness of prophets, were of necessity uninspired and must be interpolations (pp.56-58; also 64-66).

3. Istifsār, p.14.

For in emphasizing the Muslim standpoint in a chapter entitled, 'the Inspiration of the Scriptures', he moved into his opponents' camp only to show that the current Protestant explanations of inspiration were mistaken, before reiterating the Muslim requirement that any divinely revealed book must be synonymous with the directly revealed word of God as transmitted through inspired and sinless prophets. Under his scrutiny the Protestant categories of special and particular inspiration became rationalizations of inconvenient textual problems. He quoted from Horne, Paley, Norton, Watson and other Protestant publications to show that although these authorities differed in the exact distinctions they drew between 'inspired' and 'uninspired' passages, they none of them adhered to 'plenary inspiration'.[1] Among his citations was a recommendation from William Paley's much-read Evidences that,

> ...in reading the apostolic writings, we distinguish between their doctrines and their arguments. Their doctrines came to them by revelation properly so called, yet in propounding those doctrines in their writings or discourses, they were wont to illustrate, support, and enforce them, by such analogies, arguments, and considerations, as their own thoughts suggested.[2]

Pfander, too, in spite of his persistent denial of changes in the text, conceded that certain passages of scripture had not been written under direct inspiration.[3] Raḥmat Allāh's scorn for such views reflected his own adherence to the Muslim definition of a divinely

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1. Idh-Har, I, pp.135-153; Izhār, I, pp.538-562. However it has been shown above, p.409, that Raḥmat Allāh misinterpreted one of his Western sources on 'inspiration'.

2. W. Paley, A View of the Evidences of Christianity, 3 parts, (Cambridge and London, 1850) III, ch.2 'Erroneous Opinions imputed to the Apostles', pp. 259-261; cf. Idh-Har, I, p.149; Iẓhār, I, pp.557-558.

3. He explained to Āl-i Ḥasan that Christians did not believe that every statement in the Taurāt and Injīl must be the 'saying of God' or the 'saying of a prophet'. Ḥall al Ishkāl, p.125.

revealed book, and was given full vent in the remarks with which he concluded his survey,

> Such are the opinions among the most reputable of the Protestant scholars, as you see, all agree that all the words of the New Testament are not divinely inspired, and that the Apostles have been subject to error.[1]

This lack of certainty about the inspiration of the Bible reinforced his conviction that the extant books of scripture were not the original Pentateuch and the Gospels which the Qur'ān enjoined Muslims to revere, and it was therefore not incumbent to recognize any authority in them. The only recourse for a Muslim when faced by the unreliability of the Bible was to adhere to the Qur'ān, for,

> The only rule which we can follow in this matter is to receive all the accounts which are confimed by our Book, and to reject all which are contrary to it.[2]

Adherence to this rule caused Raḥmat Allāh to reject, like many Muslims before him, most of the New Testament. For although his acquaintance with critical hypotheses, such as the derivation of the extant Gospels from a common, but now lost, source, reinforced his argument, the starting point was Muslim certainty about lack of inspiration rather than Western uncertainty about source origins. In this context his dismissal of the epistles of Paul as unworthy of any consideration at all,

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1. Idh-Har, I, pp.152-153; cf. Iẓhār, I, p. 562.

2. Idh-Har, I, p.164; cf. Iẓhār, I, p.574.

demonstrates the significance in his outlook of traditional Muslim assumptions about the 'uninspired' books of the Bible, for in Raḥmat Allāh's view,

> Paul is merely one of the false apostles who made their appearance during the first generation... his words therefore have no more worth in our eyes than a straw.[1]

Thus notwithstanding the attention which both Āl-i Ḥasan and Raḥmat Allāh had paid to evaluating many hundreds of 'various readings' and disputed passages in the Bible, their entire enquiry may be seen to begin and end with the final decision of the Delhi fatwā of 1854 which reiterated that the degree of inspiration and authority to be attributed to the various books of the Bible must be tested solely against the divinely inspired sūras of the Qur'an.[2]

The missionary attempts to support their counter-claims by historical evidence from the codices and from Patristic and pagan literature, likewise proved unacceptable to 'ulamā who asserted categorically that only Islamic methods of testing historical evidence were valid. They asserted in the Istifsār, the I'jāz and the Iẓhār that, irrespective of any other argument, the evidence for the authenticity of the various books of the Bible was inadequate because it lacked a reliable 'chain of witnesses' certifying the accounts in question.[3]

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1. Idh-Har, I, p.163; cf. Iẓhār, I, p.573. Carletti translated Raḥmat Allāh's rejection of Paul as, 'ses paroles n'ont, donc, point pour nous plus de valeur qu'une paille'. In the Urdu translation this worthlessness was expressed as '... ham us kī bāt ek kauṛī men kharīdne ke liye taiyār nahīn hain.'

2. Amīn al-Dīn's tract, in al-baḥṣ al-sharīf, pt.56; cf. chap.4,p.293.

3. Isnād (sanad), a chain of authorities going right back to the source of a tradition. J. Robson, article 'Hadīth', in E.I.[2], III, pp.23-28.

In the 11th and 12th 'questions' of the Istifsār Āl-i Hasan criticized the lack of any isnād for both the Old and New Testament accounts.[1] In rejecting the historical evidence which Pfander had brought forward in the Mīzān, he re-asserted that the Muslim allegation of tahrīf would not be lifted unless the missionaries provided a complete isnād.[2]

Rahmat Allāh repeated the demand, and directed a chapter of the Izhār to showing the importance of the isnād.[3] It was now clear that this traditional Islamic method of verification, which had evolved with the study of hadīs, would be upheld by the 'ulamā even when Western sources and methods of historical investigation were being adopted for the first time. Indeed the two methods of argument proved to be complementary when the Agra 'ulamā employed their newly acquired knowledge of early church history to point out gaps in the isnād, notably by showing that uncertainty remained about the dates traditionally assigned to the works of key first century witnesses, such as Clement and Ignatius, to whose testimony Pfander had attached particular significance.[4]

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1. Istifsār, pp.148-165.

2. ibid., p.427.

3. Rahmat Allāh gave a full explanation of the meaning of isnād: '... so and so, a man deserving of full trust, received from so and so, also an honourable man, [the information] that such and such a book is the work of such and such apostle or prophet, and thus going on until you get back by a chain of witnesses worthy of trust, to the person who has actually witnessed the event, who has observed the writing of the work, or has read it himself in the presence of the author, or has heard the author affirm or acknowledge that the book is his work.' Idh-Har, I, p.172; cf. Izhār, I, p.586-587.

4. Idh-Har, I, pp.173-182; cf. Izhār, I, pp.588-601.

The emphasis which Dr Wazīr Khān chose to place at both debates on genealogical inconsistencies in the Bible as a strong proof of the occurrence of taḥrīf also reflected the 'ulama's preoccupation with isnād verification.[1] In later publications Raḥmat Allāh referred to the Agra debate to remind his readers that when faced by requests on that occasion to provide a satisfactory isnād, the missionaries had in the end admitted, as the 'ulamā claimed, that the chain of authorities had indeed been broken.[2] Pfander and French were confident that the historical evidence they had produced satisfied scholarly tests, but Raḥmat Allāh would continue to insist that a crucial proof of taḥrīf lay in the Muslim claim that 'the authenticity of the holy scriptures is not based on an uninterrupted chain of authentic traditions.'[3]

CENTRALITY OF THE TAḤRĪF CHARGE TO THE CONTROVERSIES

The era of controversy between the missionaries and the 'ulamā came to a height and then broke up over the taḥrīf issue. Examination of the 'ulamā's stance has shown the influence of traditional dogmatic attitudes, and a refusal to look beyond the immediate polemical advantage to be drawn from Western criticism. On the missionary side too, the main participant, Pfander, had fixed his attitude to the Bible

1. At both the January and April debates Wazīr Khān emphasized errors in Christ's genealogy as recorded in Matthew 1.17, and in subsequent correspondence with Pfander used D.F. Strauss in support of his criticism. Taqrīr-i dil pazīr, pp. 16-18; Al-baḥs al-sharīf, p.33.

2. Idh-Har, I, p.172; cf. Iẓhar, I, p.587.

3. Idh-Har, I, p.8; cf. Iẓhār, I, p.323.

years before the debate, and in spite of previous encounters on this subject with Āl-i Hasan, he seemed equally inflexible. It is not surprising, therefore, that the outcome was bitter, that both sides claimed misrepresentation in the written accounts of the controversy, and that the subsequent detailed publications on the question of tahrīf did not move beyond lengthy catalogues of alleged alterations, supported by re-assertions of the same arguments. While, on the one hand, the 1867 edition of the Mīzān al-Ḥaqq showed Pfander's unreadiness to pay heed to advances in biblical scholarship which had occurred in the intervening years, on the other, Rahmat Allāh's Izhār al-Haqq, which had been published in Arabic shortly beforehand, did not advance beyond the position established in the Ijāz -i Īswī over a decade earlier.[1]

If T.V. French and Wazīr Khān, the two 'seconds' at the Agra debate, had been allowed into the centre of the arena, it is possible that the encounter might have opened out in new directions. French, on the one hand, was more genuinely receptive to the critical views which, for mainly tactical reasons, the 'ulamā had adopted, while the medical doctor, albeit as dogmatic as Rahmat Allāh on questions central to Islam, was nevertheless better read in the European critical and sceptical works, and might in a less public confrontation have been drawn into a more open-ended argument.

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1. In the I'jāz-i Īswī (Agra, 1853) Rahmat Allāh had listed the books in the Bible, discussed the Council decisions and the reasons why tahrīf was easily committed, and then proceeded to deal in detail with tahrīf in the various books of the Old and New Testaments. Replies to Pfander's defence in the Mīzān of the authenticity of the Bible, and to Pfander's comments on the Kitāb-i Istifsār, followed. The book concluded with a discussion of 'various readings' and a review of early Church history. The sections on tahrīf in the Izhār al-Haqq were more concise and organized under thematic headings such as 'Inspiration of the Scriptures', 'altered', 'interpolated' and 'omitted' passages. Although there were structural improvements, both books consisted of a catalogue of hundreds of alleged corrupted passages, interlaced with the conflicting comments of Western critics on their reliability.

In the event, however, both abstained after 1855 from any further discussion of tahrīf, leaving it to Pfander and Rahmat Allāh to republish their scarcely modified views in the 1860s.

The intransigence which is to be observed on both sides resulted in part from Rahmat Allāh's very conscious decision to revive the charge of large-scale and deliberate tahrīf -i lafzī, rather than the secondary charge of tahrīf-i ma'nawī. He acknowledged the occurrence of the latter, but stated in the I'jāz-i Īswī that there was no quarrel between Muslims and Christians over differing interpretations of the Bible. He chose instead, at the moment when the north Indian 'ulamā were beginning to fear the effects of Christian preaching, to pursue relentlessly the charge of textual alteration, which he hoped if vindicated, would suddenly and completely undermine the authority of the Bible in the eyes of the Muslim population. The need to secure a visible effect of this kind explains the symbolic significance which was attached to the Muslim 'victory' on the tahrīf issue which was proclaimed at the Agra debate of 1854 in front of a vast audience of local Muslims and also some British government officials.

CONCLUSIONS

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ERA OF ENCOUNTER BETWEEN ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

The 'ulamā who came forward to write refutations of Christianity, and to engage in discussion with Christian missionaries, were prompted by the sudden intensification of missionary interest in Islam which was apparent in northern India in the 1830s and 1840s. The proliferation of Bibles and tracts written in the languages which were familiar to educated Indian Muslims created a new awareness of Christianity in 'ulamā circles, but the catalyst which turned a stir into a crisis was the activity of the Reverend Carl Pfander. The reaction occurred in three distinct phases, and centred in turn on the three cities of Lucknow, Agra and Delhi. The encounter in Lucknow in 1833 could be viewed in isolation from the subsequent reaction in Agra and Delhi, and yet its occurrence was an important causal factor in determining events in those cities. On the surface the Lucknow mujtahid's response to the missionary traveller, Joseph Wolff, was prompted by his personal interest in Wolff's Christian message, but it was assisted also by the unique circumstances at the court of Lucknow which were particularly favourable to interchanges of this type. In contrast, the reaction which followed Pfander's arrival in Agra in the early 1840s marked a sudden and reluctant abandoning of the 'ulamā's previous disdain for all things Christian, in an effort to check Pfander's activities. Certainly other aspects of the British and missionary presence in the new capital of the North-Western Provinces had contributed to the intensification of alarm. Nevertheless, it seems possible to isolate Pfander's activities as the single main catalyst whose arrival in the region provoked, and whose departure ended, the

Agra phase of controversy. Delhi was the third city to be affected, and here the _'ulamā_ showed even greater reluctance to abandon their traditional attitude of disdainful unconcern. During more than four decades of British rule there had been hardly any contact in Delhi between _'ulamā_ and missionaries. It was a conversion scare emanating from Delhi College which interacted with new evidence of Pfander's activities, to cause an unprecedented degree of alarm. However, when the Delhi and Agra _'ulamā_ felt that Pfander had been checked, humiliated and silenced by the Agra debate of 1854, their sense of urgency diminished, and the controversies suddenly abated, not to be resumed until the 1870s when the sense of crisis noticeable in the 1850s re-emerged, but more diffusely than in the pre-Mutiny era.

These theological controversies between the _'ulamā_ and the missionaries bore some of the characteristics of the previous long history of misunderstanding between the two religions. But the similarities in argument and evidence were not presented by either side in conscious revival or imitation of long-past encounters for most of the participants were unaware of any such occurrences. The manuscripts which reveal the polemical standpoint of some important Christian and Arab theologians of the medieval period, such as Peter the Venerable and al-Ghazālī, were only rediscovered and subjected to scrutiny in the present century. The interest of some mid-nineteenth century European scholars brought to light some significant polemical works such as al-Kindī's ninth century 'apology' for Christianity, but only after this era of controversy in northern India was already over. The Protestant missionaries did have some knowledge about the Jesuit encounters with the _'ulamā_ at the Mughal court in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, for

Pfander among others, had read Professor Samuel Lee's Controversial Works, which contained an account of Xavier's encounters and writings. But the evangelicals tended to be dismissive of the Jesuit approach to controversy. On the other side, the Indian 'ulamā who were writing refutations of Christianity in the 1840s and 1850s showed no awareness at all of the Jesuit-Mughal encounters, nor it seems, of earlier Arab works on Christianity.

Thus similarities to previous polemic seldom reflected a conscious drawing on the medieval legacy, but rather a direct recourse in all ages to the fundamental Qur'ānic objections to Christianity. The concentration on the doctrine of the Trinity reflected the centrality of the principle of tauḥīd (unity of the godhead), in the Muslim faith and the certainty from the early days of Islam that the Christian belief in the Trinity must violate tauḥīd and admit shirk (association in the godhead). The 'corruption' charge too, was intrinsic to the early development of a Muslim sense of distinctiveness from the Christians whose Scriptures had been, so the Qur'ān taught, both abrogated and altered. These two central themes, and others such as miracles and prophecy, had always been at the heart of Muslim-Christian encounter, and in the early phase of controversy in northern India, the starting point and the constant reference point for the 'ulamā was first and foremost the Qur'ān.

During the twenty years of encounter an initial tendency to draw objections haphazardly from this stock of Qur'ānic statements and unconsciously inherited notions about Christianity was deflected in new directions by a number of local and new factors. If the evangelical missionaries failed in their overriding purpose of persuading their listeners of their state of sin and the necessity

for repentance, their emphasis on the person of Christ and their Biblical fundamentalism did nevertheless influence the 'ulamā's own concentration on the Trinity doctrine and on the text of the Bible. The written refutations, in particular, were a direct reply to the exhortations put forward in Pfander's books and in theme, if not in treatment, they were a response to a new kind of Christian preaching which had emerged with the evangelical revival. The extent to which the emphasis chosen by a particular missionary influenced the response was shown by Joseph Wolff's preaching of a millenarian theme to an audience of Shī'ī 'ulamā who had messianic expectations of their own, and thus responded in kind. The effect of the local religious and intellectual climate was shown again in Lucknow when the emphasis in the 1840s on the refutation of the Trinity as an example of logical impossibility, reflected the rationalism of some of the 'ulamā who had been schooled in the madrasas of that city where logic and philosophy had a high place in the curriculum. Important too, were certain extraneous influences. Although the 'ulamā constituted the category of educated Indians who were least easily susceptible to the influences of Western thought, there is no doubt that their access to recent European works of 'higher criticism' provided them with a means to reformulate the age-old 'corruption' argument against Christianity in a way which was irrefutable at that time by conservative evangelical missionaries. Crucial to the final development of the 'ulamā's arguments was the availability to them of numerous recent translations of the Bible and Protestant prayer books, in Arabic, Persian and Urdu. Here they considered they had found new textual evidence for their refutation of particular

Christian doctrines such as the Trinity, and in support of the 'corruption' argument they quoted 'various readings' as a result of their study of a wide range of such translations. Such was their recourse to the Bible that by the 1850s the objections levied by the _'ulamā_ against Christianity were drawn from the Bible rather than from the Qur'ān as had been the case in the early tentative years of encounter.

Although they seemed to be unaware of any medieval encounters, including those at the Mughal court, the _'ulamā_ were quick to utilize any tracts which came to their notice during the course of the era of controversy. Thus Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī, who was active at the peak of the reaction in the early 1850s, had assimilated into his own arguments reports about encounters in India which had occurred during the previous 50 years. These included Henry Martyn's encounters which although they had seemed to make very little impact at the beginning of the century, had later come to the attention of the _'ulamā_ through the 'apostate' _munshī_, Jawād bin Sābạt, and the Wolff and Bowley encounters with the Lucknow _mujtahid_ in 1833. He had also studied in detail the various editions of Pfander's books on Islam, and the _'ulamā_'s replies to them, which had multiplied during the previous decade. Thus, if the controversies were redolent of medieval encounters between Islam and Christianity, the legacy was unconscious, and new ingredients, stemming from evangelical and secular Western thinking, had combined with particular local factors to induce the _'ulamā_ to prepare a new critique of Christianity.

However, when set in the wider context of the interchange between religious systems, the north Indian religious controversies

seem arid and unconstructive - this was indeed controversy, not dialogue. Pfander's knowledge of Arabic and of Muslim commentaries and source materials, marked him out from most Protestant missionaries of his day as an Islamist of some standing. He had been influenced by recent German scholarship in evolving a relatively sympathetic view of the prophet Muḥammad which was unusual among missionaries at this time. Nevertheless his evangelical Pietism allowed him no real inner understanding of the outlook of the 'ulamā on the basic questions which divided them. For their part, the 'ulamā reacted to Pfander only from the perspective of the danger he seemed to represent to the faith of their fellow Muslims. In their anxiety to prevent any undermining of that faith they concentrated narrowly on proving Christian doctrine to be absurd and the Christian scriptures to be unreliable. The dispute between Pfander and Āl-i Ḥasan over the claims of 'reason' and 'revelation', and Pfander's debate with Raḥmat Allāh and Wazīr Khān on 'abrogation' and 'corruption',showed the irreconcilable, and ever widening, gulf between the adversaries. During the entire era there was no instance of any encounter at a deeper spiritual level, and few occasions, the notable example being the 1833 debate in Lucknow, when hostility gave way even momentarily to harmonious discussion. Symptomatic of the narrow constraints within which contact could be made was Pfander's failure to draw any of the 'ulamā to pay attention to his preaching about sin, atonement and salvation. His book on this theme, the Ṭarīq al-Ḥayāt (Way of Life) was ignored, and his exposition of salvation in his other books received scant attention.

Given the political context in which the 'ulamā and

the missionaries met - a colonial one in which the missionaries were easily seen as agents of the imperial power at a time when government policy was beginning to interfere with socio-religious practices - the encounters were necessarily restricted to conflict areas. 'Dialogue', mutual understanding, and a real meeting of minds should not therefore be expected of this era, and did not occur at the surface level. On the other hand, there is a sense in which the era of conflict was the seed bed for later changes in outlook among a minority of the north Indian 'ulamā. At the time all seemed impervious to Pfander's message, and the effect of his activity on the majority was to reinforce their commitment to Islam. However, two 'ulamā who had been present at the Agra debate, were subsequently converted to Christianity. Both Imād-al-dīn and Safdar 'Alī came from ashrāf families and were students at Agra Government College. Both later claimed that they were still seeking for spiritual satisfaction within the Islamic tradition at the time of the debate, but that a few years afterwards Pfander's writings and the controversies played an important part in their ultimate attraction to Christianity.[1] If these conversions seem to vindicate

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1. Imād-al-Dīn (1830-1899) Born at Panipat, student at Agra College c. 1846, preacher at the Jāmi' Masjid in Agra, where he was a disciple of Rahmat Allāh and knew Dr. Wazīr Khān. Baptized 1866, after which he took a leading part in the resumption of controversy in the late 1860s and 1870s. See A Mohammedan brought to Christ, trans. by R. Clark and H. Perkins (London, 1869); Mohammedan Converts to Christianity in India (London, 1893).

   Safdar 'Alī, son of a Sayyid who had been Qāzī at the princely state of Dholpur. Attended Agra College, obtained post of Deputy Inspector of Schools at Rawalpindi. Attributed his conversion to the reading in 1861 of a copy of the Mīzān al Haqq which he had possessed since his Agra days but previously ignored. Baptized 1864. Remained in government education service. CMI, II, new series (Feb. & July 1866), pp. 46-51; Stock, History of the Church Missionary Society, II, pp. 555-559; 'The writings of Maulvie Safdar Ali', in E.M. Wherry, The Muslim Controversy (London, 1905) pp. 95-97.

Pfander's never failing optimism about the long term fruits of his efforts, the conversion of Muslims both learned and illiterate still remained an unusual phenomenon in north India in the late nineteenth century.

There was, however, an important re-orientation of outlook among some of the 'ulamā who continued to maintain a steadfast allegiance to Islam. Sayyid Aḥmad Khān had agreed with the hostile standpoint of Raḥmat Allāh's refutations at the time of the Agra and Delhi controversies, but he subsequently evolved an attitude to Christianity which conceded the inspiration and authenticity of the Christian revelation, arguing that although the Jews and Christians might be charged with taḥrīf-i ma'nawī they had not carried out deliberate alteration of the text of the Bible.[1] Sayyid Aḥmad, who was responsible in the late nineteenth century for influencing a significant number of north Indian 'ulamā in the direction of a reinterpretation of both Muslim and Christian theology, had first come into contact with Christianity through Muir, Pfander and Rām Chandar during the era of bitter controversy in the late 1840s and early 1850s. Thus the roots of a more accommodating attitude to the Bible were nurtured in the same soil as those of the late nineteenth century revival of anti-Christian activity among the 'ulamā.

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1. Syud Ahmud, The Mohomedan commentary on the Holy Bible, part I (Ghazipur, 1862), 7th discourse, 'What is the opinion entertained by the Mohomedans regarding the corruption of the sacred Scriptures?'

IDENTITY OF THE ANTI-MISSIONARY 'ULAMĀ

Who were the 'ulamā who led the reaction to missionary preaching, and what were their religious and occupational associations with each other? Can they be classified as a particular category within the 'ulamā class as a whole? The missionaries deliberately sought out those 'ulamā whom they considered to be prominent and respected in their own community. However, their initial information about the inner world of the 'ulamā was necessarily limited, for although both Joseph Wolff and Carl Pfander knew Arabic and Persian and were relatively knowledgeable about Muslim society, both had only recently arrived in India when they tried to establish contact. With the notable exception of the Lucknow mujtahid, all those whose interest was deliberately solicited thought better of their initial display of curiosity or interest, and withdrew without writing any refutations. Such was the pattern of response established by prominent 'ulamā who occupied important positions in traditional madrasa, mosque and ṣūfī circles, between 1833 and 1852. Examples are Maulānā Muḥammad Isḥāq of the Madrasa-i Raḥīmiyya in Delhi, Maulānā Wa'īẓ al-Ḥaqq of the Patna madrasa, Maulana Nūr al-Ḥasan, the professor of Arabic in Agra College, and Maulānā Kāẓim 'Alī, the custodian of the shrine of Shaikh Salīm Chistī, in Agra. Only in 1852, when the 'ulamā felt there were reasons to regard the threat from Christian preaching more seriously, did an 'ālim, Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī, emerge from the heart of traditional 'ulamā circles to lead the counter-attack on the missionaries.

Initially, the challenge had been taken up by some Muslims

who were employed in subordinate clerical and judicial capacities in the Ṣadr courts at Agra. Of these three only the munṣif, Āl-i-Ḥasan, went on to make a significant contribution to the course and content of the encounters. Nevertheless, the concern of members of this occupational category is significant. They seem to have had links with the traditional world of the 'ulamā in their family genealogy, madrasa education, and aspiration for judicial employment. But British control of the judiciary, and gradual changes in procedure, were restricting them to subordinate and ill-paid capacities in the service of a non-Muslim government. Contact with British officers in the courts gave them some knowledge of English, and acquaintance with European thought and etiquette. Only in the case of Munṣif Āl-i Ḥasan is there enough evidence to conjecture at the pressures bearing upon such an 'ālim in government service. After taking a prominent part in the reaction to Pfander he was removed from his munsifship after a lengthy inquiry into malpractices among subordinate judicial officers. By then he had abandoned the refutation of Christianity, and he subsequently departed for Hyderabad where he took service with the Nizam. Āl-i-Ḥasan's departure might be defined as hijrat from a now unacceptable dār al ḥarb situation.

Evidence is lacking about the motives and subsequent actions of the other judicial officers, but they can be linked occupationally with the response of the sub-assistant surgeon, Dr. Muḥammad Wazīr Khān, who played a crucial part in the debate with Pfander in 1854. In his case a Western medical education in Calcutta seems to have laid a veneer of modernity over an orthodox and deep Muslim faith. But it seems that he entirely rejected the impact of

Western, non-scientific, thought except in so far as it could be utilized to turn the tables on evangelical Christianity. His association with Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī created an unprecedented but devastating alliance between traditional north Indian _'ulamā_ circles and a Western-educated outsider from Lower Bengal.

The key to the drawing together in the moment of crisis, of educated Muslims from very different backgrounds may lie in their religious affiliations within Islam. In general, however, it does not seem possible to identify the anti-missionary _'ulamā_ as a distinctive category within the _'ulamā_ class. An important consideration here is the response from both Shī'ī and Sunnī _'ulamā_. Overall, most of Pfander's contacts were Sunnī, but initially there was a significant Shī'ī participation, and indeed the particular degree of sustained interest exhibited by the _mujtahid_'s circle was an important factor in the establishment of continuity between the Lucknow and Agra phases. At first there was a certain closing of the ranks between Sunnī and Shī'ī _'ulamā_ in order to counter together the new threat of Christianity. But although there was a considerable degree of co-operation in Agra during the mid 1840s, the Shī'īs suddenly and inexplicably withdrew from the controversies in 1845 and played no part in the final and crucial phases in Delhi and Agra during the 1850s. Furthermore, although the Sunnī _'ulamā_ quoted from previous refutations, they seemed to ignore the most substantial Shī'ī contribution, Maulānā Sayyid Muḥammad Hādī's _Kashf al-astār_. Nor was there any diminution in displays of Sunnī-Shī'ī hostility during the era of anti-missionary activity which would have seemed likely if the new threat from outside was

having any significant effect on Sunnī-Shī'ī relations.

If the Shī'ī 'ulamā's initial participation may be isolated as the product of unique circumstances in Lucknow, it may nevertheless be possible to identify links between some of the Sunnī 'ulamā who reacted. However, although they converged on either Agra or Delhi for occupational or religious reasons, the Sunnī 'ulamā came from homes in various parts of the province, and Dr Wazīr Khān was from Lower Bengal. It is difficult to identify any strong affiliations to any one madrasa, teacher or spiritual order. Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī was typical of the 'ulamā of his day in having studied for a time in both Delhi and Lucknow, initiating himself in each city in the branches of Islamic knowledge in which particular scholars in those cities were known to excel. This peripatetic and lengthy method of acquiring higher learning resulted in an extensive network of contacts with many other 'ulamā. However, in the course of the religious encounters a distinction may be observed between those 'ulamā, whether Sunnī or Shī'ī, who had been more closely attached to the madrasas of either Delhi or Lucknow. The Delhi 'ulamā concentrated on criticism of the Biblical text, possibly reflecting the emphasis on the study of the Qur'ān and the ḥadīs̤ in the Delhi madrasas. Those 'ulamā with stronger ties to Lucknow emphasized rational tests for religious truth, a reflection of the high place accorded to logic in the Farangī Maḥall syllabus. Thus Lucknow-based 'ulamā spearheaded the attack on the irrationality of the Trinity, while the Delhi-based 'ulamā reformulated the charge of the corruption of the Biblical text. But this distinction marks a tendency, not a rule, and it again distinguishes the Shī'ī participants more firmly from the Sunnī, without providing any full answer to the question of

internal relations among the Sunnīs. A possible answer lies in mystical affiliations, but there is little direct evidence for this from a study of their controversial works on Christianity. Only in the case of the Shī'ī *'ālim*, Maulānā Sayyid Muḥammad Hādī, did a refutation of Christianity reveal a clear and hostile attitude to Ṣūfism.

It seems that in the pre-Mutiny era the *'ulamā* who openly opposed Christianity cannot meaningfully be described as a 'school' or a separate category within the *'ulamā* class. Their reaction has been examined in this study in terms of the locality in which it occurred, namely the three cities of Lucknow, Agra and Delhi. But the affiliation networks of the north Indian *'ulamā* were much more complex than this regional distinction has allowed for, and important questions concerning the interconnections between these *'ulamā* remain unanswered.

THE ANTI-MISSIONARY 'ULAMĀ AND THE RISINGS OF 1857

It is possible that light may be shed on the unanswered questions about motivation and affiliation by an examination of subsequent events in the region and the activities of the principal participants. Some historians regard the religious reaction as but one facet of a broader Muslim reaction to the consolidation of British rule in northern India. In this view, the *'ulamā*'s demonstration of their fears about religious undermining through the refutation of Christian tracts and the holding of religious debates, was followed by active political disaffection when the sepoy risings in 1857 offered them a suitable opportunity. In 1857, the anti-

missionary 'ulamā became mujāhidīn, who abandoned the pen for the sword and turned from arguing with missionaries to fighting the British government.[1]

Certainly many British observers at the time were convinced that they were dealing with a 'long-concocted Mohammedan conspiracy', in which the 'ulamā were thought to have played an important part.[2] More recently there has been a tendency among some Indian and Pakistani 'ulamā to attribute 'freedom-fighting' aspirations to all members of the 'ulamā class during the nineteenth century. However, although many 'ulamā undoubtedly were involved in the 1857 risings, the extent to which their motives were religious or economic or an amalgam of many dissatisfactions has not been resolved as yet, nor have the possible links been traced between 'ulamā in different regions and belonging to different schools and orders. No attempt will be made here to probe this broader question of the role of the 'ulamā class as a whole, but the various views which have been expressed about the activities of those 'ulamā who had previously been involved in anti-missionary activity will be considered.

Even on this narrow front, a firm judgement requires more biographical information about those 'ulamā than has at present come

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1. Urdu works which depict the 'ulamā as mujāhidīn in 1857 include, Maulana Sayyid Muhammad Miyān, 'Ulamā-i Hind Kā shāndār māzī (Delhi, 1957-60), Vol. IV; Muftī Intizām Allāh Shahābī, Īst Indiyā Kampanī aur bāghī 'ulamā (Delhi, n.d.).

2. A. Duff, The Indian Rebellion: its Causes and Results (London, 1858); G.B. Malleson, The Indian Rebellion of 1857 (New York, 1891), pp. 17-19.

to light. A number of Pfander's correspondents and contacts had left Agra or had withdrawn from contact with the missionaries long before 1857 and have left no mark in the British Mutiny records, or it seems, in Urdu tazkiras and histories. The Agra vakīls and the Lucknow 'ālim, Sayyid Abdallāh Sabzawārī, displayed no further interest in Christianity after the mid 1840s, and nothing is known about their stance in 1857, if by that time they were still alive.[1] The Shī'ī 'ulamā who were associated with the mujtahid of Lucknow made no contact with the missionaries after 1845, but the mujtahid became increasingly important in the Oudh judiciary between that date and the annexation of the state by Dalhousie in 1856. As a prominent state official and the leader of Shī'ī religious interests, the British annexation must have struck at his position in the former capacity if not in the latter. But the mujtahid's circle was not mentioned in British accounts of the rising in Oudh, and there is no evidence to label them as 'rebels'. Indeed the Muslim religious ingredient in the Oudh risings seems to have come from Sunnī 'ulamā rather than Shī'ī, notably from the activities of the so-called 'Maulawi of Faizabad'. Nor, it seems can the munṣif Āl-i Ḥasan, whose birthplace was Oudh, and who played a key role in the Agra phase of the controversies, be linked with the risings. If he had left British service in disgrace and in despair, by the time of the revolt he had found employment in Hyderabad. If his preferred course of action can be classified as hijrat, it

1. Charles Raikes noted that all Muslim pleaders, except one, at the Agra courts were disaffected, but be supplied no names and his evidence is tainted by his tendency to regard all Muslims as 'rebels'. Notes, p. 195.

was nevertheless not jihād, and is conclusive for neither side of the argument.

The argument must rest, therefore, on the claims that the two Muslims, Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī and Dr Wazīr Khān, who debated with Pfander in Agra in 1854, decided three years later to support active jihād, and thus joined the risings which broke out in the North-Western Provinces in the summer of 1857. Historians who favour this interpretation have stressed the role of Raḥmat Allāh, who was already well known in the region as the leader of the counter-attack on Pfander. Much therefore depends on his actions, yet there are problems in interpreting the available evidence. On the one hand, Urdu secondary sources disagree with each other on Raḥmat Allāh's movements, and fail to substantiate their claims by reference to primary sources.[1] On the other hand, the Maulānā's name seems to be absent altogether from the British mutiny records. The following reconstruction from the various secondary accounts outlines the role that he is purported to have played.[2]

Raḥmat Allāh's home was the town of Kairana situated in the Muzaffarnagar District of the North-Western Provinces. It

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1. There is a broad division of opinion between those Muslim contemporaries and historians who emphasize the significance of the 'ulamā class in the risings (eg. Miyān and Shahābī) and those who argue that there was no significant jihād ingredient (eg. Sayyid Ahmad Khān Asbāb-i baghāwat-i Hind ; Ẕakā Allāh, Tārīkh-i 'ūrūj-i 'ahd-i saltanat-i Inglizīya-i Hind (Delhi, 1904), III.)

2. Based on Miyān, Shahābī, Ẕakā Allāh and biographies of Raḥmat Allāh, i.e. Imdād Sābrī, Āsār-i Raḥmat (Delhi, 1967), Muḥammad Salīm, Ek mujāhid me'mār (Mecca, 1952).

is known that he returned there soon after the end of the religious controversies in 1854. This district, and the adjacent district of Saharanpur, were the scene of a series of attacks on British stations between July and September 1857. It is generally agreed that local Muslims participated in the risings, and that although many Muslim cultivating Gujars were involved, there were also some 'ulamā. Interpretations differ in the stress which is laid on 'ulamā leadership, even 'conspiracy', and on the significance to be attached to purely religious as opposed to economic and other reasons for Muslim dissatisfaction. Eric Stoke's study of the two districts placed the emphasis on the economic pressures resulting from the land revenue system, but he nevertheless did not rule out a possible connection between the 'condition of poverty' into which some of the 'Muslim elements' in the region had fallen, and the preparation of 'fertile ground for religious extremism and political disaffection.' He concluded judiciously that 'certainly materials for an organised jihad existed ... At the same time it would be wrong to suppose that all Muslims were united in revolt.'[1] The stage is thus set for regarding a prominent Muzaffarnagar 'ālim such as Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī, who had already demonstrated his hostility to the preaching of Christianity, as likely mujāhid material.

Some of the accounts written by present-day 'ulamā, which have been published in India and Pakistan interpret possibility as certainty. According to Maulānā Muḥammed Miyān, for example, the

1. E. Stokes, 'Rural revolt in the Great Rebellion of 1857 in India: a study of Saharanpur and Muzaffarnagar Districts' in The Peasant and the Raj - Studies in Agrarian Society and Peasant Rebellion in Colonial India (Cambridge 1978), pp. 181-182.

outbreaks in Muzaffarnagar in 1857 were the culmination of a longstanding preparation for jihād by the local 'ulamā, prominent among them being Maulānā Imdād Allāh, Muḥammad Qāsim Nanautawī and Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī.[1] Raḥmat Allāh was also said to be of their number, and to have acted in the crisis of May 1857, as an intermediary between the 'ulamā in Delhi whose responsibility it was to issue a fatwā on appropriate action, and the Muzaffarnagar 'ulamā, who were awaiting instructions. However, uncertainty surrounds the statements and actions of the Delhi 'ulamā after the sepoys were received by the Mughal king on 11 May, following the initial sepoy revolt in nearby Meerut. The interpretation which is most favourable to Raḥmat Allah's active and crucial role attributes to him the signing of a fatwā advocating jihād which was issued by the Delhi 'ulamā, and relaying to Muzaffarnagar this signal for revolt.[2] The list of 'ulamā who are said to have signed the jihād fatwā included several who three years earlier had also put their seals on the fatwā which condemned the Bible after the Agra debate.[3] This would suggest that the link between the anti-missionary 'ulamā and the rising of 1857 should not be restricted to the specific activities of Raḥmat Allāh alone, but involved a

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1. Miyān, 'Ulamā-i Hind, IV, pp. 280-282.

2. Miyān, 'Ulamā-i Hind, IV, pp. 197-200.

3. ibid., p. 199. Miyān's list of 33 'ulamā who are said to have signed the jihād fatwā was taken from the Ṣādiq al-Akhbār, 26 July 1857. It was originally printed and published according to royal command, by Sayyid Jamīl al-Dīn at the Jāmī'al-Maṭābi', Delhi. The name 'Raḥmat Allāh' was second in the list but was not further identified. Of the other 32 'ulamā the following had signed the two fatāwā issued in confirmation of the result of the Agra debate of 1854: Farīd al-Dīn; Muḥammad Karīm Allāh; Muḥammad Ẓīa'al-Dīn; Sayyid Muḥammad Nāẓīr Ḥusain; Sayyid Raḥmat 'Alī.

'group' of 'ulamā. Unfortunately, however, Muslims at the time and ever since have disagreed about whether this Delhi fatwā was spurious, whether certain 'ulamā had signed it under pressure and whether and when Raḥmat Allāh actually signed it. The complex web of conspiracy in which he has been assigned a key role has thus not been satisfactorily substantiated. A more satisfactory reconstruction awaits studies on some of the other 'ulamā who were at the heart of events in Delhi.[1]

Nevertheless, whether or not they were activated by a specific fatwā for jihād, and whether or not the bearer of that injunction was indeed Raḥmat Allāh, some of the 'ulamā of Muzaffarnagar are known to have subsequently engaged in attacks on the British stations at Shamli, Thana Bhawan and Kairana. Raḥmat Allāh's name does not appear in the British records of the first two incidents, but Miyān attributes to him the leadership of events in nearby Kairana, his home town.[2] According to this account when the British began to recover their position in the district they first retook Shamli and then proceeded to Kairana. Rahmat Allāh was by this time a named and wanted 'rebel' with a price on his head. It was clear that the jihād had failed and that British rule would be restored.

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1. Among contemporaries who argued that the fatwa was a forgery were Sayyid Ahmad Khān and Maulānā Zakā Allāh. Miyan attributes their reasons to their wish to ingratiate themselves with the British in the post-Mutiny years. On the other hand his own source-references do not establish his own case with certainty.

2. Miyān, op.cit., pp. 337-41.

Raḥmat Allāh, along with many other 'ulamā, therefore decided on hijrat and eventually reached Mecca where he spent the rest of his long life. He suffered in his absence for his alleged act of rebellion by the confiscation of his family's considerable estates in Panipat. His flight makes this reconstruction plausible, but like the account of events in Delhi, it is difficult to substantiate the order of events and to be certain about motivation.[1] Many Muslims did suffer the confiscation of their lands after 1857 but sometimes on suspicion rather than proof of rebellion. Thus although Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī constitutes a very likely mujāhid, the uncertainties and contradictions in the secondary accounts of his activities in 1857 render it difficult to allow the proving of the anti-missionary 'ulamā connection with the mujāhidīn to rest on his actions alone.[2]

Dr Muḥammad Wazīr Khān's role in the risings can be pieced together more completely from British records and from later accounts by the 'ulamā, but gaps remain in the sequence of events. After the Agra debate of 1854 he remained at his hospital post in that city, and the medical records suggest that his superiors continued to be satisfied with his work.[3] On the other hand, he made several requests

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1. Raḥmat Allāh subsequently referred enigmatically to the reasons for his departure from India: 'Dans la suite les circumstances ont voulu que je me rendisse a la Mècque ...' Idh-har-ul-Haqq, I, pp. lxxxiii-iv.

2. For fuller references to accounts of Raḥmat Allāh's role in 1857 see A.A. Powell, 'Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī and Muslim-Christian Controversy in India in the Mid-19th Century', in Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society No.1 (1976), pp. 58-61.

3. J. Murray, Civil Surgeon, to H. Unwin, Commissioner of Agra, 29 Sept. 1854, CIA-1 Agra (Judicial), No. 20, State Archives, Allahabad.

for a transfer, preferably back to his previous station in central India. The requests were ignored, and one can only conjecture about his state of mind after the religious controversies. He gave constant ill health as the reason for the transfer, but it is possible that he, like the munsif Āl-i Ḥasan, wanted to remove himself from the centre of British activity where missionary provocation was so persistent.[1]

In the period between the debate and the rising, Dr Wazīr Khān seems to have been an important figure among the Agra Muslims. The Reverend 'Imād al-Dīn recalled in the 1860s that before his own conversion to Christianity when he had been active in Agra 'ulamā circles, it was Wazīr Khān who had encouraged him to preach in the Friday sermon against the missionaries.[2] 'Imād al-Dīn's account also suggests that Wazīr Khān was closely involved with Ṣūfī activities. Some accounts of his subsequent activities in the rising go further and claim that the doctor was involved in the preparation of a Muslim conspiracy against the British. One secondary account states that Aḥmad Allāh Shāh, the so-called 'Maulawi of Faizabad', visited Agra around this time and singled out Dr. Wazīr Khān, among other local Muslims, as likely to help him in his cause.[3]

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1. Wazīr Khān to J. Murray, Civil Surgeon, Agra, 27 Sept. 1854, loc. cit.

2. 'Imād al-Dīn, A Muhammadan brought to Christ, being the autobiography of a native clergyman in India (London, 1869).

3. According to Shahābī, op.cit., pp. 21-22, Aḥmad Allāh Shāh was welcomed by a group of Agra Muslims who included a number of vakīls, the chief Mufti, Riyāz al-dīn, who had been involved in the 1854 debate, Faiẓ Aḥmad Badāyūnī and Dr. Wazīr Khān.

His British superiors at the hospital commented during the rising that Wazīr Khān was known to have been in touch with a 'wandering Fuqueer' some years before the risings.[1] Thus both Muslim and British accounts point to the possibility of some organised activity among 'ulamā and Muslim government servants in Agra between the religious debate and the risings.

It is known with greater certainty that Wazīr Khān, an influential, but by now disaffected, government servant, did later react to the news of the Meerut and Delhi risings by joining the 'rebels' when Agra also rose in July 1857. Muslim accounts praise him as a leader, and British officials, medical doctors and missionaries who had known him during the previous few years, agreed that he was an active 'rebel', although it is possible that the deep suspicion with which he was regarded between May and July may itself have played a part in finally deciding his involvement. The report of the Agra Medical School for 1857 conveys that suspicion,

> He was sent out of Agra by the Magistrate, in the belief that he was engaged in some mischief, and in the hope that he would, when separated from his party in the city, keep himself from treason. He returned to Agra on the 2nd or 3rd of July, and three days after the battle of the 5th of July, on hearing that he was to be apprehended, he fled with his family to Delhie. There, on the day of the assault, it is said he was wounded by a musket-shot, in the shoulder, and ultimately passed down with the rebel army into Oude.[2]

Afterwards, the full fury of local British officers was vented on him. Charles Raikes, a judge of the Ṣadr court at Agra, argued that

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1. T. Farquhar, Officiating Superintendent Agra Medical School to J. Murray, Superintendent, Allahabad, 20 April 1858, in Selections from the Records of Government, N.W.P., part 31 (Calcutta, 1858) p. 9. In this correspondence Dr Murray referred to Wazīr Khān as 'a bigotted Wahabee' (p. 5).

2. ibid., p. 9.

Wazīr Khān's disloyalty showed the danger implicit in allowing any Indian to hold a responsible medical post, for in his view,

> The difference between a hukeem or doctor, and a hākim or ruler, is not so great in the native mind, that we can afford to have men like Vuzeer Khan at Agra, raising the green flag of rebellion.[1]

One of Pfander's missionary colleagues in Agra, the Reverend C.T. Hoernle, was convinced that 'the Muslims were the instigators and leaders in this mischief.... Their plan was to murder all Christians of whatever class, sex or age.' He too singled out Dr Wazīr Khān as a leader,

> Several Mohammedans in Govt. employ and the receipt of high salaries - amongst them is Wazier Khan, a Sub-Asst. Surgeon, who is known to the Committee by the part which he took in the late controversy between Dr Pfander and the Molvi, Rahmat Ullah - have taken an active part in the destruction of the Agra Station and our Missions. They have left the place, together with many other Muselmans and joined, I believe, the King of Delhi.[2]

Wazīr Khān's movements after the fall of Delhi cannot be reconstructed in detail, but there are references to the assistance he gave to some of the prominent rebel leaders at Bareilly in April 1858. According to a newspaper report he played an important part in the issuing of a jihād proclamation at Bareilly by Prince Feroz Shāh, a son of Bahādur Shāh, 'for the production of which credit is given to Wazeer Khan, late Sub-assistant Surgeon of Agra.'[3] Another

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1. C. Raikes, Notes on the Revolt in the North-Western Provinces of India (London, 1858), pp. 145-146.

2. Rev. C.T. Hoernle, Report written at Landour, Sept. 1857.

3. Bengal Hurkaru and India Gazette, 10 May 1858, in S.A.A. Rizvi (ed.) Freedom Struggle in Uttar Pradesh, Vol. V, Western Districts and Rohilkhand, 1857-59, p. 381.

newspaper reported that he was superintending the cannon foundry at Bareilly after the Nānā Ṣāhib's arrival there.[1] When the British regained control of the North-Western Provinces, Wazīr Khān evaded capture and followed Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī to Mecca.

Dr Wazīr Khān's activities in 1857 constitute the strongest evidence which is available for linking the 'ulamā who refuted Christianity with a readiness to wage jihād against the British government. Yet he was not representative of the traditional 'ulamā class in either background or in outlook, and his anti-British stance seems to reflect the attitude of a group of Muslim subordinate government servants rather than the broader 'ulamā class. It seems that when he joined the revolt in July 1857 he was acting in unison with other Muslims in minor government posts, mainly in the Agra courts, rather than with the madrasa 'ulamā. There is no evidence that he was in contact at this time with the Muzaffarnagar 'ulamā or with Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī. Nothing is known about any of the other anti-missionary 'ulamā to indicate that they participated in the risings. Thus the case must rest for the moment on Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī's alleged association with the Delhi fatwā for jihād, and the subsequent 'ulamā-led attacks on British stations in Muzaffarnagar, and on Dr Wazīr Khān's active, but separate, participation in the Agra rising, and his subsequent assistance to the 'rebels' in Delhi and Bareilly.

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1. Friend of India, 6 May 1858, p. 414, in Rizvi, op.cit., p. 437.

RESUMPTION OF RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY IN NORTHERN INDIA IN THE LATER 19TH CENTURY

Between 1855 and 1867 there were scarcely any encounters between the missionaries and the 'ulamā, and none that left a mark. It has been argued that after the debate of 1854 the adversaries no longer sought each other out, and although it remains uncertain to what extent participation of the 'ulamā was linked causally with the controversies, the Mutiny certainly created an unpropitious atmosphere for religious encounter. A number of factors then combined to discourage contact in the immediate post-Mutiny years.

On the missionary side, the transfer of Pfander to Peshawar soon after the debate, removed the one evangelical who had been fully convinced that 'controversial' methods were appropriate. By this time his colleagues, notably the recent arrival, the Reverend Thomas Valpy French, doubted the efficacy of his methods and were relieved to be able to turn to other ways of trying to influence the Muslim mind. French concentrated his efforts first on education, and later when he became Bishop of Lahore, on the preparation of a 'native clergy'. The significance of Agra as a missionary centre was anyway undermined by the Mutiny and the administrative changes which followed it. The CMS. mission station, and the Secundra Press and orphanage had been destroyed during the rising, and afterwards the press was transferred to Allahabad. St John's College remained in Agra and the mission station recovered and expanded in the 1860s.[1] But the days when the city was regarded

1. Report of sub-committee on the state of Agra District CMS. mission 1856-66, Registrar's Office, Bishop's House, Allahabad.

as the centre of CMS activity in northern India were over. The new emphasis on Allahabad partly reflected the government's abandonment of Agra as its provincial capital in favour of Allahabad. When in the 1870s, Muslim-Christian controversy resumed in a number of cities in the north, Agra was unaffected.

Apart from the particular reasons for missionary withdrawal in Agra, missionaries of all denominations and in all stations had been forced to question their methods by the outbreak of the revolt. Most were certain that the Company was to blame for refusing to abandon its hypocritical policy of 'neutrality' on religious questions in favour of an open display of its Christian identity. Nevertheless, the missionaries were well aware that in India and Britain there was considerable criticism of their activities which amounted in some quarters to the charge that missionary provocation was the primary cause of the Mutiny. While the controversy over 'too little' or 'too much' Christianity raged, it was but politic to avoid any further criticism. Bazaar preaching continued, but direct provocation of Hindu or Muslim religious leaders was discouraged.

If the missionaries followed a cautious path it is noticeable that in the post-Mutiny period most of the evangelical government servants avoided any direct association with controversial missionary publications or with public debates. William Muir remained in the North-Western Provinces where he rose to be Lieutenant-Governor (1868-1874), but he no longer took the active part in the evangelism of Muslims he had favoured as a young officer. His interest by no means waned, but he concentrated his attention on scholarly publications on Islam, and reserved the next spate of

homiletic tracts for his years of retirement from Indian service.[1] The Panjab was noted for the evangelical inclinations of its leading officers in the post-Mutiny period, but it is significant that John Lawrence and Donald McLeod, in spite of wanting to do 'Christian things in a Christian way', took a firm stand on the maintenance of 'neutrality'. Herbert Edwardes, who was censured for advocating a display of 'open Christianity' by introducing the Bible into government schools, was regarded as unwise by most of the evangelical officers in the north, who remained, for the most part, just as committed to missionary objectives as they had been before the Mutiny, but were now more cautious in their expression of that commitment.[2]

A certain degree of reconsideration was going on in missionary circles, and time was also required to adjust to the destruction of manpower and assets which had occurred in 1857. These internal changes were nevertheless unnoticeable to the outsider who would be likely to observe continuity rather than dramatic change. On the Muslim side however, the Mutiny had affected the world of the north Indian _'ulamā_ so deeply that even if there was some desire to resume the anti-Christian offensive it would have proved difficult

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1. Among Muir's later religious tracts and translations were: _The Rise and Decline of Islam_ (1882); _Annals of the Early Caliphate_ (1883); _Sweet First Fruits_ (1893); _The Beacon of Truth_ (1894); _The Old and New Testaments .. Moslems invited to see and read them_ (1899); _The Torch of Guidance to the Mystery of Redemption_ (1900).

2. A.A. Powell, 'The Government Neutrality Policy and its Application in the North-Western Provinces and the Panjab in the 1840s and 1850s', unpublished paper presented to a study group on 'Policy and Practice under Bentinck and Dalhousie', held at the School of Oriental and African Studies, July 1978, pp. 17-23.

in practice. During and immediately after the risings many British officers were convinced that the Muslims had conspired against their rule. Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī and Dr Wazīr Khān were not the only Muslims who fled, never to return. Other 'ulamā had been killed during the fighting, or had been executed or imprisoned afterwards, and many had lost their lands. The city of Delhi was made to pay a particular penalty for the supposed treason of its Muslim king. Bahādur Shāh was exiled, his sons shot, and the Muslim citizens who had been driven out of the city when the siege fell to the British, were allowed to return only on sufferance and after the return of the Hindus. Delhi never fully recovered its former eminence. The British stopped short of razing the Jāmi' Masjid, but dismantled many Mughal buildings and turned the Red Fort into a barracks. More significantly, the city's cultural eminence was lost for ever. Although many ashrāf families eventually returned to the city they lacked the stimulus and the patronage formerly provided by the Mughal court. Delhi College was closed, and when it was eventually reopened it had lost its particular Muslim and 'orientalist' character. If the college and the city had been on the eve of a 'renaissance' before the Mutiny, it never saw fulfilment, for 'culturally the Mutiny was a mortal thrust.'[1] The atmosphere of Lucknow too was changed for ever, first by the removal of the court on annexation in 1856, and secondly by the events of 1857.

Nevertheless, both Delhi and Lucknow were to remain important Muslim religious centres and in time some 'ulamā in the

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1. P. Spear, 'G͟hālib's Delhi' in R. Russell (ed.), G͟hālib the Poet and his Age (London, 1972), p. 53.

north would feel motivated to resume the religious controversies. In most respects, however, the second era of controversy between Islam and Christianity, which began in the late 1860s and lasted into the 1890s, was different in character from the pre-Mutiny era and its study requires separate examination. Some continuity may be noted however, in the republication of the tracts and books of both Pfander and Raḥmat Allāh in the late nineteenth century, and in the emphasis which the 'ulamā continued to place on the taḥrīf charge. There was continuity too on the Christian side when the leadership was frequently taken by converts, such as 'Imād al-Dīn, 'Abd Allāh Athim, Rām Chandar and Tārā Chand, all of whom were products of the Pfander phase of the controversy.[1]

Yet the role played by Indian converts to Christianity in the 1870s is one indication of the degree of change which had actually taken place. Whereas Western missionaries and British government servants seemed to feel that there were good reasons to avoid a resumption of controversy, it was perhaps a natural consequence of recent evangelical conversion that 'Imād al-Dīn and 'Abd Allāh Athim should feel impelled to seek out their former co-religionists. The particular interest of the Hindu converts, Tārā Chand and Rām Chandar, is harder to explain, but both chose

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1. Tārā Chand, born 1839 in a Delhi banking family. His father served as a Ṣadr Amīn in the Company's service. Attended Delhi College, 1849-1857, Agra College, 1858-1859. Said he was drawn to Christianity by Rām Chandar's conversion, by contact with newly arrived S.P.G. missionaries in Delhi and later by T.V. French in Agra. Although he accepted the truth of Christianity before 1857, he was not baptized until 1859. Studied at Bishop's College, Calcutta, 1859-63. Ordained 1863. Joined S.P.G. mission at Delhi 1863, where he remained for 20 years. I.T. Chand, The Story of a Delhi Convert (Madras, 1912); Tārā Chand's papers and reports in S.P.G. mission archives, London.

to concentrate on Muslim rather than Hindu evangelism. The willingness of the overseas missionaries to see the Indian converts take on the 'ulamā reflected, in part, a new realization that Pfander's methods had failed to penetrate to the core of Islam. The converts were thought to be in a better position to see Christianity from the 'ulamā's standpoint, in an age when missionary conferences were beginning to stress the need for a more sympathetic, as well as a more scholarly insight into Islam.[1] The missionaries did not withdraw altogether, but unlike the days when Pfander dominated the scene, there was no single renowned missionary disputant in north India in the late nineteenth century. The Reverend Charles Forman in Lahore, the Reverend Thomas Scott in Bareilly, and Bishop George Alfred Lefroy in Delhi, were among those who wrote tracts on Islam, and the two latter took part in debates with the 'ulamā.[2] Yet French, who remained in the Panjab until 1887, persistently refused to don his former colleague, Pfander's, controversial mantle.

On the Muslim side continuity between the two eras is even less evident. Nearly all the controversialists of the 1870s

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1. Reports on Allahabad missionary conference, 1872, and conference on 'Missions to Mohammedans' held at CMS. headquarters, Salisbury Square, London, 20-21 Oct. 1875.

2. Charles Forman. American Presbyterian Mission at Lahore, 1848-1883.
Thomas Scott, American Methodist Mission at Bareilly.
Debated among others, with Muhammad Qāsim Nanautawī and Dayananda Saraswatī.
G.A. Lefroy, Cambridge Brotherhood in Delhi, later Bishop of Lahore. H.H. Montgomery, The Life and Letters of George Alfred Lefroy (London, 1920), pp. 63-103.

and after were 'new' participants who had played no part in the Pfander encounters. Examples are Muḥammad Abū al-Manṣūr and Muḥammad Nusrat 'Alī in Delhi, and Ḥāfiẓ Walī Allāh Lāhorī in the Panjab.[1] It might be argued, on the other hand, that the participation of Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Nanautawī of the newly founded madrasa at Deoband was a consequence of the earlier era of controversies. For Deoband had been founded in 1868 by the group of NWP 'ulamā with whom it is claimed that Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh had participated in the 1857 risings. Thus, when in the 1870s, Muḥammad Qāsim Nānautawī went to Delhi to challenge Padri Tārā Chand of the S.P.G. mission and also participated in a debate with Thomas Scott at Chandapur, he might be seen as taking up the burden of the long absent Raḥmat Allāh.[2]

However, it would be a distortion of the extremely variegated pattern of controversy in the post 1870 period to stress the role of the Deobandi participants above those of other 'ulamā all over the region. For by this time the Muslim-Christian controversy was but one strand in an increasingly complex interaction of religious movements in various parts of northern India. The degree of change is shown by events in the Panjab, where American evangelical missionaries had been at work since the 1830s, but where there was no open Muslim reaction until the late 1860s. In

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1. Manṣūr wrote further replies to Pfander's works, and to 'Imād al-Dīn's publications. Muhammad Nusrat 'Alī published extracts from the refutations of other 'ulamā. Hafiz Walī Allah both replied to Imād al-Dīn's works and engaged in disputation with him in Amritsar.

2. Sawānih-i Qāsimī, II, pp. 355-359; 'Ulamā-i Hind, IV, pp. 289-306; on founding of Deoband, B. Metcalf, 'The Madrasa at Deoband: A Model for Religious Education in India', M.A.S., XII, 1(1978), pp. 111-134.

the last years of the nineteenth century the claims of the Āryā Samājists and the followers of Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad would result in bitter religious debates and in tract warfare between several distinct revivalist forces.[1] If the activity of the Christian missionaries had revived the munāẓara form of encounter in north India, their own message was now accompanied by the claims and counterclaims of various Hindu and Muslim revivalist sects which had adopted from them the weapons of controversy. Thus, by the 1890s munāẓara was a common occurrence in many towns of north India, and the attention which the first great debate had captured in Agra in 1854 was no longer monopolized by any single city, personality or religious message.[2]

LEGACY OF THE PRE 1857 INDIAN CONTROVERSIES IN OTHER PARTS OF THE MUSLIM WORLD

There was a more direct, but nevertheless surprising sequel to the Pfander-Raḥmat Allāh contest in another part of the Muslim world. For legend has it that the two principal contestants met again in Constantinople where they resumed the debate which had been left unfinished in Agra, the victory again going to Islam.

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1. K. Jones discusses the relationships between Christian missionaries, Āryā Samājists and Mirzā Ghulām Ahmad in the Panjab in Arya Dharm: Hindu Consciousness in 19th-Century Punjab (Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1976), pp. 139-153.

2. Among other places there were debates in Amritsar in 1867, Chandapur in 1876, Roorki in 1878, Bareilly 1879, Delhi in 1869 and 1892. At the Chandapur debate the Reverend T.G. Scott faced both the Deobandi, Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim, and the Ārya Samāj leader, Dayananda Sarasvatī. See Bakhtāwar Singh, Satyadharmavichāra (Lucknow, 1897).

It will be shown that the occurrence of a second meeting is not firmly substantiated, but its importance lies in the rumour that it did occur, for by this means the memory of Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī as the archetypal defender of Islam against the Christian missionaries was carried on to later generations, to be revived again within the last few years.

It is known that both the 'ālim and the missionary were certainly in Constantinople in the early 1860s, and their visits probably overlapped. On Raḥmat Allāh's arrival in Mecca after flight from India he had been met by Maulānā Imdād Allāh who had fled from Muzaffarnagar before him, and with his help he had soon established contact with the Shaikh al-'ulamā, Sayyid Aḥmad Dahlān. This distinguished Meccan 'ālim was anxious, among other matters, to hear about the Indian controversies, and he urged Raḥmat Allāh to write a comprehensive work on this theme, in Arabic. Raḥmat Allāh then remained in the Hijaz, apart from three journeys to Constantinople, until his death in 1890. He was occupied in Mecca in numerous religious and welfare activities, outstanding among them being the founding of the Madrasa Saulatīya in 1874, the setting up of an industrial school, and the patronage of canal repair schemes. Thus the 'ālim who had been forced to abandon his north Indian homeland became a well known and respected figure among the 'ulamā of Mecca, and after his death the Madrasa Saulatīya continued to be a centre of scholarship under the administration of his descendants.[1] The first of his visits to Constantinople, in 1864, was the occasion on which it is claimed that he again

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1. Muḥammad Salīm, Ek mujāhid me'mār (Mecca, 1952).

confronted Pfander.

Pfander too, had suffered exile of a different kind. Much against his will he had been transferred from Agra to Peshawar, but after a short time he was transferred again to the Church Missionary Society station in Constantinople. At first his uncrushable evangelical optimism led him to think that the new Hatti Humāyūn era of government would herald the awakening of the Ottoman Empire to the truth of Christianity. He therefore embarked on the same methods of evangelism which he had used in Agra, namely the publication of the Mīzān al-Ḥaqq, this time in Turkish, and public preaching. But he had not realized that Constantinople in the 1860s would actually present more direct and insurmountable obstacles to such methods than had Agra in the 1840s. In July 1864 the government struck at him by closing the preaching hall and by imprisoning all converts to Christianity. Pfander appealed for support to the British Ambassador, Sir Henry Bulwer, but he strongly disagreed with the missionary standpoint and refused to help. The next year Pfander left Constantinople feeling it was impossible to work there with any hope of success, and he died in London at the end of that year.[1]

One account which supposes that the missionary and the 'ālim not only met in Constantinople but resumed the debate there, is in a recent biographical introduction to one of Raḥmat Allāh's books, in which it is said that the Ottoman Sultan, 'Abd al-'Azīz, came to hear about the Agra debate from Pfander himself, and then

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1. Pfander's Constantinople correspondence is in the 'Mediterranean Mission' papers of the CMS. collection, now deposited at Birmingham University Library.

requested further information about it from the Sharīf of Mecca.[1] When he heard that Pfander's main protagonist was actually living in Mecca he summoned Raḥmat Allāh to Constantinople where he arrived in 1863 or early 1864. At a meeting with the Turkish 'ulamā Raḥmat Allāh reported on the activities of the missionaries in India. Hearing about this, the Sultan issued the order to close the Christian mission. Apart from this account, writers such as Maulānā Muḥammad Miyān and Maulānā Intiẓām Ullāh Shahābī have referred to an encounter in Constantinople between Raḥmat Allāh and Pfander, but without disclosing their sources of information.[2] Another account supposes that Pfander fled away from Constantinople when he heard of Raḥmat Allāh's imminent arrival.[3]

However, although it would be fair to say that Pfander's main reason for leaving was indeed his general sense of disillusion, after forty years in the Muslim world, with the prospects of converting Muslims to Christianity, he did not actually leave until 1865, at least a year after Raḥmat Allāh's first arrival. But he made no reference at all to Raḥmat Allāh's presence although he commented on meetings with other Indian Muslims. The only reference on the missionary side to the incident is a note by T.V. French which corroborates that some Indian 'ulamā later thought that such

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1. Bā'ibil se Qur'ān tak, p. 201.
2. Miyān, 'Ulamā-i Hind, IV, p. 343; Shahābī, Īsṭ Inḍiyā Kampanī and baghī 'ulamā, p. 30.
3. Bā'ibil se Qur'ān tak, p. 202.

a meeting had been proposed. French's informant was a maulawī at Multan in the Panjab, who told him in the 1870s that he was a friend of both Raḥmat Allāh and Wazīr Khān and that he knew that

> when Dr Pfander's writings and preachings began to make a stir in Constantinople, Rahmatoollah was sent for by the Sultan as the only champion that would be a match for him, but ere he reached the capital the news of Pfander's death had been received.[1]

Although it seems unlikely that Pfander and Raḥmat Allāh debated again, it is certain that the latter's visit to Constantinople did encourage him to make a final literary contribution to the history of Muslim-Christian controversy. Stimulated by what he heard there about the resurgence of the missionary threat, this time in the heart of the Ottoman Empire, he began the book which the Shaikh al-Islām in Mecca had been urging him to write ever since his arrival from India. He had not changed his mind about the issues at the heart of the controversy, and his new work, the Iẓhār al-Ḥaqq, was structured around the five questions which had been on the agenda for the Agra debate. On that occasion the discussion had foundered after dealing only with 'abrogation' and 'corruption', so the Trinity, Muḥammad's prophethood and the Qurān had not been debated. However, although the new work took up these issues and was more comprehensive than his earlier works on taḥrīf, it seems that ten years' reflection had made very little change in Raḥmat Allāh's basic arguments, thus reinforcing that from the point of view of the north Indian 'ulamā the debate of 1854 had completed

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1. T.V. French, in undated letter quoted in Birks, op.cit., I, p. 203.

their successful rebuttal of Christianity. This can be judged most pertinently from Raḥmat Allāh's treatment of tahrīf, for although he still based the assertion on the opinions of European scholars, his main sources were those he had already used in India for writing the I'jāz -i'Īswī. He showed no knowledge of key publications such as Darwin's Origin of Species and Bishop Colenso's works of textual criticism which had affected the conclusions of European critics during the intervening ten years.[1] It seems that Agra had provided an access to recent literature from Europe which was not available in Mecca, nor to the same extent in Constantinople.

The main significance of the Iẓhār al-Ḥaqq rests then, not on any claim to originality or to an advance in scholarship, but on the synthesis it presented of all Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī's previous researches on Christianity. In the Preface and the Introduction are comments which provide a retrospective assessment of the Indian-Muslim dilemma under British rule before 1857, of Raḥmat Allāh's own reasons for taking up the leadership in the refutation of Pfander, and a criticism of Pfander's strategy and arguments which is more analytical and searching than anything he had written previously.[2] The importance which was attached to this final book can be gauged from the history of its publication and dissemination throughout the Muslim world. The two volumes

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1. C.R. Darwin, On the Origin of Species by means of Natural Selection (London, 1859); J.W. Colenso, The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua critically examined, part I (London, 1862).

2. Idh Har-ul-Haqq, I, pp. lxxx-cliii.

were written in Constantinople in 1864, and the first edition was published there in Arabic soon afterwards. During the next few years it was translated into Turkish, Urdu, Gujarati and English.[1] The English translation is rare, but a French translation which had been made from the Arabic by a Tunisian student was revised and published in 1880 by P.V. Carletti, the professor of Arabic at London University. Carletti wanted to bring Raḥmat Allāh's Īẓhār to the attention of the West because he was personally strongly opposed to evangelical Christianity and wanted to support Islam in its struggle against Christianity because to his 'freethinking' mind, Islam was the more rational religion. It was in Carletti's edition that Raḥmat Allāh's views first came to the attention of European theologians.

But by the end of the nineteenth century the interest in Raḥmat Allāh's works had declined, as had the interest among evangelicals in Pfander's brand of apologetics. In general, the works of neither protagonist have seemed relevant to twentieth century attempts at creating 'dialogue' between the two religions. However, there has been a recent echo in both camps of the encounters of the 1850s. New editions of Raḥmat Allāh's Īẓhār al-Ḥaqq were published in Urdu and Arabic, in Pakistan and Morocco, during the 1960s.[2] Another Arabic edition was published in Egypt in 1978 which also includes translations of the accounts of the Agra debates

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1. Publication details are given in the preface to the Urdu translation, Īẓhār al-Ḥaqq, I, p. 214.

2. Muhammad Taqī 'Usmānī (ed.), Iẓhar al-Ḥaqq, 2 vols (Karachi, 1968). Details of other recent editions are given in Vol. I, p. 214.

of 1854.[1] On the Christian side Pfander's key controversial work, the Mīzān al-Ḥaqq has recently been republished in English and Arabic by a German missionary society. The English edition is a reprint of the 1910 revised and enlarged edition which was prepared by the Reverend W. St. Clair Tisdall.[2] Not surprisingly the circulation of Pfander's Mīzān al-Ḥaqq in the Arab world of today without any further revision to take account of advances in the understanding of both Islam and Christianity during the last seventy years is likely to cause concern not only to the Muslim scholars who are republishing Raḥmat Allāh's replies, likewise unrevised, but to other missionary bodies who no longer advocate the controversial methods favoured by Pfander in the middle of the nineteenth century.

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1. Raḥmat Allāh al-Hindī, Iẓhār al-ḥaqq (Al-Ahrām, Cairo, A.H. 1398/1978), pp. 909.

2. The reprints of the Mīzān al-Ḥaqq have been circulated by the Evangelische Karmelmission of Schorndorf in Württemberg. Place and date of publication are uncertain as the English edition gives only the 1910 publication details.

APPENDIX : Editions of the Bible accessible to the Indian 'ulamā.

The editions of the Bible used by the 'ulamā have been listed by collating the descriptive data they provided in their tracts with the catalogue of the British and Foreign Bible Society's collection of Bibles. See T.H. Darlow and H.F. Moule, The Historical Catalogue of the Printed Editions of Holy Scripture in the Library of the British and Foreign Bible Society, 2 vols (London, 1903-1911), and the annotated copy of the Catalogue in the Bible Society's archive.

(1) Maulānā Āl-i Ḥasan did not list the Bibles he had used, but his Kitāb -i Istifsār (Lucknow, 1846) contains citations from the following editions:

(i) Arabic:

(a) Biblia Sacra Arabica Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide jussu edita, ad usum Ecclesiarum Orientalium.
3 vols (Rome, 1671).
Arabic text and Latin Vulgate printed side by side
Vol. I contains a preface in Arabic and Latin.

(b) The Holy Bible
Translated by J.D. Carlyle, Professor of Arabic at Cambridge and H. Ford, Reader in Arabic at Oxford.
Known as the 'Newcastle Bible'.
Published by Sarah Hodgson (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1811).
Distributed by S.P.G. and B.F.B.S.

(c) The New Testament

Translated by Nathaniel Sabat (Jawād bin Sābāṭ) under Henry Martyn's supervision. Revised and edited by Thomas Thomason.

Published by Calcutta Corresponding Committee of the B.F.B.S. (Calcutta, 1816).

(ii) Persian:

(a) The New Testament

Translated by Henry Martyn in India and Persia, assisted by Mirzā Sayyid 'Alī of Shiraz. The Calcutta Corresponding Committee obtained Martyn's revised manuscript after his death in Persia. His New Testament was revised again by Thomas Thomason and published by B.F.B.S. (Calcutta, 1816).

(b) The New Testament

A new edition of the 1816 Martyn edition, amended on the suggestions of the Scottish Mission at Astrakhan, and edited by Samuel Lee. Published B.F.B.S. (London, 1827?) Āl-i Ḥasan gave the date of publication as 1826.

(c) The Pentateuch

A smaller edition of an 1828 translation by T. Robinson (chaplain at Poona and later Professor of Arabic at Cambridge), edited by T. Robinson and J.T. Häberlin for B.F.B.S. (London, 1839).

(iii) Urdu:

(a) The New Testament

Translated in India by Henry Martyn, revised by Mirzā Fitrat. Published by B.F.B.S. (Serampore, 1814).

(b) The Old Testament

Not positively identifiable from B.F.B.S. catalogue, but probably the translation started by Henry Martyn, and completed by Mirzā Fitrat and others, including Thomas Thomason and Daniel Corrie, and published in parts from 1822 to 1826.

i.e. Pentateuch (Serampore, 1822); Isaiah (Calcutta, 1825); Psalter (Calcutta, 1825); Proverbs (Calcutta, 1826).

(c) The New Testament

Translated by William Yates and other Calcutta Baptist missionaries who 'made free use of Martyn's version'. Printed for the English Baptist Missionary Society and the American and Foreign Bible Society. (Calcutta, 1839).

(2) Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī consulted the following Bibles, most of which were translated and published after those used by Āl-i Ḥasan. See I'jāz-i 'Iswī (Agra, 1853), pp. 5-6, Idh-Har -ul-Haqq, ed. in 2 vols. by P.V. Carletti (Paris, 1880) I, pp. lxxvii-viii, and Iẓhār al-Ḥaqq, trans. Maulānā Akbar 'Alī Ṣāḥib (Karachi, 1968) I, pp. 220-230.

(i) Arabic:

(a) The Holy Bible

A reprint of the Rome edition of 1671, without the Apocrypha. B.F.B.S. (London, 1831).

(b) The Holy Bible

Printed by William Watson ['Watts' according to Carletti] (London, 1844). Not identified in B.F.B.S. catalogue.

(c) Pentateuch

Printed by William Watson [Watts?], based on the Rome edition of 1671 (London, 1848). Not in B.F.B.S. catalogue, but an Arabic edition of the whole Bible was published in London in 1848.

(d) The New Testament

This edition was the translation of two American missionaries, Eli Smith and Cornelius V.A. Van Dyck, who aimed to prepare a new translation 'in the best modern form of spoken Arabic'. Their version included 'variant readings'. Raḥmat Allāh considered this translation to be more correct than earlier editions. Idh-Har, p. lxxxviii; Iẓhār, p. 229. (Beirut, 1860).

(ii) Persian:

(a) The Pentateuch

Edited by T. Robinson & J.J. Häberlin. B.F.B.S. (London, 1839)

(b) New Testament

Not identified in catalogue. (Calcutta, 1842/3).

(c) The Old Testament

Translated by W. Glen of the Scottish Mission at Astrakhan. Published by Committee on Missions of the United Associate Synod in Scotland, with a grant from B.F.B.S. (Edinburgh, 1845).

(iii) Urdu:

(a) Pentateuch

Prepared by Henry Martyn and Mirzā Fitrat, completed by Thomas Thomason and Daniel Corrie. Published by Calcutta Auxiliary Bible Society (Serampore, 1822).

(b) Old Testament

(1) Genesis - Esther

Initiated by Mirzā Fitrat, revised by T. Thomason, D. Corrie, J.A. Shurman (L.M.S.) and others. Calcutta Auxiliary Bible Society. (Calcutta, 1842)

(2) Job-Malachi (Calcutta, 1845)

(c) The New Testament

Translated by Calcutta Baptist missionaries. B.M.S. and A.F.B.S. (Calcutta, 1839).

(d) The New Testament

Reprint of Martyn's Urdu New Testament. Calcutta Auxiliary Bible Society. (Calcutta, 1841). This society also published in 1841 a New Testament in 'Roman Urdu' which had to be withdrawn 'on account of its numerous grave errors in transliteration and printing' after some missionaries in N.W.P. had made objections.

(e) The New Testament

This edition resulted from the Benares Committee's revision of Martyn's edition to eradicate some 'difficult Persian and Arabic terms' and to improve William Bowley's translation. The committee included missionaries of the L.M.S. and C.M.S. who were working in N.W.P. In the final stages Carl Pfander assisted them. Calcutta Auxiliary Bible Society (Calcutta, 1842).

(f) The New Testament

A new edition of the 1839 translation. B.M.S. and A.F.B.S. (Calcutta, 1844).

(iv) English:

(a) The Holy Bible

Authorized by the Anglican Church ('King James' translation). Raḥmat Allāh listed the editions of 1819, 1830, 1831[1835?] and 1836. However, there were several editions in each of these years. See Part 1 of the Historical Catalogue, revised by A.S. Herbert, 'English 1525-1961' (London, 1968), pp. 359-382.

(b) The Holy Bible.

Raḥmat Allāh consulted an edition published in Dublin in 1840 which Carletti referred to as 'La Bible Anglaise Catholique' Idh-Hār, I, p. lxxxviii. In 1834, 1835, 1837 and 1840 there were reprints of the Roman Catholic Bible Society's, New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, which had been published in London in 1815. The 1834 reprint was entitled The New Testament ... translated out of the Latin Vulgate (Dublin, 1834). It is probable that the 1840 edition used by Raḥmat Allāh was a further reprint of this version. See Historical Catalogue, Part 1 revised by A.S. Herbert, pp. 380-381.

GLOSSARY

'ālim (pl. 'ulamā): a learned man, a scholar of the Islamic religious sciences.

'amala (pl.of 'āmil): officials; espec. Indian establishment serving a law court or government office.

ashrāf: the well-born and respectable, comprising in India, the sayyids (descendants of the Prophet Muḥammad); the shaikhs (descendants of Muḥammad's Companions); the Mughals and Pathans (descendants of invaders from Central Asia).

dahriya : atheist, infidel.

dār al-ḥarb : 'the lands of war'; territory not under Muslim law, which if recovered for Islam, becomes dār al-Islām (q.v.).

dār al-Islām : 'the lands of Islam'; territory ruled by a Muslim ruler, or where the sharī'at (q.v.) is upheld even though the ruler may be non-Muslim.

darbār : a place of royal audience.

dargāh : a shrine, tomb of a saint.

dars-i Niẓāmiyya : a syllabus of religious education associated with the Firangi Maḥall in Lucknow, and adopted by many madrasas (q.v.) in India.

fatwā (pl.fatāwā): a ruling by a muftī (q.v.) on a point of Islamic law.

fiqh : the science of Islamic jurisprudence.

ghalaṭ : a mistake, error.

ḥadīṡ : a 'tradition'; an account of what the Prophet Muḥammad said or did, or of his tacit approval of something said or done in his presence.

ḥajj: the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, obligatory for a Muslim once in a lifetime.

ḥakīm : a doctor who practises the traditional Muslim system of medicine.

Ḥanafī : a follower of the Sunnī school of Islamic law ascribed to Imām Abū Ḥanīfa (c.699-767).

hijrat : flight; voluntary withdrawal on religious grounds from a dār al-harb into a dār al-Islām (q.v.)

hulūl : entering, penetrating.

hundī : a bill of exchange.

ilhām : inspiration; revelation from God to an individual.

Injīl : one of the Gospels; the New Testament.

isnād (pl.of sanad): a chain of authorities testifying to the authenticity of a hadīs (q.v.).

ittahād : union, combination.

jāgīr: a grant of land.

jihād : a struggle waged by Muslims to achieve the upholding of Islam; war to establish the dār al-Islām (q.v.).

katrā : a piece of enclosed land; a market-place.

Kāyasth : a member of the Hindu 'writer' caste.

khalīfa : a successor to a Sūfī pīr, who may initiate disciples.

khānaqa : a dwelling place for Sūfīs; a sanctuary for pīrs (q.v.) and their disciples.

kharābī : corruption, destruction.

kufr : act of infidelity practised by a kāfir , who may be a non-Muslim or a lapsed Muslim.

madrasa : an advanced educational institution where Muslims study the various branches of the Islamic sciences; a college for 'ulamā.

mahdī : 'the rightly guided one'; the leader who will appear at the end of time to establish the faith of Islam; the 'hidden' Imām of the Twelver Shī'īs.

maktab : a primary school for Muslim boys.

malfūzāt : sayings of a spiritual guide.

mansabdār : a Mughal title-holder, appointed according to rank to civilian or military service.

masjid : a mosque.

maulud : the anniversary of the Prophet Muhammad's birth.

mu'āfī : lands exempt from the payment of revenue.

mubāhasa : a verbal disputation, a debate.

muftī : a Muslim jurisconsult who is qualified to interpret the sharī'at (q.v.) and to issue fatāwā (q.v.).

muharrir : a clerk employed in a government office.

mujāhid (pl.mujāhidīn): one who engages in jihād (q.v.).

mujtahid : an 'ālim (q.v.) qualified to make a ruling on the sharī'at law (q.v.); at Lucknow, the head of the Shī'ī 'ulamā.

mukhtār : a general manager of an estate, a baillif; an attorney.

mulhid (pl.mulhidīn) : an unbeliever; one who deviates from the true faith.

mullā : common term for an 'ālim (q.v.).

munāzara : disputation, debate.

munshī : tutor, language teacher.

munsif : the lowest rank of subordinate civil judge.

muqaddama : preface, introduction.

murīd: a disciple of a Sūfī pīr(q.v.).

mushā'ara : a gathering for the recitation of poems.

pīr : a teacher belonging to a Sūfī (q.v.) order who guides his disciples on the mystical path.

qāzī : a Muslim judge empowered to administer the sharī'at (q.v.).

qāzī al-quzāt : a head qāzī (q.v.).

sadr amīn : a subordinate civil judge, ranked above a munsif (q.v.).

sadr dīwānī 'adālat : chief (provincial) civil court.

sadr nizāmat 'adālat : chief (provincial) criminal court.

sajjāda nishīn : the successor to the leadership of a religious establishment.

sanad : see isnād.

sati : a Hindu widow who burns herself to death on her husband's funeral pyre; the act of so burning.

shagird : pupil, disciple.

shari'at : the revealed law of Islam, the 'sacred law' which provides guidance for all aspects of the Muslim way of life.

shirk : association of other objects of worship with God in a manner which conflicts with the Qur'anic emphasis on the oneness of God; breaking of tauhid (q.v.).

suba : a provincial division of the Mughal empire.

sufi : a Muslim mystic.

tafsir : the science of Qur'anic exegesis; a commentary on the Qur'an.

tahrif : corruption, alteration.

______-i lafzi : corruption of the words of a text.

______-i ma'nawi : corruption of the meaning of a text.

tahsil : an area under the charge of a tahsildar, a sub-collector of revenue.

Taslis : the Holy Trinity.

tauhid : the unity of God.

Taurat : the Pentateuch, the 'five books of Moses'.

tazkira : a biographical memoir.

thana : a sub-police station.

umara (pl.of amir) : nobles attendant on an Indo-Muslim court.

vakil : an attorney, pleader.

Wahhabi : name given to the followers of the Arabian religious reformer, 'Abd al-Wahhab (1703-87); used in India for the followers of Sayyid Ahmad of Rai Bareilly (d.1831), and by some British officers for any Muslims they suspected of disaffection.

wahī : inspiration; revelation from God to mankind, transmitted through a prophet.

waqf (pl. auqāf) : a pious endowment directed to the upkeep of religious institutions such as mosques and madrasas (q.v.).

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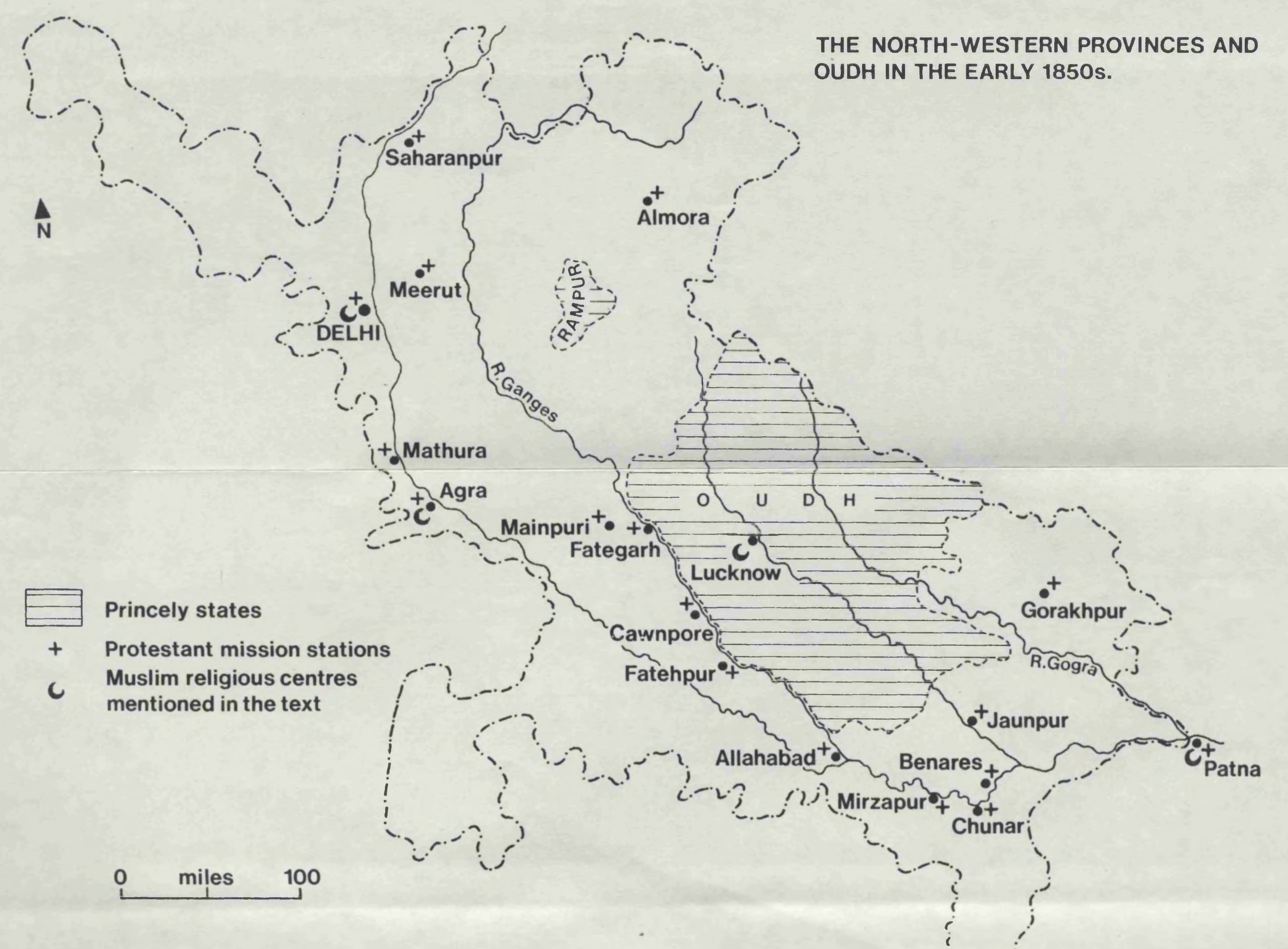
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Gorakhpur
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MAULĀNĀ RAḤMAT ALLĀH KAIRĀNAWĪ AND MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN CONTROVERSY IN INDIA IN THE MID-19TH CENTURY

By A. A. Powell

During the 1850's a prolonged encounter took place in the city of Agra between a Muslim *'ālim*, Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī, and a German evangelical missionary, the Reverend K. G. Pfander. The early Mughal emperors had developed Agra as the capital of their expanding empire, and even after the transfer of the court in 1648 to nearby Delhi, the city had retained some importance as a centre of Muslim culture and learning. But the period of the decline of the Mughal fortunes in the 18th century culminated in the capture of Agra in 1803 by the forces of the East India Company, and the next half-century saw the transformation of the city into a key administrative centre in the expansion of British control over north India. In 1836 Agra was made the headquarters of a new unit of administration—the North-Western Provinces. Hence the phase of active religious encounter which began shortly after that date should be examined in terms of the impact which British rule, Western culture, and the Christian religion had effected on the people of the province since its annexation. Indeed in the eyes of missionary as well as *'ālim*, the generating force behind the new confrontation was a fear that the beginning of Christian preaching activity in Agra was a threat to the hold of Islam on the uneducated Muslims of the city and the surrounding region.

Protestant missionary activity was a new religious phenomenon to the Muslims of north India. The Protestant churches of Europe had shown very little interest in missionary work until the impulse of the evangelical revival had stimulated several churches to send missionaries to the newly acquired East India Company territories in India during the last years of the 18th century. Even then, most of the first missionaries had been more eager to preach to the Hindus than to the Muslims. One reason for this preference was that the initial encounter with certain features of Hindu religious and social life, such as the custom of *satī*, was particularly disturbing to the evangelical temperament, and so Hinduism seemed to require more immediate attention than Islam, which had been part of European consciousness, albeit in variously distorted forms, for many centuries past. In addition to this factor the East India Company's initial hostility to their purposes, and the churches' lack of resources and men, had postponed until the late 1830's the spread of intensive Protestant missionary activity to the centres of Muslim culture in the North-Western Provinces. By this date the peak of revivalist enthusiasm had already been passed within Christendom itself, but this was the decade in which the energy generated by the home evangelical movement was increasingly channelled into overseas missionary activities. Viewed from the evangelical perspective, contemporary events, and in particular the political decline of the Ottoman empire, seemed to confirm the millennarian conviction that the entire Muslim world was on the point of turning towards Christianity. The spread of British power in India seemed to be yet another manifestation of this tendency. Furthermore, the optimism of the churches themselves was now reinforced by the increasing influ-

ence of the evangelical outlook within the ranks of the East India Company. Men who in their public capacity supported the Company's principle of not interfering with the religions of the people were in their private capacity forming a core of officialdom which was sympathetic to the activities of the missionaries. Significant also in the new situation was the arrival in Agra of a German missionary, Karl Gottlieb Pfander, whose special interest in Muslim-Christian polemics and whose knowledge of the relevant languages were important factors in precipitating a positive interaction between this new type of Christian preaching and the emerging fears of the local *'ulamā'*.

The *'ulamā'*, on the other hand, who formed the class traditionally responsible in Indian Muslim society for the religious leadership of the people, were faced with the predicament of formulating some response to this new phenomenon. If the 18th century had witnessed the gradual loss of the effective political power which had previously resided in the Mughal family, the victories of the British in 1803 had begun to generate a fear in some quarters that a further consequence of this temporal decline might be the weaning away of the people from the tenets and way of life of Islam. But the nature of the reaction of the *'ulamā'* to the British presence during the first three decades of the 19th century is difficult to assess. That the situation was indeed regarded as new and potentially dangerous is reflected in some of the *fatāwā* which were issued by certain of the *'ulamā'* with the objective of guiding the Muslim response to various problems generated by the dominance of the British. A *fatwā* issued soon after the annexation of Delhi indicated that India under the influence of the British should be regarded as *dār al-ḥarb*, "land of war", because in the view of Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz who compiled the decree, Islamic law was no longer prevalent, for "the law of the Christian overlords is current without check or hindrance".[1] If this *fatwā* represented a theoretical statement of the reaction of at least some of the Muslims to their new situation, the *jihād* movement organized by Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz's disciple, Sayyid Aḥmad Barelwī might be interpreted as an unsuccessful attempt to realize the actual expulson of the "Christian overlords" from Indian soil. Yet the reaction of some of the *'ulamā'*, including Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz, to the problem of English education was in favour of allowing Muslim students to enrol in British schools. There are obvious problems in achieving a satisfactory analysis of Muslim reaction to the British on the basis of such seemingly ambivalent evidence from the *fatāwā* of the time. But in a period when the precise relationship between the Company and the Mughal court was still a matter of dispute, and when Company policy, especially in its cultural and socio-religious aspects, was still in the melting pot, one might expect any discernible reaction to show signs of uncertainty and even ambiguity. What is more certain, however, is that missionary activity was not identified as a separate and peculiarly dangerous aspect of British influence until the escalation of preaching and publication in the late 1830's caused some of the *'ulamā'* to recognize the urgent necessity for a radical rethinking about the position of the Muslims *vis à vis* Christianity. During the next few years a number of *'ulamā'*, both Sunnī and Shī'ī, produced a spate of pamphlets, letters, and books on the subject of Christianity and Islam. Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī did not initiate this activity, but he was the first to urge that it was now crucial for the *'ulamā'* to try to safeguard the illiterate Muslim masses by

[1] Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic modernism in India and Pakistan 1857–1964*, London, 1967, 19.

making a concerted and comprehensive stand against the Christian missionaries, and by openly challenging them on their own ground through the adoption of the self-same techniques of publicity and propaganda. Assisted by the researches into Christianity of Dr. Wazīr Khān, a surgeon at the government hospital in Agra, Raḥmat Allāh produced a comprehensive body of literature on various aspects of Christianity, and by organizing and participating in a widely-publicized religious debate succeeded in spreading to many of the Muslims of the Agra region the sense of disquiet already felt by a large number of the '*ulamā*'. In 1857 both he and Wazīr Khān abandoned the pen for the sword, and their active participation in the uprising of that year suggests that the old accusation of "provocative activity" which was levelled against the missionaries both during and after the rising deserves further examination. The influence of Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh's writings on later Indian Muslim thinking about Christianity, and the recent republication of one of his books, add further weight to the significance of his role as an important Muslim scholar and leader in mid-19th-century India.

The participants in the "Mohammedan controversy" [2]

1. *Karl Gottlieb Pfander (1803–65)*

Pfander was born in 1803 in a village near Stuttgart in the state of Württemberg, a region which had been deeply affected by the Pietist movement which had arisen within the Protestant churches of central Europe in the late 17th century. Because the Pietists attached great importance to education, Pfander, a son of the village baker, was able to enter the Latin school at the age of twelve, proceeded to the local Pietist college when he was 16, and the next year was nominated as a candidate to the newly-established Basel missionary seminary.[3] During this early period of his life two influences were important in the formation of his attitudes to Islam.

First there were the general effects of the Pietist evangelical atmosphere in which he was born and brought up. The Pietists had rejected the rationalism then prevalent in the established Protestant churches and had turned away from logical evidences for religious truth to emphasize instead the need for the individual Christian to recognize the state of sin in which he, in common with the rest of mankind, was born, salvation from which would be found in the new birth which only whole-hearted and complete acceptance of Christ could bring about. There would be a strong impulse to missionary activity in an outlook which regarded Hindu, Muslim, or mere nominal Christian one and all as sinners. But in the process of suggesting to the unconverted the plight of his soul the evangelical missionary would be especially liable to create a storm in his wake because of the very directness of the methods he adopted. This was perhaps inevitable at a time when most missionaries of an evangelical tendency shared a basic anti-intellectualism of outlook which made them shun rational discussion of the comparative merits of other religions as irrelevant to the main objective of establishing consciousness of sin. The social origins

[2] The term coined by William Muir for his first article on relations between the missionaries and the '*ulamā*', published in the *Calcutta Review*, IV, 1845, and later republished in *The Mohammedan controversy and other Indian articles*, Edinburgh, 1897.

[3] C. F. Eppler, *D. Karl Gottlieb Pfander, ein Zeuge der Wahrheit unter den Bekennern des Islam*, Basel, 1888, 1–5.

of such missionaries in the first half of the 19th century were, generally speaking, in the class of "skilled mechanic"[4] and their education was usually narrowly confined to Biblical studies.

But second, if Pfander shared the general outlook common to most evangelicals at this period, the effects were somewhat offset in his case by certain features of the training he received at the Basel seminary. Although all candidates were required to be skilled in a manual trade, the four-year course of training was unparalleled in its intensity by the preparatory efforts of any other contemporary Protestant society. Two features of the curriculum were to have a bearing on the later Muslim-Christian controversies. First, whereas English missionaries of this period were sent overseas with little, if any, knowledge of other religions, there was provision in the Basel curriculum for the study of Islam and Arabic. Inspector Blumhardt, the head of the seminary, lectured five hours a week on the Qur'ān, and Professor Hengstenberger, of the University of Basel, taught Arabic for three hours each week.[5] No details about the contents of these courses survive, but however superficial they may have been, their inclusion in the curriculum suggests that a Basel missionary would have a more scholarly point of contact with the people whose religion he sought to overturn than had most of his fellow missionaries. The second important feature of the curriculum was that in spite of intense devotional study of the contents of the Bible, there seems to have been complete isolation from the movement of Biblical criticism which was beginning to stir the theological departments of some German universities. During the first half of the 19th century Biblical studies were increasingly affected by changes of approach and new discoveries in other fields of study. The rationalist outlook of the 18th century had left its mark on critics both within and outside the fold of Christianity and a spate of literature had been produced challenging, for instance, the traditional significance of miracles in the Bible. Radical changes in historical thinking, accompanied by important discoveries in the fields of geology, archaeology, and anthropology now seemed to threaten the traditional chronology of the Bible. From the philosophy department came the devastating influence of Hegelian dialectical thinking which certain theologians later applied to the process of trying to understand the Bible. When Pfander was a student the effect of these trends was not yet widespread outside the universities and the epoch-making books had not yet been published. The significant point, however, is that the missionaries in their isolated schoolroom at Basel seem to have been entirely oblivious of the winds of change and, consequently, when they issued forth to their various mission fields to propagate Christianity, they remained isolated from the channels of communication which might have made them conversant with the ideas and publications which were uprooting traditional approaches to Christianity.[6] Thus when he completed his studies at Basel in 1825, Pfander was probably more knowledgeable about

[4] M. Warren, *Social history and Christian mission*, London, 1967, 39.

[5] "Buch für die Wochenzettel des Missions-Institutes, 26 Januar 1822–10 Juli 1824", Basel Mission Archive.

[6] Important among the books published in the 1830's were Sir Charles Lyell's *The principles of geology* (1830–3) challenging the catastrophic theory of creation; D. F. Strauss's *Das Leben Jesu* (1836), which viewed the Gospels as the embodiment of mythical rather than historical truth; and F. C. Baur's publications from Tübingen which developed the dialectical analysis of the New Testament.

Islam than most contemporary missionaries, but was very inadequately equipped to defend the Bible against anyone armed with arguments from the new criticism.

From 1825 to 1835 he worked among the Muslims and Armenians of Shusha in Trans-Caucasian Georgia. During this time he made several journeys into Persia in order to learn Persian and to make contacts with the *'ulamā'* of the cities he visited, some of whom he engaged in discussion of a controversial nature. In 1829 he completed the German manuscript of his first book on Islam and Christianity, the *Mīzān al-ḥaqq* (*Balance of truth*).[7] During the next few years he prepared Armenian and Persian editions of the *Mīzān*, and of two further books, the *Miftāḥ al-asrār* (*Key of secrets*), and the *Ṭarīq al-ḥayāt* (*Way of life*).

In 1835 the Russian Tsar ordered the closure of the Shusha Mission, so Pfander spent the next three years trying to locate a mission field where his special interest in work among Muslims could be utilized. In 1839 the Basel Mission sent him to India, and during his initial stay in Calcutta he prepared Urdu editions of his books on Islam. He was then transferred to the Church Missionary Society which decided that he should join the group of German missionaries who were already at work under its auspices in Agra. He arrived at Agra in 1841.

2. *Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī*

Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī was descended from Shaikh 'Abd al-Raḥmān Gāẓrūnī who had settled at Panipat in the 11th century in the wake of Sultan Maḥmūd's invasions. His ancestor, Ḥakīm Muḥammad Aḥsan had been given the *jāgīr* of Kairana as a reward for his services in medicine to the Emperor Akbar. The family then moved from Panipat to Kairana and during the reigns of Jahāngīr and Shāh Jahān further honours accrued to them.

Raḥmat Allāh was born in 1818, and was educated at home in Kairana until the age of twelve, when he went to Delhi to study at the *madrasa* of Maulānā Muḥammad Ḥayāt. He then studied for a period in Lucknow, and in 1841 took the post of *mīr munshī* on the Delhi estates of the Mahārājā Hindū Rāo. After the deaths of his wife and son he left the rājā's service and returned to Kairana where he established a *madrasa* and occupied himself mainly with teaching. It was probably during a visit to Agra in the 1840's that he met and became a close friend of Dr. Wazīr Khān, was informed about Pfander's activities in that city, and began to contemplate the preparation of a counter-attack against the missionaries.[8]

3. *Dr. Muḥammad Wazīr Khān*

Little seems to be known about the early life of Dr. Wazīr Khān, except that he was born in Bihar, studied in an English-medium school in Murshidabad and later at Calcutta Medical College. He came to England for medical studies sometime in the 1830's, and during his stay carried out extensive research on the Christian religion, an interest possibly prompted by contact with missionary preaching and publications during his student days

[7] K. G. Pfander, "Wage der Wahrheit", MS No. Ha 42, Basel Mission Archive, first published in Persian as the *Mīzān al-ḥaqq*, Shusha, 1835.

[8] Muḥammad Taqī 'Uṣmānī, *Bā'ibil se Qur'ān tak*, Karachi, 1968, 179–84. For biographical details about Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh see also Imdād Ṣabrī, *Āṣār-i Raḥmat*, Delhi, 1967, and Muḥammad Salīm, *Ek mujāhid me'mār*, Mecca, 1952.

in Bengal. As well as reading books in English he collected books of Biblical criticism by German authors, and began the study of Hebrew and Greek. It is probable that he also made arrangements for further publications to be conveyed to him in India. After obtaining a British medical qualification he returned to India, and later took up the post of sub-assistant surgeon and lecturer in pharmacology at the Thomason Hospital Medical College in Agra. Wazīr Khān's knowledge of Christianity from Western sources was to provide much of the material which Raḥmat Allāh needed for his counter-attack on the missionaries.

The growth of Muslim disquiet about missionary activities

When Pfander began to circulate his books in Agra he provoked a reaction among some of the Muslims of that city of an intensity which was unprecedented in most other parts of India. His arrival increased the suspicions which had been growing with the geographical expansion of missionary activity during the previous decade, and with the arrival in the province of new societies, notably the American Presbyterians. In the light of later events some of the *'ulamā'* considered these developments to represent a deliberate missionary-government conspiracy to further the spread of Christianity, especially as a clause of the Charter Act of 1833 appeared to favour missionary expansion by permitting settlement in the Company's territories without the formality of a residence licence.[9] Certain events and policies fed this suspicion further.

First there were specifically missionary activities, such as the organization of hitherto isolated mission stations into spheres of influence controlled by particular societies; the setting up of missionary schools with a Bible-based curriculum; the adoption and conversion of orphans; the setting up of presses and publication of tracts denouncing Islam and Hinduism; and bazaar preaching of a type which was considered to be more derogatory than hitherto. Second there were changes in government policy, for example, the increasing emphasis on the use of English in schools and colleges, which gave rise to the fear that the Muslims would soon see, on the one hand, a monopoly of English-speaking students in government service, and on the other, the atrophy of the Persian language and Muslim learning generally. Other policies of government liable to arouse suspicion included the encouragement of education for girls, and the partial implementation of legislation to ensure a convert's right to inherit his family property. Third, there were measures which involved, or seemed to involve, the actual co-ordination of government and missionary activity, such as the interest in missionary schools taken by some of the evangelically-inclined government officials; the issue of government grants to these schools; the provision of police protection to padres during bazaar preaching; connivance at army officers holding religious discussions with their men; and the appointment and payment of padres by government.

There were real grounds for some of these suspicions, but some of them resulted from a misunderstanding of the government's real intentions, and from certain confusions of terminology which were liable to arise when, for instance, the single word "padre" might refer either to a privately-sponsored missionary or to a government-supported chaplain, and a government official might act in his private and official capacity on different occasions.

[9] Parliamentary Papers, House of Commons, Public Bills, 1833, Vol. II.

But whether or not the grounds were real, Pfander's arrival in Agra in 1841 served only to reinforce the fears already aroused by these issues. It seemed that his presence endangered local Muslim society at various levels.

One reason was that the Church Missionary Society had especially engaged Pfander's services because of his well-known inclination for work among the *'ulamā'* and among educated Muslims. The society's choice of Agra as a headquarters for this type of work was influenced partly by the reputation of the city as a centre of Muslim learning and culture in the past, but also by the consideration that its new status as capital of the North-Western Provinces would draw to it the class of educated Muslims who had aspirations for service with the British. But other groups were more obviously vulnerable to Pfander's preaching. The Agra missionaries had opened an orphanage for children left destitute after the famine of 1837, and in the intervening years a significant number of these children had been baptized as Christians.[10] So missionary activities in Agra posed a real threat to the destitute, who might be compelled to turn to the orphanage because of indigence and helplessness.

But perhaps the most important reason was that the publication of Pfander's books on Islam from the Agra Mission Press signified the first dissemination in the locality of books in the Urdu language dealing directly with the alleged truth of Christianity and the alleged falsity of Islam.[11] A first glance at the nature and themes of his attack on Islam in these books may suggest something of a paradox, because in the context of the history of missionary writings on non-Christian religions it seems at first surprising that the *'ulamā'* should have regarded them as marking a dangerous turning-point in missionary strategy. Yet their sense of a new threat was not misplaced, for although Pfander's main themes were in nature expository, and his language was less derogatory than some earlier missionary writings on Islam, his relatively deeper knowledge of Islam and his ability to read and quote the Qur'ān in the original Arabic made his works seem insidious even if their content was less openly aggressive than that of previous books. Two thirds of the *Mīzān al-ḥaqq* contained proofs of the integrity and inspiration of the Bible, and proof of Christ's mission. His main theme in the *Ṭarīq al-ḥayāt* was to expound the evangelical understanding of sin and salvation by faith. Even the attack on the inspiration of the Qur'ān and on Muḥammad's claim to prophethood with which he concluded the *Mīzān* was not couched in the denunciatory tones which the Muslims were used to hearing from the missionaries. Yet the charges seemed to be all the more dangerous because they were based on Islamic sources which had not hitherto been utilized by the missionaries. Part of his strategy to ensure that the books would indeed be read by Urdu-speaking Muslims was the very conscious adoption of a style, and even a form of binding, which he hoped would be considered similar in character to publications from the Muslim presses.[12] It seems that Pfander intended that these books should be distributed mainly among the village *maulawīs* whom he frequently met during his preaching tours around Agra, and that through their agency his message might filter down to the unlettered masses. Thus the whole Muslim

[10] J. H. Pratt, *The Missionary register*, April 1841, 213.
[11] The first publication of Pfander's books in Urdu coincided with the first large-scale publication and dissemination of an Urdu translation of the complete Bible.
[12] K. G. Pfander to H. Venn, 4 January 1856, Pfander Correspondence, CMS Archives.

community, whether learned or illiterate, might in time be threatened by the activities of the Agra mission station.

Pfander's early controversies in Agra, 1841–7

Pfander did not have to wait long for some reaction to his preaching and publications. Between 1841 and 1847 he received a number of letters, pamphlets, and books on the theme of Islam and Christianity. Some of these were replies to his own communications and others had been generated by news of his activities which had circulated among the *'ulamā'*. Although Agra was the focus of reaction, and several of the writers were *wakīls* associated with the local courts, there were also a number of replies from some Shī'ī *'lamā'* of Lucknow. Few of these writings were published, and knowledge about them is provided mainly by Pfander's reports to the Church Missionary Society, by William Muir's comments in the columns of the *Calcutta Review* on what he termed the "Mohammedan controversy", and by Raḥmat Allāh's references to them in his books.

It soon became apparent that the lead was being taken by one Āl-i Ḥasan, who was described by William Muir as "an officer of some standing in the Suddar Dewany Adalat, N.W.P. . . . a man of very superior abilities, and holds a high place in Mohammedan society for attainments and learning".[13] Āl-i Ḥasan had heard a group of *'ulamā'* discussing some pamphlets written in reply to Pfander by Muḥammad Qāsim 'Alī, who was also employed in the Agra court. He became interested in the controversies and engaged in a long correspondence with Pfander, in the course of which he visited Lucknow and consulted with the *mujtahid*, Maulānā Sayyid Muḥammad, before resuming his letters. Sayyid Muḥammad, son of the famous Shī'ī scholar, Sayyid Dildār 'Alī, had already been in correspondence with Pfander, and had engaged his nephew, Muḥammad Hādī, to write a book in reply to the missionary publications. The main theme of these early replies was discussion of the type of reasoning relevant to proving religious truth. In this context they were attempts to establish rules governing "logical possibility" for the purpose of showing that the doctrine of the Trinity was irrational.

But for the first two or three years these skirmishes did not attract widespread attention outside the circle of the *'ulamā'*. It was in 1845–6 that the controversies reached the public ear. During the first six months of 1845 some correspondence between Pfander and Āl-i Ḥasan was published in both Urdu and English in the missionary magazine, *Khair Khwāh-i Hind*.[14] In Āl-i Ḥasan's opinion the comments which Pfander appended to the published version of the correspondence distorted his arguments, so he immediately published an 800-page volume he had been preparing called *Kitāb-i istifsār* (*Book of questions*), which was intended as a reply to all Pfander's books. About the same time Maulānā Sayyid Muḥammad published his nephew's book *Kashf al-astār*.[15] At this critical juncture, when he was just emerging as the principal Muslim protagonist against Pfander, Āl-i Ḥasan suddenly left Agra. There is some doubt about the reasons for his sudden disappearance from the scene. William Muir pointed out that his prominence in controversy

[13] W. Muir, "The Mohammedan controversy", *Calcutta Review*, IV, 1845, republished in *The Mohammedan controversy*, 35.
[14] *Khair Khwāh-i Hind*, I–VII (January–August 1845).
[15] Āl-i Ḥasan, *Kitāb-i istifsār*, Lucknow, 1845; Sayyid Muḥammad Hādī, *Kashf al-astār*, Lucknow, 1845.

with Pfander was followed by his promotion to the position of *munṣif*. He was posted to Fatehpur district and the distance from Agra and his new duties there probably prevented him from taking any further active interest in religious controversy.[16] The result of his departure was a five-year lull in the controversies caused by the lack of any local *'ālim* who was sufficiently well versed in the pattern of the controversy to challenge Pfander's latest book, the *Ḥall al-ishkāl*, which was published in 1847.[17] Although Dr. Wazīr Khān was present in Agra and was sufficiently familiar with Christianity, he was probably not fully enough informed in Islamic theology to take up the lead, for the Muslims required a defensive as well as an offensive strategy.

Raḥmat Allāh's books

It was Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī who regained the lost initiative. In the introductions to several of his books he mentioned the reasons which had prompted him to take up Āl-i Ḥasan's role. He reviewed the sequence of events since the arrival of the British and emphasized the opinion by then current among the *'ulamā'* that British policy had recently undergone a significant change of direction on the question of religion. He had no complaint about the first phase of British rule and even tendered moderate praise to the good organization and sense of security which the British presence had at first guaranteed. But the touchstone of this security had been the fact that there was no religious proselytism. He identified the beginning of the second phase of British rule with the abandonment of this religious neutrality in favour of support to missionary activity. In the preface to the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* he recounted that,

> For a time the ordinary Muslims shrank from listening to their preaching and from studying their books and pamphlets, therefore neither did any Indian *'ālim* pay any attention to the refutation of those pamphlets. But after some time had passed there began to be a weakening in some of the people of the aversion they had felt, and some of the illiterate people were in danger of stumbling. Therefore some of the scholars of Islam turned their attention to their refutation.[18]

The situation steadily worsened during the 1840's, and his realization of the responsibility of the learned for the illiterate finally impelled him to leave the life of scholarly retreat which he preferred in order to plan a counter-attack which would destroy the current supposition that the *'ulamā'* were keeping silent because they were incapable of refuting the arguments levelled against Islam. It seems that his association with Dr. Wazīr Khān now became of vital importance because he himself still lacked intimate knowledge of Christian sources, and the lull in the controversy continued while Wazīr Khān acquainted him with the results of his London researches. By 1852 he felt sufficiently well prepared to commence his counter-attack.

He sought to achieve his objectives through the publication of books on various aspects of Christianity, the prior instruction of the *'ulamā'* through this medium being

[16] W. Muir, op. cit., 89; *Agra Government Gazette*, VII, No. 7, 17 February 1846, and No. 18, 5 May 1846. See also Imdād Ṣabrī, *Farangīyon kā Jāl*, Delhi, 1949, 239–42.
[17] K. G. Pfander, *Ḥall al-ishkāl*, Agra, 1847.
[18] Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, Urdu translation edited by Muḥammad Taqī 'Uṣmānī, Karachi, 1968, I, 221.

necessary before any communication could be achieved with the Muslim masses. But he chose the language medium of his books with the linguistic skills of his missionary readers in mind as well as the needs of the Indian Muslims. His first books were written in Persian, but he soon decided to adopt Urdu also, arguing that,

> the reason for my writing in two languages [Persian and Urdu] was that the first language was extremely familiar among the Indian Muslims, and the second language was actually their mother tongue, and the padres who were residing in India and were going about preaching were certainly expert in the second language and were somewhat acquainted with the first language, except that padre who held the religious debate with me [Pfander] who was more expert in the Persian language compared to Urdu.[19]

Discussion of two of Raḥmat Allāh's books will show that he utilized two main types of argument. The first of these was the refutation of the doctrine of the Trinity on rational grounds, and the second the charge that the Christian scriptures had been altered at various times in history and therefore were not divinely inspired. It will be shown that his original contribution to Indian Muslim thinking on Christianity lay in his treatment of the second type of argument.

i. *Ibṭāl al-Taṣlīṣ* (*Refutation of the Trinity*)[20]

His purpose in writing this "refutation" was to produce a short pamphlet which would draw together the arguments used by Pfander's earlier opponents and which would demonstrate also the logical weaknesses of the type of reasoning from analogy which some missionaries used in the course of bazaar preaching when trying to explain the Trinity to a Muslim audience. His main argument was that if the Christians accept a real distinction between the three persons of the Trinity they are believing in a conjunction of contraries, and are logically inconsistent, for although they accept the conjunction of real unity and real trinity in the godhead, they nevertheless consider any other conjunction of unity and plurality to be impossible. Having established his argument in terms of pure logic he then demonstrated the logical implications of the doctrine, basing his points on the words of the Athanasian Creed which he considered the definitive Christian statement of the belief in the Trinity. Turning to the methods used by the missionaries to explain this creed he pointed out logical inconsistencies in their use of analogy. A favourite analogy seems to have been a comparison between the Trinity and a triangle. Here he argued that although the three sides of a triangle might be "equal", they did not constitute the "essence" of the triangle itself and therefore did not prove the possibility of the existence of "three in one and one in three". Other "bazaar arguments", such as the attempt to prove Christ's divinity on the grounds of his birth without a human father and his power to do miracles, came in for criticism because he felt that such phenomena were true of other prophets besides Christ. In the final section he denied the missionary argument that the Qur'ān contains testimony to the divinity of Christ. Part of Raḥmat Allāh's purpose in this last section was to demonstrate that Pfander's argument was falsely based because ignorance

[19] ibid., 223.
[20] Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī, *Auẓaḥ al-aḥādīṣ fī ibṭāl al-Taṣlīṣ*, Delhi, 1875.

of the rules of Arabic grammar had caused him to misunderstand the relevant passages in the Qur'ān. This was significant for the controversy as a whole at a time when Pfander was making an explicit effort to orientalize even the outer appearance of his books in an attempt to convince the less learned Muslims that he knew their religion as well, or better, than they did themselves.

So Raḥmat Allāh's concern to reassure both the *'ulamā'* and the masses became very explicit in this pamphlet, for it was directed to those *'ulamā'* who might be momentarily disconcerted by Pfander's apparent technical comprehension of their religion and languages, and to the illiterate Muslims in their care who might be swayed by the disturbing simplicity of the "triangle" analogy. However, from the point of view of advancing his specific controversy with Pfander it achieved very little, for the main lines of this rational type of argument had already been laid down by Āl-i Ḥasan and Muḥammad Hādī, and the manner of treatment did not differ substantially from medieval treatises on the Trinity. In any case Pfander, in his evangelical certainty that the Trinity was a revealed mystery not explicable by reason, did not himself make use of the sort of logical analogies which Raḥmat Allāh was attacking. In this sense, therefore, the subject was not even open to debate. Raḥmat Allāh felt, however, that repeated publicity of this admission in an atmosphere where the test of reason was considered all important must eventually harm the missionary case and thereby assist in the process of reassurance.

ii. *I'jāz-i 'Īswī* (*The miracle of Jesus*)[21]

The second and more important type of argument used by Raḥmat Allāh was the charge of *taḥrīf*—the charge that the Jews and Christians had altered the original scriptures for various purposes necessary to the propagation of their own beliefs and to the detriment of Islam. The type of argument was not in itself new, and in missionary writings of the early 19th century the word *taḥrīf* had usually been translated as "corruption".[22] Historically, and in the context of the Bible, the charges laid against the Jews and Christians had fallen into one of two categories, firstly *taḥrīf-i ma'nawī*, or alteration of the sense or meaning of the text, and secondly *taḥrīf-i lafẓī* or alteration of the actual words of the text. From an early date various Muslim theologians had expounded each of these views. But the reason why the second of these categories, *taḥrīf-i lafẓī*, provided a real platform for discussion between the *'ulamā'* and the missionaries in mid-19th century India in a way which the Trinity argument had failed to do, was because the age-old charge that the Scriptures had been corrupted was revived by Raḥmat Allāh at a time when the Protestant churches of Europe were themselves in turmoil over the same issue. Pfander's study in Basel in the early 1820's had taken no account of the critical stirrings in the university theological departments, and missionaries were generally being sent overseas to preach a fundamentalist acceptance of the Bible which was meanwhile undergoing radical challenge and revision in Europe both by acknowledged sceptics and by reputable theologians within

[21] Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī, *I'jāz-i 'Īswī*, Agra, 1854.

[22] It has been defined more recently as "the corruption of a document, whereby the original sense is altered". The various ways this result can be obtained include, "by direct alteration of the written text, by arbitrary alterations in reading aloud the text which is itself correct, by omitting parts of it or by interpolations or by a wrong exposition of the true sense", *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. H. A. R. Gibb and J. H. Kramers, Leiden, 1961, 560.

the fold of Christianity. Pfander only became aware that the *'ulamā'* of Agra had collected a library of such critical literature during the debate of 1854 when he was astonished to find that Dr. Wazīr Khān had the books of T. H. Horne,[23] D. F. Strauss,[24] and other German theologians piled in front of him. Ignorant about Wazīr Khān's period of study in England he suggested two probable channels of communication between the *'ulamā'* and such books, namely Muslim students who had imbibed sceptical ideas from the secular education provided by the English-medium government colleges, and the Roman Catholic Capuchin missionaries in Agra whom he suspected of abetting the Muslims in their animosity against Protestantism.

The main strength of Raḥmat Allāh's argument in the *I'jāz* was that, while availing himself of the researches of both sceptics and Christian commentators and critics, he based his main arguments only on the opinions of the avowedly Christian writers and utilized the sceptics only to introduce the more scurrilous remarks about the nature of God which he found in some of the apocryphal books of scripture, but which he hesitated to voice in his own words. The Biblical commentaries which he used were Nathanial Lardner's *The credibility of the Gospel history,* in the edition of 1827, G. D'Oyley and R. Mant's *Notes, practical and explanatory to the Holy Bible,* in the edition of 1840, M. Henry and T. Scott's *A commentary upon the Holy Bible,* published 1831–5, and T. H. Horne's *Introduction to the critical study of the Holy Scriptures,* in the edition of 1822. He placed heaviest reliance on Horne's *Critical study,* which from the date of its first publication in 1818 until the late 1860's seems to have been a handbook and source of solace for Anglican clergymen worried by the havoc which was being created by the influx into England of more extreme critical works from Germany. Its usefulness for Raḥmat Allāh's purposes was that, while retaining, for example, the literal account of the creation and Moses' authorship of the Pentateuch, Horne admitted the existence of numerous readings and interpolations in the Bible, although he denied that they made any difference to the overall integrity of the essential doctrines of Christianity. Raḥmat Allāh's main purpose in citing from a wide range of commentators was not to show which of them he considered correct, but to demonstrate what a wide and irreconcilable range of opinion existed within the Christan camp on almost every point of Biblical history. So the greater part of the book contained arguments and evidence for the occurrence of alteration, omission, and interpolation, the three types of textual corruption which he claimed had taken place in both the Old and New Testaments, and discussion of when, and at whose agency it had happened.

Significant though the book was in marking the absorption of a new line of argument into the age-old reproach, its somewhat encyclopædic character, which contrasted sharply with the pamphlet-like character of the *Ibṭāl al-Taṣlīṣ,* precluded its making much impact before its subject matter was widely publicized through a new channel of communication.

The Agra debate of April 1854

It seems that even Pfander had not read the *I'jāz-i 'Īswī* when, a few months after its

[23] T. H. Horne, *An introduction to the critical study and knowledge of the Holy Scriptures,* 3rd ed., London, 1822.

[24] D. F. Strauss, *The life of Jesus,* 4 vol., Birmingham, 1842–4, a translation from the German, *Das Leben Jesu,* which had been published in 1836.

publication, the vast researches involved in its compilation were utilized in a highly dramatic manner. For meanwhile, Pfander's persistency in public preaching on anti-Islamic themes had led Raḥmat Allāh to the conclusion that a policy of countering the padre by publication of books was insufficient: he, and the other *'ulamā'* who shared his fears, should step on to the public rostrum like Pfander himself, and give a visible and dramatic demonstration to the Muslim masses that the padre's arguments were specious, and by the effect of public humiliation restrain him from his daily bazaar preaching. Hence his decision early in 1854 to make a personal visit to Pfander's house for the purpose of challenging him to a public debate.

Pfander was away from Agra when Raḥmat Allāh called to see him in January 1854. The arrangements were therefore established by letter. Pfander's initial reluctance to accept the challenge was naturally interpreted by the Muslims as a wish to avoid confrontation. In a letter to the Church Missionary Society he stated that in the end he had no alternative but to accept although "I was well aware that generally very little good is done by verbal public discussion".[25] Further letters between them settled that the *manāẓara* should be held at the mission school compound in Agra, and that Pfander should be assisted by the Reverend T. V. French, an Oxford graduate who had recently joined the German group, while Raḥmat Allāh should be seconded by Dr. Wazīr Khān. The subjects for discussion in the following order were; abrogation and corruption of the Christian scriptures, the doctrine of the Trinity, Muḥammad's claim to prophethood, and the inspiration of the Qur'ān. It is significant that the order of the agenda gave the initiative to the Muslims whose objections to Christianity would therefore be presented first.

As Raḥmat Allāh had intended, the Agra debate brought into the open both his sense of crisis and his determination to retaliate. It gained considerable publicity among a broad cross-section of the population of Agra, and the next year Pfander heard references to it as far away as Peshawar. Invitations were extended to official and legal opinion on both sides. On the Christian side were Mosley Smith, judge of the *Ṣadr Dīwānī* and *Niẓāmat* courts, George Christian, secretary to the *Ṣadr* Board of Revenue, and William Muir, secretary to Government, N.W.P., noted previously for his interest in the earlier controversies. On the Muslim side legal opinion was represented by Muftī Riyāẓ al-Dīn, and publicity was ensured by the presence of Munshī Khādim 'Alī, the editor of a local Agra newspaper. The first day of the debate was attended by an audience of Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, and Christians which has been variously estimated as numbering between 200 and 600. All accounts agree that the attendance on the second day was considerably higher, suggesting that news of the first day's proceedings must have spread rapidly round the city that same evening.

Raḥmat Allāh, and Muslim opinion generally, hailed the 1854 debate as a great victory for Islam, and Pfander was clearly disturbed about the outcome. The main reason for this was that the strategy of Raḥmat Allāh and Wazīr Khān in concentrating on the three aspects of Christianity usually singled out by Muslims (namely, abrogation, corruption, and the Trinity), with the new and crucial advantage of being able to employ arguments

[25] Pfander to CMS, *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, V, 1854, 254.

derived from their study of recent Biblical criticism, made it impossible for the missionaries to regain the initiative and resume their usual offensive position.

This situation became quickly obvious during the first discussion, which was on abrogation. After explaining the Muslim belief that the revelations in the Qur'ān had abrogated certain passages of earlier revelations, Raḥmat Allāh and Wazīr Khān tried to secure an admission from the padres that their own scriptures were indeed liable to such cancellation. They presented two types of objection to Pfander's repeated affirmation that the words of Christ were immutable and "shall not pass away".[26] First were references from the Old Testament, the Gospels, the letters of Paul, and from contemporary Christian practice which they had chosen with the purpose of showing that some Biblical injunctions had actually been subject to various changes over the centuries. Second were citations from recent Biblical criticism which seemed to conflict with Pfander's interpretation of Christ's words about the impossibility of abrogation. Pfander's difficulty with the first type of attack was that the terms of debate which had been agreed on before the commencement had very precise and technical meanings within Islamic theology. The *'ulamā'* selected their examples of abrogation from the more ritualistic aspects of Judaic and Christian doctrine, arguing, for example, that the concept of *ḥarām* and *halāl* had undergone various changes between early Biblical times and the 19th century and thus justified their charge of abrogation.[27] Since the Islamic connotations of such terms were naturally uppermost in the minds of most of his audience, Pfander's repudiations seemed verbally and logically inconsistent. His attempt to rephrase the implication of the term "abrogation" by suggesting that the New Testament had "fulfilled" rather than "abrogated" the Old Testament, because the coming of Christ had transformed the external rites and precepts of the Old Testament into internal and spiritual principles, only struck his audience as mere evasion of an unpalatable fact. Secondly, when Raḥmat Allāh introduced quotations from commentaries such as D'Oyley and Mant's to the effect that Christ's testimony to the immutability of his words referred only to one particular chapter of the Bible, and not to the whole of the gospel message, it became apparent that Pfander was not familiar with such recently published commentaries and was therefore unable to frame a precise answer. According to the Muslim accounts the discussion of this point came to an end when Pfander admitted that abrogation of the scriptures was a theoretical possibility, although he still adhered to his denial that it had actually occurred. For the moment this admission was sufficient for Raḥmat Allāh's purposes as he intended to postpone substantial proof until the discussion should turn to the Qur'ān.[28]

The second point for discussion was the charge that the Christian Scriptures had been corrupted—the theme of the *I'jāz-i 'Īswī*. The *'ulamā'* had a carefully-prepared plan of

[26] "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away", Luke 21: 23 (King James's version).

[27] *Ḥarām* is defined in the *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 133, as anything "forbidden by the Sacred Law". An example of Wazīr Khān's application of the term *ḥarām* to the contents of the Bible was his argument that according to the Torah many things were *ḥarām*, but by the time of the apostles only meats offered to idols, blood, things strangled, and fornication were considered *ḥarām;* St. Paul, on the other hand, said nothing could of itself be *ḥarām*, whereas contemporary Christians consider only fornication to be *ḥarām*. In the opinion of the Muslim doctor these changes in the application of the term meant that abrogation must have taken place.

[28] Muḥammad Taqī 'Uṣmānī, op. cit., 186–9.

assault which was designed to enable them to demonstrate the flaws in Pfander's initial categorical denial of *taḥrīf*, thereby forcing him to redefine his terms until they had secured from him what would amount to an admission of the point.

The first stage was easily gained when Pfander quickly admitted the existence of what he termed "copyists' errors" in the various texts of the Bible. The *'ulamā'* then proceeded to show that errors of a more fundamental type could also be identified. At this juncture they brought out a full battery of charges based on quotations from various commentators. The disconcerting factor from Pfander's point of view was that they employed this attack at two levels. Whereas he might have succeeded in rejecting the quotations from recent 19th-century publications as mere reflections of the latest fashionable idea momentarily dominating the university theological departments, he could not dismiss so lightly the quotations from the "Fathers" of the early Christian Church which were introduced via the 19th-century works of criticism. The accusation, for example, that Justin Martyr had charged the Jews with alteration of the Scriptures was based on the writings of Eusebius and Augustine, which had become familiar to the *'ulamā'* through the recently-published secondary works of such commentators as Watson, Horne, and Scott. The two Muslims, and particularly Wazīr Khān, were clearly in thorough control of these sources and usually used them to good effect for the purposes of their argument. Once, however, Raḥmat Allāh departed from the concise logical thrust of Wazīr Khān's line of attack and allowed the argument to slip for a moment into somewhat inconsequential channels by retorting to Pfander's objection that he did not accept Paley's opinion on a particular point, "If you don't believe what Paley says then we don't believe what you say."[29]

But in spite of this lapse the weight of Wazīr Khān's numerous examples soon forced Pfander to modify his initial categorical denial into an admission that a few "mistakes" had actually been made of a kind more significant than mere "copyists' errors", an example of this type being the account of Christ's genealogy given in Mt. 1: 17. He still insisted, however, that "a mistake is one thing, and corruption is another".[30] Earlier on he had attempted to demonstrate this distinction by moving the discussion away from secondary writers back to the Bible itself, on the grounds that the words of Christ should form the basis of any real discussion. But Wazīr Khān had rejected this line of argument as a logically invalid procedure of debate which would mean drawing proof from the very source whose integrity was the main issue of debate. Pfander's maintenance of the distinction between "mistakes" and "corruption" now settled on his challenge to the *'ulamā'* to produce for inspection a copy of the Bible which contained the relevant passages in their "uncorrupted" form.

At a moment when it seemed that both sides would continue to maintain their incompatible claims, events came to a sudden climax. The crucial passage was verse 7 of the fifth chapter of John's first epistle, which Wazīr Khān quoted as an example of an interpolation which had not been present in the original Scriptures. When he heard this verse, Pfander is reported to have said, "Yes, this passage has been altered, and there are one or

[29] op. cit., 191.
[30] ibid.

two other places like it."[31] This was the first and last time he admitted the occurrence of *taḥrīf* without adding any qualification to the meaning of the term. Immediately the atmosphere became surcharged with excitement and Muslims in the audience began to urge the newspaper editor who was present to print Pfander's important admission in the next day's edition of his paper. Pfander at once realized that the Muslims were putting an interpretation upon his words which he had not intended to give, and he now tried to retrieve lost ground by redefining his terms in a new way. He argued that, although certain passages of the Bible might have been altered in a way which would constitute "ordinary corruption", none of the doctrines which were essential to Christianity had been in any way affected by these changes. Among the essential doctrines he mentioned the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, and the doctrines of atonement and intercession. His objective was to convince the *'ulamā'* that, even if the literal integrity of the Bible is not complete, no doubt can be cast upon the inspiration of the Christian scriptures on this ground, because both the text and the meaning of the spiritual and necessary doctrines remain utterly free from any suspicion of alteration.[32]

But at this juncture it was decided to settle the matter by a legal test, an idea which was in keeping with the stress which had been put on legalistic criteria all the way through the discussion. The *muftī* and the English judge were invited to comment on Pfander's last statement. *Muftī* Riyāẓ al-Dīn gave the opinion that if an error is detected at any place in a document, its presence casts doubt on the validity of the entire document. When asked for his opinion it seems that Mosley Smith, the English judge, elected to remain silent. The implication was clear to all, and at Pfander's request the debate was soon afterwards adjourned until the next day.

The second day added little that was new to the argument. As far as the Muslims were concerned Pfander's admission and the *muftī's* "opinion" meant that the victory was already won. Pfander attempted to readjust the balance of opinion by arguing that the Qur'ān contained proof that the Gospels were in their original form in Prophet Muḥammad's time, but by this stage nobody was interested in listening to his argument, and the emphasis of the debate reverted to the previous day's argument. The *'ulamā'* on the one hand produced more examples of what Pfander had termed "ordinary corruption", and the missionaries repeated their conviction that in spite of this the spiritual doctrines were unaffected and would remain so unless the *'ulamā'* could produce a copy of the Scriptures which actually showed the uncontaminated passages. The debate came to an abrupt end when Pfander said that unless the *'ulamā'* would accept this latter argument, he would discuss with them no longer. In a letter to the Church Missionary Society he admitted that this ultimatum was a mistake on his part as it allowed the Muslims a ready pretext to claim that he was afraid to continue with the other points for discussion. Although he also admitted to the CMS that the immediate result seemed to favour the Muslims, he expressed the view that

[31] "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one", First Epistle General of John, 5: 7. 19th-century and modern commentators agree that this verse is an interpolation which is not to be found in any manuscript earlier than the 4th century A.D. It has been omitted from the revised versions of the Bible but is included in the A.V. from which were made the translations into Persian and Urdu which were circulating in India in the 19th century.

[32] Muḥammad Taqī 'Uṣmānī, op. cit., 192.

the long-term effect would be favourable to Christianity, because the stir which the debate had generated in what he considered the usual torpor of Muslim society was probably only a prelude to an imminent turning towards Christianity.[33] This degree of optimism was not shared by all the Christians who had been present, and very soon afterwards the CMS committee in Calcutta decided to transfer Pfander to Peshawar in spite of his remonstrations against the decision. Apart from Pfander's own report, which was published in the *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, and his book *Ikhtitām dīnī mubāḥaṣa kā* (*Conclusion of the religious debate*),[34] there are no detailed accounts of the debate from the Christian point of view. This is particularly significant in view of the fact that only two years before William Muir had contributed another article on the controversies to the *Calcutta Review*, but now, although he had been present at the debate, he, like Mosley Smith, chose to remain silent.

Although his transfer to Peshawar prevented him from making any further personal contact with the *'ulamā'* of Agra, there was an exchange of letters between Pfander and both Raḥmat Allāh and Wazīr Khān in the months following the debate. After reiteration of the same points which had been raised in the debate, the level of discussion degenerated to disagreements about the terminology to be used for beliefs held sacred by the opponent and with the onset of petty and open acrimony the correspondence came to an abrupt end, the participants still holding firmly to the positions they had maintained at the close of the debate. Pfander elaborated his own arguments in *Ikhtitām dīnī mubāḥaṣa kā*, which was published in Agra the following year. There is some indication that he realized the force and novelty of Wazīr Khān's scholarship in the fact that immediately after the debate he sent requests to both the CMS and the Basel missionary society asking for copies of the books which the Muslim doctor had been studying.

On the Muslim side the debate received wide publicity. It was indeed the first occasion in British India that the Christian padres and, by implication, also the Christian government which had its representatives there, albeit in a private capacity, had suffered public defeat in open forum. Several accounts were published, including two volumes compiled by Sayyid 'Abd Allāh Akbarābādī which were published in Agra during the next few months. His *Mubāḥaṣa-i mazhabī* is an account of the debate which was published in both Persian and Urdu, part two of which contains the correspondence which passed between Wazīr Khān and Pfander after the debate.[35] It might fairly be said, on the basis of the publicity it achieved, that the debate had fulfilled Raḥmat Allāh's hopes. Its function was symbolic as well as real, for the *'ulamā'* knew very well that the danger from Christianity could not be checked in a day, but it symbolized their new determination to combat the missionaries in every way open to them.

Raḥmat Allāh's activities in 1857

Three years after the debate Raḥmat Allāh was involved in the efforts made by some

[33] Pfander to CMS, *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, V, 1854, 258.
[34] K. G. Pfander, *Ikhtitām dīnī mubāḥaṣa kā*, Agra, 1855.
[35] Sayyid 'Abd-Allāh Akbarābādī (ed.), *Mubāḥaṣa-i mazhabī*, Agra, 1854. The same account of the debate was also included in a volume which was published the same year by Wazīr al-Dīn, and which also included some other articles pertaining to the debate. The title of this work was *al-Baḥṣ al-sharīf fī aṣbāt al-naskh wa-'l-taḥrīf.*

of the *'ulamā'* of the North-Western Provinces to end the threat to Islam by participating in the rising against the British. The part played by the *'ulamā'* in the events of 1857 is a complicated question—not all those who joined were of one doctrinal viewpoint, and on the other hand many well-known *'ulamā'* of all sects kept out. The freedom-fighting role attributed to the *'ulamā'* by several writers has probably been exaggerated and more research needs to be done on the Muslims in this period before a balanced conclusion can be drawn. The objective here, however, is not to offer any generalizations about the role of the *'ulamā'*, but simply to draw attention to Raḥmat Allāh's movements in the year 1857, and to suggest on the basis of his involvement, that there is good reason to examine missionary activity in the years prior to 1857 in terms of its influence on the attitudes of some *'ulamā'* in respect to British rule generally. Dr. Wazīr Khān, Raḥmat Allāh's partner in religious debate, was equally involved in the uprising, during which he was made governor of Agra by Bakht Khān. He too, like Raḥmat Allāh, did *hijra* to Mecca after the failure of the rising.

Historical opinion has disagreed at several points about the signing of a *fatwā* for *jihād* in Delhi in 1857. Even among those *'ulamā'* who had been waiting for the opportunity to wage *jihād* against the British, it seems that the confused situation in Delhi after the initial outbreak at Meerut gave room for doubt about the appropriate steps to be taken. According to the opinion of Muḥammad Miyān, expressed in his book, *'Ulamā'-i Hind kā shāndār māẓī*, lack of confidence in the Emperor Bahādur Shāh's ability to lead the *jihād* caused hesitancy among the *'ulamā'*. However, he thinks that the arrival in July of Bakht Khān's army transformed the situation, for he and Sarfarāz 'Alī seemed to provide the military and spiritual leadership which had been lacking previously, and the latter's presence reassured the *'ulamā'* that the success of the rising would create a situation agreeable to them. After a meeting in the Jam'a Masjid, a *fatwā* declaring that there was sufficient strength for *jihād* was signed by more than 30 *'ulamā'*, thereby giving authority to the view that it was absolutely obligatory on all the Muslims of Delhi and the vicinity to wage *jihād*. The second signature on the *fatwā* was that of Raḥmat Allāh.[36]

However, this account of Raḥmat Allāh's involvement is not supported by all historians of the period. Maulānā Ẕakā Allāh, for example, described events in the vicinity of Delhi in May 1857 and argued that although Raḥmat Allāh did indeed come to Delhi to find out if conditions were ripe for *jihād*, he quickly left again when he realized that the city was in the hands of the royal princes and other unreliable elements.[37] Muḥammad Miyān attempted to reconcile Ẕakā Allāh's version with his own conviction of Raḥmat Allāh's active role by giving the following account of the activities of some of the local *'ulamā'*.

For some years previous to 1857, he argued, a group of *'ulamā'* had dedicated themselves to securing the eventual freedom of Indian Muslims from British rule. A committee had been set up for this purpose under the leadership first of Mamlūk 'Alī and, later, Imdād Allāh, and including such *'ulamā'* as Muḥammad Qāsim Nānautawī, Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī, and also Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī. Thana Bhawan, which was a small town

[36] Muḥammad Miyān, *'Ulamā'-i Hind kā shāndār māẓī*, 1957–60, IV, 196–9.
[37] M. Ẕakā Allāh, *Tārīkh-i 'urūj-i 'ahd-i salṭanat-i Inglizīya-i Hind*, Delhi, 1904, III, 675.

in Muzaffarnagar District, situated near Raḥmat Allāh's birthplace of Kairana, was the centre of organization for this group. When they received news from nearby Meerut about the upheaval which broke out in the regiments stationed there in May 1857, an emergency meeting was called to decide whether *jihād* should be declared. As no clear picture of the nature of events could be obtained in Thana Bhawan, Raḥmat Allāh was sent to Delhi to investigate the situation.[38] When he reached Delhi at the end of May he adjudged the effete Mughal court to be an unworthy pivot for *jihād*, and returned to Thana Bhawan with this advice. This, according to Muḥammad Miyān, was the visit which Maulānā Ẕakā Allāh mistakenly made the basis for his opinion that Raḥmat Allāh at no time gave his support to *jihād*. However, Muḥammad Miyān argues that, although conditions were not yet ripe, the *'ulamā'* of Thana Bhawan began to streamline their organization in preparation for a more favourable turn of events, and designated special military and judicial functions to each *'ālim*. The event which seemed to revolutionize the situation was, according to this interpretation, the arrival in Delhi of Bahkt Khān's forces, thus providing, in the opinion of these *'ulamā'*, the leadership and strength previously lacking among the Muslims. When Bakht Khān called a meeting of the *'ulamā'* in the Jam'a Masjid, Raḥmat Allāh, who had returned to Delhi, judged that the conditions necessary for *jihād* had now materialized and signed the *fatwā* in his capacity as representative of the Thana Bhawan *'ulamā'*. On his return to Thana Bhawan a final meeting was held there during which the *'ulamā'* agreed with the Delhi decision to declare *jihād*.[39]

The main military event in which the Thana Bhawan *'ulamā'* engaged, and which is mentioned also in British accounts of the events in Muzaffarnagar District, was the attack on the neighbouring *taḥṣīl* of Shamli.[40] It is uncertain whether or not Raḥmat Allāh participated in the fighting there, but his leadership of events in nearby Kairana is mentioned in some Muslim accounts of the rising. It is reported that he organized a group of *mujāhidūn* from the locality with the rallying cry, "The country belongs to God, and command belongs to Maulawī Raḥmat Allāh." However, after the British had regained hold of Shamli, they brought their artillery up to Kairana and started to search for the *maulānā*. Forewarned about the danger, he escaped to a neighbouring village, and when the British forces followed him he pretended to be cutting grass in a field. The narrowness of his escape from capture is illustrated by his claim that the pebbles raised by the horses' hooves actually struck him as they thundered past. Failing to find him in the village the troops withdrew, and soon after this a warrant was issued for his arrest, and 1,000 rupees offered for his capture. There was now no alternative but to leave India. Travelling via Delhi, Jaipur, and Jodhpur, he reached Surat where he embarked for Mecca. His extensive property was confiscated and auctioned in January 1864.[41]

[38] Miyān, op cit., 291.
[39] ibid., 299.
[40] R. M. Edwards, Officiating Magistrate, Muzaffarnagar, to F. Williams, Commissioner, Meerut Division, 11 October 1857, *Freedom struggle in Uttar Pradesh*, Lucknow, 1969, V, 135–43. British reports of events in the district recognized the existence of Muslim disaffection but attributed the immediate cause of the local outbreak to the execution of 'Abd al-Raḥīm Khān at nearby Saharanpur, whereupon his relatives, 'Ināyat 'Alī and Qāẓī Maḥbūb 'Alī, took up the leadership of the Thana Bhawan Muslims. The British reports of the incident make no mention of any of the *'ulamā'* who figure so prominently in Muslim accounts of events in these districts.
[41] Miyān, op. cit., 337–41.

The preceding account of Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh's activities appears in several Urdu secondary sources, but he was not mentioned in the British government "mutiny records", nor was the confiscation of his property mentioned in the revenue records. However, he certainly left India after the rising, either because he had taken an active part and was anticipating arrest, or because he could not reconcile himself to the situation of the Muslims in post-mutiny India.

Mecca and Constantinople

On arrival in Mecca he was met by Maulānā Imdād Allāh who had reached there before him, and he soon established contact with the *Shaikh al-'ulamā'*, Sayyid Aḥmad Daḥlān, who was interested among other matters to hear about his controversies with the Christian missionaries in India, and urged him to write an integrated work on this theme in Arabic. Raḥmat Allāh remained in the Ḥijāz, apart from three journeys to Constantinople, until his death in 1890, and was occupied there in numerous religious and welfare activities, outstanding among them being the founding of the Madrasa Ṣaulatīya in 1874, the setting up of an industrial school, and patronage of canal repair schemes. Clearly there is scope for study of the Meccan phase of his activities, especially his attitude to the post-1857 doctrinal controversies among the *'ulamā'* in India, but it was his first journey to Constantinople in 1864 which maintained the link with his previous missionary controversies and will therefore be mentioned here.

Indeed, the Reverend Pfander re-emerges on the scene at this point. After leaving Agra Pfander had worked in Peshawar for a few years, but the ill health of his family had caused him to request a further transfer. He was appointed to the Church Missionary Society station in Constantinople, and on arrival there his uncrushable evangelical optimism led him to believe that the new *Hatti Humāyūn* era of government must surely herald the awakening of the Turkish Empire to the truth of Christianity. He therefore embarked on the same methods of proselytism which he had used in Agra, namely the publication of the *Mīzān al-ḥaqq*, this time in Turkish, and public preaching. But Constantinople in the 1860's presented more direct obstacles to such methods than had Agra in the 1840's. In July 1864 the government struck at him by closing the preaching hall and imprisoning all converts to Christianity. Pfander appealed for support to the British Ambassador, Sir Henry Bulwer, but he strongly disagreed with the missionary standpoint and gave no help. The next year Pfander left Constantinople feeling it was impossible to work there with any hope of success, and he died in London at the end of that year.

Maulānā Muḥammad Taqī 'Uṣmānī, who has recently edited a biographical introduction to a new Urdu translation of Raḥmat Allāh's last book, the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, has suggested that Sultan 'Abd al-'Azīz first heard about the Agra debate from Pfander himself, and thereupon requested further information on the subject from Mecca. Although there is no indication of any such direct contact with the Sultan in Pfander's correspondence, 'Abd al-'Azīz must have heard of the matter from some source or other and then instructed the *Sharīf* of Mecca, 'Abd Allāh Pāshā, to make inquiries about it from Indian *ḥājjīs*.[42] Learning that Raḥmat Allāh, Pfander's main protagonist, was actually living in Mecca, he

[42] Muḥammad Taqī 'Uṣmānī, op. cit., 201.

summoned him to Constantinople where he arrived in 1863 or early 1864. At a meeting with the *'ulamā'* Raḥmat Allāh reported on the activities of the missionaries in India, and it is likely that he influenced the Sultan in his decision to take strong action against Pfander. There is a possibility that Pfander and Raḥmat Allāh met again in Constantinople and resumed the debate they had begun ten years earlier in Agra, but there is no mention of any such encounter in Pfander's papers, and writers such as Muḥammad Miyān and Intiẓām Ullāh Shahābī have mentioned the occurrence without disclosing their source of information. An alternative opinion which is held by some Muslim historians is that Pfander fled away from Constantinople when he heard of Raḥmat Allāh's imminent arrival, but although it would be fair to say that his main motive for leaving was indeed his general sense of disillusion with the prospects of converting Muslims to Christianity, he did not in fact leave until 1865, at least a year after Raḥmat Allāh's arrival. But whether or not a debate took place, one of the important activities of Raḥmat Allāh during this first visit to Turkey was the writing of his last book on Muslim-Christian controversy.

Iẓhār al-ḥaqq (*Revelation of the truth*)

Stimulated by the resurgence of the missionary threat, this time in the heart of the Turkish Empire, Raḥmat Allāh proceeded with the writing of the book which Sayyid Aḥmad Daḥlān had been encouraging him to produce ever since his arrival in Mecca. He still considered that the issues crucial to the controversy were the five subjects which had been on the agenda at the Agra debate. At that time discussion had foundered after dealing only with abrogation and corruption. His new work, which he intended both as a summary and a commentary on all the stages of the controversy, would therefore include the remaining three issues. In fact, however, ten years' reflection had produced very little change in the content of his argument. He again based the assertion of *taḥrīf* on the opinions of European scholars, but it seems that he had not done much further reading on Christianity since 1854, and his main sources, which he documented carefully, were those utilized earlier for the writing of the *I'jāz-i 'Īswī*. The theme to which he gave most stress was again the charge that the Christian Scriptures had been altered, which suggests that he realized that this was his most valuable contribution to the argument. In the section on the Trinity he supported the predominantly rational type of argument he had used in *Ibṭāl al-Taṣlīṣ* by references to the New Testament to try to show that the Christian revelation contains no testimony to the doctrine. In the second volume he turned to the defensive in a detailed refutation of missionary arguments against the Qur'ān, the *Ḥadīṣ*, and Muḥammad's claim to prophethood.

But the main significance of the *Iẓhār* rests less in any claim to originality than on the synthesis it represents of all Raḥmat Allāh's researches on Christianity. The Foreword and Introduction provide a retrospective assessment of the Muslim dilemma under British rule in India, his own reasons for taking upon himself the leadership in the refutation of Pfander, and a criticism of Pfander's strategy and arguments which is more analytical than anything he had written previously. Some indication of the importance of the book lies in the history of its publication and dissemination throughout the Muslim world.

The two volumes were written in Constantinople in 1864, and the first edition was published there in Arabic that same year. During the next few years it was translated into

Turkish, Urdu, Gujarati, and English. A Tunisian student made a French translation from the Arabic, and in 1880 P. V. Carletti, professor of Arabic in London University, revised and published this French version. Carletti, who had worked in Tunisia from 1860 to 1877 and styled himself a free thinker, was motivated towards the publication by his own hostility to evangelical Christianity, his view being that Islam was preferable to Christianity because of its greater degree of rationality. He thought the importance of the *Iẓhār* consisted in its being the first work written by a Muslim of the modern age which succeeded in challenging Christianity on its own ground.

Although Raḥmat Allāh left the Indian scene in 1857, participants in later phases of the Muslim-Christian controversy in India based their arguments on Pfander's *Mīzān al-ḥaqq* on the one hand, and on Raḥmat Allāh's books on the other. For instance, Muḥammad Abū 'l-Manṣūr, who was the most prolific writer and debater on the subject in the 1870's, used Raḥmat Allāh's works as one of his main sources, and the *I'jāz-i 'Īswī* was the standard work of reference for Muslim controversialists such as Ḥāfiẓ Walī Allāh and Muḥammad Nuṣrat 'Alī. The long term significance of Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī's stand against missionary activity in northern India in the period prior to 1857 is indicated by the fact that the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* has been republished recently in Morocco and Pakistan. The editor of the Urdu version has expressed the strong opinion that nothing written in the intervening hundred years on the theme of Islam and Christianity has replaced the books which were generated in the mind of Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī by the situation of extreme tension which faced the *'ulamā'* of northern India in the first half of the 19th century.