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## *Analyzing Historical Misrepresentations in Shaikh ‘Ali al-Ṭanṭāwī’s Aḥmad bin ‘Irfān al-Shahīd*

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### Abstract

*This paper critically examines the historical narrative presented by the renowned Islamic scholar Shaikh Ali al-Tantawi in his book Aḥmad bin ‘Irfān al-Shahīd regarding the armed movement of Syed Ahmad Shahid Bareilvi against the Sikh rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in northwestern India. The study aims to identify and evaluate historical inaccuracies in al-Tantawi’s account through a comparative analysis of primary and secondary historical sources related to this important episode of South Asian Islamic history. Ali al-Ṭanṭāwī portrays Syed Ahmad as a leader who largely avoided conflict with Muslim Pashtun tribes and achieved significant military victories against the Sikh forces. However, a careful examination of contemporary records and authoritative historical works reveals a different picture. The evidence indicates that Syed Ahmad’s movement remained engaged in prolonged conflicts with various Pashtun tribes for nearly five years, largely due to political, social, and religious disagreements. Furthermore, contrary to claims of major victories over the Sikh military, Syed Ahmad’s forces were generally unable to defeat the regular Sikh army in decisive engagements or establish lasting control over major cities and fortresses. The temporary occupation of Muzaffarabad stands as a limited exception and did not result in sustained territorial authority.*

*The paper also highlights al-Tantawi’s failure to adequately investigate the reasons behind the opposition of many Pashtun Muslims to Syed Ahmad’s movement. By reassessing these issues, the study contributes to a more balanced and historically grounded understanding of Syed Ahmad Shahid’s struggle and its complex regional dynamics.*

### Keywords:

*Ali al-Ṭanṭāwī, Syed Aḥmad, Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Ali al-Nadawī, Jihād, Khilāfah, Mahārājah Ranjīt Singh, Sikh Regime, Punjab.*

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## 1. Introduction

Syed Aḥmad Shahīd Brailwī's (1786-1831) campaign against the rule of Ranjīt Singh in India served as a significant inspiration for nearly all the subsequent Muslim religious-political movements in the subcontinent, which aspired to revive the Muslim empire or Khilāfah.<sup>1</sup>

In his book *Aḥmad bin 'Irfān al-Shahīd*, 'Ali al-Ṭanṭāwī<sup>2</sup> introduced Syed Aḥmad Shahīd to the Arab world in a way that does not align with historical facts. This book, a part of his I'lām al-Tārīkh series, was published by Dār al-Fikr, Damascus. The edition under review was published in 1997

'Ali al-Ṭanṭāwī claims that Syed Aḥmad avoided fighting the Pashtūns because they were Muslims. Contrary to this, the fact is that Syed Aḥmad declared the Pashtūns hypocrites and rebels. He engaged with them in a five-year-long armed conflict, killing hundreds of them, including some of their tribal leaders. Al-Ṭanṭāwī attributed Syed Aḥmad's successes against the Pashtūns to victories over the Sikh regime. The fact is, Syed Aḥmad could never win against the Sikh army, except for the city of Muẓaffrābād which he took over only for a short while and the Sikhs reclaimed it very soon. Furthermore, he made an erroneous statement regarding the founder of Sikhism that Guru Nanak was a Magus (Zoroastrianism), whereas, he was a Punjabi and belonged to a Hindu family.

## 2. A Brief Introduction to Syed Aḥmad Brailwī (1786-1831)

The following account of Syed Aḥmad Brailwī is derived from *Sīrat-e-Syed Aḥmad Shahīd*<sup>3</sup>, a key source for 'Ali al-Ṭanṭāwī's book, authored by Mawlana Abū al-Ḥasan 'Ali al-Nadawī. The historical records from this source are further verified through works like *Syed Aḥmad Shahīd*<sup>4</sup> by Ghulam Rasul Mehr<sup>5</sup> (1895-1971) and *Almiyah Tarīkh*<sup>6</sup> by Dr. Mubarak Ali<sup>7</sup>, a renowned Pakistani historian.

Syed Aḥmad Brailwī was a mystic. He founded a group of religiously motivated fighters (Mujāhidīn) and was their military and mystic leader. The armed movement of Syed Aḥmad was a blend of Sufism and Islamism. It was launched for the revival of Islamic Khilāfah, or the Kingdom of God, during the diminishing Muslim political power of the Mughals in the subcontinent.

Syed Aḥmad was born on November 29, 1786 CE, in the town Rā'ai Brailī, situated in Uttar Pradesh (UP), India, in a religious family of mystics. He came to Lucknow at around 17, looking for a job, but was unsuccessful due to declining economic conditions. The weakening of the Mughal Empire encouraged the local landlords and warlords to establish their independent states and armies. That led to constant warfare in the land. These landlords and warlords used to attack their neighboring states to extort money or extend their rule. The trade was low and jobs were scarce. Syed Aḥmad traveled to Delhi and became a disciple of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, the son of the renowned Islamic scholar of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Shāh Walī Uallāh. He stayed in his monastery from 1806 to 1811 CE<sup>8</sup>.

Syed Aḥmad had a slim interest in religious education. He left his studies but continued receiving spiritual training in Sufism, mainly, from Shāh 'Abdul Qādir, another son of Shāh Walī Uallāh, for a brief period. Then, he returned home and got married.

Following his interest in war or Jihād, as maintained by Abū al-Ḥasan 'Ali al-Nadawī or because of the scarcity of jobs, as suggested by Dr Mubarak 'Ali, he joined the army of the Nawāb Amīr Khan, the ruler of Tonk, India, because this was the only reliable way to get some livelihood. Nawāb, like other warlords, used to attack his neighboring states to extort money and feed his troops. He provided his service to Hindu Marahatās and Rajpūts against their rivals<sup>9</sup>. When the East India Company got a strong hold on India, it enforced peace in the land. It compelled the warlords to stop their warfare. Nawāb Amīr Khan had to end his military activities against a fixed stipend from EIC and downsize his army. Thousand soldiers were laid

off including Syed Aḥmad. However, according to al-Nadawī, he left Nawāb's army because he disapproved of Nawāb's capitulation to EIC.<sup>10</sup>

Syed Aḥmad returned to Delhi to acquire further training in Sufism from the monastery of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz and started imparting it to other disciples of Sufism. Then, he made a tour visiting different parts of India to disseminate religious teachings, and spiritual training to purify the Muslims from the un-Islamic influences that they had received from Hinduism and also from Shi'it<sup>11</sup>.

He received acceptance and reverence from the masses. Then, he promulgated his expedition to Makkah for the pilgrimage (Ḥajj). Ḥajj had not been in practice for some time in India, because the Muslim scholars had exempted the Indian Muslims from going on pilgrimage to Makkah for the odds and insecurity of the traveling. Syed Aḥmad made his journey from Rā'ai Brailī to Mirzāpūr to Banāras to Calcutta (India), wherefrom he voyaged to Makkah with a caravan of almost 800 Muslims.<sup>12</sup>

Upon returning from Hajj, he initiated the promotion of the movement of Jihād (armed struggle) against the Sikh regime of Maharaja Ranjīt Singh of Punjab accusing him of persecuting the Punjabi Muslims. However, historical evidence does not confirm such persecution on a large scale. Maharaja Ranjīt Singh was known for treating his subjects fairly, regardless of religion

Syed Aḥmad's movement of armed struggle started in 1826. He traveled far and wide in India to call the Muslims to join him as Mujāhidīn (the fighters in the name of God or vigilante) of Islam. He traveled from Rā'ai Brailī to Mārwār (Sindh, Pakistan) to Shikārpūr to Shāl (Quetta, Baluchistan, Pakistan) and from there to Peshawar, (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan). He visited a few cities in Afghanistan and finally arrived at Mansehra (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan). Everywhere he received a warm welcome from the local people and chieftains. However, he could bring only around 500 people from India with him. He was expecting that the Pashtūn tribal people, known for their warlike characteristics and enthusiasm for religion, would join him. He made Peshawar and the Samah his military base camp.

Syed Aḥmad declared Jihād against Maharaja Ranjīt Singh, alleging him persecuting Muslims. However, the alleged persecution is not confirmed by historians. The possibility of transgressions by some Sikh soldiers is not ruled out but Maharaja was known for his fair dealing with his subjects, irrespective of their religion. Muslims were employed in his army. The army that came to fight Syed Aḥmad included Punjabi Muslims.<sup>13</sup> There is no record of the migration of Punjabi Muslims from Punjab due to the alleged persecution of the Sikh regime, nor did they rush to join Syed Aḥmad who stood up in their neighborhood, to rescue them from the persecution of Ranjīt Singh. All his followers were from northern India.

Syed Aḥmad arrived in Mansehra and challenged Ranjīt Singh, without taking any formal consent from the local tribal chieftains who were living under the regime of Ranjīt Singh. He wrote a warning letter to Maharaja, asking him to embrace Islam, if not, he had to pay Jizyah (traditionally, a special tax levied on non-Muslims of an Islamic State) if not, then he was invited to fight. After the expected turndown of his offers, he, with his 700 fighters (including around 200 local participants), made a surprise raid at night on a Sikh troop of 7000 at the place of Akoṛā. He succeeded in disrupting the Sikh army.<sup>14</sup>

After that, he declared himself divinely appointed Imām (the religious-political leader of the Muslims). The chieftains of Pashtūn tribes pledged their allegiance to him in the hope of getting rid of the Sikh rule. He was able to gather an army of around one hundred thousand. But the Chief of the Durrānī tribe, Yār Muhammad Khan betrayed him, poisoned him during the battle of Shaidū, and retreated from the battlefield. Syed Aḥmad survived the poison but lost the battle. Later on, all his power was spent fighting with the local Pashtūn tribes, who turned against him for many reasons: They feared retaliation from the Sikh regime of Ranjīt Singh. Secondly, they did not like the declaration of Syed Aḥmad as their Imām and ruler of

the people without their consent. They considered him their warlord (Amir al-Jihād).<sup>15</sup> The Pashtūn joined him hoping that with the help of Syed Aḥmad, they would get rid of the rule of Ranjit Singh. They did not like that another foreigner, Syed Aḥmad, would rule them in the place of Ranjit Singh. Thirdly, strict and sudden imposition of Shari‘ah by Syed Aḥmad penalties and punishments for not observing Islamic rituals and injunctions turned them against him. Many of these measures imposed in the name of Shariah ran counter to their traditional and tribal practices. Fourthly, due to sectarian differences between them and Syed Aḥmad, they went against him. Syed Aḥmad and his followers had an inclination towards the Salafid school of thought, which does not follow a single principal jurist or Imām, while Pashtūns were bigot Hanafids, the followers of Imam Abū Ḥanifah. Further, the Brailwī scholars opposed Syed Aḥmad and wrote letters to Pashtūns discrediting him in the eyes of local people and their chieftains.

Apart from Syed Aḥmad’s civil wars against the Pashtūn tribes, whenever Sikh regular army came to attack him, he used guerrilla war style. His army would disperse in the hideouts across the mountains, or erect a fence or dig a ditch to defend themselves, but they never came in open to battle with them.

Syed Aḥmad won Punjtār from Yār Muhammad Khan and killed him. He won the city of Muzafrābād from Sikhs only for a short while and had to withdraw his troops from the city when the Sikh army came to reclaim it. He defeated Sultan Muhammad Khan and took Peshawar from him, but he gave it back to him voluntarily. Sultan Muhammad Khan, with other chiefs of tribes, conspired against him and assassinated the officials of Syed Aḥmad from Peshawar to Samah, the seat of Syed Aḥmad. Then, Syed Aḥmad decided to shift from Samah to Hazārah and Kashmir. But his local opponents led the Sikh army to his camp at Bālākōt. The Sikh army attacked them Syed Aḥmad along with some of his fighters rushed into the marsh, which he had prepared as a defense line against his enemy. It obstructed the movement and performance of his fighters. A fierce battle started and Syed Aḥmad along with almost all the leadership lost their lives. This incident took place on 6 May 1831 at Bālākōt (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan).<sup>16</sup>

### 3. The Account of Syed Aḥmad’s Armed Movement as told by ‘Ali al-Ṭanṭāwī

‘Ali al-Ṭanṭāwī presented quite a different picture of Syed Aḥmad and his movement. The major sources of his book are the books of his contemporary, Syed Abū al-Ḥasan al-Nadawī. Al-Ṭanṭāwī mentioned only al-Nadawī’s book as his primary source and quoted directly from his book. al-Nadawī is inspired by Aḥmad. al-Nadawī was from the line of Syed Aḥmad and had a personal affiliation with him. This made him biased in favour of Syed Aḥmad as indicated by his contemporary, Mr. Mas‘ud ‘Alam al-Nadawī. He writes:

“Unfortunately, my dearest friend and sincere brother’s (Abū al-Ḥasan al-Nadawī) approach is purely reverential, and he tried to evade the errors and shortcomings of the elders (Syed Aḥmad and his fellows).<sup>17</sup>

In his book, *Aḥmad bin Irfān al-Shahīd*, ‘Ali al-Ṭanṭāwī, states that Syed Aḥmad left his hometown for Lucknow because he wanted to go beyond the confinement of his small hometown as lava spews out from the volcano.<sup>18</sup> While the fact, that al-Nadawī mentions in his book is, he left his hometown in search of his livelihood.<sup>19</sup>

al-Tantawī writes that Syed Aḥmad left the military job in the army of Amīr Khan because his warfare was not Jihād against non-Muslims but for the sack of booty and monetary benefits.<sup>20</sup> Amīr Khan was no better than a warlord who invaded and threatened the states around him to extortion but Syed Aḥmad served him for around six years (according to al-Nadawī<sup>21</sup>) or seven (according to Dr Mubarak Ali<sup>22</sup>) years. The question is why he took that long to realize that his warfare was not Jihād but fasād (corruption in the land). On the contrary, we find no evidence of his objection to the military expeditions of Amīr Khan. He kept serving

him until EIC forced him to stop his warfare and downsize his army. Later, we find him following the pattern of Amīr Khan by establishing his Private army of freelance fighters.

al-Tantwī wrongfully associates Sikhism with Zoroastrianism. He writes:

والشيخ (او السيک) طائفة من المجوس من اتباع كرونانك وهو مجوسی<sup>23</sup>

Sikh is a sect of Magus (Zoroastrianism) and the founder of Sikhism, Guru Nānak was a Magus.

This is not true. It is well known that Guru Nānak was a Panjabi and belonged to a Hindu family, and Sikhism has no connection with Zoroastrianism.

al-Tantwī writes that Syed Aḥmad's a good number of people pledged him for Jihād<sup>24</sup> but the actual number of people who accompanied him to the Northwestern tribal areas was only around 500<sup>25</sup>.

al-Tantwī writes at page 30 of his book:

وكان العدو أكثر عدداً واكمل عدداً واكثر خبرة بالقتال ولكنه لم ينتصر وانتصر المجاهدون وهزموا جيوش الطغاة  
الظالمين المعتدين وملكو ابلادهم وما زالوا يفتحون حصناً بعد حصن حتى احتلوا (بشاور) المدينة العظيمة<sup>26</sup>

(Although) the enemy (Sikh regime of Ranjit Singh of Punjab) was more powerful in terms of numbers, far well equipped with arms, and more skilled in warfare, but they were not supported by Allah, rather, the Mujāhidīn were supported by Allah. Mujāhidīn defeated the forces of transgressors and wrongdoers and occupied their lands and their castles fell to their hands one by one until they conquered the great city of Peshawar.

This never happened. Syed Aḥmad He never defeated a regular Sikh army. All his achievements were his surprise night attacks and hit-and-run ventures against the Sikh troops. Whenever he had to face a regular Sikh army, his humble force of a few hundred fought behind a fence, dug a ditch, or dispersed in the mountains.<sup>27</sup> He could never stand against the regular Sikh army. The cities or castles he won were from the Pashtūn chieftains, many of them were killed in fighting against him. As mentioned above, he won Punjtār from Yar Muhammad Khan, a Muslim Pashtun chief of Durranī tribe, after killing him in the battle. He won the city of Peshawar from another Muslim Pashtūn chief, Sultān Muhammad Khan, not from Sikhs as claimed by al-Tantwī. He did win the city of Muẓaffarābād from the Sikhs, but only for a short while, he had to leave it as soon as the Sikh army came to reclaim it.

'Ali al-Ṭanṭāwī never mentions his battles with Muslim Pashtūn tribes, rather he negates the fact that he fought against them. He states that the Afghan warriors were motivated against Syed Aḥmad's officials to assassinate them.<sup>28</sup> This is not true. His officials were not killed by Aghans, but they were killed by the Pashtūns whom he was trying to rule. His officials were assassination by Sultān Muhammad Khan from Peshawar and by the chieftains of Samah.

In this perspective of his fights with the Pashtūns, read the following statement of 'Ali al-Ṭanṭāwī. He writes on page number 33 that when the tribal Muslim chiefs went against him and killed his 150 officials<sup>29</sup>, he decided to leave the place to avoid fighting and killing the Muslims, as it was not lawful for him to fight Muslims. His actual words go:

ولبارى الشيخ احمد والشيخ اسماعيل ومن معها انه لا طاقة لهم بهم ولم يجوزوا لانفسهم قتل المسلمين وهم انما  
خرجوا القتال الكفار الباغين<sup>30</sup>

When Sheikh Ahmad, Sheikh Ismail, and those with them saw that they had no strength to face them, they did not permit themselves to kill Muslims, for they had only set out to fight the oppressive disbelievers.

This is quite an alteration of the historical facts. Syed Aḥmad had declared the local Pashtūns his rebel. He and his disciple Shah Ismāil had issued the religious verdict (Fatwā) that the tribal Muslims were hypocrites and their blood was lawful to be shed.<sup>31</sup> He fought against them for five years and killed hundreds of them including their chieftains.

#### **4. Conclusion:**

‘Allama ’Ali al-Ṭantāwī misrepresented the historical facts about the armed movement of Syed Aḥmad of India. He maintains that Syed Aḥmad left his hometown because his spirit could not stay confined to his small town, but he never mentions that he left his hometown in search of his livelihood. He admits that Syed Aḥmad left Nawab Amīr Khan because his warfare was not for Islam but for booty and extortion of money from other states, but he never criticizes him for being in the service of Non-Muslim states for six or seven years, participating in his wrongful activities. He gives the impression that several people from India gave their pledge to Syed Aḥmad for Jihād, while the fact is that only around 500 people accompanied him from India for Jihād. al-Tantawī skips the whole episode of Syed Aḥmad’s five-year-long civil war against the Muslim Pashtūns tribes in which hundreds of Pashtūns were killed. Furthermore, he gives the impression that he avoided fighting Muslims. He says that Syed Aḥmad defeated Sikhs and won their cities and castle, this is incorrect. All his achievements were against Muslim Pashtūn tribes, which al-Tantawī replaced with Sikhs. He writes that Afghān fighters came to kill his 150 officials. This is not true. Those were the same Pashtūn whom he was trying to rule. They assassinated his officials. He never mentions why the Muslim Pashtūn tribes who welcomed him warmly in the beginning and participated in the first battle under his leadership against Sikhs, turned so vehemently against him. He writes that Sikhism is a branch of Zoroastrianism and the Guru Nanak was a magus. This is not true. Guru Nanak was a Punjabi and belonged to a Hindu family and Sikhism has no connection with Zoroastrianism. The alleged persecution of Maharaja Ranjīt Singh is not proven. Several Muslims were employed in his army. No Punjabi Muslim joined Syed Aḥmad nor do we find migration of the Punjabi Muslims from Punjab because of the alleged persecution during the Ranjīt Singh regime.

## References:

- <sup>1</sup> Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī al-Nadawī, *Tehqīq-o-Insāf kī 'Adālat Mian Aik Mazlūm Muṣliḥ kā Muqadamah*, 1st ed. (Lahore: Syed Aḥmad Shahid Academy, 1979).
- <sup>2</sup> Shaikh 'Ali bin Mustafa al-Tantawī, born in Syria in 1909 with Egyptian roots, was a prominent scholar, journalist, and broadcaster. A law graduate from Damascus University in 1932, he served as a teacher across Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon before joining the Syrian judiciary. He played a role in drafting family laws during the Egypt-Syria union and actively supported Arab independence movements. In 1963, he moved to Saudi Arabia, where he taught, wrote extensively, and anchored popular radio and television programs for 25 years. He passed away in Jeddah in 1999 at the age of 90, leaving behind a rich legacy of knowledge and moderation. (retrieved from <https://kingfaisalprize.org/sheikh-ali-at-tantawi/> on 10/10/2024)
- <sup>3</sup> Its 9th edition, published by Majlis-e-Tehqīqat wa Nashriyat-e-Islam, Lucknow, India is consulted for this paper.
- <sup>4</sup> Dr Mubrak Ali's book was published by Kitāb Manzil, Kashmiri Bazar, 1952, Lahore
- <sup>5</sup> Ghulam Rasul Mehr hailed from Jallunder in East Punjab. A prolific writer, Mehr besides writing a bestseller interpreting Ghalib's poetry, Nawa-i-Saroosh also wrote on other topics of historical significance. He also translated more than 50 books from Persian, Arabic, and English into Urdu. Retrieved on 10 Oct 2024 from <https://www.journalismpakistan.com/hall-of-fame-profile-detail.php?id=18&pageid=famed>
- <sup>6</sup> His book was published by Tarikh Publications, Lahore, Pakistan (2012).
- <sup>7</sup> Dr Mubarak Ali, (born 21 April 1941) is a Pakistani historian, activist, and scholar. Retrieved on 10 Oct 2024 from <http://www.dr-mubarakali.org/biography.html>
- <sup>8</sup> Dr Mubarak Ali, *Almiyah Tarikh*, (Lahore: Tarikh Publications, 2012), 107
- <sup>9</sup> Jadunath Sarkar, *The Fall of the Mughal Empire*, vol. 4 (Calcutta: M.C. Sarkar and Sons, 1950), 270–276. Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī al-Nadawī, *Sīrat-e-Syed Aḥmad Shahid*, 9th ed., vol. 1 (Lucknow: Majlis-e-Tehqīqat wa Nashriyat-e-Islam, n.d.), 141.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid., 144.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>12</sup> Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī al-Nadawī, *Sīrat-e-Syed Aḥmad Shahid*, 9th ed., vol. 1 (Lucknow: Majlis-e-Tehqīqat wa Nashriyat-e-Islam, n.d.), 344.
- <sup>13</sup> Mubarak Ali, *Almiyah Tarikh (Lahore: Tarikh Publications, 2012)*, 107.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid, 502.
- <sup>15</sup> Ghulām Rasūl Mehr, *Syed Aḥmad Shahid*, vol. 1 (Lahore: Kitāb Manzil, Kashmiri Bazar, 1952), 374.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid. vol 2, 468-475
- <sup>17</sup> Mas'ūd 'Alam Nadawī, *Hindustān kī Pehlī Islamī Tehrīk*, (Delhi: Markazī Maktabah Islamī Publishers, 1999), 8
- <sup>18</sup> 'Ali al-Ṭanṭāwī, *Aḥmad bin Irfān al-Shahid* (Damascus: Dar al-Fikr, 1997), 16.  
His words go:  
وَضَاقَ بِهَذَا الْبَلَدِ الصَّغِيرِ وَهَذِهِ الْحَيَاةِ الْمَتَشَابِهَةِ وَكَانَ نَشَاطَهُ الْحَبِيسِ يَقْرَعُ جِوَانِبَ نَفْسِهِ كَمَا تَلَطَّمَ الْحَمِيمُ جِوْفَ الْأَرْضِ لِتَتَفَجَّرَ (بِرْكَانًا) مِنْ فَوْهَةِ الْجِبَلِ
- <sup>19</sup> *Sīrat-e-Syed Aḥmad Shahid*, 114
- <sup>20</sup> *Aḥmad bin Irfān al-Shahid* 19-20
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid, 139
- <sup>22</sup> *Almiyah Tarikh*, 107
- <sup>23</sup> *Aḥmad bin Irfān*, 28
- <sup>24</sup> *Aḥmad bin Irfān al-Shahid*, 28
- <sup>25</sup> Syed Muhammad 'Ali, Mukhzan-e-Aḥmadī (Persian), (Agra: Mufīd-e- 'Aām, 1882), 117
- <sup>26</sup> *Aḥmad bin Irfān*, 30
- <sup>27</sup> See for details the description of his battles by Abu al-Hasan al-Nadawī in his book, *Sīrat-e-Syed Aḥmad Shahid*
- <sup>28</sup> *Aḥmad bin Irfān*, 32. His actual words are:  
وَسَاقُوا عَلَيْهَا مِنْ قِبَائِلِ الْأَفْغَانَ سَيْلًا مِنَ الرِّجَالِ الْأَشْدَاءِ لَهُ أَوْلٌ وَلَيْسَ لَهُ آخِرٌ فَوَضَعُوا السِّيُوفَ فِي رِقَابِ هَذِهِ الْقَتْنَةِ مِنَ الْمَجَاهِدِينَ وَقَتَلُوا هُمْ رَاكِعِينَ وَسَاجِدِينَ
- <sup>29</sup> *Sīrat-e-Syed Aḥmad Shahid*, vol 2, 344
- <sup>30</sup> *Aḥmad bin Irfān*, Pg 33

<sup>31</sup> Makātib Syed Aḥmad Shahid, (Lahore: Maktabah Rashīdiyyah Ltd. 1975), 12, 16- 17

From a historical perspective, facts must always be determined on the basis of authentic and reliable historical sources. Folk narratives, over time, tend to lose their scholarly credibility. Therefore, the history of the renowned figures associated with the struggle for freedom and autonomy in the Subcontinent must also be understood and evaluated within a rigorous academic framework. (Co-Author)