

**The Correction Series of the Fallacies  
Published About Islam and Muslims**

**3**

# **THE LIFE OF THE PROPHET**

**Correction of the Fallacies  
in the Encyclopedia of Islam  
(Published by Brill, Leiden, Holland)**

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## Table of Contents

Foreword .....	7
Preface .....	9
Introduction: The Orientalist’s Treatment of the Prophet’s Life	13
<b>Part One: The Meccan Stage of the Prophet’s Life</b> .....	<b>33</b>
Chapter One: The Prophet’s Childhood and the Early Signs of his Prophethood .....	35
Chapter Two: From the Call to Prophethood to Emigration From Mecca .....	53
Chapter Three: The Claim that the Emergence of the Prophet was Gradual .....	63
Chapter Four: Their Discrediting of the Major Events in the Life of the Prophet before the Hijra .....	87
<b>Part Two: The Medinan Stage of the Prophet’s Life</b> .....	<b>93</b>
Chapter One: Errors in <i>The Encyclopedia’s</i> Treatment of The Prophet’s Hijra .....	95
Chapter Two: Errors in the Description of the Prophet’s Dealing with the Jews of Madina .....	103
Chapter Three: Errors in the Treatment of the Raiding Parties (Saraya) and Military Expeditions (Ghazawat) ...	123
Chapter Four: The Exaggeration of the Political Effects of The “Ifq” Incident .....	137
Chapter Five: Raising Doubt about the Prophet’s Letters to Kings and Rulers .....	141
Chapter Six: Miscellaneous Allegations .....	149
The Correction of the Errors in the <i>Encyclopedia’s</i> Treatment of the Hadith .....	159
Bibliography .....	171

## Foreword

In an attempt to render more complete its endeavour to consolidate Islamic culture and preserve the independence of Islamic thought from the effects of cultural invasion and distortion, the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO) strives to correct the false information and notions about Islam and Muslim contained in encyclopedias and approved references that are widely consulted. The Islamic Organisation gives special attention here to the correction of the mistakes found in *The Encyclopedia of Islam* (published by Brill in Leiden, Holland), because of the cultural importance that it has acquired as a result of its wide circulation among students and scholars.

For many years now, the Islamic Organisation has given attention to the refutation of the false allegations and ideas contained in this *Encyclopedia* with regard to the Holy Quran and Muslim religion. To respond to these falsehoods, the Islamic Organisation has relied on sound scientific method and scholarly methodology which deploy the instruments of unbiased historical research and the means of honest, objective refutation. Thus, it has published two books in three languages: Arabic, French and English.

The present book, which is also published by ISESCO, follows the same methodology adopted in the writing of the two previous books. For it relies on fair argumentation that is based on logical proof and clear evidence in its refutation of the false claims and inventions published in *The Encyclopedia* about the Prophet's life. This is a tendentious treatment that has nothing to do with historical facts and the rules of scientific research which depends on objectivity, fairness and intellectual integrity. The causes of such flaws is the reliance

of the authors of *The Encyclopedia* materials on unreliable sources, doubtful references and their deliberate ignorance of authentic historical sources which are not tinted by desire or interest.

In presenting the third book of this series to researchers, scholars and specialists, the Islamic Organisation takes this opportunity to praise its fruitful cooperation with the International Islamic Charity Organisation in Kuwait. Part of the yield of this cooperation is the elaboration of this book in an attempt to let Islamic truths prevail and be crystal clear to everybody, while refuting the misleading and suspicious ideas which have been disseminated about the True Religion through false claims and inventions.

I would like to thank my dear friend His Excellency Professor Yussuf Jassem Al Hajji, the President of the International Islamic Charity Organisation for his cooperation with ISESCO in realizing this scientific, Islamic project which will be of great benefit to Islamic culture, Allah Willing.

May Allah crown our efforts in the service of our religion, culture and civilisation with success, and may He make this work beneficial to truth-lovers and knowledge-seekers among researchers and scholars.

**Dr. Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri**

Director General of the Islamic  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultrual Organization

## Preface

Praise be to Allah Who sent His Messenger (PBUH) with guidance and True Religion and made him the bearer of glad tidings and warnings, like a lamp which spreads light and offers guidance. May Allah's peace be upon the most honoured of His Messengers and the best of all His Creatures. Allah has chosen him and endowed him with the most noble qualities and the best moral conduct, thus making him an excellent exemplar for All humankind.

Now to our topic :

The excellent biography of the Prophet (PBUH) offers lofty moral lessons and renders a great service to humanity, because it is a faithful record of the Messenger's life, a clear mirror of his noble moral standards, his conditions, ideal qualities, as well as a guiding light sent down from Heaven to show humanity the right path. The Muslim, and people in general, can find on its pages the noble model of human perfection, embodied in the life of a man who actually walked on earth and did actually live among people.

This is one of the bounties Allah has granted to humanity, for a human being, as it is known among educationalists and moralists, does not improve his behaviour and moral conduct when good morals and noble ideals are presented to him on the level of theory alone. But he becomes influenced by them when he sees them acted out in real human situations.

As a result of this, the biography of the Prophet (PBUH), which offers among its highly noble pages enlightening human experiences, excellent examples, and a noble model of human perfection that

all people aspire for, provides lofty moral lessons, and is highly honoured among Muslims.

Consequently, Muslims attached great importance to preserving the account of the Prophet's life, thus recording his living conditions, acts and moral conduct which they were eye-witness to. This enterprise was undertaken by a number of his noble Companions and Followers, who honestly and faithfully recorded the very reality of his life, his good qualities, moral values and brilliant attributes.

Similarly, Orientalists paid great attention to the life of the Prophet (PBUH), about which they wrote many books for various purposes; a minority of them were objective, while the majority were prejudicial.

Afterwards, *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, which was published by Brill (in Leiden, Holland) in English, French and German, and which went through many editions (among which is the 1993 edition), presents the results of the Orientalist studies about the life of the Prophet (PBUH). Yet it tends to favour the writings of authors who display a very prejudicial attitude towards Islam.

Because of the importance given to this *Encyclopedia* in academic circles both in the West and the East, and due to its wide circulation among researchers in different fields of Islamic culture and knowledge, the revision of its contents and the correction of the shocking errors made in its treatment of the Prophet's life, etc., has become an urgent matter, an inescapable obligation, as well as a pressing responsibility that Muslims have to take into account in an attempt to defend the Messenger (PBUH), to do justice to his unblemished life, and to make truth prevail and falsehood vanish.

The elements concerning the life of the Prophet (PBUH) are scattered throughout the volumes of this *Encyclopedia*, but the entry:

“Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam” incorporates the subjects of the ‘*Sira*’ and its different stages in a twenty-seven page text where the bulk of the errors and false allegations of the Orientalists is to be found.

Short references are also made to some details related to events in the life of Muhammad (PBUH) in other entries of the *Encyclopedia* which deal with:

- the places where he lived or travelled such as “Makkah”, “Al-Madinah” and “At-Taif”, or the places where “Ghazawat” (wars) were fought or the names of these “Ghazawat”, such as “Badr”, “Uhud”, “Al-Ahzab”, “Al Hudaybiya”, “Hunayn”, “Mu’tah”, and “Tabuk”;
- the names of the Arab or Jewish communities or quarters, such as “Al Hunafa”, “Ar-Ruhban”, “Bani Al-Mustalaq”, “Bani Salim”, “Ahl Najran”, “Bani Qaynuq’a”, “Bani An-Nadir” and “Bani Quraydha”;
- the names of the Companions (MABPWT) such as “Abu Bakr”, “Umar”, “Othmane”, “Ali”, etc. Or the names of enemy Unbelievers, such as “Abu Lahab” and “Abu Jahl”

But the most important entry is “Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam”, where the events of the Prophet’s life are dealt with in a brief and selective way, and where most of the errors and fabrications reiterated in Orientalist texts about his life are included. *The Encyclopedia* presents this material in a language characterized by trickery and distortion at times, and outright lying or deliberate slandering at others.

In order to be brief and so as not to repeat myself, I have summed up the mistakes scattered in the different entries of *The Encyclopedia*

pertaining to the life of the Prophet (PBUH) in clear Arabic, without deeming it necessary to keep to the literal translation of the original. Then I corrected these mistakes by referring to the Holy Quran, the Hadith Traditions and the '*Sirah*' Biographical Writings, as well as to the exegetical and historical sources. I have tried to be objective and to avoid, as far as possible, prejudicial or injurious statements. May Allah grant us success.

**Dr. Ahmed Abu Zayd**

## **Introduction**

### **The Orientalists' Treatment of the Prophet's Life:**

#### **I. A Brief Outline of their Methodology in Studying Islam:**

First of all, it is necessary to acknowledge clearly and frankly the efforts made by the Orientalists in the service of the Islamic intellectual heritage. For they have devoted their energy to studying the different fields of Islamic knowledge whose treasures have captivated them, and to analysing and authenticating documents, a task that required tremendous efforts. It would be ungrateful and presumptuous to deny their contribution in this connection. It is thanks to their work that many treasures of the Islamic intellectual heritage have been brought to light and published after they had been confined to library shelves for many centuries. Actually, many a scientific work and historical document were published for the first time through these efforts.

Notwithstanding our acknowledgement of the service rendered by the Orientalists, it should be stressed here that the objective of the large majority of these scholars has been the search for the weak spots in Islamic civilisation and history and their use for political and religious purposes.

The huge amount of intellectual work accomplished by the Orientalists in the various fields of Islamic studies is a bottomless sea, so to speak. Yet the most common standard reference among the researchers of all levels is *The Encyclopedia of Islam* which was prepared and published under the patronage of the International

Union of Academies. Most of its contents deal with Islam and the Muslims, and include opinions and information that need revision and rectification.

If we take into account the fact that this encyclopedia plays a major role in giving a false image of Islam and abounds in absurdities, we will have an idea of how Orientalists study Islam and conceive of Islamic civilisation. Thus, we will be all the more aware of the urgent need not only for the revision of the information it provides and the correction of the distortions therein, but also for the examination of the ideas and opinions it contains which are pernicious to both Islam and the Muslims.

The ideas and judgements of some modern Orientalists have improved and become free of some aspects of bias and hostility which are due to differences related to religion or interests, or caused by a shortage in the number of references available to Orientalists, as well as the latter's ignorance of the Arabic language and the bad quality of old translations. Yet some of their writings about the Islamic religious and intellectual heritage still contain all sorts of machinations and distortions, resulting from their evil intent at times, and from their misunderstanding of historical facts or the specificities of the Islamic vision at others.

These Orientalists were, and still are, ignorant of numerous facts pertaining to the Islamic culture; they will remain so as long as they live in an intellectual and cultural environment that is alien to the Islamic civilisation, and so long as they look at it from a perspective tinted by their culture and milieu.

Furthermore, their coming from a materialistic intellectual background will make it difficult for them to understand the spiritualism inherent in the Islamic civilisation and history. For a materialistic and historical interpretation alone is not suitable for

the explanation of the Muslim's work and behaviour, or for the study of Muslim history. The goal of a Muslim in all the acts he performs throughout his life is primarily the desire to please Allah; therefore, his conception of things and the standards by which he evaluates them differ in essence from the conception and standards of a materialistic person:

- *“Is then the man who believes no better than the man who is Rebellious and wicked? Not equal are they.”*<sup>(1)</sup>
- *“Shall We treat those who believe and work deeds of righteousness, the same As those who do mischief On earth?”*<sup>(2)</sup>

### **A Critique of the Methodology of Modern Orientalists:**

The early Orientalists openly expressed their hostility to Islam, attributing all kinds of shortcomings and evils to it and assaulting it with lies and calumnies.

Modern Orientalists have changed their methods; they have abandoned direct slandering and open hostility, and pretended to be fair and objective, so as to meet the requirements of scientific research. Their aim in doing so is to appeal to the Muslim reader in an attempt to win his confidence. Thus, they admit the flaws of their predecessors, and they shed light on the good qualities intrinsic to Islam, while implicitly resorting to intrigue and calumny.

The judicious Muslim reader discovers these secret machinations which lie behind a façade of pretentious fairness and objectivity. Some modern Muslim scholars have demonstrated that the writings

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(1) Surat *As-Sad*, Verse n° 8.

(2) Surat *As-Sajda*, Verse n° 18.

of modern Orientalists are far more dangerous than those of their predecessors, who openly displayed their hostility and filled their books with lies, calumnies and false allegations. For the former category managed by their tricky method to influence the less-judicious reader, who easily succumbs to the charm of their ideas. This is why we deem it rewarding to mention some of the criticism levelled against the modern Orientalists' way of writing about Islam:

### **1. Objectivity as a Smoke-screen:**

Many of these Orientalists claim to be objective in their studies and appear to be intent on providing true facts; they present a few positive aspects of Muslim religion and civilisation, which leaves the reader with the impression that these scholars are objective and committed to abiding by the rules of genuine scientific research. But when their studies are submitted to a critical mind and subjected to close scrutiny, they turn out to be fancies and fallacies.

These Orientalists, who hide under the cover of objectivity and fairness, are not in reality different from their predecessors, except in one aspect, namely that they do not reveal their fanaticism and hostility towards Islam in an explicit way, for they try to present their ideas in a way that would be appealing to Muslims.

Nevertheless, a fair researcher cannot deny the existence among modern Orientalists of a number of scholars whose scientific mind has prevented them from blindly adhering to Christian prejudice or to colonial ambitions. On the contrary, they tried to be truly objective, and spoke out the results of their studies, without falling prey to external influences. Some of them have converted to Islam and become its ardent defenders.

## **2. Setting Dubious Scientific Objectives:**

It is common practice among Orientalists to set a dubious scientific objective for themselves and to decide to achieve it by any means. Thus, they start hunting for evidence, without being in the least concerned about the credibility of the evidence or the reliability of its sources. That is why they collect information from all kinds of texts, be they prosaic or poetic, or they indulge in humour and buffoonery. Then, they present it in a bold manner after disguising it. Moreover, it is on this information that they base their judgements about Islam, judgements that exist only in their minds. The majority of these Orientalists conceal in their writings a certain amount of poison, as it were, while they strive not to offend the Muslim reader, render him suspicious or make him lose his confidence in the author.

## **3. Orientalism's Enjoyment of the Protection of the Church from the Start and that of Colonial Institutions in Modern Times:**

This protection has forced the field to be at the service of these circles and has prevented it from rising to the level of genuine scientific research that aims at fair judgement.

## **4. The Monks' and Priests' contribution to the Rise of Orientalism:**

A fact which played a major role in steering this field of study towards fanaticism and hostility towards Islamic civilisation. This is why modern Orientalists have been unable to cast aside the false and ridiculous ideas that had been perpetuated by their ancestors.

## **5. The Aversion of Orientalists to Scientific Methodology:**

A characteristic which appears in their neglect of the fundamental principles of this methodology and in their taking as a starting point

false allegations in the study of Islam, such as their consideration of the Holy Quran as a man-made text and the Prophet (PBUH) as an imposter, along with their heavy reliance on unreliable sources and their indifference to the authentic ones, as well as their drawing of evidence from false and vile accounts, while neglecting the firmly true ones.

### **6. The Orientalists' Recourse to Disguise and Deception in their Studies:**

A fact which is manifested in their mingling truth with falsehood, their cultivation of doubts under the cover of being committed to the socio-historical method, their misuse of evidence and their analysis of Islamic history in a misleading way, so as to serve the intended objectives and goals of Orientalism.

### **II. The Way the Orientalists Write the Biography of the Prophet:**

Orientalists, of diverse nationalities and backgrounds, have tried their hands at writing the biography of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). But very few were fair in their endeavour, while the majority were completely biased. This is not a surprise, for most of them were missionaries who were still filled with hatred for Islam and its adherents. This is the reason why they tried hard to scrutinise historical and biographical texts in the hope of finding gaps or breaches that might help them support their allegations by means of 'evidence'. Thus, whenever they came across a gap that would allow them to vent their hatred, they used it; or a spurious account that denied, or differed from the authentic facts, they brought it to light and celebrated it. They did not have the least concern for accuracy in this respect, even when they distorted the truth, as long as such a practice helped them and suited their fancies.

Strange though as it may seem, in order to quench their desires and inherited feelings of hatred, they bestowed an aura of authenticity and truth on the fabricated accounts and the apocryphal Judaic texts, as long as these sources supported their falsehood. When it came to the true accounts, however, they regarded them as inferior and fictitious, because such accounts did not coincide with the objectives which made the Orientalists interested in writing the biography of the Prophet (PBUH) in the first place.

The majority of these Orientalists launch their vehement attacks on the Messenger's way of life, falsely accusing him of all types of hideous attributes, which are not worth recalling here. The very few Orientalists who are known for their fairness refute this ignominious slander and treat the Prophet (PBUH) quite fairly. The number of the biographies of the Prophet (PBUH) written by both European Orientalists and others is large, indeed. These biographies include thin and substantial texts, as well as true and false elements. Among these authors are the fair and the just. Nevertheless, it must be stated that in the modern period, European Orientalists have been relatively fair in their treatment of the Prophet (PBUH) when compared to their predecessors. Had the Muslims awakened from their lethargy, carried out an organised Call to Islam Campaign and spent generously on it, they would have been able to correct a lot of falsehoods and discard a lot of misleading information and doubts cast upon their religion, history and civilization, the life of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) and his trustworthiness. Better still, large numbers of people in Europe and elsewhere would have converted to Islam.

### **Writing the Prophet's Biography with a European Mentality:**

Most of the Orientalists grew up in a European cultural environment with its specific ways of thinking and conception of things; they learnt to adhere to a materialistic and secular system of thought.

Predicatably, when they started analysing the events of the Prophet's life and the history of Islam, they were greatly influenced by this system, hence their straying far from the truth. For the rationalism of the European mind cannot yield any sound results when dealing with the history of the Prophets and the revealed religions which emerged in the East, or whose history and civilisation had a lasting influence. The best critique of this method is the one prepared by the French Muslim Orientalist Etien Dient, in whose book - *There is a Big Gulf between You and Us*, he refutes the ideas of the Jesuit Lamces. Dient's following words are to the point here:

**“The Orientalists who tried to criticize the life of the Prophet (PBUH) in this entirely European manner have spent three quarters of a century carefully investigating and scrutinising documents, as well as making allegations so as to undermine the validity of what the majority of Muslims accepted as being the correct account of the Prophet's life. They should have been able, after these long and thorough investigations, to refute the asserted opinions and well-known accounts of the Prophet's life. Have they been capable of achieving some of their aims? The answer is that they have been unable to prove the least new elements.**

**... However, when we carefully examine the new views advanced by these Orientalists, we find that they are confusing and chosen at random. More than that, the authors contradict each other or even themselves in what they allege.**

**... If we want to shed light on these contradictions, we will spend far too much time, without being able to get any facts about the life and conduct of the Prophet (PBUH). Thus, the only choice we have is to look at the writings of the Arabs about the Prophet's life.**

**... As to the authors who allegedly state that they wanted to produce a biography of the Prophet (PBUH), using a very scientific method, they did not agree on any important point.**

**In spite of their supposed investigations and revelations, they were only able to come up in this biography with characters who were not any better rooted in reality than the ones found in the stories written by Walter Scott and Alexander Dumas. For these storytellers imagined people belonging to their own society, people whom they could understand and among whom they noticed only a difference in terms of roles. As to these Orientalists, they seem to have forgotten that they had first of all to fill the wide gap between their Western mentality and that of the Oriental people they dealt with. For, without giving due attention to this observation, they would be in the wrong all along<sup>(1)</sup>.**

### **The Denial of the Prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH):**

The majority of the Orientalists deny the fact that Muhammad (PBUH) is a Prophet sent by Allah to deliver His Divine Message. They fumble in their interpretation of Revelation, for some attribute it to epileptic fits, some impute it to mental illness, and others to fantasies that filled his mind. It seems as if God has never sent any messenger whatsoever, and as if these Orientalists have never heard about the fact that the Prophets received their messages from God. Since all these Orientalists (both Jewish and Christian) acknowledge the existence of the Israeli Prophets and God's Revealed Messages to them, their rejection of the Prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH) is the result of their obstinacy and haughtiness, both of which are firmly anchored in their religious fanaticism.

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(1) Quoted from *Hader Al-'Alam Al-Islami* (The Muslim World Today) by the American author Luthrop. Tr. By A'ajjad Nuihid, commented and annotated by Shakib Arsalan. Dar Al-Fikr, Beirut. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 1971: the quote is attributed to the French Orientalist Etien Dient, who converted to Islam and wrote a book on the Prophet.

## **The Denial of the Divine Origin of the Holy Quran:**

In addition to their denial of Muhammad's prophethood, Orientalists reject the fact that the Quran is a revealed book. When they are dumbfounded by the historical facts it reports about the ancient peoples, facts that could not have come from an illiterate person, such as Muhammad (PBUH), they allege what the Unbelievers in the *Jahiliya* (the pre-Islamic Arabs) alleged before them, namely that the Prophet received this information from other people. Then, when they are dumbfounded by the Quran's references to scientific truths that had neither been known nor discovered until modern times, they attribute this to the Prophet's intelligence and genius.

## **The Denial of the Divine Origin of Islam:**

Similarly, these Orientalists deny the fact that Islam is a revealed religion and go on alleging that it was fabricated by Muhammad (PBUH), who patched it up from Judaism, Christianity and pre-Islamic paganism in Arabia. Yet they do not present any evidence supported by genuine scientific research to substantiate their claim. Theirs are no more than claims based on a few similarities either between Islam and the two other monotheistic religions, or between it and some of the ancient traditions and rituals pertaining to Arab paganism.

The limitations of the way the Orientalists dealt with the biography of the Prophet (PBUH) can be summed up as follows:

1. Recourse to selectiveness in their choice of sources and their drawing of material from them. For they use only what best serves their purposes.
2. Extreme bias which bespeaks their deep-rooted hostility to Islam and hatred for it.
3. Tendency to exaggerate some events, while minimising others.

4. Passing dangerous judgements on the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), his Companions, the Muslim religion, Islamic law, history and civilisation, with no evidence provided whatsoever.
5. Excessive use of the materialist model and its norms when studying the life of the Prophet (PBUH) and the events relating to it.
6. Interpretation and analysis of events in a manner that is not objective at all.
7. Reliance on less-reliable sources.
8. Daring to interpret Quranic Verses according to their whims, while neglecting the standard commentaries on the Holy Quran.

### **Sources for the Prophet's life:**

The two authors of “The Prophet's Life” in the *Encyclopedia of Islam* state that there are many diverse sources for the life of Muhammad (PBUH), the most important of which is The Holy Quran, which not only always coincides clearly with the actual changes and conditions prevailing at the time of the Prophet (PBUH), but also abounds in facts and allusions to events in his life. Then, they assert that the most commonly used sources in this respect, in addition to The Holy Quran, date back to the third and fourth centuries of the Hegira.

The two authors supply interesting information about the sources for the Prophet's life, but there are some points, in their text, which still need further clarification, discussion, and revision. Our discussion here will focus on two points:

1. their consideration of The Holy Quran as the primary source for the life of Muhammad (PBUH);
2. their consideration of the third and fourth centuries as the periods during which the most influential books on the life of the Prophet (PBUH) were written.

As to the first point, The Holy Quran is truly the first and predominant source for the life of the Prophet (PBUH). This is an unquestionable fact. But the two authors treat the Quran as a historical record which not only depicts the events of the Prophet's life in detail, but also plainly reflects his character and the different stages of his intellectual, spiritual and political development, in a manner not unlike the way intellectual and literary outputs reflect the distinctive scientific and intellectual characteristics of a scholar, or a literary figure or leader.

These ideas need to be discussed, for they are premised on the belief that The Holy Quran was written by the Prophet (PBUH), emanated from his personality and was in harmony with the events of his life. Though we approve of the fact that The Holy Quran is the predominant source of information on the messenger's life, we do not accept the view that it is a historical record which supplies a detailed account of his life, because The Quran is not a historical book. On the contrary, it is a Text that guides and sets the rules. Allah has revealed it to guide people to that which will not only improve their individual and social lives, but also help them understand the purpose of their existence, and establish an equitable system that ensures a decent life for every human being and shields him from oppression and aggression.

Therefore, we should not expect the Quran to present historical events in a detailed manner, or to provide a complete account of the Prophet's life. For the Quranic Verses themselves are not arranged in the Holy Book according to the sequence of their revelation. Moreover, it is difficult to know the reason for the revelation of many Verses, either because nothing was reported about them, or because of contradictions in the reported accounts.

This is why it is not appropriate to consider the Quran as a historical book, a record of the Prophet's life or a mirror of the development

of his character and career, in spite of the fact that there are implicit and explicit references to some of the actual events of his life in the Holy Book:

“[Anyone who claims] that the Quran reflects the intellectual development of the Prophet (PBUH) or depicts the progressive maturity of his views, ideas and teachings attributes to the Quran what it does not report. For the Quran is a Divine Revelation from Allah to His Messenger, whom He commanded to read His Holy Book, transmit it to people and live according to its instructions. The Prophet (PBUH) has nothing to do with the Quran, except that he received it from Allah and delivered it to people. Hence, it is not permissible to consider it as a mirror of his character nor as a reflection of his life. Neither the two authors who wrote about Muhammad (PBUH) in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, nor others had any historical or scientific evidence that would prove what they claimed about the consideration of the Quran as a record of the historical events in the life of the Prophet (PBUH)”.

(...)

“It is well-known that the authorship of some sacred texts are attributed to their originators or to those who wrote them down, as it is the case with the teachings of Confucius and the Biblical texts of Matthew, Marcus, Lucas and John. Having considered the Quran like these texts, some European Orientalists and scholars allege that the Prophet (PBUH) is the author of the Holy Book. Such a claim may be considered as a mere personal opinion of some Orientalists.”<sup>(1)</sup>

Namely, those who were influenced by their own religious culture. Yet, this does not definitely apply to the Quran. Scientific and

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(1) See the magazine *Al-Islam Al-Yawm*, which is published by ISESCO, n° 14. “Muraja’at Madat “Muhammad” in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*” by Dr. Anis Ahmad, p. 62.

intellectual evidences which prove that the Quran is a Revealed Book and that it cannot to be the product of a human mind are well-known, there is no need to dwell on them here.

As to the claim of the two scholars who wrote about the life of Muhammad (PBUH) in *The Encyclopedia of Islam* that the Quran is a historical record of the events in the life of the Prophet (PBUH), it is utterly wrong. They have made many mistakes, among which is their questioning of the existence of several major events in the life of the Prophet (PBUH) during the Meccan Period; they even go to the extent of considering them as false despite the fact that the authorities in the fields of study of the Hadith, the life of the Prophet (PBUH) and the history of Islam have all agreed to the truth of these events (This issue will be dealt with in detail later). Secondly, there is the two scholars' strange interpretation of some Holy Verses, which completely differs from what is reported in the books of exegesis - both Old and New. Thirdly, there is also their claim that the mission of the Prophet (PBUH) in Mecca was restricted to warning Arab people, and that he was not thinking then of founding a new religion, etc. There are other errors which will be corrected later, Allah willing. These errors stem from the fact that the Quran does not mention these events or dwell on these meanings, as well as from the two authors' neglect of other Verses which do not chime with their own opinions.

### **The Disregard of the Prophetic Traditions:**

Strange though it may seem, neither of the two scholars, who wrote about the Prophet's life in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, paid the least attention to the Prophetic Traditions. They did not draw upon these texts which contain attested facts and accounts which provide ample and detailed information on the life of Muhammad (PBUH),

his career and the different stages of his Call to Islam, despite their complaint about the difficulty of getting reliable historical data. We may wonder what made them entirely reject the Prophetic Traditions which are of paramount importance in this respect, and prompt them to look for information in the Holy Quran's hidden allusions, hints and terse implied meanings?

More curious still is their disregard of the Prophetic Traditions, while trying to find historical evidence in Islamic and pre-Islamic poetry. However, it is generally accepted that a genuine scientific method requires that a scholar should not rely on poetry in his attempt to prove or disprove the validity of historical events, so long as more reliable and authentic sources are available. Therefore, the two scholars should have drawn on the Prophetic Traditions, because the elements of the biography of Muhammad (PBUH) reported in these texts have been authenticated. The rule is that all the information concerning the life of the Prophet (PBUH) available in these authentic Prophetic Traditions is given top priority over what is reported in the accounts of the Prophet's wars (Al-Maghazi), his biography and history; so how about poetry?

The reason is that the Prophetic Traditions contain attested information which is the fruit of enormous efforts made by the authorities in the field in their subjection of the Traditions to severe scrutiny in terms of both ascription and solidity. Such close examination and critique were not reserved for the other sources. Therefore, we notice that the two scholars did not respect the requirements of genuine scientific research, for they disregard the Prophetic Traditions, while giving priority to the War Accounts, historical books and collections of poems.

It is worth noting that because of their specialisation, the Prophetic Traditions do not give ample information about the military

expeditions and the biography of Muhammad (PBUH); therefore, the Traditions do not provide a complete picture of the Prophet's life; the gap can be filled by turning to the specialised books on his life.

What has been said about the value of the Prophetic Traditions does not depreciate the value of the War Accounts and biographies ; these are ranked immediately after the Holy Quran and the authentic Prophetic Traditions, as far as their scientific and historical value is concerned.

What enhances the value and the regard given to the “books on wars” (Al-Maghazi) is that most of their authors, who were among the early followers of the Prophet (PBUH) and those who immediately came after them, were authorities in the field of the Prophetic Traditions; the Ulemas testified to their trustworthiness and righteousness. Among these authors are Aban Ibn Uthman Ibn ‘Affan (d. 110 H.), a reliable Hadith reporter and early follower (d. 94 H.), same as Aban and also one of the eminent theologian in Madina; ‘Aamer Ibn Sharhabil Acha’abi (d. 103 H.) - a reliable Hadith reporter and author of Kitab Al-Maghazi (A Book on Wars); A’assem Ibn ‘Umar ben Qatada (d. 119 H.) - a reliable Hadith reporter; Muhammad ben Muslim ben Shihab Az-Zuhri (d. 124 H.), an eminent Hadith reporter and a reliable authority for the most brilliant ‘Ulemas of the Impugnment and Amendment of the Prophetic Traditions; Mussa Ibn ‘Uqba (d. 140 H.), a reliable Hadith reporter and disciple of Az-Zuhri; Imam Malek praised his Book on Wars (Al-Maghazi), saying that “It is the most reliable in the field”; Yahya Ibn Mui’in also says, “Mussa Ibn ‘Uqba’s book on Az-Zuhri is the most reliable in this field”; Imam Shafi’i corroborates this as he says : “None of the Books on Wars is more reliable than Mussa Ibn ‘Uqba’s book, in spite of its small size and lack of most of the information found

in the works of other authors”; and finally, Muhammad Ibn Ishaq (d. 151 H.), one of Az-Zuhri’s disciples and authority on Wars, but his accounts do not all rank as reliable; however, ‘Ulemas agreed to ranking them as good on condition that the authorities on which they were related be attested. There are many testimonies in works specialising in the science of the Hadith which assert his honesty and the reliability of his accounts on the Prophet’s life<sup>(1)</sup>.

There is a wrong tendency among some Orientalists, who are imitated by some Muslim historians, to overvalue the “Book on Wars” by Al-Waqidi, giving it precedence over the Prophet’s biography by Ibn Ishaq. Actually, the latter’s book is both more accurate and more reliable, for the information it provides coincides with that reported in the Prophetic Traditions in many respects.

As to Al-Waqidi, the ‘Ulama judge him as less accurate, stating that he should not be relied on, especially when he is the only one to report a given event.

The “Books on Wars” (Al-Maghazi) and the biography of the Prophet (PBUH) have their scientific value which necessitates our reliance on them, but they do not all have the same level of accuracy and validity.

To conclude our discussion of the attitude of the two scholars of *The Encyclopedia* article on the Prophet (PBUH), we should wonder why they disregarded the reliable sources on the life of Muhammad (PBUH) and the Prophetic Traditions, and why they drew on the writings of the missionaries and Orientalists (both ancient and modern) about the Prophet and Muslim history, in spite of the fact that most of these authors had very little knowledge of the actual

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(1) Akram Diya Al-’Umari, *As-Sira An-Nabawiya As-Sahihah*, pp. 51-56.

events of the Prophet's life, its sources and spirit. This is the reason why their texts are of little value. Some of these authors are fair while others are biased. Some wrote in the vein of fanaticism and open hostility, so much so that their texts have nothing to do with the spirit of scientific research and objectivity.

It should be remarked that the two scholars do not distinguish between the fair and the biased among the Orientalists. They rather seem to draw on the prejudiced. It is evident that scientific integrity requires that a scholar should shun in his study of a personality all the elements he gets from its enemies and opponents.

What is strange about missionaries and Orientalists is that they take for granted the discredited accounts and the apocryphal Judaic texts as long as they suit their purposes and so long as they help them to validate any allegations that please them, while considering the accurate accounts, and even the most authentic ones, as being inferior and fabricated, because the latter category of documents does not lend credence to their forgeries.

Moreover, as they live in a materialistic society, it is difficult for them to grasp the kind of spirit that Islam teaches, a spirit which has been the guiding point of many of the events and achievements in the life of the Muslims since the time of Muhammad (PBUH). This spirit cannot be understood through reading and consultation; it can only be acquired through a deep understanding and awareness of the spirit of Islam and the extent to which this spirit is embedded in the minds of those who contributed to the development of Muslim history and civilization.

The ideas and judgements of some Orientalists have evolved in the twentieth century, and their writings have become fairer than those of their predecessors whose texts teem with bias and ill-will, because

of either the difference in terms of religion and interest, the paucity of the resources they had, their ignorance of the Arabic language, or the bad quality of ancient translations. However, all modern Orientalist texts are now free from falsehoods and distortions. These are deliberate at times; and at others, they are the result of misunderstanding historical facts.

For these and many other theological considerations, as well as factors, that are not mentioned here, scientific integrity requires the unbiased scholar to disregard all that is written by the Orientalists on the life of the Prophet (PBUH).

### **The Date on Which the Most Well-Known Books Dealing with the Prophets's Life were Written:**

The author of "Muhammad: the Prophet of Islam" in *The Encyclopedia of Islam* states that most of the commonly used sources on the Prophet's life date back to the third and fourth centuries of the Hegira. He expresses this in a way that would make the ordinary reader believe that the biography of Muhammad (PBUH) was not written and recorded until three centuries or more after the death of the Prophet (PBUH). It is evident that such a hint would raise doubt about the truth of the accounts, events and facts in these books.

It should be noted here that the examination of the validity of the sources by the author is very weak, indeed, not to say inexistent, as his statment below shows:

The sources that are mostly used in the study of the Prophet's life, in addition to the Quran, were written during the third and fourth centuries of Hegira and the most famous source of all is the biography of Muhammad (PBUH) by Ibn Ishaq (d. 151 H.).

However, the date of Ibn Ishaq's death, as is reported here, completely contradicts the authors's statement. Obviously, (151 H.) is mid - second century (Hegira), which means that Ibn Ishaq's book was written before his death; thus it cannot be classified as a third or fourth century work.

Actually, writing on the Prophet's life started in the second part of the first century, and we have seen above that the leading authors in this connection were among the early followers of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), such as Urwa Ibn Az-Zubair Ibn Al-Awam, Aban Ibn Uthman ben A'affan, Acha'abi, Az-Zuhri, Mussa ben Uqba, and others who lived in the first and second centuries.

For some reason, the author disregards the sources on the life of the Prophet which were written before the third century in spite of the fact that they are more accurate and reliable than others. Their authors, as seen above, are among Hadith Scholars who are well-known for their thorough investigation of events and accuracy in relating them. The science of Hadith criticism testify to this. Whatever the case may be, the sources that the author disregards are given precedence by the authorities on Hadith and the biography of the Prophet over the '*Tabaqat*' of Ibn Saad (d. 230H) on which he relied heavily. Ibn Saad subjected many of his relations to close scrutiny, as is stated by AL-Khatib Al-Baghadadi and Ibn Hajar AL-Aasqalan, but he drew on weak sources, such as Al-Waqidi's book on which he relied heavily, so much so that he was accused of plagiarism by Ibn An-Nadim<sup>(1)</sup>.

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(1) Ibid, pp. 61-66.

PART ONE

**THE MECCAN STAGE OF  
THE PROPHET'S LIFE**



## Chapter One

### **The Prophet's Childhood and the Early Signs of his Prophethood:**

#### **1. The Allegation that his Childhood is Obscure**

The author of this section alleges that the Messenger's date of birth is not known. He denies that Muhammad (PBUH) was born in "the Year of the Elephant", claiming that there is no chronological historical information about the Prophet's life during the Meccan Period. He goes on to deliberately belittle the nobility of Muhammad's descent and the reputation of his father, alleging that his kinship with the Madina people is not evident. Moreover, he questions the veracity of the Messenger's name and denies the truth of the major events in his childhood, which are considered as the early signs of Prophethood - such as the opening of his breast and his trade journeys to Syria as a child in the company of his uncle Abu-Talib. He also denies that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) took part in the re-building of the Ka'aba and disregards other events of paramount importance. It is obvious that the author deliberately tries here to raise doubt about the different aspects of the Prophet's childhood and the early period of his life in Mecca. This is why he omits the immovable truths, rejects accurate accounts that were passed on successively by an unbroken chain of transmitters and does not pay attention to what the authentic Hadith sources, the accounts of the Prophet's life, and historical books have unanimously agreed on as being valid. He seems to have passed his judgement in advance and only went on blindly to validate it, or to have started from an already set objective which he then endeavoured to achieve, without paying the least attention to genuine facts.

Here is a discussion of his views and allegations concerning the Meccan Period.

## 2. The Date of the Prophet's Birth:

The authentic Hadiths prove that the Prophet's date of birth is "the Year of the Elephant", precisely after the famous event related to the Elephant. Ibn Ishaq states that Muhammad (PBUH) was born on the 12<sup>th</sup> night of Rab'i I of "the Year of the Elephant", which is the most reliable of all the accounts that specify the month and day of his birth.

It was proved that the day of his birth was a Monday, as is corroborated by Muslim in his *Sahih*<sup>(1)</sup>, Abu-Dawud in *Sunan*<sup>(2)</sup> and Imam Ahmed in *Musnad*<sup>(3)</sup>. Moreover, Ibn 'Abbas (May Allah be pleased with him) states that "the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) was born on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> Rab'i I in the Year of the Elephant, and it is the same day of the week on which he ascended to the Heavens, left Mecca for Madina, and died, too". This has been agreed on by the majority of the 'Ulama<sup>(4)</sup>.

Khelifa ben Khayat states in his *Tarikh* that the versions which differ from the one above have all weak sources.

The majority of the 'Ulemas assert that the date of Muhammad's birth was in "the Year of the Elephant", a fact that is corroborated by modern studies carried out by both Muslim and Orientalist scholars who found that "the Year of the Elephant" corresponds to 570-71 A.D.

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(1) Muslim, *Sahih, Kitab As-Syam*, Hadith n° 1977.

(2) Abu-Dawud, *Sunan, Kitab As-Sawm*, Hadith n° 2071.

(3) Imam Ahmed, *Musnad*, 5/297.

(4) See Abu-Shabiya's *Mussannaf* and Ibn Qathir's *Assira An-Nabawiya*.

Following these reliable statements and the unanimity of the Ulemas, we should discard the arguments advanced by the author of the Chapter : “The Life of Muhammad” in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, namely his rejection of the birth of the Prophet (PBUH) in the “Year of the Elephant” and his negation of the occurrence of the event related to the Elephant in 570 A.D., which he alleges “It should have taken place before this date”.

It should be noted that the author of this chapter discredits facts and passes judgements, without taking the least trouble to provide evidence. His attitude is contrary to sound scientific methodology and open-mindedness, as well as to the principles of positivism to which the majority of European authors adheres, including the author in question. Moreover, his claim that there is no chronological historical information about the Prophet’s life during the Meccan Period is completely wrong. It seems that he relied on the Quran as a primary source for his research, while ignoring the Prophetic Traditions and doubting the validity of the accounts of the Prophet’s life, hence his view in this connection. For he did not find in the Quran a detailed relation of the Prophet’s life in his childhood and youth.

What corroborates our point of view here about the negative attitude of the author towards the sources for the life of Muhammad (PBUH), and about his heavy reliance on the Quran is that he refers to “Surat Ad-Duha” which mentions the Prophet’s growing up as a poor orphan, and then reiterates his view, namely that the information about the early stage of the Messenger’s life is very scarce, adding that “All the information the sources provide about this period is of little value with regard to the historical image of Muhammad (PBUH)”.

This is a misleading generalisation; for, as mentioned earlier, not all the sources pertaining to the Prophet’s life have the same level of

historical accuracy and veracity. Similarly, the information reported in these sources is not entirely of little value, as he alleges.

Despite the existence of a few less-reliable accounts in some sources, objective scientific research does not allow passing such an unfair judgement on the whole corpus of the sources for the life of Muhammad (PBUH), because there are among them reliable ones, which the Ulemas have praised, and whose accuracy they have established. It is in these sources that we find a detailed chronological relation of the most important events of the Prophet's life, from his childhood in Mecca to his reception of Allah's Revelation and to his migration to Madina. Similarly, they provide ample information about his noble descent, his parents, the conditions in which the pregnancy and delivery took place, his father's death, his breast feeding by a wet nurse, his mother's death, his growing up as an orphan under the protection of his grandfather Abd-Al-Muttalib and then of his uncle Abu-Talib, his work as a shepherd (tending the sheep of his uncle and those of some Qurayhis), his journey to Syria for trade in the company of his uncle Abu-Talib, his participation in "Hilf Al-Fudul" (the Committee of the Wisemen), his employment by Khadija bint Khuwaylid in her trade, his marriage to her later, his happy marital life which yielded boys and girls, his participation in the building of the Ka'aba, and his choice by the Qurayshi tribes to put the Black Stone in its place when the rebuilding of the Ka'aba was undertaken later. Furthermore, these sources describe his conduct, his high moral standards, his reputation among the Meccans as an honest and trustworthy person, hence their surnaming him Al-Amin (the Trustworthy). The sources also report his keeping away from participating in the fun and frivolous play of the Meccan adolescents, his avoidance of sharing his people's religious practices and beliefs, and his habit of retiring to the Hira Cave for worship, far away from the occupations of daily life.

Thus, we can refute the claim of the author concerning the difficulty of getting access to a chronological historical account of the Prophet's life, particularly the Meccan Period, because it is a claim that is completely wrong.

### • **His Belittling of the Prophet's Noble Descent**

Once more the author ignores the authentic sources for the Prophet's life, while relying on some random hints he found in poetic lines. He also quotes the following Quranic Verse: "*Also, they say: "why Is not this Quran sent Down to some leading man In either of the two (chief) cities?"*"<sup>(1)</sup>.

He considers the Banu-Hashim Family as not rising to the level of nobility of the Qurayshi families known for their noble descent, such as Banu-Umaya and Banu-Makhzum.

He states that the Prophet's father was an obscure figure and doubts that his real name was Abdullah (the Servant of Allah) before the advent of Islam.

He also says that Muhammad's grandfather had two names: Shayba and Abd Al-Muttalib, specifying that the relationship between the two names is obscure, as is their relationship to the Banu Shayba and the Banu Al-Muttalib families.

Furthermore, he states that as to his kinship on his mother's side, the Prophet (PBUH) has some less obvious connections with people in Madina (Yatrib), concluding that very little reliable information is known about Muhammad's descent because most of what is reported in this respect is influenced by later legends.

First of all, it should be noted here, that the author resorts to a style dominated by a tendency to question the validity of facts and

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(1) Surat Az-Zukhruf, verse n° 30.

deliberately raises doubt about the descent of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH).

Strange though it may seem, in his attempt to establish the fact that Muhammad (PBUH) was a member of the Banu Hashim to some unreliable poetry lines he contents himself - as if they were the only available evidence for this very serious issue. His reliance on poetry here is another illustration of his disregard of the information found in the Prophetic Traditions, the accounts of the Prophet's life, and the relevant historical books.

As to the Quranic verse, *“Also, they say: “Why Is not this Quran sent Down to some leading man ...”*, it is a reported speech of the Quraychi Infidels, who rejected the Prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH) and started finding pretexts based on their private standards, among which are that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) was not one of the leading men of the two “cities” - Mecca and At-Taif. In other words, they suggested that the Prophet should be a powerful and prominent man from one of the two “cities”. This is what the Holy Verse aims at. We have briefly explained the matter so as to show that the Holy Verse is not concerned with descent, as the author thought it was ; on the contrary, it deals with social status and tribal leadership which depended, according to the Infidels of *Al-Jahiliya* (The Pre-Islamic Pagans), on wealth and supremacy within the tribe.

His insistence on undermining the nobility of the Prophet's descent is contrary to truth and reality, for the Banu Hashim were prominent among the Qurayshis in terms of noble descent, a fact which Abu-Talib publically stressed in a large gathering attended by the leaders of Quraysh, which nobody contested. It was part of the speech he made during the ceremony of the announcement of the Prophet's marriage to Khadija (MABWH). He has it as follows:

*“Moreover, my nephew here will excel any Qurayshi man with whom he is compared as far as honor, nobility and merit are concerned. If he is not wealthy, it does not matter, for wealth is a life shadow, which, indeed, does not last-it is a frequently changing matter, as well as a retrieval loan. All in all, Muhammad’s descent is known to you”<sup>(1)</sup>.*

Besides, Abu-Sufyan, one of the enemies of the Prophet (PBUH), acknowledged this fact -namely the noble descent of the Messenger of Allah-when asked by Hercules (the Roman Emperor): *“How does his (the Prophet’s) descent rate among you?”* He answered, *“He is of noble descent”*. Heracles (Hercules) then added, *“The custom is that Prophets are chosen from among those who have a noble descent in their society”*.

In Al-Bukhari’s *Sahih*, especially the chapter “The Call on the Prophet to proclaim Islam”, there is an unbroken genealogy of his descent till Mua’ad Ibn ‘Adnan. This part of Muhammad’s genealogy was approved by the authorities in the field; they also agree that his remote ancestor is Ismail Ibn Ibrahim (Peace Be Upon him), though they disagree on the connecting links between Mua’ad ben ‘Adnan and Ismaïl<sup>(2)</sup>.

In Muslim’s *Sahih*, it is reported that the Prophet (PBUH) said, *“Allah has chosen the people of Kinana from among the offspring of Ismaïl, and from among Kinana Quraysh and from among Quraysh, Bani-Hashem, and He has chosen me from among Bani-Hashem”*.

One wonders on what scientific grounds the author allowed himself to disregard these reliable sources and strong proofs about the noble

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(1) *As-Sira An-Nabawiya Fi Dawi Al-Qur’an wa As-Suna*,

(2) Al-Bukhari, *Sahih, Kitab Al-Manaqib*, 4/238. Chapter: “Mab’ath”

descent of Muhammad (PBUH), and pass very serious judgements with no evidence whatsoever.

As to his claim that the Prophet's father was a shadowy figure, this has no negative impact on the Messenger's noble descent, or on his Prophethood. It seems that the author conceives of Prophethood as some kind of political leadership, and imagines that a Prophet should come from a family that has political leadership and influence. Furthermore, the father of Muhammad (PBUH) died at the age of twenty five (that is at an early stage of his youth). Had he lived longer, he might have succeeded his father in the leadership of the Bani-Hashem family, and thus become not only one of the prominent men of Quraysh, but also one of its chiefs who achieved great renown.

As to his question of the fact that the real name of the Prophet's father was Abdullah, claiming that this name seems to have been given him after the advent of Islam, it is completely wrong, for the Hadith, and the biographical and historical sources all agree on the validity of this name. None of the historians and genealogists has ever expressed any hesitation or doubt in this respect.

Moreover, his claim that the connection between the two names given to the grandfather of the Prophet (PBUH), namely Shayba and Abd Al-Muttalib, is obscure stems from the scarcity of his data. For the issue here is easy and evident since the man was named Shayba at the beginning of his life, (and this is his first name) ; later he was nicknamed Abd Al-Muttalib by which he finally became known among his people. Both the biographers of the Prophet and historians were aware of this matter and did not see any obscurity therein.

As to the author's claim that on his mother side, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) had less clear connections with Madina (Yatrib), it is

unfounded, too, and stems either from the scarcity of the information he had, or from his ignorance of the data found in biographical and historical sources.

It seems that he has based his opinion here on the reference found in *Sirah* books to the fact that the maternal uncles of the Prophet (PBUH) were Banu An-Najjar, who lived in a district of Madina, and thus thought that the mother of the Prophet (PBUH) had direct family connections with Madina. This bears no relation to reality, for her name was Amina bint Wahb ; she came from Banu Zahra of Quraysh, and shared the same lineage with her husband Abdullah in that their common ancestor was Kallab. Therefore, she was a pure Qurayshi.

As to the Messenger's connection with Madina, it results from the fact that the mother of his grandfather Abd AL-Muttalib was Salma bint 'Amru An-Najjariya, who got married to Hashim ben Abd Manaf, the father of Abd Al-Muttalib. Hashim was a wealthy trader who traveled a lot between Mecca and Syria. On one of his journeys he stayed at Madina, where he saw Salma An-Najjariya whom he fell in love with and married. She gave birth to Abd Al-Muttalib, whom she named Shayba.

#### **• The Opinion of the two Authors about the name of the Prophet (PBUH)**

After mentioning what has been reported by the biographies of the Prophet (PBUH) about the fact that he was known by the surname of Al-Amin (the Trustworthy), which he was given in recognition of his righteousness and trustworthiness, the two authors try hard to strip the Prophet (PBUH) of this nobility of character and deserved recognition so much so that they impose on this laudable surname a meaning devoid of all moral excellence. For they allege that Al-Amin was his original name, giving as evidence their claim that

the word “Al-Amin” and his mother’s name “Amina” are derived from the same root, for the term “Al Amin” is the masculine form, while “Amina” is the feminine one. They then add that it is also the case with the name “Muhammad” which is a masculine form, while “Muhammada”, its feminine form, is a woman’s name found in the Himyarite language.

Such a farfetched hypothesis, which is not based on strong evidence, cannot be resorted to, except when no reliable data exists. But when strong and established proofs are available, it is not acceptable to give free rein to mere assumption and conjecture.

The two authors ignore what is proved by the Holy Quran and the authentic Hadith ; they disregard not only the true historical facts, but also what has been unanimously accepted by the biographical sources and uncontested by friend and foe, Kinsman and alien.

In the Holy Quran, for instance, Allah Says, “*Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah ; and those who are With him are Strong Against Unbelievers, (but) Compassionate among each other*”.<sup>(1)</sup>

He also Says: “*And remember, Jesus, the Son of Mary, said: ‘O Children of Israel ! I am the Messenger of Allah (Sent) to you, confirming the Taurat (which came) Before me, and giving Glad Tidings of a messenger to come after me, Whose name shall be Ahmad ...’*”.<sup>(2)</sup>

There is no need to dwell on presenting evidence from the Quran and the Prophetic Traditions for an issue that is well attested. But we would like to remind the two authors of the clear evidence found in the Torah and the Bible. Both Moses and Jesus (PBUT) brought the

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(1) Surat *Al Fath*, Verse n° 29.

(2) Surat *As-Saf*, Verse n° 6.

“Glad Tidings” of the coming of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), but the Torah and Biblical texts were distorted and the name of “Muhammad” was omitted, except in the “Samira” Copy of the Torah and the “Branan” Copy of the Bible. The latter existed well before the rise of Islam, but was banned from late fifth century A.D. onwards. The manuscripts that have recently been discovered near the Dead Sea corroborate this.

In the “Branan” Bible, the name of the Prophet Muhammad is clearly stated, as in Chapter 41 which reads as follows: “*God became invisible and both of them were thrown out of Paradise by King Michael; when Adam looked back, he saw this statement written above the gates: “There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger”.*”

Here is another example from the same source:

*“The Disciples answered: Ye, Master, who is the man you are talking about and who will come into the world?”  
Jesus answered happily: ‘It is Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah.’<sup>(1)</sup>*

In the presence of such clear evidence which was ignored by the two authors of the Chapter: “Muhammad: the Prophet of Islam” in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, it seems that they embarked on writing this chapter with an urgent desire to cast a shadow of doubt and obscurity onto the life of the Prophet (PBUH) in all its aspects; this is why even his very name was not spared their manipulation. If we follow their questioning process, we will end up considering all the events pertaining to the Prophet’s biography as being unreal and the whole of his life as being obscure. This is an unsound attitude, indeed.

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(1) For more quotations see *As-Sirah An-Nabawiya As-Sahihah*, 1/118.

- **Their Discrediting of the Predictions Related to his Future Prophethood:**

Muhammad (PBUH) underwent some extraordinary experiences in his childhood, which were considered as a preparation for some momentous event in his future. Among these experiences are the “expansion” of his breast when he was still a baby in the tribe of Banu-Sa’ad; his encounter with the monk Bahira, who announced Muhammad’s future Prophethood; his taking part in the building of the Ka’aba during which he put his loincloth on his shoulder, thus uncovering his private parts; this incident made him lose consciousness, although the uncovering of private parts was a usual habit in *Al-Jahiliya*. All these well-known events, which are reported by the biographical, historical and Hadith sources, are completely rejected by the two authors.

- **Their Discrediting of the Opening /Expansion of the Prophet’s Breast**

They reject the truth of this experience, claiming that it was part of the mysteries of nature which could not have happened in ordinary circumstances. They then state that it is wiser to set this story aside. They base their attitude on the view of another Orientalist, namely Birkeland, who thinks that this story is no more than an embodiment or representation of Allah’s statement: “*Had we not Expanded thee thy breast*”<sup>(1)</sup>

The two authors, along with a number of Orientalists, persist in evaluating the events of the Prophet’s life according to the standards of ordinary human reality, especially, the standards of the positivistic and materialistic thought which rejects all connections with the invisible and the spiritual, even when the lives of the Prophets are

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(1) Surat *As-Sharh*, Verse n° 1.

concerned. These scholars forget that the use of this type of standards discredits the miracles worked by all Prophets, including Moses and Jesus (PBUT).

The opening /expansion of the Prophet's breast is indeed a miracle. After all, exceeding the customary and the laws of nature is a recurrent element in the lives of the Prophets. Such an extraordinary act was performed by Allah at the hands of His Messengers for some wise purpose. The birth of Jesus Christ, his childhood and life were full of miraculous occurrences, he was born without a father and spoke in his cradle. Moses also experienced many extraordinary events. Thus scientific investigation does not lie in measuring events in the Prophets' lives according to the criterions of positivistic and materialistic thought alone.

Any Orientalist who considers the "opening of the breast" miracle as an embodiment of the Almighty's statement "***Have We not Expanded thee thy breast***" is in the wrong, for 'Sharh' (expanding) the breast is not opening it in the literal sense. In fact, exegetes did not give the two words the same meaning.

When consulting Hadith sources, we find that the Hadith of "expanding the breast" is well authenticated. It was related by Abu-Nai'm in his "Proofs of Prophethood" and attested by Muslim in *Sahih*, Imam Ahmad in *Musnad*, and Ibn Sa'ad in *Tabaqat As-Sahaba*. It was reported by Anas (MABPWH) that "*while playing with boys, the Prophet (PBUH) was visited by Gabriel; the Archangel seized him, threw him down, pulled out his heart from which he took out a clot, then he said, 'this is the part of Satan in you'; he cleaned the heart in a golden basin containing some water from Zamzam ; then he closed the 'expansion' and returned the Prophet to his place; meanwhile, the boys, who had run to tell his foster mother that he was killed, met him on their way back and noticed that he was pale.*"

This Hadith was supported by ample evidence ; it was attested by Al-Hakim in *Al-Mustadraq* and confirmed by Ad-Dahbi. Moreover, after reporting all the relations which prove the “expansion of the breast”, Al Hafid ben Hajar says,

*“All that is reported about the “expansion of the breast”, the pulling out of the heart, and all the other extraordinary things require us to accept them unquestionably, without trying to distort their truth, for Allah is Omnipotent and nothing is impossible for Him”.*

The cleansing of the Prophet’s heart from Satan’s ‘share’ is an early indication of his Prophethood, and his preparation for infallibility - both in terms of not committing sins and of worshipping none but Allah. The events of his childhood testify to this, for he never sinned or worshipped any idol, although such a practice prevailed among his people.

The rejection of the validity of the miraculous predictions that are attested by reliable sources is, indeed, a submission to materialistic ideas and positivistic philosophies.

### • **Their Contestation of the Validity of the Prophet’s Trading Journeys**

The two authors argue that it would be wiser to discard the alleged Prophet’s trading journeys into Syria - both his first journey while still a child under the protection of his uncle, Abu -Talib, and his later travels as a merchant in the service of Khadija (his wife - MABPWH). They base their view on the grounds that the main theme common to the stories relating the events of these journeys is the announcement of two Christian monks of Muhammad’s future Prophethood. They go on to criticize the attitude of some modern Western authors who agree to the truth of these journeys.

However, the two authors take no trouble to provide evidence to support their attitude. According to commonsense, a contestation is a judgement that cannot be valid, unless it is supported by evidence, as is the case in law. But instead of presenting any proof, they merely base their view on the fact that the events of the journeys turn around one central theme, namely the prediction of Muhammad's future Prophethood.

Actually, the grounds on which these journeys and other events of the Prophet's life should be judged as either true or false do not lie in mere suspicion or assumption. On the contrary, they reside in the ascertainment of how the stories have come down to us, then if their relation is considered valid by the analysts among the Hadith Ulemas, the historians and the biographers of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), their reliability is thus proved.

When consulting Hadith sources, we find that the story of the journey of Muhammad as a child in the company of his uncle Abu -Talib into Syria and their meeting with the Christian monk Bahira is attested by Abu-Mussa Al-Acha'ari in his Hadith:

*“The Prophet (PBUH) went on a journey in the company of his uncle Abu-Talib, along with some leading men of Quraysh. When they were near the Convent, they stopped. The monk came out to meet them while they were settling down, he searched among them until he found the Prophet whom he held by the hand and said, ‘Here is the lord of the worlds, this is the Messenger of the God of the Universe, who will send him as mercy for all creatures’. The leading men of Quraysh asked the monk how he knew that, he answered, ‘when you left the Ka’aba, every stone and every tree prostrated, and prostration is reserved only for a Prophet, I also recognise him by the sign of Prophethood - a ring below the lower part of his shoulder, it looks like an apple ...’”.*

There is no need to quote the whole Hadith here. Suffice it to say that it was attested by At-Tirmidi in *Al-Manaqib* (particularly the chapter on the “Early stages of Prophethood”), by Al-Hakim in *Al-Mustadrak*, by Ibn Abi Shayba in *Al-Munsif*, by Al-Marudi in *A’alam An-Nubuwa*, by Abu-Na’im in *Dalil An-Nubuwa*, and by At-Tabari in *At-Tarikh*. Ibn Hajar asserts in *Al-Isaba* that the reporters of this Hadith are all reliable.

Ad-Dahbi attested it in his *As-Sirah An-Nabawiya*, that part of this Hadith is reliable while some of its elements are wrong. The reason for Ad-Dahbi’s supposition here is the mention of the names of Bilal and Abu Bakr in the closing section of the Hadith.

Ulemas explained this problematic issue by asserting that the mention of the Prophet’s two Companions here is a mistake made by the reporters of this Hadith, a fact which Al-Hafid Ibn Hajar confirms. He is also supported by Ibn Qiyam Al Jawziya in *Zad Al Ma’ad*. Finally, this Hadith has been authenticated in modern times by sheikh Al Albani, too.

All in all, this Hadith is reported by reliable people, but the mention of Abu-Bakr and Bilal in it is an obvious mistake.

#### **• Their Contestation of the Prophet’s Contribution to the Rebuilding of the Holy Ka’aba**

The two authors allege that little credence is to be given to the story of the Prophet’s contribution to the rebuilding of the Ka’aba ; however, they do not provide any reason or evidence for their questioning of the veracity of this event. It seems that, once more, they want to reject the matter altogether, or at least to doubt its accuracy because, as will be seen in the Hadith, the story contains information which shows that Mohammad (PBUH) was preserved, before his Call to Prophethood, by Special Divine Protection from imitating the reprehensible conduct of the Arab polytheists in *Al-Jahiliya*.

The Hadith on Muhammad's contribution to the re-building of the Ka'aba was authenticated by At-Tabararni in *Al Kabir*, where it is reported to the last detail, and by Imam Ahmed in *Al Musnad* (where only part of it is reported) on the authority of Ibn At-Tufail - the following is related in the last section of the Hadith:

*“While the Prophet (PBUH) was carrying a large stone, his wrapping cloth became tight, so he put it on his shoulder, which exposed his private parts; he was asked to cover them and from that time onwards he was never again seen naked. Five years elapsed between the rebuilding of the Ka'aba and his Call to Prophethood”.*

Another version reported by Jaber Ibn Abd Allah relates that *“the Prophet (PBUH) was carrying stones to the Ka'aba with other people, and was wearing his loincloth. His uncle Al-'Abbas told him, 'O' my nephew! It would be better to loosen your loincloth and put it on your shoulder under the stone'. No sooner had the Prophet loosened it and put it on his shoulder than he fell unconscious, and was never again seen naked after that incident”*<sup>(1)</sup>.

Since this Hadith is authentic, it is obvious that neither its rejection, nor its being questioned by Orientalists has any importance whatsoever, as they do not provide any evidence for their claims.

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(1) Al-Bukhari reported it in *Kitab As-Salat*, Chapter: “On the reprehensibility of proceeding to prayer while naked”. In *the Pilgrimage*, Chapter: “The Precedence of Mecca and its building” and in “The Virtues of the Helpers”. It is reported by Imam Muslim in *Al-Hayd*, Chapter : “Taking care of covering one genitals”. it is also reported by Imam Ahmad in *Al-Musnad*, all the three authenticated this Hadith on the authority of “Amru ben Dinar ben Jaber.

The obvious reason which seems to have made the two authors dispute the truth of the events pertaining to the life of Muhammad (PBUH) prior to his Call to Prophethood - such as the “expansion of his breast”, his trade journeys (during which he met the monks who confirmed the authenticity of his Prophethood), his contribution to the rebuilding of the Ka’aba, is the fact that these events augured his Prophethood. Thus, the two authors assume that these stories were fabricated to support Mohammad’s Call to Prophethood.

Such an assumption cannot hold in the face of authentic Hadiths and attested chronological historical data. We must wonder, once more, why have the two authors disregarded the Prophetic Traditions which contain a lot of attested information on the Messenger’s life (PBUH).

## Chapter Two

### From the Call to Prophethood to Emigration from Mecca

The two authors start their account of this period of the Prophet's life by claiming that there are questions which are difficult to answer. These questions concern the emergence of Muhammad (PBUH) as a religious reformer. They point out that because of the complexities that are involved in interpreting them, the biographical (Sirah) sources do not help in answering these questions. But if we take into consideration the historical, materialist method which they have adopted in their study of the biography of the Prophet, we may suppose that the questions they allude to are as follows: - what was so exceptional about Mohammad that he had not been influenced by his social, intellectual, cultural and religious environment?

- What enabled him to come up with new religious teachings, moral values and social systems?
- Where did he get all this?
- What helped him change the old beliefs and traditions which were deeply - rooted in the minds of the Arabs?
- What was the secret of his tremendous influence on people?

These are the type of questions usually put by adherents of historical materialism. One may assume that the two authors want to apply this method literally to the life of the Prophet (PBUH).

It is natural that they find it difficult to answer these questions, because they want to interpret the reality of Prophethood in

materialist and mechanical terms. This is impossible, for the lives of the Prophets are not ordinary human lives. Of course, they are human beings but their lives are not ordinary, for in these lives are interlocked things that are secret and visible, material and spiritual, religious and secular. The time in which a prophet is sent from God constitutes a unique period in human history, for it is during this time that the earth receives Divine Revelation, Divine Messages, Prophets and Messengers, who live under Direct Divine Protection so that they could deliver the Message, save and guide humanity. It is in such a period that extraordinary occurrences and miracles take place to support the Messengers and direct events.

In sum, the lives of the Prophets and Messengers are not ordinary human lives; therefore, it is not acceptable to force them into the matrices of the limited materialist thought.

- **The Claim that the Prophet (PBUH) was Influenced by the Pre-Islamic Paganism in Arabia**

Basing their assessment on the principles and ready-made conclusions of positivistic and materialist thought, the two authors persist in trying to prove their claim that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) remained, even after his Call to Prophethood, influenced by the pre-Islamic pagan beliefs and notions. They also base their claim on the fact that a person's behavior is shaped by the cultural and intellectual environment in which he lives. This is, in every respect, the most realistic of all the taken-for-granted notions.

- **The Claim that he erred before the advent of his Prophetic Mission**

To prove this erroneous claim, the two authors indulge in presenting false allegations, such as their quoting of the Quranic Verse: “*And*

*he found thee Wandering, and he gave thee guidance*”,<sup>(1)</sup> which they interpret as they please; their reporting that the Prophet (PBUH) not only gave a pagan name to one of his sons, but also married two of his daughters to the sons of his uncle Abu lahab, the most ardent defender of paganism; and their claiming that the Prophet (PBUH) spoke frequently about the Djinn (genies), as it is illustrated in the Quran.

The reason for their bringing in of the Holy Verse “*And he found thee Wandering, and he gave thee guidance*” is that they want to prove that the Quran itself describes Muhammad (PBUH) as having gone astray prior to his Prophetic Mission, and that this description is proof of the fact that the Messenger of Allah was influenced by the Jahiliya pagan beliefs. Such an interpretation is completely wrong. It is fanciful, indeed. The intended meaning of the Verse according to the Exegetes is:

*“That the Prophet (PBUH) was, prior to his mission, at a loss about the state of his pagan people and was in quest of the Truth. Allah inspired him with the idea that the polytheism of his people was false. There is no implication whatsoever of sin or error on his part in the use of the word “Dalal” (wandering away), for Prophets are impeccable as to the sin of idolatry before their ministry, and the “Ulemas are unanimous about this”.*

“Sunnah” Scholars all agree that our Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) did not perform any act which would contradict Islamic principles even before his Prophetic Mission. Actually, they take all that has been reported successively about his righteousness and freedom from sin before his Prophethood as part of the evidence which

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(1) Surat *Ad-Duha*, Verse n° 7.

testifies to his Prophethood. Better still, the Quran confronts the Unbelievers with statements in this sense:

*“Say: “If Allah had so willed, I should not have rehearsed it to you, nor should he have made it known to you. A whole life - time before this have I tarried amongst you: Will ye not then understand?”<sup>(1)</sup>.*

*“Or do they not recognise their Messenger, that they Deny him”<sup>(2)</sup>.*

Furthermore, Almighty Allah does not mention in the Holy Quran that his Messenger (PBUH) has ever been silenced by the polytheists arguing that what he now rejects as vile acts in their conduct, he used to practice with them in the past.

The two authors go on to quote the following Verse from the Quran: *“Thou knowest not (before), what was revelation, and what was Faith”<sup>(3)</sup>* which they interpret in a way that coincides with their claim. They understand from this Holy Verse that the Almighty is reminding Muhammad (PBUH) of his ignorance of the Book of Allah and belief in Him in the past; in other words, that he has gone astray. But this is not correct, for the Verse does not in the least mean this. On the contrary, the Verse challenged the Unbelievers, who rejected the Prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH), to contemplate the case of the Messenger of Allah and realise that the Sharia laws, as well as the moral and religious guidance he had acquired could not have been his own; indeed, they were of Divine Origin, because he had never performed such deeds. The fact that he did not have

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(1) Surat *Yunus*, Verse n° 16.

(2) Surat *Al-Muminun*, Verse n° 96.

(3) Surat *As-Shura*, Verse n° 52.

any knowledge of the Book and Faith means that it was never his task to read and understand books, or to deal with what a perfect Faith involves, such as the attributes of Allah and the fundamental principles of religion. This does not mean that the Messenger of Allah did not believe in the existence of Allah and in His Oneness before he received Revelation. For the Prophets and Messengers of Allah were free from idolatry even before they received their Mission, yet they did not have ample knowledge of Faith<sup>(1)</sup>.

- **The Claim that One of the Prophet's Sons was given a Pagan Name**

As to their claim that one of Muhammad's sons was named Abd Manaf, which they provide to prove that the Prophet (PBUH) used to share the pagan beliefs of his people, I do not know where they have derived this information from, because the authenticators of the biography of Muhammad (PBUH), who mentioned the names of his sons did not mention this name at all. On the contrary, they reported the name Abd Allah, and the Prophet (PBUH) was surnamed At-Tahir (the Pure) and At-Tayeb (the Kindly).

- **The Prophet's References to the Genies as a Vestige of Paganism**

As to their claim that the references of the Prophet to the genies is an illustration of the fact that he was influenced by the pagan beliefs of pre-Islamic Arabia, it is a strange allegation, indeed. It appears that they base it on materialist thought which denies the existence of all that is not derived from sensory experiences. (There is no need to dwell here on the discussion of this system of thought,

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(1) Ibn A'ashur, *At-Tahrir wa At-Tanwir*, see his comment on the Verse. Vol 12, Sections 25-26, p. 125.

or to prove the existence of the genies). Suffice it to remind the two scholars of the fact that speaking about the genies was not initiated by the Messenger in the first place. It was a Divine Revelation to him. References to the genies recur in the Quran, which contains a whole Surat named after them, Surat Al-Jinn. Furthermore, another Holy Verse reports that upon hearing the Quran a group of genies started to believe in Allah and asked their people to embrace the New Faith (Islam).

We may wonder here what kind of scientific criterion the two authors use in their dealing with the Holy Quran. What made them accept certain verses, and even use them as proof at times, and reject some Verses at other times. At the beginning of their talk about the sources for the life of the Prophet, they acknowledge the fact that the Quran is the primary source. A moment ago, we dealt with their recourse to the Quran to prove the influence of the pre-Islamic pagan notions on the Prophet (PBUH). Why then do they reject the existence of the genies and consider his references to them as an aspect of the impact of the pagan beliefs on him?

The two authors persist in advancing false allegations. They claim that among the aspects of the influence of polytheism on the Prophet (PBUH) are his consideration of the Ka'aba as a sanctuary even before the Quran connected it with Ibrahim (PBUH), his eating from the meat of the sacrificial animal offered to the idols, as well as the participation of his followers in the pagan pilgrimage rituals practised by the Unbelievers.

As to the sanctity of the Ka'aba, it is an ancient tradition which the Arabs inherited from Ibrahim and Isma'il (PBUT). It was part of

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(1) At-Tabarani, *Al Kabir*, 5/88: Al Bayhaqi, *Dalail An-Nubuwa*, 2/34, Al Hakim in *Al Mustadraq*, 3/2.

the Arabs' historical and religious memory, and emotional make-up. Their literary heritage, especially their speeches and poetry, bears witness to their strong sense of adherence to these traditions and their constant celebration of them. It may suffice to quote here from the introduction of the speech made by Abu-Talib, the uncle of the Prophet (PBUH), during the ceremony of the latter's marriage to Khadija (MABPWH):

*“Praise be to Allah Who made us from among the progeny of Ibrahim and the offspring of Ismail, entrusted us with the custody of His House (the Ka’aba) as well as with the leadership of His Holy Place (Mecca), and gave us a House that is meant for pilgrimage and a Holy Place where peace prevails ...”*

In their statement: “Muhammad considered the Ka’aba as a sanctuary before the Quran connected it with Ibrahim”, the two authors presume that the link between the Ka’aba and Ibrahim (PBUH) had been broken, or unknown until the Revelation of the Quran which created it. They also presume that the sanctification of the Ka’aba before the rise of Islam was a pagan tradition, whose practice Muhammad (PBUH) shared with his people.

Yet this is completely contrary to the truth, for the Prophet (PBUH) undoubtedly sanctified the Ka’aba, but his belief in this respect was inherited from Ibrahim and Ismail; the following authentic Hadith proves this:

*“The Prophet (PBUH) was circumambulating the ka’aba before the conquest of Mecca; he was accompanied by his manumitted slave, Zaid ben Haritha, who touched some idols. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) forbade him to do so. Zaid touched them once again in order to be sure about the matter; the Prophet (PBUH) forbid him a*

*second time, so he stopped. When the Prophet received Allah's Message, Zaid swore by Allah that the Messenger had never touched any of these idols before Allah honored him by entrusting him with his Mission”<sup>(1)</sup>.*

#### • His Acceptance of the Meat of the Sacrifices offered to the Idols

As to their claim that the Prophet (PBUH) had accepted the meat of the sacrifices offered to the idols and the evidence they furnish from the Quran to support it: “*To thy lord Turn in Prayer and Sacrifice*”<sup>(2)</sup>, it is completely wrong; the Holy Verse they quote here has nothing to do with this issue.

It is obvious that the two authors have based their claim on the assumption that this Verse is unquestionably Meccan, but this is not the case, for the ‘Ulemas did not unanimously agree on this. Some Exegetes think that it was probably revealed in Madina; it is on this basis that one of the Followers, namely Sa’ad Ibn Jubayir, interpreted this Verse as being a command to the Prophet (PBUH) to pray and sacrifice his offerings to Allah at Al Hodaybiya (outside Mecca); even if this Verse were Meccan, probably, whenever the season of pilgrimage was nearing, the Prophet, who went on pilgrimage every year before and after his Call to Prophethood, hesitated about offering sacrifices during the pilgrimage after he had received his Mission, especially that he desired to feed the poor Meccans. He was embarrassed by taking part in the practices of the Unbelievers, so Allah ordered him to offer sacrifices and feed the poor. This meant that the Unbelievers’ offering of sacrifices to their idols would not prevent the Messenger (PBUH) from offering his own to Allah ...<sup>(3)</sup>.

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(1) At-Tabarani, *Al Kabir*, 5/88: Al Bayhaqi, *Dalail An-Nubuwa*, 2/34.

(2) Surat *Al Kawtar*, Verse n° 2.

(3) Sa’ad ben Jubayir quoted in *At-Tahiri wa At-Tanwir*, particularly his comment on this Verse.

The authentic Hadith also illustrates the falsehood of the two authors' claim here. Al-Bukhari reports in "Manaqib Al-Ansar" that the Prophet (PBUH) met Zayed Ibn 'Amru Ibn Nafil at the foot of Baldah before his Call to Prophethood; Zayed invited him to eat, but the Prophet refused, saying "*I will not eat from what is offered as a sacrifice to your idols, I will eat only from what has been killed with the name of Allah duly pronounced*"<sup>(1)</sup>.

The two authors also allege that the Faithful took part in the practice of pagan pilgrimage rituals, before the Islamic pilgrimage was decreed by Allah. They offer as a support for their claim the Almighty's statement: "*Behold! Safa and Marwa are among the Symbols of Allah. So if those who visit the House in the season or at other times, should compass them round. It is no sin in them*"<sup>(2)</sup>. What they understood from this Verse is that it allowed the Muslims to perform the ancient ritual of going around these places before it acquired an Islamic meaning and became an obligatory rite of pilgrimage.

All their talk here is mere falsehood and a sign of their ignorance of Islam. This Holy Verse was revealed because some Muslims hesitated about going round Safa and Marwa, as the following statement of Aisha (the Prophet's wife -MABPWH-) confirms:

*"This Verse was revealed because the Ansars had been worshipping Manat (one of their idols). Manat was a white stone. They were embarrassed to go around Safa and Marwa. When Islam was established they asked the Messenger (PBUH) about this ritual and the Holy Verse of 'Safa and Marwa' was revealed to him".*

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(1) Al Bukhari, *Fath Al Bari*, 1/42.

(2) Surat *Al Baqara*, Verse n° 158.

Al-Bukhari reported, on the authority of Anas, the following: “*We considered them (Safa and Marwa) as part of pagan rites, so when Islam was established, we stopped from practicing this rite; thus Allah revealed this Verse: “Safa and Marwa are ... ”.*”

In brief, this is the genuine meaning of the Verse and its purpose. It is more than enough to refute the allegations of the two authors here.

At the end of this chapter, we should stress once more the falsehood of all the allegations concerning the influence of the pre-Islamic, pagan notions and beliefs on the Prophet’s conduct, teachings, and faith. The truth - which is beyond doubt-must be reiterated here, namely that the Prophets are free from all that is against the founding principles of religion and that our Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) grew up with an unstained faith, for it has never been known that he prostrated to an idol or rubbed himself against it, consulted a fortuneteller or a soothsayer, or shared any of the pagans’ beliefs.

It should be mentioned here that all these allegations are no more than an attempt to cast doubt about the Prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH) through their insinuations that the Islamic teachings are but a continuation of pagan ideas and rituals of the Arabs in the *Jahiliya*.

A true understanding of Islam clearly shows that this religion was antithetical to the intellectual and social reality of the period in which it emerged; moreover, it was not a continuation of previous pagan ideas, the elements of the pre-Islamic culture that it destroyed outnumbered those it kept.

The purpose of the two authors in advancing these allegations is to show that Islam was a continuation, development and a reflection of the social and intellectual environment of Mecca, to establish the human authorship of the Quran, and deny Prophethood and Revelation altogether.

## Chapter Three

### **The claim that the Emergence of the Prophet (PBUH) was gradual and involved long periods of meditation and reflection**

The two authors report the view of the Orientalist Caetani which is as follows: “Muhammad’s emergence as a religious reformer developed gradually and involved extended periods of meditation and reflection”. They agree with him, and they go on to mention that what the “Sirah” literature refers to as “Tahannuth” (avoiding sin by means of seclusion) supports this view.

They disregard all authentic Hadiths and relations which prove that the Prophet (PBUH) had a sudden revelation from the Almighty at a precise moment of his life. They then allege that the Holy Quranic Verses which mention the Revelation of the Quran on “the Night of Power” in Ramadan are ambiguous, for they do not contain any clear reference to the beginning of Revelation.

Moreover, they claim that the Hadiths which mention the Verse of “Al ‘Alaq” and that of “Al Muddathir” as the first Revelations of the Quran are doubtful. They also deny the event of the “future” or “fatra” (pause) in Revelation after the Prophet’s reception of the first Revelations;

They even claim that the beginning of the Verse “Al-Muddathir” (The Wrapped Up) and that of Al-Muzzammil (the Folded in Garment) refer to the preparation for the reception of revelation in the manner of the Arab soothsayer (Kahin).

Then, they admit that they were inclined to accept the accusation often reiterated by the enemies of the Prophet (PBUH), namely that he was a djinn - possessed person, a magician or a soothsayer.

Thus, the two authors indulge in applying the rules of positivism and historical materialism to the Prophetic Mission, such rules which reject the fact that the emergence of the Prophet (PBUH), along with his religious Call, his solid teachings in terms of Faith, Shari'a, high moral standards, and the regulations of the social and individual life of a person, could have suddenly taken place, without prior preparation, long search, meditation and reflection, because the case of the Prophet (PBUH) differs from what the historical materialist thinkers have established about the development of human thought.

To support their view, the two authors exploit the Sirah and Hadith sources regarding reference to the Prophet's withdrawal to the Cave of Hira for worship, reflection and meditation (tahannuth). The exploitation of this event here is an instance of turning truth into falsehood because his "Tahannuth" and worship, as well as his meditation during his periods of withdrawal to the Cave of Hira is true, but the two scholars' claiming that it is proof of his gradual search for his reformational religious teachings is completely wrong. For both reality and history testify to this. There is no evidence in his actual life, before he received his Mission, which proves that he was searching for and thinking about how to found a new religion or prepare a book dealing with religious rules and laws, or that he was preparing himself for the reception of his Mission. For Prophethood cannot be had through mere personal training and preparation; on the contrary, it is an instance of the Grace of Allah which He bestows on whom He pleases.

## **The Denial of Revelation**

The purpose of the two scholars in referring to the idea of gradual development is to deny the existence of Divine Revelation and of the Prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH), because what their view leads to is that he did not get Inspiration from Allah, that the Archangel was not sent down to him, and that the Revelation he received from Allah was merely an inspiration that “sprang out” of his mind and heart thanks to a long process of meditation and reflection.

As to their statement that the Holy Verses which refer to the Revelation of the Quran at a precise moment on a blessed night “the Night of Power”, they are ambiguous and unsubstantiated; the purpose and meanings of these Verses are clear. The authentic Hadiths further clarify the point at issue here, as will be seen in due course.

It should be stressed here that the phenomenon of Revelation is a miracle that transcends the laws of nature and that it has no connection with inspiration, meditation or psychological preparation. Revelation came from Allah - from outside Muhammad’s self, his attitude was that of a receiver who had no say either in the meanings, or in the form of the Message.

Orientalists and historical materialists have been confronted by the phenomenon of Revelation which they have never taken for granted and to which they could not provide a psychological or materialist interpretation. However, they keep indulging in their haphazard absurdities. Undoubtedly, it is their attempt to evade acknowledging the truth of Prophethood and Divine Revelation, which has pushed them to fumble around. That is why they could not have a firm view throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; all their references to the gradual development of Muhammad’s emergence over a long period of meditation and reflection before his Call to Islam and Reception of his Mission are refuted by evidence in the authentic

Hadiths which assert that the reception of Divine Revelation by the Prophet was sudden and that he experienced a violent fear, which shows that he was not expecting it.

The authentic Hadith reported in the Sahihs by Al Bukhari and Muslim relates that the first thing that Muhammad (PBUH) had experienced was truthful dreams; then he grew to love seclusion and contemplation in the Cave of Hira; finally, towards the end of a day, a Monday in Ramadan, Gabriel came to him all of a sudden for the first time. According to Al Bukhari's relation, the Prophet (PBUH) spent his time in worship and contemplation until the Truth came to him in the Cave of Hira. Ibn Hajar reports this as follows: "in the Exegesis, till the Truth came to him all of a sudden ..."<sup>(1)</sup>.

### **The Testimony of a Christian Scholar**

There is no need to start a debate with those Orientalists and historical materialists who reject Revelation and Prophethood. However, I would like to refer here to the testimony of an objective Christian scholar, namely Michael Bichri Zakhari, who presents his fellow Christians with clear evidence about the fact that the Quran is a Revelation from Allah, particularly in his book: *Muhammad, the Apostle of Allah ... as the Bible Predicted*<sup>(2)</sup>. Among his proofs are:

1. The Quran contains what has been reported by the Revealed Books before. This is the proof which An-Najashi, King of Ethiopia, presented when Ja'afar Ibn Abi-Talib read some Holy Verses to him. The King said, "By Allah, what you

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(1) Ibn Hajar, *Fath Al Bari*, 1/231.

(2) See Abd Al-Muta'al Muhammad Al-Jabri, *As-Sira An-Nabawiya wa Awham Al-Mustashriqin*, Maktabat Wahba, Cairo, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, 1988, pp. 60-61.

have been reading to me and what was revealed to Jesus Christ come from the same source.” To provide proof by showing similarity between the main aspects of two things is an instance of scientific evidence, indeed.

2. Had the Quran been the work of Muhammad (PBUH), he would not have elevated Moses and Jesus to a higher rank. The least the Prophet would have done was not to speak about the miracles performed by Moses, Jesus and others so as not to supply his enemies with a ‘sharp weapon’ that they might use against him.
3. Had Muhammad (PBUH) been the author of the Quran and attributed this extraordinary order to Allah or to any other source, he would have been extremely unfair to himself because he would have deprived himself of the glory this sublime book entitles him to, especially that it is a book which challenges both men and genies to produce something similar to it. Moreover, the ‘author’ of this cogent and miraculous book would have had the right to be above the Universe, hence the Divine Origin of the Quran.

In spite of their simple nature, these proofs may suffice here, because they are suitable for the way of thinking of those who reject the Prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH), and because they are part of the testimony of a fair enemy - the truth we uphold is further consolidated when admitted by the enemy.

Furthermore, we do not need to dwell on refuting the doubt raised by the two scholars about the fact that ‘Surat’ “Al ‘Alaq” is the first ‘Sura’ of the Holy Quran to be revealed, and that ‘Surat’ “Al-Muddaththir” is the first ‘Sura’ to be revealed after the ‘futur’ or interruption period in the Revelation, because the Hadiths of Al-Bukhari remove all doubts which are not premised on sound foundations.

Similarly, the issue of the ‘futur’ or interruption of Revelation is a fact that is established by both the authentic Prophetic Traditions and the unanimity of the ‘Sirah’ scholars and historians.

The narrations differ about the duration of this interruption of Revelation. But the most probable period is forty days. The underlying reason for this is to allow the Prophet (PBUH) to recover from his first meeting with the “King of Revelation” and to start yearning for meeting Him again and receiving Divine Inspiration.

The claim of the two authors that the alleged interruption of the Revelation remains an enigma is completely false, as it is the case with their allegation that this period of ‘future’ originated from the Prophet’s biographers, who aimed at constructing an exact chronology of his life. The authentic Prophetic Traditions and the unanimity of ‘Ulemas are clear evidence that refutes all these false allegations.

### **The Claim concerning the Prophet’s Preparation for the Reception of Revelation in the Manner of a Soothsayer**

This is another instance of truth distortion, because the two authors consider the opening of ‘Surat’ “Al-Muddaththir” as didactic instructions meant to teach the Prophet (PBUH) how to carry the burden of his Mission, as the Almighty asserts:

***“O thou wrapped up (in a mantle)! Arise and deliver thy warning! And thy Lord Do thou magnify! And thy garments keep free from stain! And all abomination shun! Nor expect, in giving, (Any) increase (for thyself)! But for thy Lord’s (Cause) Be patient and constant!”<sup>(1)</sup>***

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(1) Surat Al-Muddaththir, Verses n° 1-7.

Similarly, ‘Surat’ “Al-Muzzammil” reinforces this:

***“O thou folded in garments! Stand (to prayer) by night,  
-Half of it,- or a little less, Or a little more; And recite  
the Quran in slow, measured rhythmic tones. Soon Shall  
We send down To thee a weighty Word.”<sup>(1)</sup>***

The two scholars’ assumption that this holy education and these Divine didactic instructions are a preparation for the reception of the Prophet’s Mission in the manner of the soothsayers is an obvious falsehood. Surely, this preparation has nothing to do with the obscure devilish methods practiced by the soothsayers. Worshipping a Unique God, purifying the mind, conduct and actions, staying up at night praying and reading the Holy Quran are very unlike the methods of soothsayers. The two roads are different and wide apart; indeed, they are utterly dissimilar.

Furthermore, the education of the Prophet (PBUH) is a Divine one; it is not a self-preparation, or personal training, or psychological exercise that is meant to prepare him for the reception of the Call to Prophethood. Rather, it is a Divine education designed to help him carry the burden of the Mission, because it is a heavy burden which requires having a lot of moral qualities, the most important of which are firm will and patience. There is a big difference between education and training for the fulfillment of the Mission and personal preparation for receiving “prophetic call or inspiration”, as is the case with soothsayers and poets. This difference is not unknown to Orientalists; however, they deliberately ignore it and wilfully falsify the truth, because this has always been the most formidable way of fighting the truth both in the past and at present.

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(1) Surat *Al-Muzzammil*, Verses n° 1-5.

## **The Misleading Assumption that Inspiration was the Result of Fits of Madness:**

This assumption is reiterated by many Orientalists; the two authors do not openly state it in their reference to the Revelation in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, but their description of the state of the Prophet (PBUH) during the moments of his reception of Revelation as experiencing mysterious fits and reactions even before he claimed to be the Messenger of Allah misleads the reader, so much so that he might think that what happened to the Prophet (PBUH) during the moments of Revelation was due to fits of madness. This is a false allegation, because the state of the Prophet (PBUH) at these moments had nothing to do with fits; in fact, there is ample evidence which refutes this claim:

1. The Prophet (PBUH) enjoyed very good health, according to the testimony of his enemies themselves. His personal characteristics, reported in many accounts, prove his bodily strength, which an epileptic cannot enjoy.
2. An epileptic suffers from excessive pain in every part of his body, especially after an epileptic fit, which renders him sad and depressed. More often than not epileptics contemplate committing suicide as a result of the sharp pain they experience. Had the state the Prophet (PBUH) experienced during Revelation been an epileptic fit, he would have been sad about the occurrence of the Revelation and happy when it stopped. But the situation was completely different.
3. It has been scientifically proved that during an epileptic fit, a person's mental capacities are obliterated. Thus, during

such a fit, the patient loses touch with the outside world; he does not think; nor does he remain conscious. The Prophet (PBUH) was not at all epileptic, for he had the habit of delivering, to people immediately after receiving the Revelation Holy Verses, eloquent sermons, firm religious laws, high moral values, and words that were outstanding in terms of eloquence and good style. Is it reasonable that an epileptic can produce such things? No one can answer affirmatively in this case, except those who fail to distinguish between black and white, night and day.

4. Medical instruments have reached a very high level of sophistication, advanced machines and electric devices have been used in diagnosis and cure. Unquestionable evidence has proved (beyond any doubt) that what the Prophet (PBUH) experienced was not a case of epilepsy and that all the allegations reported by orientalists are mere falsehoods. Actually, Revelation is a phenomenon which science has upto now been unable to explain, but science cannot be blamed for this.
5. It is evident that the tenacious exponents of this 'epilepsy slander', insult not only the Prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH) but also that of all the Prophets and Messengers of Allah, to whom Holy Books had been revealed by God. Can they then say about Jesus and Moses what they have said about the Seal of the Prophets? This kind of allegation can only emanate from two types of people: a positivist and a historical materialist, who confines himself to the fortress of his materialistic and perceptible world; or an annihilator, who wants to destroy all religions.

## **The Rationalisation of the Prophet's Proclamation of his Mission on Psychological Grounds**

As part of their negation of Revelation, the two authors state that:

*“Probably, over a period of several years a new world of ideas began to fill him to an ever increasing extent, until he was finally compelled, with irresistible force, to come forth and proclaim them.”*

This statement is made in such a twisted manner as to mislead the reader into thinking that the lofty meanings, laws and wisdom, as well as the firm religious precepts and teachings in terms of faith and conception, the system of human life, existence, the universe and humankind, the Creator and His Attributes, Wisdom and Perfection, and all that is contained in the Holy Quran and the Prophetic Traditions are no more than an overflow of ideas which submerged his mind and feelings after a long period of reflection and meditation. Therefore, his proclamation of these ideas sprang from an irresistible personal force. These ideas and conceptions may be accepted for the explanation of the behaviour of an ordinary human being, but they are not suitable for the explanation of the conduct of Prophets, for the latter had to fulfill their Mission which lay in Calling people to religion, warning them and delivering God's Message in compliance with His Commands and out of obedience to His Will, about which they had no choice even if it led them to the sacrifice of their own lives or to the endurance of numerous difficulties.

Our Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) did not proclaim his Call to Islam as a result of a psychological or hidden force, as the statement of the two authors suggests. On the contrary, he proclaimed his Call when Allah commanded him to do so. The following Verse is to the point here:

*“Therefore expound Openly what thou art Commanded,  
And Turn away from those who join false gods with  
Allah”<sup>(1)</sup>.*

There are other “Surat” in the Holy Quran where Allah’s command to His Prophet to Call openly to Islam is clearly stated.

These “Surat” are a cogent proof, which completely refutes the two authors’ allegations here and asserts that Muhammad’s proclamation of his Call was done in compliance with these Divine Orders, which were given to him by the Almighty in a very rigorous manner. His Obedient Servant and Apostle received them with the suitable seriousness required in this respect, and then carried them out on the spot. The fight of the Prophets against ignorance and lack of faith, their long struggle for the righteous guidance of humanity and its salvation, as well as the troubles, hardships, harm and aggression which they endured as a result cannot be given a psycho-materialist interpretation which does not take into account the Revelation and the Divine Command emanating from a source other than the Prophet’s personality and the psychological motives that underlie it.

#### • **The First Parts of the Quran Are Not Based on Monotheism**

The two authors claim that the first sections of the Quran were not based on monotheism, but on a strong moral and religious appeal which was linked to the circumstances of the Prophet in Mecca. According to their allegation, the most important themes in these early sections of the Quran are moral responsibility, the last Judgement on the Day of Reckoning, the torturing of the damned in Hell, the rewarding of the blessed in Paradise, and the Signs of Allah in the Universe.

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(1) Surat *Al-Hijr*, Verse n° 94.

This is a brief summary of their ideas in this connection, ideas which bespeak their conflation of truth and falsehood. These themes really exist in the early sections of the Quran, but their claim that these sections are not based on monotheism is completely wrong and utterly unfounded. For the Quran itself is the first to refute such a claim, especially these early Quranic sections themselves. The idea of monotheism is the primary focus of the First Divine words which Gabriel (MPBUH) conveyed to Muhammad (PBUH) in the Cave of Hira:

***“Proclaim! (Or Read) In the name of thy Lord and Cherisher, Who created - created man out of A leech - like clot. Proclaim! And thy Lord Is Most Bountiful - He Who taught (the use of) the Pen”<sup>(1)</sup>.***

What can the two honourable scholars say about these verses? The First Command of the Quran which came down to the Messenger of Allah was combined with a permission from his God. What this means is that the reading which the Prophet (PBUH) was commanded to do and the knowledge and science which he was ordered to receive is the knowledge which would please Allah. This order emanated from Allah, who ***“Created - Created man out of a leech-like clot”***. These Divine Qualities are the essence of the Uniqueness of Allah. If we were to analyse the Divine Qualities that are encompassed in these words, we would need too much time and space, because the Creator - Who Created every thing, must logically be Living, All-Knowing, Potent, Wise, Well - Acquainted, Fully Observant, One and Eternal. Here we find ourselves faced with two alternative ideas: either the two authors lack adequate information and thus are incapable of understanding the Holy Quran or they deliberately ignore the truth and try to hide it.

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(1) Surat Al-'Alaq, Verses n° 1-4.

Let us look at the first Verses of ‘Surat’ “Al Muddathir” which were revealed after the aforementioned one; the Almighty Allah says: **“O thou wrapped up (In a mantle)! Arise and deliver thy warning And thy Lord Do thou magnify!”**<sup>(1)</sup> After the Prophet (PBUH) was called and commanded to arise and warn, he was ordered to worship and praise the One True God, Allah - a fact which is central to monotheism, indeed. Anyone who is familiar with the structure of Arabic (the language of the Quran) will understand that putting the object before the verb in **“And thy Lord Do thou magnify!”** signifies that praise should be reserved to the Almighty Allah alone, for He is the One True God, Who truly deserves to be worshipped.

If we say that these early Quranic sections, and even all the Meccan part of the Quran deal with the key theme of monotheism, we will not be in the wrong. Similarly, the early Prophetic Traditions and teachings focus on the very idea of monotheism. The first thing that Muhammad (PBUH) called his closest relatives and tribesmen to believe in and proclaim was “There is no god but Allah”. This was the founding principle of the Faith he taught to the first people who converted to Islam. A principle that is firmly grounded in believing in the Oneness of Allah and not joining anyone else with Him. What proves the firmness of this belief in their minds since the first stages of the Call to Islam in Mecca is the fact that, although some of the early converts underwent a lot of torture at the hands of the Qurayshi Unbelievers, their faith remained unshaken, and they went on reiterating the word which epitomises the belief in the One True God: One and the Only one, One and the Only one, One and the Only One, while suffering torture. This may suffice here.

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(1) Surat *Al-Muddaththir*, Verses n° 1-2.

## • **The Justification of the Prophet's Strength on the Grounds of His Strong Personality**

The two authors allege that the strength of Muhammad (PBUH) lies in his awareness that he was living in a higher intellectual world which was closed to the polytheists, and that he proclaimed ideas "the equal of which neither mankind nor the genies could produce" even if they were to join their efforts together.

This is a psycho-materialist interpretation which negates the spiritual link between Muhammad (PBUH) and his God, Who supported him and strengthened his position in Words and in Deeds; it is based on a materialist conception, namely that the moral strength, which the Prophet (PBUH) had and which helped him stand firm in the face of big challenges and continue his Mission persistently and bravely, in spite of the cruelty, the oppression and the treachery of his enemies, sprang from his personal consciousness and his own belief in himself and his ideas.

Actually, the Prophet (PBUH) had good personal qualities such as courage, firm resolve, patience and self-possession, but they do not alone explain the secret of his strength. There is another side to this secret, which is derived from his close relationship with his God and his awareness of the magnitude of his Mission. What confirms this is that when he found himself in a situation of human weakness - confronted by some hardship or calamity - the Prophet (PBUH) prayed and beseeched Allah to grant him help, support and victory. Had this strength been personal or emotional, he would have had another type of reaction. His prayers are numerous and preserved and there is no need to dwell on them here.

Strange though it may seem, the two authors ignore all this, as well as what other Orientalists have written about the secret of the Prophet's greatness. It is worth recalling here some of what they

state in this respect. the famous French poet Lamartine, who was an expert in Islamic and Oriental studies, has this to say,

*“If the force of moving upward or shooting in the Natural Sciences is the right gauge of the force of the source from which a shot or a shell is launched, the work that is carried out by a performer in the world of history, the records of immortality and the book of humanity is the strength of the heart and emotions, the noble idea which travels to far away places and remains there for a long time. Undoubtedly, this is a powerful idea which originated from strong feelings.*

*There is no doubt that this applies to Muhammad and his fight against the myths of his people, their ignorance, his courage in the face of the cruelty and ill-treatment he suffered at the hands of the polytheists, his belief in victory, his self-possession in his attempts to consolidate the principles of the Muslim Faith. All this proves that he was a prophet who did not resort to falsehood in his life”.*<sup>(1)</sup>

Similarly, Thomas Carlyle has this to say in his book, Heroes about the Prophet (PBUH):

*“It is a great shame on me and on any civilised person to listen today to those accusations made against Islam and its Prophet. Our duty is to fight such ridiculous and disgraceful rumours. The Mission carried out by that noble Prophet is still a guiding light to millions of people. A great man, in my opinion, comes from the heart of the*

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(1) *Al-Mustashriqun wa Al-Islam*, p. 271.

*world and the bowels of the universe, he is part of the essential facts of things, and Muhammad was such a man and, on top of this, he was a great man to whom God taught knowledge and wisdom - his word is but a faithful voice emanating from the highest heavens”<sup>(1)</sup>.*

The secret of Muhammad’s greatness is then derived from the Invisible World, from the Might of the Omnipotent Who granted him victory and the support of the Believers. The Quran and the Prophetic Traditions are full of evidence which proves that the Almighty supported him in every situation and at every step.

#### • **The Call to Islam Lay Only in Warning the Arabs**

The two authors allege that the Prophet (PBUH) did not think of founding a new religion during the Meccan Period of his Prophetic Call. His task was limited to warning the Arabs to whom no prophet had ever been sent before. They give a farfetched meaning to the word “Ummi” (illiterate), a characteristic attributed by the Quran to Muhammad (PBUH), and use this in support of their claim. But this is not convincing evidence. Among the Quranic Verses which they use in this respect are: *“O thou Wrapped up (In a mantle)! Arise and deliver thy warning:”<sup>(2)</sup>*; *“Thou art but a Warner For such as fear it”<sup>(3)</sup>*; *“Nor wast thou at the side of (the Mountain of) Tur when We called (to Moses). Yet (art thou sent) As a Mercy from thy Lord, to give warning to a people to whom no Warner had come Before thee”<sup>(4)</sup>* ; *“Or do they say, ‘He has forgot it’? Nay, it*

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(1) Ibid.

(2) Surat *Al-Muddaththir*, Verses n° 1-2.

(3) Surat *An-Nazi’at*, Verse n° 45.

(4) Surat *Al-Qassas*, Verse n° 46.

*is the truth from thy Lord that thou Mayest admonish a people to whom no Warner has come before thee: In order that they may be rightly guided*"<sup>(1)</sup>. These Holy Verses are used by the two authors to prove their claim that the task of the Messenger of Allah in the Meccan Period of his Call was restricted to warning the Arabs, and that he had not thought then of founding a new religion. There is no need to dwell here on the comments of the Exegetes on these Verses. None of them has ever thought of this kind of interpretation. It may suffice here to quote a modern Exegete's comment on the last verse. He asserts that "those who are being warned here are (the Arab polytheists), because they were the ones who needed a warner far more than any other people because they had lost touch with Divine Guidance; the justification in Allah's statement "***that thou Mayest admonish a people ...***" does not limit the Islamic Message to these Arabs, nor does it deny the spreading of the Message to non-Arabs, who had received a warner in the past. Facts which prove that Islam is a universal religion abound in the Holy Quran and the 'Sunnah' (Prophetic Traditions), such is the case with the universality of the Islamic Call"<sup>(2)</sup>

It is worth noting here that the Verses which prove the universality of Islam were revealed during the Meccan Period itself. Among them are the following:

***"Blessed is He Who sent down the Criterion to His servant, that it may be an admonition to all creatures"***<sup>(3)</sup>.

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(1) Surat *As-Sajda*, Verse n° 2.

(2) *At-Tahrir wa at-Tanwir*, Vol. II. p. 210.

(3) Surat *Al Furqan*, Verse n° 1.

*“We have not sent thee But as a (Messenger) to all mankind, giving them glad Tidings and warning them against (Against sin) but most men know not”<sup>(1)</sup>.*

*“Say: ‘O men! I am sent Unto you all, as the Messenger of Allah”<sup>(2)</sup>.*

*“This Quran hath been Revealed to me by Inspiration that I may warn you and all whom it reaches”<sup>(3)</sup>.*

*“We sent thee not, but As, Mercy for all Creatures”<sup>(4)</sup>.*

In the Hadith reported by Al-Bukhari in his *Sahih*, the Prophet (PBUH) said, *“I have given five (things) that nobody ever gave before me ... among these is that each prophet was sent to his own people, in particular, while I was sent to all humanity.”*

Having presented these Quranic Verses to illustrate the universality of Islam and confirm the universal nature of the Islamic Message, in parallel with the attitude of the two authors, who ignore these Verses and resort in their study to a selective method, which is completely against the rules of scientific research, we would like now to offer some testimonies of Western intellectuals who told the truth about Islam. Among them is the English writer, Bernard Shaw, who said:

*“I have always elevated the religion of Muhammad to a higher rank because of its astonishing energy; it is the only religion which appears to me to have won the aptitude to digest the different stages of life because it can be appealing to all generations of people; I predicted*

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(1) Surat *Sabaa*, Verse n° 28.

(2) Surat *Al-‘Araf*, Verse n° 158.

(3) Surat *Al-An’am*, Verse n° 19.

(4) Surat *Al-Anbiyaa*, Verse n° 107.

*that the religion of Muhammad would be accepted by Europe in the future, and it has already started to be appealing to Europeans today”<sup>(1)</sup>.*

René Etienne said, too:

*“I have never entered a mosque without feeling some psychological irritation and a great regret when I remember that I am not a Muslim. I am sure there are in Europe and America thousands of people who honestly wish to convert to Islam, but they lack the courage to express what they hide. I vehemently declare the truth, namely that I have chosen Islam as a religion”<sup>(2)</sup>.*

Actually Islam has distinctive advantages which render it attractive to people, such as:

1. Its harmony with human spontaneity and its satisfaction of the needs of both mind and heart.
2. The proclamation of brotherhood among its followers.
3. The spirit of tolerance which it spreads among all communities.

At the end of this section I feel the need to go back to the two authors' statement: “that Muhammad had not thought of founding a new religion”, because it is a tricky and provocative statement, so to

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(1) See *As-Sirah An-Nabawiya wa Awham Al-Mustashriqin*, p. 52.

(2) Zakariya Hashem, *Al-Mustashriqun wa Al-Islam*, p. 300, the edition of the High Council for Islamic Affairs and Publicising Islam Committee, Cairo. Taken from *As-Sirah An-Nabawiya ...*, p. 54, Tr. By Muhammad Abdel'adim Ali, edited by Abd Al-Muta'al Muhammad Al Jabri, Dar Ad'awa Li At-Tab'a ...; Alexandria, 1<sup>st</sup> ed- (1414 H? 1994). This book is a translation of and commentary on *Mukhtasar Hayat Muhammad*, by Claude -Etienne SAVARY.

speaking. For it insinuates that Muhammad (PBUH) was an intellectual reformer, and not a prophet, - that his Call changed according to the conditions and situations it had to live with, and that is why it started as a limited and local reformatory Call. But when the Prophet (PBUH) found that the way was paved for him, he started thinking about founding a new religion.

These are fantastic and false ideas conceived by the two authors in the name of historical materialism ; had they been loyal to the principles of this system of thought, they would have found in the strong opposition and excessive hostility with which the Meccans and their neighbouring tribes received the Call to Islam clear evidence not only of these people's awareness that Islam was a new religion in its doctrine, laws and morals but also of their attitude towards the belief in the Uniqueness of Allah by which they were completely amazed and bewildered, as the Almighty Allah says about them in the Holy Quran:

***“Has he made gods All into one God? Truly this is A strange thing! And the leaders among them Go away (impatiently), (saying), ‘Walk ye away and remain constant to your gods!***

***For this is Truly a thing designed (against you)! We never heard (the like) of this in the last religion. This is nothing but a made - up tale!”<sup>(1)</sup>.***

their reaction was similar when they heard about Resurrection as the following Holy Verses show:

***“But they wonder that there has come to them a Warner from among Themselves. So the Unbelievers say: This***

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(1) Surat As-Sad, Verses n° 5-7.

*is a wonderful thing! What, when we die And become dust, (Shall) we live again? That is a (sort of) Return Far (from our understanding)”<sup>(1)</sup>.*

*“Shall we point out to you a man that will tell you, When ye are all scattered to pieces in disintegration, that ye shall (then be Raised) in a New Creation? Has he invented a falsehood Against Allah, or is he Afflicted with madness?”<sup>(2)</sup>.*

Since its advent Islam has produced a radical revolution in the life of the individual and in that of the community because they have undergone a complete change; their standards, judgements and view of the universe, of life and humanity have changed, too. The social structure too has changed remarkably.

In the realm of faith, Islam raised the Arabs and the polytheists in general from the worship of sensory objects to the worship of Allah, the One True God, Whom nobody resembles. As to the behaviour of people, Islam caused a radical change, too. The Arab was no longer free from the laws regulating his dealings and social relationships. On the contrary, he became respectful of the religious laws in the smallest details of his life, such as morals and traditions.

• **A Farfetched Interpretation of: “the Illiterate Prophet”**

Within the framework of looking for evidence of a local nature of the Islamic Call during the Meccan Period, the two authors do not find anything, except the term ‘Ummi’ (Unlettered) - an attribute of Muhammad (PBUH) reported in the Holy Quran as the Almighty’s words illustrate:

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(1) Surat *Qaf*, Verses n° 2-3.

(2) Surat *Sabaa*, Verses n° 7-8.

***“The unlettered Prophet, Whom they find mentioned In their own (Scriptures), - in the Taurat and the Gospel”<sup>(1)</sup>.***

They give a false interpretation to this Verse, stating that “It is in this context, i.e. Islam as a local religion during the Meccan Period, that the meaning of the term ‘Umami’ as applied to the Prophet in “Surat Al-’Araf” is best understood. It means those people who had not previously been given the Book of God and is the antithesis of the People of the Book”.

Thus they interpret the term ‘Umami’ as someone who has no knowledge of religion, so as to be able to say that “the Unlettered Prophet” means a prophet sent to the “illiterate” in particular, namely the Arabs to whom no sacred book had ever been revealed from God before. This interpretation is unknown, it is a distortion of truth, because the Quran clearly states that Muhammad (PBUH) was illiterate; that is, he could neither read nor write:

***“And thou was not (able) to recite a Book before this (Book came), nor art thou (Able) to transcribe it with thy right hand : In that case, indeed, would the talkers of vanities Have doubted”<sup>(2)</sup>.***

As an attribute of the Prophet (PBUH), being illiterate is a complementary quality which Allah reserved for him to complement the wondrous nature of the Quran in terms of its scientific and intellectual inimitability and as yet one further proof of his Prophethood. For the Holy Book, which was revealed to him, encompasses the sciences of religion, life, the universe, the Hereafter, as well as the science of the Sharia and ethics, along with stories of

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(1) Surat Al-’Araf, Verse n° 157.

(2) Surat Al-’Ankabut, Verse n° 48.

past nations and Prophets; cannot emanate from an illiterate, or even from a human mind, no matter how learned a person is. After going a long way in discovering facts, modern scientific progress has only strengthened this proof.

A look at the meaning of the previous Verse further clarifies the absurdity of the two scholars' view. For the Almighty's statement: "***And Thou was not (Able) to recite a Book***" completely denies any ability to read since 'ma' (in Arabic) is used to stress negation; the use of "min" before "Kitab" is there to show that he was not able to read any book, whether in Arabic or in any other language. The Holy statement: "***nor art thou (able) to transcribe it with thy right hand***" clearly denies the ability of the Prophet (PBUH) to write; as to "***thy right hand***", it removes any possibility whatsoever. Thus, the verse displays an exact meaning which leaves no room for any other interpretation.



## Chapter Four

### **Their Discrediting the Major Events in the Life of the Prophet (PBUH) before the Hijra**

The two authors raise doubt about the major events in the life of the Prophet (PBUH) before the Hijra. They tend to deny the truth of the stories about the persecution, ill-treatment, aggression and hostility which the unbelievers reserved for the Prophet (PBUH), as well as the different forms of torture which the early Believers suffered at their hands. They also tend to discredit the story of the emigration of some Muslims from Mecca to Abyssinia, and that of the blockade of Bani Hashem in their own part of Mecca. The evidence they have advanced in this respect is their statement that the relationships between these events in the '*Sirah*' sources are obscure, and that the Quran is silent on them.

#### **The Struggle against the Islamic Call**

An objective scholar would be surprised by the two authors' dealing with these events and by their rejection of well-known and recurrent events in historical and '*Sirah*' sources, and even of all that is referred to in the Quran. The Holy Book reports the hostility of the Quraychi Unbelievers to the Prophet (PBUH) in many Verses, as well as their derision and scorn. It threatens his enemies, such as his uncle Abu-Lahab, Al-Walid ben Al-Mughira and Abu-Jahl with punishment. The silence of the Quran on the details of this attested

enmity and dispute is not a reason for doubting their validity, for the Quran is not a historical record of Muhammad's life, as Orientalists claim.

Both Al-Bukhari's and Muslim's texts devote a special chapter to the harm the Prophet (PBUH) had suffered at the hands of the Unbelievers, and there is no need to refer to these Hadiths here.

If a person is allowed to discredit such chronological, historical events, he can raise doubt about the major world historical events ; thus all facts will be discredited by people.

### **The Emigration to Abyssinia**

As the harm and torture of the early Muslims increased at the hands of the Unbelievers in Mecca, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) allowed them to emigrate to Abyssinia. It is reported in the '*Sirah*' books that he told them: «*Why not emigrate to Abyssinia, for its king is known for his protection of all people living in his country*»; thus Muslims emigrated to Abyssinia in order to preserve their religion<sup>(1)</sup>.

Undoubtedly, emigration from one's country is not always a good experience, and a person leaves his own country only when he is forced to. Had it not been for the excessive, unbearable harm and persecution which Muslims had undergone in Mecca, they would not have left their country to live in a foreign environment whose people did not share their religion or language.

The story of this emigration is true, it is confirmed by authentic Hadiths<sup>(2)</sup> and historical accounts. It seems that the two authors felt that the denial of such an event contradicts historical truth, so

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(1) Ibn Hisham, *As-Sirah*, 1/222.

(2) *Fath Al-Bari Bisharh Sahih of Al Bukhari*, 6/237, 7/188.

they report the false hypotheses of another Orientalist, who claims not only that there was some kind of division within the Muslim community, which resulted in the emigration to Abyssinia of a group of Muslims, but also that some emigrants went to Abyssinia for trading purposes. These reckless claims have no basis in history. Rather, they are inventions meant to exclude the religious and spiritual motive behind this emigration, because a scholar who adheres to materialist philosophy will not be able to believe in the fact that a Muslim's act is triggered by idealistic motives which alone can explain it.

#### • **A False Interpretation of the «Al-Gharaniq»/«Cranes» Incident**

The emigration to Abyssinia is associated in some 'Sirah' books and Quranic Exegetic texts with a story commonly referred to as the story of the «Al Gharaniq» (the «Cranes») which is summed up in At-Tabarani's *Tafsir* as follows:

*«The Prophet (PBUH) was reading «Surat An-Najm» in the Holy House in Mecca in the presence of Muslims and some Quraychi Unbelievers. When he reached the Almighty's statement:*

*«Have ye not seen Lat, and 'Uzza, And another, the third (goddess, Manat)?<sup>(1)</sup>.*

*Satan «cast on his tongue» the words 'those high-flying ones, «Al Gharaniq» (the Cranes) whose intercession is to be hoped for'. The Unbelievers said that he had never praised their gods. When the Prophet prostrated, all the people present prostrated with him, including the Unbelievers.»*

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(1) Surat *An-Najm*, Verses n° 19-20.

Al Bukhari also reported this story, but he kept only the authentic part of it, namely the Prophet's reading of «Surat an-Najm», his prostration at its end, and the prostration of those behind him.

Regarding the prostration of the Muslims, it was done in compliance with Allah's order and an imitation of the Prophet (PBUH). As to the prostration of the Unbelievers, it occurred when they heard the secrets of the lofty language and most eloquent words; it did not occur because the Prophet (PBUH) had referred to their gods in a positive way. However, the insertion of this in the story is a mere invention.

The reason for such an invention and insertion is that the Unbelievers who prostrated with the Messenger (PBUH) were later sharply criticised by their fellow pagans who were not present. It was then that they made a lie about the Prophet (PBUH) and invented the idea that he showed sympathy for their gods so that they could find an excuse for their prostration.

This is a summary of the story, and the opinion of the authenticators about it. In contrast, the majority of the European biographers of the Prophet (PBUH) accepted it in all its details, and used it in their attempts to discredit facts and induce doubts.

The two authors exploit the story in a worse and more deceptive manner. At the beginning of their reference to it, they dismiss it as being unrealistic, but they rectify their view immediately after by asserting the existence of some kernel of reality behind it. Then, they use it as evidence of the influence of polytheist notions on the Prophet (PBUH) and his sharing in some beliefs of the Qurayshis. They argue that putting the responsibility of his departing from monotheism on Satan (as we have seen in the summary of the story) is some sort of telescoping of events in the life of the Prophet (PBUH). What is meant by telescoping here is that the aspects of

polytheism apparent in the Prophet's behaviour took a much longer period, so his biographers foreshortened them in a story like this one.

We have already dealt in some detail in the previous chapters with the preservation of the Messenger (PBUH) from adhering to polytheism and to anything that denies the Uniqueness of Allah both before and after his Prophetic Call. There is no need to repeat ourselves here. We have also mentioned that the positive reference to the idols in the story is an insertion, thus it is mere falsehood.

### • **The Rejection of the Idea of the Blockade of Bani-Hashem and their Boycott**

'Sirah' and Hadith sources relate that when the Quraychis realised that the Followers of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) had grown in number and strengthened after the conversion to Islam of Hamza Ibn Abd Al-Muttalib and Omar Ibn Al-Khattab, and that the emigrants to Abyssinia found refuge there, they finally decided to kill the Prophet (PBUH). When Abu-Talib heard about this plot, he summoned Bani Hashem and Bani Abd Almuttalib and ordered them to bring Muhammad (PBUH) to their quarters in Mecca so as to protect him from being killed by his enemies.

This event is real, it was attested by authentic Hadiths which were related by the authors of reliable Hadith books such as Al Bukhari and Muslim<sup>(1)</sup>. However, the two scholars were bold enough to claim in their Encyclopedia article that it is difficult to take this event for granted and to elucidate it. They allege that as far as the exaggerated stories related to it are concerned, they have no evidence, except that the Holy Quran is silent about it.

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(1) Attested by Al Bukhari in *Kitab Al-Haj, Fath Al-Bari, 3/452*.

In spite of the discrepancies in the relation of the details of this event, its origin is attested to in the Hadith of Abu Huraira (MABPWH) reported by Al-Bukhari<sup>(1)</sup>. He states that *«the Prophet told us while we were at Minan: “Tomorrow, we will stay at Bani- Kinana’s quarters because they disagreed on disbelief in God’, for the Qurayshis and Bani-Makhzoum had entered into an alliance against Bani Hashem and Bani Abdeltalib and decided to boycott them both in terms of marriage and trade till the latter communities had handed the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) over to them.”*

The rejection or the questioning of the validity of this event by the two scholars is part of their attempt to underestimate the Qurayshis’ resistance to the Islamic Call in the Meccan Period; we have already shown that this view is completely false.

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(1) Ibid.

PART TWO

**THE MEDINAN STAGE OF  
THE PROPHET'S LIFE**



## Chapter One

### Errors in the Encyclopedia Article on the Treatment of the Prophet's Hijra (Emigration)

#### **The Objectives of the People of Madina Were Political**

The *Encyclopedia* states that the people of Madina did not so much want to attract an inspired preacher to their town as to have a political leader capable of improving their relations which had worsened as a result of tribal wars which culminated in the Battle of Bu'ath.

Before we begin discussing this point, we should mention that the goal of the authors of *The Encyclopedia* is to allude to the fact that the motives of the people of Madina for accepting the Call to Islam, believing in the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), preparing for his reception in their town, supporting his Call and protecting him from his enemies were worldly political motives, with no room for religious aims or spiritual motives.

Such a positivist, and historical materialist analysis, which does not take into consideration spiritual motives, the desire to please Allah, the Hereafter and the rewards therein, is not suitable for the explanation of the believers' work and the Prophet's life. Therefore, the motives of the Madina people in accepting the Prophet's migration to their town could be both religious and worldly. Perhaps the political situation in Madina at the time was the cause that Allah prepared to trigger off their conversion to Islam and to pave the way for the Prophet's migration to Madina.

Above and beyond all these reasons and motives, stand supreme Allah's Will and Wise Planning, as well as His preparation of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). Our purpose here is to draw attention to the fact that the Prophet's migration was undertaken first and foremost as a result of Allah's permission, as the authentic Hadith related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim shows: the Prophet (PBUH) said: «*I was shown in a dream that I would emigrate from Mecca to a land where palm trees grow, I thought that it was Al Yamama, but it turned out to be Madina (Yatrib)*»<sup>(1)</sup>.

This hidden cause, which is related to Allah's Will, does not preclude the existence of objective causes stemming from the conditions of the people of Madina who had been weakened by tribal wars and worried by their future expectations.

Ibn Ishaq has clarified one aspect of these objective causes in a long analysis. Here is a brief summary of it. One of the causes of the quick acceptance of the people of Madina of the Prophet's Call to Islam lies in the fact that some Jews who lived in Madina were a pious and learned community, unlike the Arab inhabitants who were unbelievers and worshippers of idols. As a result, there were wars between the two camps, and the Arabs were always victorious. These Jews used to tell them that a Messenger of Allah was on the point of being sent down to earth and that they would follow him and wage war against their Arab enemies with his support. When the Prophet (PBUH) talked to a group of Arabs from Yatrib and invited them to embrace Islam, they discussed the matter, and some of them said to the others: "*By Allah! you know that it is the Prophet whom the Jews threatened us with, so don't let them be the first to get his support; then they added, 'We left our people among whom hostility*

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(1) Al Bukhari, *Sahih, Fath Al Bari*, 7/266; Muslim, *Sahih*, 4/1779.

*and violence were more widespread than among any other people. We hope that Allah will grant them reconciliation and peace through your intervention, and if Allah turns them into your followers, no man will be as powerful as you*'<sup>(1)</sup>.

The causes reported by Ibn-Ishaq are undoubtedly objective and real. But a close look at the Hadiths which relate the words of the Madina people at the time of their taking the oath of allegiance to the Prophet (PBUH) in the second «Aqaba» shows that there were strong spiritual motives. It is reported that they had asked the Messenger of Allah what their pledge of allegiance would be about. He answered them: *“You pledge that you will obey my orders in all circumstances, that you will urge people to follow the right path and shun evil deeds; that you will believe in Allah - without fearing other people’s criticism because you have obeyed Allah; that you will defend and protect me, when I come to you, against any harm; and that you must defend yourselves, your wives and children against. Paradise shall be your reward”*. Then, they pledged their allegiance to him.

*«Furthermore, Asa’ad Ibn Zurara (the youngest among them) took the Prophet’s hand and said, ‘Slowly O’ people of Yatrib! We would not have come all this distance on camel back unless we knew that he was the Messenger of Allah, that his banishment would lead to wars among all the Arabs, to the killing of their elite, and to your suffering from the cuts of swords. Therefore, either you are the type of people who will endure all this and be rewarded by Allah, or you fear this matter in your minds; thus be aware of it, and this will be the best excuse you may make to Allah. They answered him: ‘O Asa’ad! Stop scolding us; by Allah, we will neither renounce taking this pledge nor break it. ‘Then we pledged our allegiance to the*

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(1) Ibn Hisham, *As-Sirah*, 428-29.

*Prophet who accepted it after reminding us of his conditions, and promised us Paradise as a reward»<sup>(1)</sup>.*

This allegiance to the Prophet (PBUH) was spiritual in the first place; its motive was the unshakeable belief in the fact that he was the Messenger of Allah, whose obedience was a binding duty in times of happiness and adversity. The words of Asa'ad Ibn Zurara are overflowing with a spirit of faith which stemmed from complete awareness of the big responsibilities and sacrifices that were required in this connection. They pledged their allegiance to the Prophet (PBUH) because they knew that he was Allah's Messenger, and not because they noticed his skills for intelligent leadership, as the authors of *The Encyclopedia* article allege.

### **The Meccans did not Try to Prevent the Prophet's Migration**

What is alleged in *The Encyclopedia of Islam* is that the Meccans did not consider the Prophet as a real threat, whether he was in Mecca or Madina. This is a false allegation, because it is completely different from all that is borne out by real evidence.

It is an established historical fact that Quraysh tried by every means possible to prevent the Emigration of the Prophet (PBUH) to Madina by creating problems and placing obstacles in the way of the Emigrants, by confiscating their wealth or forbidding them from taking it away at times, and kidnapping their wives and children at others, as well as by cunningly trying to bring them back to Mecca.

It is worth noting that the authors of *The Encyclopedia* article ignore the authentic Hadiths and attested historical relations by resorting to a selective method which is against the rules of scientific research.

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(1) Related by Imam Ahmad, 3/332, by Al Baihaqui in *As-Sunan*, and by Al Hakim 2/624. It was also attested and approved by Ad-Dahbi.

They do not mention anything about the fact that the Prophet (PBUH) kept the news of the Hijra secret and that the Emigrants sneaked away singly or in small groups. They do not refer to the harm and ill-treatment that some Emigrants had suffered ever since their intention of migrating from Mecca was found out before their departure. Moreover, they fail to mention not only the conspiracy of the Qurayshis to assassinate the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) on the very night he emigrated from Mecca, but also their wrath when they discovered that Muhammad (PBUH) had already left, as well as their efforts to stop him from reaching Madina by even offering a large reward to anyone who would catch him or supply them with any information about him.

The authors of this article ignored all these facts, asserting that Quraysh did not pay any attention to the Emigration of the Prophet and to that of his Followers. This is completely different from what is stated in the Holy Quran about the conspiracy to assassinate the Prophet (PBUH).

***«Remember how the Unbelievers plotted against thee, to keep thee in bonds, or slay thee, or get thee out (of thy home). They plot and plan, And Allah too plans, But the best of planners Is Allah»<sup>(1)</sup>.***

Ibn Abbas (MABWT) said in his comment on this Verse:

*«The Qurayshis were holding a discussion in Mecca one night; some of them said, 'Let us chain him in the morning'; others said, 'Kill him', while others said, 'Banish him'. However, Allah informed him about their plot, so Ali slept in the Prophet's bed that night.*

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(1) Surat *Al-Anfal*, Verse n° 30.

*Muhammad (PBUH) left the town for the Cave of Hira, while the Unbelievers spent the night closely watching Ali, whom they took for the Prophet (PBUH)».*

*«When morning came, they jumped on him, only to realise that it was Ali. Allah thus defeated them at their plotting; then they asked him, ‘Where is your Companion?’ Ali answered them, ‘I do not know’. Immediately thereafter, they followed the Prophet’s tracks, but when they reached the mountain, they completely lost it, so they climbed the mountain and passed by the Cave of Hira, on whose entrance they saw a spider’s web. They said to themselves, ‘Had he entered here, the spider’s web would not have been on the Cave’s entrance’. The Messenger of Allah stayed in there three nights»<sup>(1)</sup>.*

## **The Discrediting of Prophet’s Hiding out in the Cave of Hira**

Among the allegations of the authors of The Encyclopedia article about the event of the Hijra of the Prophet (PBUH) is their comment in which they state that the traditional story which is embellished with later legendary details, namely the story of Muhammad and Abu Bakr remaining in Mecca until all the other Muslims have safely left and then hiding out in the Cave, is an unrealistic story. For it is a later materialisation of the interpretation of the Holy Verse which refers to the hiding out in the Cave:

***«If ye help not (the Prophet), (It is no matter): for Allah Did indeed help him, when the Unbelievers Drove him***

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(1) Related by Imam Ahmad in *Almusnad* 1/348; reported by Al Hafed Ibn Hajar in *Al-Fath* 7/236 - stating that its authentication is good; Ibn Qathir asserts the same in his *As-Sira*.

*out: being the second of the two they two were in the Cave»<sup>(2)</sup>.*

This questioning of the validity of the event here is of no importance when compared to the clear testimony of the Holy Quran. The Verse is straightforward and plain; there is no ambiguity in it as the authors allege; moreover, the authentic Prophetic Traditions and attested historical relations are strong proofs that leave no room for any doubt here.

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(1) Surat *At-Tauba*, Verse n°40.



## Chapter Two

### Errors in the Description of the Prophet's Dealing with the Jews of Madina

#### **The Questioning of the Date the Prophet Concluded a Treaty with The Jews**

After mentioning how the wise political skills of the Prophet (PBUH) are revealed in the signing of this treaty and how its contents were preserved by Ibn Ishaq, the authors of *The Encyclopedia* article assert that the text of the treaty was probably written during the first year of residence of Muhammad (PBUH) in Madina, because it reflects the bad relations between him and the Jews.

When the Prophet (PBUH) settled in Madina, its inhabitants consisted of different groups: the Helpers, the Emigrants, the Hypocrites, the Unbelievers and large Jewish communities. He organised relations among these different groups. Actually, he made the Helpers and the Emigrants sign a treaty, and prepared a second one between Muslims and Jews. The latter document was known in ancient sources under the name of «Book» or «Script». Modern scholars call it «the Constitution of Madina», since it contains a declaration concerning the obligations of all parties in Madina, specifying rights and duties.

#### **• The Date of the Conclusion of the Treaty with the Jews**

It appears most likely to one modern scholar that the document was originally made up of two documents which the historians had

conflated: one of them deals with the Prophet's peace with the Jews, it was put down in writing before the Battle of Badr, while the second one outlines the obligations of the Muslims, both the Emigrants and Helpers, specifying their rights and duties. This scholar has this to say:

*«It seems most likely to me that the conclusion of the peace treaty with the Jews took place before the Battle of Badr, while the second document was written later»<sup>(1)</sup>.*

The ancient sources seem to support this probability, Abu Abd Al Qassim Ibn Sallam said, *«The document deals with two events related to the arrival of the Prophet (PBUH) in Madina: the first, was before the rise of Islam and its consolidation; the second, was before he was commanded to ask the People of the Book to pay 'Al-Jizya' (a tribute)»<sup>(2)</sup>.*

Al-Baladri also said in this respect:

*«When the Prophet (PBUH) arrived in Madina, he made peace with the Jews and signed a treaty with them on condition that they would no longer befriend his enemy; that they would support him against aggression; and that he would not fight on their side against their enemy. Thus, he did not wage war against anybody, nor did he slander anybody. He never sent any raiding party until Allah revealed the following Verse:*

***«To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight), because they are Wronged; - and verily,***

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(1) Akram al 'Amri, *As-Sirah An-Nabawiya As-Sahihah*, 1.

(2) Abu-Abd Al Qassim Ibn Sallam, *Kitab Al-Amwal*, n° 518.

***Allah is Most Powerful For their aid; - (They are) those who have been expelled from their homes In defiance of right<sup>(1)</sup>.***

Thus, Al Baladri specifies that the peace treaty with the Jews was signed before the sending of the first Muslim raiding parties. It is worth noting that the first raiding party which was led by Hamza was constituted in Ramadan, Year One of the Hijra - namely one year before the Battle of Badr.

Al Baladri reports in another place, while talking about the battle of Qaynuqa':

*«Its cause was the fact that when the Prophet (PBUH) arrived in Madina and made peace with the Jews, a document was signed in this respect. However, when he defeated the enemy at Badr and went back to the city with much booty, the Jews ambushed the Muslim army and thus broke the treaty»<sup>(2)</sup>.*

That is why Al Baladri asserts that the peace treaty with the Jews was concluded before the Battle of Badr.

At-Tabari also has this to say:

*«Then the Messenger of Allah came to Madina after the Battle of Badr. He had already signed a peace treaty with the Jews when he emigrated to Madina. It specified that they should not support his foes, and that they should fight on his side against any enemies who might attack him in Madina. But when the Prophet (PBUH) defeated*

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(1) Al Baladri, *Ansab Al-Achraf*, 1/286. The Holy Words are from Surat *Al-Hajj*, Verses n° 39-40.

(2) Ibid.

*the Qurayshi Unbelievers at the Battle of Badr, the Jews were not only envious and unjust but they also violated the treaty»<sup>(1)</sup>.*

### **• The Adoption of the Rituals of the Jews by the Prophet in Order to Attract Them**

The authors of *The Encyclopedia* article allege that the political wisdom of the Messenger of Allah and his determination to establish his power appear in his attempts to attract the Jews to Islam by adopting some of their religious rituals and customs, such as fasting on the day of ‘Ashura’, the addition of the middle prayer ritual, and the Friday prayer, as well as facing Jerusalem during prayer.

They go on to say that all these practices were part of his attempt to attract the Jews of Madina to Islam, for they were a very active community whose economic status was prominent.

Before embarking on the correction of these major errors, it is worth noting that the Prophet (PBUH) strove to win the Jews over to Islam, as he struggled for the conversion to Islam of all the other communities in Madina and elsewhere. There is nothing wrong with his endeavours to attract the Jews and make Islam likeable to them, but their strong denial and envy prevented these measures from having good effects. As to the idea that the Prophet (PBUH) had adopted Jewish rituals for this purpose, it is far from reality.

As to the fasting during «’Ashura’ (the tenth day of Muharram), it was a common religious practice among the Jews of Madina, so when the Prophet arrived there, he asked them about the reason for fasting on that day. They told him, “*This is the day on which God saved Moses and his people; thus they fasted on it to give thanks to God*”.

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(1) At-Tabari, *Tarikh ar-Russul wa Al-Muluk*, Vol. II, p. 479.

The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, “*We have precedence over you, as far as Moses is concerned*”; he then ordered the Muslims to fast on the day of ‘Ashura’. When Allah commanded Muslims to fast during the Holy month of Ramadan, the fasting on the occasion of ‘Ashura’ was no longer obligatory; it became optional<sup>(1)</sup>.

Fasting on this day is then a following of the model of Moses (PBUH), the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) believes in Moses and asserts that the Muslims have precedence over the Jews in this matter, as it is evidenced by his very words: «*We have precedence over you*». Thus on the surface, the observance of ‘Ashura’ in Islam is similar to its practice in Judaism; but, in essence it is after the model of Moses (PBUH).

As to the authors’ statement that «the Jewish practice of performing three daily prayers appears to have been a factor in the introduction of the Islamic midday prayer which was added to the morning and evening prayers», it is pure invention and an outright lie which does not deserve discussion because the five prayers which Islam prescribes, were most likely ordained one year before the Hijra, precisely on the Night Journey of the Prophet (PBUH), a fact which is attested by authentic Prophetic Traditions, ‘Sirah’ sources, and the practice of Muslims<sup>(2)</sup>.

Before the Night Journey of the Prophet (PBUH), the prayer was performed twice a day - at dawn and dusk<sup>(3)</sup>. We do not think that the Hadith related to the Night Journey and the prescription of the five

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(1) This Hadith is attested by Al Bukhari, 4/213, *Fi-As-Sawm*, Bab: *Sawm ‘Ashura*, and by Muslim in *Fi As-Siyam*.

(2) Al-Bukhari, *Sahih*, Chapter: *Al-Mi‘raj*, n° 3887: Muslim, *Sahih*, *Kitab Al-Imam*, Bab: *Al-Israa*, n° 164.

(3) *Ar-Rawd Al-Anif* 1, p. 11.

prayers is an ambiguous matter. For the Hadith, ‘Sirah’ historical and exegetical books refer to it and report ample information about it. Therefore, it is impossible to forgive the authors of the article for this serious error on the grounds of their ignorance or lack of data.

Another false allegation reported by *The Encyclopedia* article is that the Friday Prayer which was practiced in Madina for the first time and which may have been instituted before Muhammad’s Migration was most likely influenced directly by the Jewish «day of preparation for the Sabbath, which begins on Friday evenings at sundown.

It is asserted in the authentic Hadith which is related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim that the Almighty honored Muslims by guiding them to pray on Fridays, long after this practice had ceased to exist among Jews and Christians. Al-Bukhari’s *Sahih* reports the Prophet’s following words:

*«We are the last (to receive Revelation), but the first and the triumphant Ummah on the Day of Judgement, though they received the Book of Allah before us. Moreover, this is the Day Allah had prescribed for them (The People of the Book), but they have disagreed about it. So, Allah guided us to it, and people have followed our example in sanctifying this day. The Jews will do the same as us tomorrow (in the future) and the Christians the day after ‘tomorrow’ (Hereafter)»<sup>(1)</sup>.*

The *Sahih* of Muslim reports, on the authority of Abu-Hurayra and Huthayfa (MABPWT), that the Prophet (PBUH) stated the following:

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(1) Related by Al-Bukhari, 2/293-294, “*Bab Fard Al-Jumu‘a*”.

*«Allah had led those who preceded us into forsaking Friday; the Jews were given Saturday and the Christians Sunday; therefore, Allah brought us and guided us to Friday. Hence the ordering of Friday, Saturday and Sunday which implies that they will be behind us on the Day of Judgement; we are the last part of humankind on earth, but the first on the Day of Judgement, namely the ones to be judged before all creatures»<sup>(1)</sup>.*

Friday prayer is the most insisted on of all the Islamic obligatory duties; it is one of the most important religious gatherings of the Muslims. In fact, it is the major religious gathering of all that is obligatory, second only to that of 'Arafat, during the Pilgrimage. Therefore, there is no reason to say that Muslims established the Friday prayer as a result of the influence of the Jewish day of preparation on them;

It is true that the first Friday prayer was performed in Madina before the Migration of the Prophet (PBUH), because Friday prayer requires the gathering of Muslims in a big place and the freedom to perform their religious rituals openly, but this was not possible in Mecca since the Believers were a persecuted community, too deprived of their freedom to declare their faith and perform their rituals openly.

As to the statement in *The Encyclopedia* article which specifies that the Muslims' facing north towards Jerusalem when performing their prayers was part of the Prophet's campaign to win the Jews over to Islam, it needs clarification and discussion. First of all, the Muslims' turning in prayer towards Jerusalem was done in compliance with the Command of Almighty Allah, while the Prophet (PBUH) preferred to face the Holy House in Mecca, as the Quran asserts:

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(1) Muslim, *Sahih, Kitab Al-Jumu'a*, Hadith n° 1415.

*«We see the turning of thy face (for guidance) to the heavens: now shall we turn thee To a Qibla that shall Please thee ...»<sup>(1)</sup>.*

We really do not know in details the Divine Wisdom behind this Command to face Jerusalem, during the first year of the Hijra. It is not too farfetched an explanation to say that His Wisdom in this respect was to bring the Jews closer to Islam, or to prevent them from harming the Muslims in Madina until the latter had settled down and organised their lives.

However, the Prophet's turning in prayer towards Jerusalem was not an event that took place after the Hijra to Madina; so it could not be considered as having stemmed from the need to attract the Jews. On the contrary, it was a practice which had been performed in Mecca long before the Hijra, as is attested in the Hadith of Ka'ab Ibn Malik:

*«Al Barra Ibn Ma'arur, one of the Muslims who went on Pilgrimage from Madina to Mecca before the Emigration prayed on the way there with his face turned towards the Holy Ka'aba, unlike his fellow Muslim pilgrims who turned their faces towards Jerusalem. When they arrived in Mecca, they went to see the Messenger of Allah, whom they asked about the act of Al-Barra Ibn Ma'arur. The Prophet (PBUH) answered, 'You have already a 'Qibla' which you should keep'. Al Barra complied and returned to the 'Qibla' of the Prophet (PBUH), who prayed with us with his face turned towards Jerusalem»<sup>(2)</sup>.*

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(1) Surat *Al-Baqarah*, Verse n° 144.

(2) Related by Imam Ahmad, *Musnad*, 3/460-62, attested by Ibn Habban in *Fath Al Bari* 5/42.

As this authentic Hadith asserts, it is a fact that the Muslims' turning their faces towards Jerusalem after the Migration to Madina was a continuation of a practice which the Believers had adopted before. Therefore, the claim of the authors of *The Encyclopedia* article that it was part of the Messenger's campaign to attract the Jews to his religion is completely groundless.

### **The Building of the Prophet's Mosque was an Imitation of the Jewish Synagogue**

*The Encyclopedia* article states that, according to certain authors (which it does not name), the Grand Mosque which the Prophet (PBUH) built on his arrival in Madina is an imitation of the Jewish synagogue.

The authors of the article go on to reduce the value of the Prophet's Mosque and its sanctity. They draw on the work of another orientalist who alleges that the Mosque was used for secular purposes, and that it was no more than a house where Muhammad (PBUH) and his family lived, whereas the assemblies performed their prayers in 'Al-Mussalla'. All this is confused and false, for Islam instituted group prayer and asked Muslims to gather together to pray five times a day, so as to consolidate the unity of the community, and to strengthen the spirit of brotherhood and friendship among its members. Therefore, it was necessary to build a mosque for the practice of this obligatory ritual. There was no need whatsoever for imitation in such a matter.

However, the treatment of this subject in *The Encyclopedia* article is done in such an ambiguous and twisted manner as to provoke confusion and disarray, for there is a confusion between the Prophet's Mosque and the rooms in which his wives lived; furthermore, the prayers were not performed, as it is alleged in *The Encyclopedia* article, in 'Al Mussalla', but in the Mosque.

In Islam, the Mosque is well-defined, it is the ‘House of Allah’, where prayers are performed, while ‘Al Mussala’ is any place where a prayer is performed whether in a house or in the open air.

It is obvious that the authors of *The Encyclopedia* article have based their talk about the Prophet’s Mosque and the function of the mosque in Islam in general on non-Islamic religious and cultural conceptions; hence their belief that the sanctity of the Prophet’s Mosque was violated by the insertion of secular practices among the activities carried out therein.

This is a false conception, and it is unrewarding to spend time discussing whether the mosque is of a secular or religious nature from the Islamic point of view which, unlike other religions, does not draw a line of demarcation between everyday life and religion. For the mosque in Islam is a religious, scientific and social institution, where prayers are performed, learning is transmitted, and where religious matters, as well as the social issues which are relevant to the life of the community, are discussed. There is nothing in these activities that undermines its sanctity.

What makes it clear that the authors of *The Encyclopedia* article did not respect the principle of objectivity and fairness in their writings about the Prophet’s Mosque is their giving more value to the mosque built by the Hypocrites in Madina in an attempt to destroy the unity of the Believers which the Prophet’s Mosque had fostered and preserved. The Quran called this «mosque of opposition» «Masjid Dirar». The attitude of the authors here completely ignores what is referred to in the Holy Quran and what has been transmitted successively in the Prophetic Traditions, ‘Sirah’ and historical books over the years. It may suffice, to quote from the Holy Quran, where Allah states:

*«And there are those who put up a mosque by way of mischief and infidelity- To disunite the believers - And in preparation for one who warred against Allah and His Messenger aforetime. They will indeed swear that their intention is nothing but good; but Allah doth declare that they are certainly liars. Never stand thou forth therein. There is a mosque whose foundation was laid from the first day on piety; it is more worthy of thy standing forth (for prayer) therein. In it are men who love to be purified; and Allah loveth those who make themselves pure»<sup>(1)</sup>.*

- **The Accusation of Misunderstanding Levelled against The Prophet (PBUH)**

*The Encyclopedia* article relates that the Messenger of Allah found himself in an embarrassing position when there was incongruence between what he recited from the Book of Allah and the Book sent down to Moses earlier, because Muhammad (PBUH) had previously announced that they were identical. He thus aroused Jewish ridicule. Since his position did not allow for admitting that he was mistaken; he resolved this problem by announcing that the Jews had received only a portion of the Book and by accusing them of having concealed from him parts of their Holy Scriptures, and even of having invented verses and claiming that they were their scriptures. To support such false allegations and pure inventions, the authors of *The Encyclopedia* article quote the following verses from the Holy Quran:

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(1) Surat *At-Tawba*, Verses n° 107-108.

**«Hast thou not turned thy thought to those who have been given a portion of the Book? They are invited to the Book of Allah, to settle their dispute, but a party of them turn back and decline (The arbitration)»<sup>(1)</sup>.**

**«Hast thou not turned thy thought to those who were given a portion of the Book? They traffic in error, and wish that ye should lose the right path?»<sup>(2)</sup>.**

As to the authors' statement that the Prophet (PBUH) found himself in an embarrassing situation, resulting from his misunderstanding of the Torah, as well as from the contradiction in the Quran, which had earlier announced the agreement between its contents and those of the Torah, but later displayed discrepancies between it and the former Book, it is mere falsehood and baseless claims. There is no contradiction in the Holy Quran; and its status vis - a - vis the Torah, the Bible, etc. is clearly defined in many Verses. The Quran makes it the duty of Muslims to believe in all the Holy Books which were revealed before it. More often than not, the Almighty compares the Torah with the Quran in terms of greater importance. Allah says :

**«Say 'Who then sent down the Book which Moses brought? - A light and guidance to man: but ye make it into separate sheets for show, while ye conceal much (of its contents) ...»<sup>(3)</sup>.**

**«And this is a Book which We have sent down, bringing blessings, and confirming (the revelations) which came before it: that thou Mayest warn the Mother of cities and all around»<sup>(4)</sup>.**

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(1) Surat Al- 'Imran, Verse n° 23.

(2) Surat An-Nissa', Verse n° 44.

(3) Surat Al-An'am, Verse n° 91.

(4) Surat Al-An'am, Verse n° 92.

*«Moreover, We gave Moses the Book, completing (our favour) to those who would do right, and explaining all things in detail - and a guide and a mercy, that they might believe in the meeting with their Lord»<sup>(1)</sup>.*

Then, Allah says about the Holy Quran, in the same context:

*«And this is a Book which we have revealed as a blessing: so follow it and be righteous, that ye may receive mercy»<sup>(2)</sup>.*

Al-Hafed Ibn Kathir's comments in this connection are highly relevant:

*«Those who are wise know that Allah, the Almighty, did not send down a Book more perfect, more glorious, more comprehensive, more eloquent and grander than the Book He revealed to Muhammad (PBUH), namely the Holy Quran. After it, comes in terms of glory and sublimeness, the Book which was sent down to Moses (PBUH), and which Allah describes as follows: **«It was We Who revealed the Torah (to Moses): therein was guidance and light»<sup>(3)</sup>. Then comes the Bible which was revealed to complete the Torah and to make lawful some of what had been forbidden to the Israelis»<sup>(4)</sup>.***

The Holy Quran was revealed to confirm the Scriptures that preceded it and to bear testimony to the forgeris they contain, as the Almighty Allah says:

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(1) Surat *Al-An'am*, Verse n° 154.

(2) Surat *Al-An'am*, Verse n° 155.

(3) Surat *Al-Ma'idah*, Verse n° 44.

(4) Ibn Kathir, *Mukhtassar At-Tafsir*, Vol. III, p. 13.

*«To thee we sent the scripture in truth, confirming the scripture that came before it, and guarding it in safety: so judge between them by what Allah hath revealed»<sup>(1)</sup>.*

This is the position of the Quran in comparison with the Torah. There is no contradiction in its dealing with the latter. There is no contradiction in the Quranic verses that speak about the acts of the Jews who had distorted the word of Allah:

*«There is among them a section who distort the Book with their tongues; (as they read) so that you would think It is a part of the Book, but it is not part of the Book; and they say, ‘That is from Allah’, but it is not from Allah: It is they who tell A lie against Allah, and (well) they know it»<sup>(2)</sup>.*

Agreement on religious principles exists between the Quran and the Torah in its original version, not in the version which underwent additions and distortions. Thus, there was no embarrassment in the position of the Prophet (PBUH), or any misunderstanding on his part. Had he committed errors, even the slightest ones, the enemies of Islam would have given them too much publicity in all ages, and there had been many enemies, indeed. It is not logical that such errors would have remained unknown until the authors of *The Encyclopedia* article came to unravel them in the twentieth century. Furthermore, the Almighty’s statement about the Jews: *«Hast thou not turned thy thought to those who have been given a portion of the Book»<sup>(3)</sup>* was no trick to which the Prophet (PBUH) had resorted to find a way out of an embarrassing situation, or to get rid of Jewish ridicule.

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(1) Surat *Al-Ma'idah*, Verse n° 48.

(2) Surat *Al-Imran*, Verse n° 78.

(3) Surat *Al-Imran*, Verse n° 23.

What the «portion» means in the Holy Verse is their assigned share. For the Jews' share of the Scriptures is the Torah which was revealed to Moses (PBUH) and which abounds in knowledge, guidance and light. But the Jews did not take advantage of this. We have seen the purpose of the Holy Verse; there is no evidence in it which corroborates what the authors of *The Encyclopedia* article have advanced.

It should be mentioned here that the treatment of this point in *The Encyclopedia* article displays the authors' deliberate distortion of meanings and temerity to interpret the Quranic verses and to impose on them meanings that they do not really convey. It should also be recalled here that indulging in this kind of falsification and distortion has a preset objective, namely that the Quran was the creation of Muhammad (PBUH), who not only changed it, according to the changing circumstances and conditions surrounding him, but who also confirmed that there was agreement between the Quran and the Jewish Scriptures at one time, and who advocated its contradictions at another. However, when he found himself in an embarrassing situation, he resolved the problem by deciding on what suited the situation.

It must be noted, too, that the two authors resort here to the policy of «attack is the best instrument of defence» so as to remove the accusation of distortion and addition in the Torah texts, which the Quran confirms. Thus instead of taking a defensive attitude, they took an offensive one by putting the Prophet (PBUH) in an embarrassing and ridiculous situation, and by accusing him of contradicting himself in order to come to the conclusion that accusing the Jews of distortion is wrong, and that this occurred within the context of finding a way out of embarrassment and getting rid of the Jews' ridicule. But this is a well-known strategy which one usually resorts to when one does not have evidence to prove one's innocence.

## **The Impact of Jewish Opposition on Shaping the Future of Islam**

*The Encyclopedia* article states that the nascent Muslim community in Madina took on, under the impact of the opposition or rejection with which the Jews responded to the Islamic Call, a pronounced national character through the adoption of various elements from ancient Arabian worship. This decisive change took place in the second year of the Hijra, and was signalled by the change of the 'Qibla' from Jerusalem to the Holy House (the Ka'aba) in Mecca, which became the centre of the new religion. Thus Muhammad (PBUH) was freed from the derision of the Jews. This change was made all the more obvious by the Prophet's announcement that his Call was closely related to that of Ibrahim (PBUH).

The authors of *The Encyclopedia* article go on to ask whether it had already been known that Ibrahim (PBUH) was the father of monotheism or that the idea only originated in the context of Muhammad's dispute with the Jews of Madina. They thus raise doubt by such speculation. Then, they reach their set objective which lies in the total denial that the Prophet (PBUH) had been acquainted with the idea of the connection between Ibrahim and the Holy Ka'aba before the Hijra to Madina because, according to their allegation, this connection had not been referred to in any Verse of the Meccan part of the Quran.

These are the ideas reported in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*. I have tried to summarise many sections which contain numerous mistakes and dangerous claims which insult the prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH), the Quran, Islam, and the Muslims to the very core of their Faith. Some of these errors are plain, while others can only be understood from the suggestions and allusions made by the authors.

The first of these errors is the claim that the opposition of the Jews of Madina to the Prophet (PBUH) had an impact on the future of Islam; thus changing it from a universal to a national religion. Such a claim is based on a false basis, namely that Islam is an earthly religion founded by Muhammad (PBUH), hence his very influence by the changing and unexpected conditions, as well as by the circumstances which forced him to change his principles and fundamental teachings, according to what he encountered on his way, be they opposition and obstacles or support and confirmation. However, the attitude of the Prophet (PBUH) in terms of his proclamation of his Call and its principles was completely different. He did not pay attention to the position of his opponents and enemies, nor did he hesitate to deliver the Word of Allah, and to announce the truth as it came down to him, even when it provoked the anger of his addressees. He could not do otherwise even in Mecca, when he was in need of supporters for Allah's religion; so, how could he have done what the authors of the article claim, in Madina where he had the support of both the Helpers and the Emigrants who constituted a very powerful community.

Furthermore, Islam is the religion of the Almighty Allah, His Laws and Commands, which He revealed to the Messenger so as to change the conditions of people on earth for the better. Allah is not influenced in His objectives, principles and goals by the earthly conditions of people, nor by the circumstances or the determining factors of their milieu.

Of course, the method of the Call to Islam and the means of spreading it can change with the changing conditions, but the Call in terms of essence and principles, the Call does not change. The Prophet (PBUH) did not have the right to introduce any change so as to please anybody, or to be influenced by any opposition or hostility.

If we were to dwell on the allegations the authors of *The Encyclopedia* article have made, we would have to spend a lot of time and energy on their treatment of the Prophet's life, for they assert in other sections that we have touched on a moment ago that Muhammad (PBUH) had actually adopted a number of Jewish rituals in the first year of the Hijra and had changed his course by adopting ancient features of Arab worship in the second year of the Hijra.

Looking at these allegations and conjectures, the reader will think that the Prophet (PBUH) did not have a firm principle or motive; or else why did he keep modifying his positions and the objectives of his Call according to the changing situations. Moreover, the reader will think, as a result, that Islam is not the valuable religion of Allah and His Wise Laws and System. This is what the authors of the article endeavour to impress on the minds of people in an indirect way.

As to the claim that Islam took on a national character with the announcement of the changing of the 'Qibla' from Jerusalem to the Ka'aba in Mecca, it is completely false. There is no reference, neither in the Holy Quran nor the authentic Hadith, either implicitly or explicitly, to the fact that the Islamic Call took on, at any time or period, a national character and abandoned its universal and human character. On the contrary, what the Quran and the Hadith proclaim is a call for the rejection of nationalism and partisanship and the adherence to the bonds of Islamic brotherhood.

We have already provided, in the first part of this study, ample evidence about the universality of Islam, during our discussion of the allegations which specify that the Prophet (PBUH) was asked throughout the Meccan Period of his Call to Islam to warn his people only. Therefore, there is no need to repeat them here.

Suffice it to say here that the Messenger's attitude as well as that of the The Four Rightly-guided Caliphs refute this allegation. The changing of the 'Qibla' did not prevent the Muslims from Calling to Islam the Jews of Madina and the Christians of Arabia, as well as the Romans (the Europeans), the Persians, the Abyssinians and humankind as a whole at all times. As he did with the Arab unbelievers, the Prophet (PBUH) sent the Muslim army to call to Islam, the Jews and the Christians. His letters to kings and rulers of different countries is another proof of his awareness of the universality of Islam. Of course, these letters were sent after the conclusion of the peace treaty of Al Hudaibiya, which the authors of *The Encyclopedia* article were not unacquainted with. As to their claim that the connection between the Holy Ka'aba and the religion of Ibrahim (PBUH) had resulted from the Muslims' enmity with the Jews of Madina, and their attempt to prove this by stating that the Meccan Part of the Holy Quran did not mention this connection, they do not deserve to be discussed, because they completely ignore history and the unambiguous nature of the relevant Quranic Verses in this respect.

How can that the Messenger (PBUH) forget this, while the Meccans, despite their polytheism, were proud of being the descendents of Ibrahim (PBUH)? The Holy Quran, which we know and read, corroborates the existence of this connection in the Meccan Verses themselves. The most significant verse in this respect is the Almighty's words in «Surat Ibrahim», which is unanimously considered as Meccan:

***«Remember Abraham said: 'O my Lord! Make this city one of peace and security; and preserve me and my sons from worshipping idols. O my Lord! They have indeed led astray many among mankind, he then who follows***

*my (ways) is of me, and he that disobeys me, - but Thou art indeed Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful. O our Lord! I have made some of my offspring to dwell in a valley without cultivation, by thy Sacred House; in order, O my Lord! that they may establish regular prayer: so fill the hearts of some among men with love towards them. And feed them with fruits: so that they may give thanks'.»<sup>(1)</sup>*

In sum, such falsehoods by which the pages of *The Encyclopedia of Islam* are blotted, particularly in the twentieth century - the age of advanced scientific investigation, of developed means of communication and of careful collection of data from authentic sources - bring shame on academic research centers.

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(1) Surat *Ibrahim*, Verses n° 35-37.

## Chapter Three

### **Errors in the Treatment of ‘Saraya’ (Raiding Parties) and ‘Ghazawat’ (Military Expeditions Led by the Prophet Himself)**

#### **The Motives for Sending out Raiding Parties and Military Expeditions**

*The Encyclopedia* article deals with the motives of the Prophet (PBUH) for sending out raiding parties and military expeditions to the neighbouring areas of Madina since he first emigrated to it. Among the motives it generally gives are the psychological, personal and political ones - thus completely negating the religious ones.

Among the psychological or personal motives referred to here is «that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) had an account to settle with the Meccans; for by expelling him from Mecca they had triumphed over him in the eyes of the world». The authors of the article also make a connection between the sending out of raiding parties and the permission to fight, which is a mixing of issues here, because the sending out of raiding parties in the first year of the Hijra took place before the Muslims were permitted to fight and before the Holy War (Al-Jihad) was introduced. This is borne out by the size of these first raiding parties which did not match that of the Unbelievers' forces, and by the fact that they were not given permission to fight by the Prophet (PBUH). On the contrary, they were sent out for other purposes-mainly economic and strategic motives. Another proof of this is what happened to the raiding party led by Abdallah

Ibn Jahsh, which was involved in a fight during the month of Rajab (one of the sacred months during which all fighting was forbidden). The members of this raiding party were sharply rebuked by both the Prophet (PBUH) and their fellow believers. The polytheists took this opportunity to spread tendentious rumours, which resulted in confusing concepts, so the Quran came down to remove this confusion and clarify the hierarchy of values:

***«They ask thee concerning fighting in the Prohibited Month. Say: 'Fighting therein is a grave (offence) but graver is in the sight of Allah to prevent access to the Sacred Mosque, and drive out its members. Tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter'.»<sup>(1)</sup>***

It is completely wrong to say that the sending out of raiding parties was motivated by the settlement of a personal account with the Meccans because the attitude of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) towards the Meccans even after Allah had helped him to vanquish them on the occasion of the Great Conquest, refutes this claim. He showed them his mercy and generosity and thus gave the whole world a good lesson in forgiveness and charity. If he had had a personal account to settle with them, or a desire to avenge himself, he would have had a different attitude towards them.

However, we cannot deny that the motives behind the first raiding which the Muslims had sent out before they were allowed to fight, were interconnected-both strategically and religiously. These motives may be summed up as follows:

First, giving a strong sign to the polytheists of Madina, its Jews and the neighbouring tribesmen that the Muslims were strong, and that

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(1) Surat *Al-Baqarah*, Verse n° 217.

they had got rid of their previous weakness, which made it possible for the Qurayshis in Mecca to ‘confiscate’ their faith and freedom, and violate the privacy of their homes and possessions. Therefore, the Muslims had the right to give enough attention to these instances of military ‘show of force’, though they were of little importance. For the lurking enemies of Islam in Madina were numerous, and nothing prevented them from attacking the Muslim community, except their fear. Allah’s following words corroborates this assertion:

*«To strike terror into (the hearts) of the enemies, of Allah and your enemies, and others besides, whom ye may not know, but whom Allah doth know.»<sup>(1)</sup>*

Second: giving a warning to Quraysh as a result of their recklessness, for they had waged war against Islam and were still waging it. They had persecuted the Muslims in Mecca, and they continued their transgression by not allowing any Meccan to convert to Islam or preventing this religion from spreading to any other part of the land. The Prophet (PBUH) wanted to show to the Meccan leaders that their hostile attitude would be the cause of their ruin, and that the time when they engaged in aggressing the Believers without fear of retaliation are gone forever<sup>(2)</sup>.

## **The Distortion of Attitudes and Truths**

The authors of *The Encyclopedia* article refer to the attitude of the Helpers towards the raiding parties and military expeditions in a way that would induce us to imagine that they had refused to take part in them, because they had pledged to defend the Prophet (PBUH) only if he were to be attacked.

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(1) Surat *Al-Anfal*, Verse n° 60.

(2) Muhammad Al-Ghazali, *Fiqh As-Sirah*, pp. 228-29, dar Al-Kutub Al-Haditha, Cairo, 7<sup>th</sup> edition, 1976.

They go on to claim that the merchants of Mecca were not inclined to start hostilities, and that the Emigrants had not pledged to fight, because it went against their feelings towards their Meccan relatives. Then after wondering how much this resistance had vexed the Prophet (PBUH), the authors state that the answer to this can be found in the Quran where a rigorous reproof is made against his Followers.

This is a summary of what the authors of the article have to say on this issue. What they advance consists of mere lies about the Followers of the Prophet (PBUH) and a distortion of the reality of their attitudes. Anyone who reads this article and takes it for granted would be led to one main inference, namely that the Prophet (PBUH) was the only one who wanted war and was ready to fight, while the other parties - including the polytheists of Quraysh - were only forced into it.

Actually, the attitude of the Qurayshi Unbelievers was not as peaceful as *The Encyclopedia* article alleges; the hostility of the Meccans continued unabated, as the Quran and the Hadith assert, they had plotted to kill the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) on the night of his Emigration from Mecca and had relentlessly followed his track; they only failed in their endeavour thanks to Allah's miracle. Undoubtedly, the Prophet (PBUH) was expecting that the Qurayshis and their allies would pursue him and wage war against him in Madina or elsewhere.

The concatenation of circumstances and the nature of the conflict indicated that war was inevitable. The Qurayshis, who had been fighting Islam for many years, were not prepared to allow Islam to spread to different parts of the Arabian peninsula.

The Prophet (PBUH) and the Muslims knew this; hence the Followers' embarking upon launching small raiding parties to carry out military manoeuvres outside Madina, aimed at showing their enemies that they were now strong.

As to the Muslims' ambush of the Qurayshi trade caravans, This was a legitimate act in the eyes of the Emigrants, because they considered those caravans and the goods they carried as their property, for they had been expelled from their homes in Mecca and deprived of their property by the Qurayshi Unbelievers.

There are in the Holy Quran, the Prophetic traditions, biographical and historical books many texts which prove that the Followers had pledged to obey the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) and to throw in their lot with him and to strike it together through thick and thin. They had never objected to taking part in military expeditions or Jihad. On the contrary, they were always prepared to comply with the Prophet's orders. They had sacrificed their properties and lives and bravely vied with each other in this respect. Contemporary accounts abound in noble examples of their eagerness to fight and die as martyrs so that Allah's religion could prevail. Even the weak and the poor among them, who had neither money nor horses to ride, insisted on taking part in these expeditions; so the Holy verses were revealed to free them from their anguish, Allah says in this respect:

***«There is no blame on those who are infirm, or ill, or who find no resources to spend (on the cause), if they are sincere (in duty) to Allah and His Messenger: No ground (of complaint) can there be against such as do right: and Allah Is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. Nor (is there blame) on those who came to thee to be provided with mounts, and when thou saidst, 'I can find no mounts for you' they turned back, their eyes streaming with tears of grief that they had no resources wherewith to provide the expenses»<sup>(1)</sup>.***

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(1) Surat At-Tawbah, Verses n° 91-92.

One may wonder how the authors of the article in The Encyclopedia of Islam dared to ignore all historical facts and claim that the Followers of the Prophet (PBUH) were against fighting for the Cause of Allah.

Moreover, the two Quranic Verses, which the authors refer the reader to so as to justify their claim, alleging that they were revealed to chastise the Followers for their opposition to military expeditions, do not have this meaning at all. On the contrary, they mean the opposite of the interpretation given them by the authors of *The Encyclopedia* article: the first Verse is:

***«They ask thee concerning fighting in the Prohibited Month. Say: 'fighting therein is a grave (offence) but graver is it in the sight of Allah to prevent access to the path of Allah, to deny Him, to prevent access to the Sacred Mosque, and drive out its members', tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter»<sup>(1)</sup>.***

The purpose here is to grant pardon to the members of Abdallah Ibn Jahsh's raiding party which was involved in a fight against the Meccan Unbelievers without the permission of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), who (upon realising that the fight took place in the month of Rajab) told them that he did not order them to fight in a «Prohibited Month»; thus the raiders felt conscience stricken, and their fellow Muslims scolded them. Furthermore, the Unbelievers took this opportunity to criticise the Muslims and the Prophet (PBUH) for having violated the sanctity of the Prohibited Month by shedding blood in it.

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(1) Surat *Al-Baqarah*, Verse n° 217.

It is during these instances of regret, blame and embarrassment that the Revelation was sent down from Heaven to absolve the Muslim raiders from their guilt. Thus, the Verse means completely the opposite of what is advanced in *The Encyclopedia* article. No blame (little or big) is laid on the Followers here, for having refused to take part in military expedition. On the contrary, the Verse highlights the pardon granted to the raiders who took the initiative of fighting the Unbelievers, and clears them of any accusation or blame levelled against them.

As to the second Quranic verse, it is as follows:

***«Did not Allah check one set of people by means of another, there would surely have been pulled down monastries, churches, synagogues and mosques, in which the name of Allah is commemorated in abundant measure. Allah will certainly aid those who aid His (cause); -for verily Allah is full of strength, exalted in might (able to enforce His will)»<sup>(1)</sup>.***

I do not know how the authors of this article managed to understand from this Verse what they have advanced. For this Holy Verse was revealed within the context of the very Verse which gave the Muslims permission to fight those who had wronged them from among the Quraychi Unbelievers. The Verse which immediately precedes it reads:

***«To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight), because they are wronged; - and verily Allah is most powerful for their aid»<sup>(2)</sup>.***

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(1) Surat *Al-Hajj*, Verse n° 40.

(2) Surat *Al-Hajj*, Verse n° 39.

This is, therefore, a manifest permission from Almighty Allah to fight in self - defense and retaliation. Moreover, it is there to incite the Believers to fight and not, as *The Encyclopedia* article alleges, to blame them for that.

There are two plausible explanations for such blunders in the article of the *Encyclopedia of Islam*: either the authors of this section had little knowledge of Islam and the Prophet's life, or they deliberately distorted the truth for hidden purposes.

### **3. Evident Bias and Disregard of Facts**

The authors of *The Encyclopedia* article refer to the military expeditions (Ghazawat) led by the Prophet (PBUH) to chastise the Jews in Madina and Khaybar in a biased way; in that they clearly side with the Jews whom they endeavour to portray as innocent victims, while the Muslims are portrayed as tyrannical aggressors, for they selected from the events of these expeditions only what suited their purposes, ignoring crucial facts.

#### **• The Disregard of the Reasons for the Expulsion of Bani Qaynuqa'a**

After referring to the important advantages that the Muslims had gained from their victory at the Great Battle of Badr, the authors go on to talk about the besieging of the Jewish tribe of Bani Qaynuqa'a in a way that suggests that the Muslims were proud of their force and wanted to show it in their attack of this Jewish quarter. *The Encyclopedia* article has it as follows:

*«After completing the arrangement for ransom for the Meccan prisoners, Muhammad began to besiege the Jewish tribe of Kaynuka' in their forts. The 'Munafikun' (the Hypocrites) did not dare to oppose him seriously by openly supporting the Kaynuka', and other Jewish*

*groups left their co-religionists in the lurch so that this first Jewish tribe was forced to leave their longtime home in Madina».*

In this manner, the authors disregard the causes of the siege which are well-known, for they are reported in 'Sirah' and history books. Among these causes are the Bani Qunyuqa's violation of the peace treaty with the Muslims, their show of envy for and hostility towards the Muslims after the latter's victory over the Unbelievers of Mecca at Badr. Ibn Abbas (MABPWT) states that:

*«As to the Hadith of Bani Qaynuqa'a, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) convened them on Bani Qaynuqa'a's market day and told them: ' Oh ye the Jews! Take what happened to the Qurayshis as a warning from Allah. Convert to Islam; or else, you will suffer the same fate; for you know that I am the Messenger of Allah; you find this in your Holy Book, as well as Allah's promise to you'. They replied, 'Oh Muhammad! You see that we are your rivals, so do not be deluded by your victory over a people who have no experience in warfare, by God, if we wage war against you, we will be the victors'»<sup>(1)</sup>.*

The purpose of quoting this Hadith is not to show that the cause of the expulsion of Bani Qaynuqa'a from Madina was their refusal to convert to Islam. During this period, Islam tolerated peaceful coexistence with them, for the treaty which the Prophet (PBUH) had signed with them specified that they were to enjoy their religious freedom. The reason for expulsing them was their show of hostility

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(1) Related by Abu-Dawud; *Al-Kharaj*, n° 3001, and authenticated by Ibn-Hajar in *Fath Al-Bari*, 7/332.

towards the Muslims, which resulted in breaking the law and order and casting aspersions upon the Muslims' honour.

Authentic 'Sirah' sources report that some insolent members of the Qaynuqa's tribe aggressed a Muslim woman whose private parts they tried to uncover while she was shopping. She called for help; a Muslim rushed to the scene of the incident and killed a Jew. The Jews gathered and killed the Muslim; therefore, the Prophet (PBUH) was forced to wage war against them after their breaking of the peace treaty, as a result to this disgraceful aggression on a Muslim woman. He besieged their quarter for fifteen days until they accepted the Judgement of Allah and His Messenger which lay in their expulsion. This is the cause which the authors of *The Encyclopedia* article ignored, particularly the Jews' return of the Muslims' tolerance with treachery and offence.

The Unbelievers, as well as the Jews, caused a lot of harm to the Muslims, but Almighty Allah ordered the latter to be patient and forgiving:

*«Ye shall certainly be tried and tested in your possessions and yourselves; and ye shall certainly hear much that will grieve you from those who received the Book before you and from those who worship partners besides Allah. But if ye preserve patiently, and guard against evil, - then that indeed is a matter of great resolution»<sup>(1)</sup>.*

#### • The Disregard of the Reason for the Expulsion of Bani An-Nadir

After referring to the Battle of Uhud and to what the Muslims had suffered thereof, the authors report that some of the Madina Jews made no secret of their delight at this misfortune. This was enough

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(1) Surat *Al-'Imran*, Verse n° 186.

to give the Muslims the opportunity to justify their action against them. They add that contemporary relations and accounts impute all sorts of crimes to these Jews, but it is difficult to determine the offenses they had committed. The Quran simply says that «*they defied Allah and His Messenger*».

This is a brief summary of what is reported in *The Encyclopedia* article which completely disregards the real causes of the expedition against this Jewish tribe in Madina. Actually, the Bani An-Nadir were among the tribes with which the Prophet (PBUH) had concluded peace with when he arrived in Madina; however, they did not respect the treaty, for they tried to assassinate him twice. Ibn-Ishaq, with whom the majority of the Prophet's biographers agree, related that the Messenger (PBUH) had gone to Bani An-Nadir asking them to help him pay the blood money of two men mistakenly killed by a Muslim; he sat near one of their walls. The Jews were on the point of throwing a big stone on him, but Inspiration from Allah warned him of their treachery, so he went fast to Madina and ordered the Muslims to besiege them<sup>(1)</sup>.

Hadith and biographical sources report a second attempt made by Bani An-Nadir to kill the Prophet (PBUH) at the instigation of the Qurayshis who sent them a letter inciting them to kill him, and threatening to wage war against them if they did not carry out the act. Banu An-Nadir responded favorably and were intent on treachery, for they sent a message to the Prophet (PBUH), asking him to come to their district in order to speak to them about Islam; so if they believed in him, all the Jews would convert to Islam. He accepted their invitation. Three of their Rabbis came out to meet him, hiding their daggers. However, a Jewish woman disclosed the

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(1) Ibn Ishaq, *As-Sirah*, p. 191.

secret to a Muslim who gave word to the Prophet (PBUH); the latter went back home without meeting the Rabbis. He then besieged their tribe and fought against them until they accepted the judgement passed on them, namely, their expulsion from their homes, taking with them only what their camels could carry of their wealth and material possessions, except arms<sup>(1)</sup>.

This is all the harm that Bani An-Nadir inflicted on the Muslims. History has recorded that they incited the Unbelievers to wage war against the Muslims at the Battle of Uhud, and that they helped Abu Sufyan to attack the outskirts of Madina; furthermore, the poems written by their poet Ka'ab ben Al-Achraf to denigrate the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) and to incite the polytheists to fight against the Muslims is well-known.

#### • **The Disregard of the Causes of the Expedition against Bani Quraytha**

After relating the events of the Battle of Al-Ahzab, the authors of *The Encyclopedia* article entry state that this battle, which ended without fighting, turned into a bloody tragedy for Bani-Quraydha. For hardly had the Meccans retired when the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) declared war on the last Jewish tribe in Madina. In this way, the causes of what *The Encyclopedia* article calls «bloody tragedy» are passed over by the authors who have completely disregarded them.

The cause, once more, is the violation of the peace treaty by the Jews; their treachery took place at a critical time for the Muslims who were besieged by ten thousand fighters of allied forces. Bani Quraydha's treachery was at the instigation of the An-Nadir Jewish community of Bani Akhtab.

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(1) Abd Ar-Razaq, *Al-Muncif*, 5/359; *Fath Al -Bari*, 7/331.

The Muslims entered this war against bani Quraydha in compliance with Allah's direct Command. The 'Sirah' and Hadith sources report that «*When the Prophet (PBUH) returned from the Battle of Al-Ahzab, and put down his arms; Gabriel came to him and told him, 'Have you put down your arms, O Messenger of Allah?' He answered, 'Yes!' Gabriel said, 'We have not laid down the arms yet, and Allah orders you to go to Bani Quraydha, for I am going to make them shake with fear'. The Prophet (PBUH) ordered a caller to announce that 'Nobody should perform the afternoon prayer, except in Bani Quraydha's quarter'; thereafter, the Muslims besieged them till they gave in. The Prophet (PBUH) thus allowed them to choose who would judge them; they chose Sa'ad Ibn Mu'aad, the leader of the tribe of the Aws, who were their allies. His judgement was that all the men were to be beheaded, and that all their women and children be taken captives*».

The authors of *The Encyclopedia* article, however, persist in putting the responsibility of what happened on the Prophet (PBUH). Actually, they should have put it on the Jewish quarter of Bani Akhtab, who pushed Bani Quraydha to violate the peace treaty and to act treacherously against the Muslims in the most dangerous circumstances.

In fact, the judgement given by Sa'ad Ibn Mu'aad was fair; for, in addition to the abominable treachery they had committed, they had amassed a large quantity of arms (which the Muslims discovered when they opened the Jewish houses) with the intention of massacring their Muslim neighbours in Madina.

The authors of the article also disregard the causes of the Prophet's expedition against the Jews of Khaybar, presenting the whole affair in a way that would suggest the innocence of the Jews, as they did in their treatment of the aforementioned expeditions. There is no need

to dwell on this issue, it may suffice to mention that Khaybar had become a real menace to the Muslims after the settlement of Bani An-Nadir in it. The Prophet (PBUH) sent them a message inviting them to convert to Islam, but they refused; so it became urgent to wage war against them in order to remove all threat to Islam.

## Chapter Four

### The Exaggeration of the Political Effects of the “Ifq” Incident

The authors of *The Encyclopedia* article speak about this incident in a way that makes it appear as if Aisha - the Mother of the Faithful - (MABPWH) had committed a sin; then they go on to mention the political effects of this incident in an exaggerated manner. The Encyclopedia article puts it as follows: «It was on the return journey from the expedition against Bani Al-Mustaliq that the celebrated adventure involving Aisha occurred. More importantly for the early history of Islam is that the Aisha affair had fostered a big rift within the ranks of the leaders of the Emigrants themselves and gave rise to a conflict between the Emigrants and the Helpers, which continued well into the period after the Prophet’s death».

It is evident that the authors here deal with the events of the Prophet’s life and its biographical sources in a selective manner. They took from them what they liked and brushed aside what they did not. This is well illustrated by their disregard of everything that is reported in the Holy Quran about the incident of “Al-Ifq”, namely the Verses which were revealed to assert the innocence of Aisha (MABPWH<sup>(1)</sup>). They also ignored the Hadith texts and authentic historical events. But there is no need to dwell on these texts because the innocence of Aisha is attested by the Holy Quran.

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(1) Surat *An-Nur*, Verses n° 11-18.

As to what *The Encyclopedia* article relates about this incident, there is a tendency to exaggerate the events.

What happened was simply a hot discussion between two men from among the Helpers in the Prophet's Mosque, in the presence of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). The Hadith relates that the Messenger said while on the «Minbar» (Pulpit):

*«O ye Muslims! Who will take revenge for me on a man who has slandered my wife. By Allah, all I know about her is that she is a good Muslim. They have mentioned in this slander the name of a man about whom I know nothing but that he is a good Muslim. For he has never entered my house, except in my company'. Then Sa'ad ben Mu'aad Al Ansari stood up and said: 'I will take revenge for you on the slanderer O Messenger of Allah, if he is from Aws I will behead him, if he is from our Al-Khazraj brothers, you just give us the order and we will carry it out'. Sa'ad Ibn Ubada - the leader of Al-Khazraj tribe and a righteous man but who now acted under the effect of tribalism, stood up and said to Sa'ad Ibn Mu'aad, 'You lied, by Allah, I will not let you kill him, you are an hypocrite who defends the Hypocrites. Aws and Al-Khazraj Muslims were so furious and quarrelled with each other until they were on the point of starting a war; meanwhile, the Prophet (PBUH), who was still standing on the «Mihrab», continued calming them down until they became quiet, so he stopped talking, too»<sup>(1)</sup>.*

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(1) Related by Al-Bukhari, *Kitab Al-Maghazi*, "Bab: Hadith Al-Ifq"; and by Muslim, *Kitab At-Tauba*, "Bab: Hadith Al-Ifq wa qubul Taubat At-Taib"

This is what is reported in the authentic Prophetic Traditions and ‘Sirah’ sources. It is actually one of the bad effects of the Ifq incident, for tribalism was on the point of breaking out again between Aws and Al-Khazraj, resulting in the destruction of the unity of the Muslims. But Allah saved them from this, and the Messenger of Allah managed to preserve the unity of the Muslim community. Therefore, he succeeded in outwitting the machinations of the Hypocrites, who were responsible for the whole affair.

There is a big difference between the quarrel in which the two men from Aws and Al-Khazraj were involved at a moment of excitement and anger and the excessively exaggerated version of the incident which *The Encyclopedia* article provides. The argument was limited to Aws and Al-Khazraj, while *The Encyclopedia* article turns it into a big conflict among the leaders of the Emigrants themselves and a rift between them and the Helpers. The authors of the article have even volunteered to tell us that this conflict and division continued till after the death of the Prophet (PBUH).

Actually, the Emigrants did not take the least part in this quarrel, and there was no conflict or rift among their leaders, or between the latter and the Helpers. However, the authors of *The Encyclopedia* article liked to exaggerate the problem and to speak about it in a haphazard way, without providing any evidence whatsoever.



## Chapter Five

### Raising Doubt about the Prophet's Letters to Kings and Rulers

The authors of the article refer to the letters the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) had sent to Mukawkis, the Governor of Egypt, Negus of Abyssinia, Heraclius, the Byzantine Emperor, the Persian King and a number of others, in which he asked them to adopt Islam as a religion. Then, they state that in the form in which these letters have come down to us, they cannot be accepted as authentic, because they contain certain details which reflect a later period of the rise and power of Islam; moreover, the substance of these letters does not deserve the faith that people have put in it. The reason they advance is that:

*«It is very unlikely that so sober a politician and diplomat as Muhammad would have engaged in so presumptuous a venture before the Conquest of Mecca».*

What this clearly shows is that the authors have based their doubting of the authenticity of the Prophet's letters on two criteria:

- First: their contents reflect the period of Islam's power, while the actual date of their writing goes back to the period prior to the conquest of Mecca.
- Second: the wisdom of the Prophet (PBUH) and his sobriety exclude any presumptuous act.

In fact, these two criteria are derived from the close scrutiny of the letters' texts and from the personal characteristics of their author.

This is a method adopted by scholars, but it is not the only method of authenticating texts. The best way of knowing whether such historical documents are genuine or not is to check if they were reported on attested authority and reference. In this case, there is no room for doubt. The authenticity of this letter is validated by the authentic Prophetic Traditions and the unanimity of historians. Better still, the best Hadith books reserve special chapters to it, as in the *Sahih* of Al-Bukhari and that of Muslim. The former reports the text of the letter the Prophet (PBUH) had sent to Heraclius in his *Sahih*, particularly in the volume devoted to the beginning of Inspiration, namely, the chapter: «Abu-Sufyan at Heraclius' Court»<sup>(1)</sup>.

In the *Sahih* of Muslim, particularly the chapter, «The Letters of the Prophet (PBUH) to the Kings of the Unbelievers, Asking Them to adhere to Islam», there is a Hadith reported by Anas Ibn Malek (MABPWH) which states

*«that the Prophet (PBUH) wrote a letter to Khosrau, to Cesar, to Negus of Abyssinia and to all the tyrants, calling them to Islam. This Negus is not the one the Prophet (PBUH) blessed in his prayer»*<sup>(2)</sup>

As to the Prophet's letter to Khosrau, the Persian King, it is reported by Abu 'Ubayed Al-Qassim Ibn Sallam in his book, *Kittab Al-Amwal* on the authority of Sa'ad Ibn Al-Mussayab. The Ulama are unanimous about the fact that all Ibn Al-Mussayab's relations are attested.

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(1) Al-Bukhari, *Sahih, Kitab Al-Wahye*, Hadith n° 6.

(2) Muslim, *Sahih, Kitab Al-Jihad*, Chapter, «*Kutub An-Nabi Li Muluk Al-Kuffar*».

The Prophet's letter to Al-Mukawkas, the Governor of Egypt, is referred to by Ibn Hisham on the authority of Ibn Ishaq, who accepted it as authentic. Any Hadith reported by Ibn Hisham is, according to the Ulemas, true.

It has been confirmed that these letters were reported on attested authority, a fact which historians, as well as Hadith and 'Sirah' scholars have unanimously accepted. So, what the Ulemas have unanimously agreed on as authentic cannot suffer from the orientalist's attempt to discredit it.

Moreover, the reasons given by the authors for doubting the validity of these letters are not unquestionable, because the dispatching of these letters does not necessarily require the existence of a large military force, for they are only letters meant to convey the Call to Islam. In addition to this, the Muslims had never relied on military force alone to spread Islam. They, on the contrary, relied, first and foremost, on their obedience to Allah and their firm faith. Had we applied the criterion of the authors of the article to the Islamic military expeditions and conquests, we would have discredited many of them. For the strength of the Muslims was no match to that of the Unbelievers.

Furthermore, the Prophet (PBUH) did not send these letters until had secured the conclusion of Al-Hudaybiya peace treaty with the Meccans, which was considered as a «Great Victory», for it was on its occasion that «Surat Al-Fath» was revealed to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH); this Holy Surat opens with the Almighty's following words:

«**Verily we have granted thee a manifest Victory**»<sup>(1)</sup>. This proves that the Muslims had acquired great strength, indeed.

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(1) Surat *Al-Fath*, Verse n° 1.

If we take all this into account, it will become obvious to us that when the Prophet (PBUH) sent out these letters, he did not act against wisdom, sobriety and diplomatic tact; in fact, he was far from being qualified as a presumptuous adventurer, which the authors of *The Encyclopedia* article try to project onto him, in a presumptuous and rash manner.

Still in the vein of discrediting the existence of these letters, the authors raise doubt about two important issues.

1. the universal character of the Islamic Call,
2. the Calling to Islam of both the Jews and Christians.

As to the first issue, the authors of *The Encyclopedia* article state that

*«While it is true that the Madinan Quranic verses do go beyond the earlier concept that Muhammad (PBUH) was sent as a prophet to the Arabs alone, even those Verses which are so often cited as poof that he regarded his mission as universal hardly hold up to close scrutiny, but require a broader interpretation than their literal meaning. It is very doubtful that Muhammad had even thought of the socio-religious community he had founded in Madina as a universal religion».*

As to the second issue, the authors claim that the Prophet (PBUH) - even at the height of his power - had never asked the Jews and Christians living in the Arab Peninsula to adopt Islam.

They go on to allege that the soundest conclusion one can draw from all this is to reject the stories which relate that Muhammad (PBUH) had actually tried to convert to Islam the Byzantine and Persian emperors, as well as other rulers outside the Arab Peninsula.

This is a brief summary of what the authors of the article advance in this connection. As to the conclusion they have reached here, it is completely wrong, simply because it is based on farfetched assumptions and evidence, and what is based on falsehood is false.

Their claim that the Messenger (PBUH) had never thought of his Mission as being universal is completely wrong. For the Quranic verses, the authentic Prophetic Traditions and the history of the Islamic Call all confirm its falsehood. In Part One, We have already dealt in some detail with the universality of Islam and the evidence which proves it; so, there is no need to repeat ourselves here.

As to the rejection of the idea that the Prophet (PBUH) had actually asked the Jews of the Arab Peninsula to convert to Islam, it is completely unfounded and false, for the simple reason that the Islamic Call is addressed to all people. The Holy Quran, the Prophetic Tradition and ‘Sirah’ sources, as well as the biographies of Muslim conquerors, are ample proof of the fact that the Call to Islam was addressed to both the Jews and Christians living in the Arab Peninsula and outside it.

The tolerance with which the People of the Book were treated does not preclude that the Call was permanently addressed to them. The Quranic Verses below are proof that they were asked to adopt Islam and believe in the Prophethood of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) :

***«O ye People of the Book! Believe in what We have (now) revealed, confirming what was (already) with you, before We change the face and fame of some (of you) beyond all recognition, and turn them hindwards, or curse them as We cursed the Sabbath - breakers, for the decision of Allah must be carried out»<sup>(1)</sup>.***

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(1) Surat *An-Nissa'*, Verse n° 47.

*«When it is said to them; ‘Believe in what Allah hath sent down’, they say, ‘We believe in what was sent down to us’: yet they reject all besides, even if it be truth confirming what is with them»<sup>(1)</sup>.*

*«Say: ‘O People of the Book! come to common terms as between us and you: that we worship none but Allah; that we associate no partners with Him; that we erect not, form among ourselves, lords and patrons other than Allah’. If then they turn back, say ye: ‘Bear witness that we (at least) are muslims (bowing to Allah’s will’.)»<sup>(2)</sup>*

Al-Hafed Ibn Kathir states in his comments on this Verse that the Call is addressed to all the People of the Book and to anyone who follows a way similar to theirs. Because this Verse really conveys this meaning, the Prophet (PBUH) included it in his letter to Heraclius, the Byzantine Emperor, part of which says:

*«Now then, convert to Islam, and you will be saved. If you become a Muslim, Allah will reward you twice; if you refuse, your sin will be as deadly as that of the Arsyine: ‘O People of the Book! come to common terms as between us and you: That we worship none but Allah ...’.»*

the Prophet (PBUH) specifically called different groups of Jews and Christians to Islam in particular circumstances. For instance, he called the Bani Qaynuqa’ a Jews to Islam on a particular occasion, as it is attested in the Hadith of Ibn Abbass (MABPWT):

*«It is reported in the Hadith of Bani Quynuqa’a that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) convened them and told them, ‘O ye Jews, take as a warning from Allah*

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(1) Surat Al-Baqarah, Verse n° 91.

*the calamity that has befallen Quraysh, and convert to Islam; for you know that I am the Messenger of Allah, a fact which you find in your Book and the promise that the Almighty Allah has made to you'.»*

He also called the Jews of Khaybar to Islam, and ordered Ali Ibn Abi Talib (May Allah Enlighten his Face) to invite them to Islam, when he gave him permission to attack their forts, stating:

*«Break through their fortifications and call them to Islam; remind them of their duty to Allah. By Allah! If you manage to be the instrument of Allah's guiding of one of them to Islam, your reward will be better than the most valuable possessions of this world»<sup>(1)</sup>.*

Likewise, he called the Christians of Najran to Islam when he received their delegation, as Ibn Kathir relates in *Tafsir*:

*«The delegation appointed two monks to argue with the Prophet (PBUH); when they talked to him, he told them, 'Believe in Allah and convert to Islam'; they answered 'We believe in Allah'; he told them, 'You do not believe in Allah'; so convert to His religion'; they said, 'Certainly, we have believed in Allah before you'; he retorted, 'You are Lying, what has prevented you from being like Muslims is your claim that Allah has a son, your worship of the Cross and your eating of pig meat ...»<sup>(2)</sup>.*

When it became clear that they had refused to adhere to Islam, preferring to remain Christian, the Prophet (PBUH) accepted their

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(1) Al-Bukhari, *Sahih, Kitab Al-Jihad wa As-Siyra*, Hadith n° 2787. Muslim, *Sahih, Kitab fadail Al-Sahaba*, Hadith n°4423.

(2) Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, Vol. 1, p. 369, Dar Al-fikr edition, 1984.

decision and sent with them Abu ‘Ubayda Ibn Al-Jarrah as an arbitrator to solve a problem their tribesmen had differed about, as an answer to their request. He also wrote a document in which he granted them his protection, which remained valid throughout the period of the Rightly-guided Caliphs.

It is thus proved that the Call to Islam was also addressed to the Jews and Christians; a fact that is fully evidenced in the Holy Quran, the Prophetic Traditions and ‘Sirah’ sources, which clearly shows that the claim advanced by the authors of *The Encyclopedia* article is completely worthless.

As a result, the Prophet’s dispatching of letters to Kings and rulers is an attested fact, it is a material evidence of the universality of Islam and the comprehensive character of the Prophet’s Message. Moreover, his established practice of *Jihad* and conquest corroborates this dimension and clarifies it. The first thing he would do in this respect was to call to Islam the inhabitants of a given place, if they refused, he would ask them to pay Al-Jizya (the tribute) if they were People of the Book; if they refused, he would wage war against them so that the Word of Allah would prevail and people may be freed from the worship of other deities.

## Chapter Six

### Miscellaneous Allegations

#### • **The Portrayal of the Prophet (PBUH) as a Genius and Religious Reformer:**

The authors of *The Encyclopedia* article indulge a deliberate use of these attributes in their portrayal of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), without ever referring to him as a Prophet, or a Messenger. It is not difficult to discern their objective here, for they deliberately try to substitute the idea of a genius or religious reformer to that of a prophet so as it becomes fixed in the annals of history and ingrained in the minds of generations.

This tactic has been deployed by Orientalists for centuries; they attribute these characteristics to the Prophet (PBUH) in an attempt to make him appear as an intellectual, whose powerful mind and genius had enabled him to invent this religion, improve the conditions of the Arab communities by freeing people from ignorance and polytheism, and to establish the foundations of a highly developed Arab-Islamic civilisation, which has had tremendous influence on human civilisation.

Some modern Muslim authors have followed the orientalist's tactic, either through ignorance and inadvertance, or on purpose. For they have also written about the genius of the Prophet (PBUH), as well as about that of Abu Baker, Omar Ibn Al-Khattab, etc. Such is a big prejudice to Allah's Prophet and Messenger (PBUH).

Muhammad (PBUH) is far above any genius, and he excels any leader or reformer. Actually, he combines the best and the fairest of

their qualities. But he towers over them all, since he was a Prophet who received Revelation from Allah, and a Messenger who delivered His Message. This quality cannot be had or attained, neither through genius and reflection, nor inspiration. There is a big difference between a genius reformer and a Messenger of Allah.

Al-Abbass, the uncle of the Prophet (PBUH), preceded our modern authors in realising this difference. For when Abu-Sufyan Ibn Harb converted to Islam on the night of the Conquest of Mecca (Al Abbas had preceded him in converting to Islam), the Prophet (PBUH) told Al-Abbass, 'Take Abu-Sufyan and stand with him at the foremost part of the mountain so that he could see the conquering army'. Allah's forces were on parade and among them was the Green Unit, that of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). Unable to control himself, Abu-Sufyan said, 'The rule of your nephew has become very powerful'. Al Abbas replied, 'It is prophethood O Abu-Sufyan'. The latter remarked, 'Yeah, by Allah, it is prophethood'<sup>(1)</sup>.

The non-Muslims who have written about the life and career of Muhammad (PBUH) do not believe in his prophethood, that is why they describe him as a reformer, a great genius and an inspired man. But Muslim authors should not follow their example in attributing to him characteristics and titles that may damage his prophethood. On the contrary, they should follow the model provided by the Holy Quran, the conduct of the Companions of the Prophet and the worthy ancestors of the Muslim Ummah.

The Quran does not describe him as a reformer or a genius; in fact, in all the references to him in the Holy Verses, and these are many, he

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(1) *Ar-Rahiq Al-Makhtum*, by Al-Mubarikfuri, the Xeroxed Copy (published by Saudi Education Office in Rabat) of the Edition prepared by the Muslim World League in Mecca, p. 458.

is given the title of the Prophet and Messenger of Allah. Whenever the Quran calls him by his name, it always fastens on it the term Messenger, as the following Verses from the Holy Book of Allah show:

*«Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah»<sup>(1)</sup>.*

*«and giving Glad Tidings of a messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad»<sup>(2)</sup>.*

Similarly, the Companions of the Prophet (PBUH) had never called him by a title, or attributed to him an attribute other than that of Prophet or Messenger of Allah. 'Sirah' books, as well as other sources, do not refer to him by any of the titles or characteristics used by the orientalist and the Muslim authors who followed their suit, because each Believer understands that Prophethood is above all qualities, titles and distinctive marks.

Obviously, the purpose of orientalist is to reject the prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH) and to present him as a reformer or genius, because the ideas of the latter may die with them, for they may be replaced by better ideas that another scholar or reformer may strike up. Therefore, such people cannot achieve immortality because of their ideas, because people do not stick to them for long, unlike their adherence to the Messages of the Prophets.

Strange though it may seem, orientalist persist in attributing such characteristics to the Prophet (PBUH) in spite of the fact that he had rejected them and denied having any worldly powers or privileges, as the Holy Quran illustrates here:

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(1) Surat *Al-Fath*, Verse n° 28.

(2) Surat *As-Saff*, Verse n° 6.

*«Say ‘I am not an innovation among the Messengers, nor do I know what will be done with me or with you. I follow but that which is revealed to me by inspiration; I am but a warner open and clear’.»<sup>(1)</sup>*

*«Say: ‘I tell you not that with me are the treasures of Allah, nor do I know what is hidden. Nor do I tell you I am an angel. I but follow what is revealed to me’.»<sup>(2)</sup>*

It is evident that no genius, reformer, hero, or human being, accepts to perform noble deeds and then attribute them to some one else. This is completely against human nature. Had Muhammad (PBUH) invented this religion, established this right path, and performed such glorious deeds which have changed the course of history and saved humanity from ignorance and going astray with the help of his genius and strong personality, he would not have deviated from this human habit, and he would have been only too pleased to attribute this merit and honour to himself. Yet, he very well knew his status, so he attributed them all to his God.

**• The Allegation that the Prophet (PBUH) Fled During the Battle of Uhud:**

Muslim fighters started losing ground in the Battle of Uhud after they had been on the point of winning it. Their lines were broken and many of them were martyred; moreover, the Unbelievers’ forces were able to penetrate to positions nearer to the Prophet (PBUH), one of the enemy fighters threw a stone at the Messenger, which broke one of his front teeth and cut his face. As a result, the Muslims

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(1) Surat *Al-Ahqaf*, Verse n° 9.

(2) Surat *Al-An’am*, Verse n° 50.

panicked and got completely confused. Some of them ran away, but the Prophet (PBUH) remained firm in his position and started calling the Muslims back: «*Come to me, O ye servants of Allah!*» Thirty men came back to him, a number of his Companions defended him, and many died in front of him. The Holy Quran asserts the determination of the Messenger in this battle, even when the Muslims' positions were shaken. Allah says in this respect:

**«Behold! ye were climbing up the high ground, without even casting a side glance At any one, and the Messenger in your rear was calling you back.»<sup>(1)</sup>**

Muslim relates in his Sahih that

*«The Messenger of Allah was singled out during the Battle of Uhud, along with seven Helpers and two Qurayshis, from the main body of the Muslim army. When the Unbelievers charged towards him, he said, 'He who volunteers to push them back, will be rewarded with paradise'; one of the Helpers fought till he was killed. The attackers charged towards him once again, and the Prophet said, 'He who volunteers to push them back, will be rewarded with Paradise'. He kept repeating the same words until the seven Helpers were martyred, then he said, 'Our friends were unfair to us', namely those Muslim fighters who had ran away and left him behind.»<sup>(2)</sup>*

Likewise, Al-Bukhari relates in his Sahih a Hadith on the authority of Abi 'Othman An-Nahdi, who said, «*Only Thalha and Sa'ad, namely Ibn Abi Waqas, remained with the Prophet.*»<sup>(3)</sup>

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(1) Surat Al 'Imran, Verse n° 153.

(2) Muslim, *Sahih, Kitab Al-Jihad wa As-Siyar*, Hadith n° 3344.

(3) Al Bukhari, *Sahih, Kitab Al-Manaqib*, Hadith n° 3444.

Moreover, Al-Bukhari relates a Hadith on the authority of Anas Ibn Malek (MABPWH), who said:

*«During the Battle of Uhud people ran away leaving the Prophet (PBUH) face to face with the enemy. Abu Thalha remained in his company to defend him, he was a skillful archer, and he broke two or three bows on that day. Whenever someone carrying a bunch of arrows passed them by, the Prophet (PBUH) asked him to give his arrows to Abi Thalha. Then, when the Prophet (PBUH) tried to look on the fighters (in the battlefield), Abu Thalha said to him, ‘By my father and mother, don’t look on the fighters, an arrow may hit you’.»<sup>(1)</sup>*

Those quotations from the Quran and the Hadith prove that the Messenger (PBUH) did not flee during the Battle of Uhud in spite of the fact that the Muslim fighters had abandoned him, and the Unbelievers charged towards him; on the contrary, he stayed firm as a mountain, calling his Followers, *«Come to me, O ye servants of Allah! Come to me, O ye servants of Allah!»* As a result of his firmness, the Muslims rallied again and bravely defended him, sacrificing their lives in an unparalleled way. This strong evidence refutes the claim of the authors of The Encyclopedia article, who allege that the Messenger (PBUH) had escaped through a ravine of the Uhud mountain. He did not flee at all, he could not act as such, (he whom Allah had protected from people’s harm). A second proof is that the Battle was not decisively won by the Unbelievers; on the contrary, the latter were disappointed and wanted to finish the war, for they were exhausted by its length and the endurance of the Muslims. Thus, they stopped their attack and left the battlefield.

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(1) Related by Al-Bukhari in *Fadail Al-Ansar*.

At the end of the war, the Messenger (PBUH) ordered his men to bury the martyrs, who were seventy in number. No Muslim was taken captive.

• **The Double Personality of Muhammad (PBUH):**

After mentioning the political, military, social and organisational responsibilities which awaited the Prophet (PBUH) after the Hijra, the authors state the following:

*«With this we are faced with one of the most difficult problems in the biography of Muhammad, his double personality. The inspired religious person whose ideas mainly centered around the coming of the Last Judgement, who had borne all insults and attacks, who only timidly touched on the possibility of active resistance, and preferred to leave everything to God's intervention, now with his migration to Madina enters upon a secular stage, and at one stroke, shows himself a brilliant political genius».*

This is a brief summary of what is advanced in The Encyclopedia article about this issue, and it clearly accuses the Prophet (PBUH) of having a double personality. It is an accusation based on a misunderstanding of both his personality and Islam, in general.

One of the major distinctive characteristics of Islam is that it does not divide the life of a human being into two separate sides or opposite parts : one material and one spiritual, or one for worldly matters, and the other for religion. On the contrary, it considers the life of a human being as a cohesive unit in which religious and worldly concerns coexist, and in which the material and the spiritual exist in harmony. Islam does not call for a rejection of worldly life. On the contrary, it asks the Muslim to contribute to it, for Islam does

not believe in monasticism, nor does it order a person to give up material things. On the contrary, it asserts that the ideal spiritual exaltation cannot be achieved, except through coping with Life's concerns in times of prosperity and adversity, as well as through righteousness and piety. This conception is succinctly summed up in Allah's words:

***«Our Lord! Give us good in this world and good in the hereafter. And save us from the torment of the fire!»<sup>(1)</sup>***

Islam tries to keep a balance between the two components: religion and worldly concerns, the material and the spiritual dimensions of life. It proclaims that everything in the material universe was created for the sake of humanity, ready for them to acquire and to satisfy their needs, while human beings were created to serve Allah - their function in life is to fulfill their Creator's Will and obey His Commands, as it is shown in the Divine Hadith:

*«Ye offspring of Adam! I created you for Myself and created everything for you. Out of duty to Me, do not get absorbed by what I created for you at the expense of what I created you for».*

Islamic teachings cater for the human being's needs, both spiritual and physical. By guiding him to a satisfactory relationship between him and his creator; it also helps him to achieve the cohesion of and cooperation between his external and internal forces, and trains him to acquire a behaviour in which the spirit prevails over the material and religion over worldly concerns. Finally, the religious component will be the guiding force by which all his acts and behaviours are controlled.

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(1) Surat Al-Baqarah, Verse n° 201.

This is how a human being is conceived of in Islam, while Christianity gives too much importance to the spiritual side of life and teaches a certain type of love which puts a heavy responsibility on every Christian. This ideal love does not satisfy the human being's spiritual and psychological desires, because it is incompatible with the mind and sound perception.

Those who accused the Prophet (PBUH) of having a double personality were intentionally or unintentionally influenced by a culture that is impregnated by Christian principles, thus they were convinced that Muhammad (PBUH) was an ideal Messenger, who, on the one hand, built his Call on giving up worldly matters and life's concerns, forcing himself to lead an austere life and enduring calamities as well as evil acts, while leaving everything to Allah's Will and Divine Decree during the Meccan Period. On the other hand, during the Madinan stage of his Prophetic Call, he completely changed into a practical man who established a community whose political, military and social affairs he took into his own hands. For he fought the enemies of his Ummah, planned for its future and prepared the material force necessary for its protection.

Actually, this is a false accusation since the work related to the material world is seen as being not different from prayer and praise; and may even be considered the best way of worship; Jihad for the cause of Allah is also among the best ways of worship; so is providing for one's children and family; but Allah, the Almighty, advises His servants to devote only a reasonable amount of time to prayer and praise at night, so that they would not be overburdened and people's working for their livelihood is considered as a reason for this moderation. Allah says:

***«Thy Lord doth know that thou standest forth (to prayer) nigh two-thirds of the night, or half of the***

*night, or a third of the night, and so doth a party of those with thee. But Allah doth appoint the night and day in due measure. He knoweth that ye are unable to keep count thereof. So he hath turned (in mercy): read ye, Therefore, of the Quran as much as may be easy for you. He knoweth that there may be (some) among you in ill-health; Others travelling through the land, seeking of Allah's bounty; yet others fighting in Allah's cause. Read ye, therefore, as much of the Quran as may be easy (for you)»<sup>(1)</sup>.*

There is absolutely no duality in the life and personality of the Prophet (PBUH), as the authors of *The Encyclopedia* article allege. If he did not undertake the political and social organisation of the Muslim community in the Meccan Period, it is due to the unfavorable conditions at the time. Similarly, his enduring the ill-treatments and attacks, and his calling of his Followers to be patient, too, are the result of his obedience to Allah's orders. After all, the Almighty knows His wise reasons for all this.

If it is acceptable to accuse the Prophet (PBUH) of having a double personality for this reason, every sensible and wise leader, ruler or reformer, who postpones some work until there are propitious conditions for it, and takes decisions according to the reality on the ground, then he, too, should be accused of having a double personality, which is impossible, of course.

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(1) Surat *Al-Muzzammil*, Verse n° 20.

## **The Correction of Errors in The Encyclopedia's Treatment of the Hadith**

The writing of the section of *The Encyclopedia* which deals with the Prophetic Traditions was assigned to the English Orientalist, Robson, who is known for his work on the history of the sciences of the Hadith. We intend here to correct the mistakes and distortions found in this section because of the close link between the Prophet's 'Sirah' (life) and his 'Sunnah' (Traditions) in an attempt to provide complete information in this respect.

Robson examines the different stages of the development of the sciences of the Hadith; in his study, he raises some important questions inherent in this science and adheres to the point of view of his Orientalist predecessors. Among these issues are:

1. The place of the Prophetic Traditions in the Islamic Law.
2. The collection and recording of Hadith.
3. The importance of the science of Hadith criticism.

The author deals with these issues in a manner that is customary among Orientalists, which is passing serious judgements without proof and using evasive and twisted arguments, while ignoring the attested facts.

Robson relies heavily on what has been written by Orientalists in the field, and accepts their biased opinions and attitudes. Thus, he makes many tendentious remarks which raise doubt about Hadiths, their place and validity, as well as the value of their science. The article contains gross errors which require clarification and correction.

## I. Questioning the Place of the ‘Sunnah’ in Islamic Law (Shari’a)

At the beginning of his study, Robson points out that Hadith is the second source for Islamic Law, but immediately qualifies his statement by saying, «*but this was the result of a long process*». He then refers to the rapid spread of Islam and people’s urgent need for Hadith, adding that

*«At that time Hadiths were not considered as the second source for Islamic Law after the Quran, because there was no collected body of Hadith; after the death of the Prophet (PBUH), the Quran remained the source of guidance. Then people felt the need for a second source that would appear in accordance with the newly emerging problems».*

The words here are wrong and evidently misleading, for the author says that Prophetic Traditions were not considered as a source for Islamic Law until after the death of the Messenger (PBUH) and the occurrence of new problems. There is ample evidence which refutes such a false distortion. For during the life of the Prophet (PBUH), his companions took from the ‘Sunnah’ many Islamic precepts, along with the details they provide with regard to religious observances, social transactions, and moral values. Many of the rules concerning cleanness, prayer, Zakat, fasting, and pilgrimage were taken from the ‘Sunnah’; such was also the case with many rules that govern social transactions, which are not dealt with in the Quran in detail. Actually, there are many Holy Verses which urge Muslims to obey the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) by carrying out his orders and following his ‘Sunnah’ (Traditions); the following are two such verses:

**«So take what the Messenger gives you and refrain from what he prohibits you».**<sup>(1)</sup>

**«Say: 'If ye do love Allah, follow me: Allah will love you and forgive you your sins: for Allah is Oft-forgiving, most Merciful'».**<sup>(2)</sup>

Similarly, there are Hadiths which urge the Muslim to apply the 'Sunnah' of the Prophet (PBUH), one such Hadith is related by Al-Hakim and Ibn Abd Albar on the authority of Kathir Ibn Abdallah Ibn 'Amru on the authority of his father and grandfather, who said that the Prophet (PBUH) said: *«I entrust you with two things, if you hold on to them you will not go astray: the Book of Allah and my 'Sunnah'»*

Secondly, there is another Hadith related by Ibn Abd Albar on the authority of 'Arbas Ibn Sariya, who said:

*«The Messenger of Allah was leading our morning prayer, he delivered a profound sermon that made us weep and filled our hearts with fear. Therefore, the Messenger was told, 'It seems though it were a farewell sermon, so advise us'. He answered, 'You should obey your leader, even if he were a bondsman from Abyssinia, for anyone of you who lives after my death, will witness a lot of disputes, so hold on firmly to my 'Sunnah' and the tradition of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, avoid interpolated novelties, for every evil innovation is a grave error'».*<sup>(3)</sup>

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(1) Surat *Al-Hashr*, Verse n° 7.

(2) Surat *Al 'Imran*, Verse n° 31.

(3) *Jami'i Bayan Al-'Ilm*, 2, 182.

It is illogical to think that while the Quran and Hadith urge the Muslim to obey the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) and to follow his 'Sunnah', the Companions and the Followers did not respect the order by using the 'Sunnah' as one of the sources for Islamic law. Such an attitude is strange and is belied by both reason and reality.

The authentic Prophetic Traditions clearly confirm working according to the 'Sunnah' and relying on it, when there is a need for other Canonical Laws. This fact is established by the belief of the Companions and consolidated by their behaviour when the Prophet (PBUH) was still alive. By way of example, we may mention here the Hadith of Mu'aad Ibn Jabal (Note that it is classified as 'Mashhur', i.e. with more than two transmitters) which is related by Abu-Dawud and At-Tirmidi and which says that

*«When the Prophet (PBUH) intended to appoint Mu'aad as a judge in Yemen, he asked him, 'What law are you going to apply when you have a case?' Mu'aad answered, 'I will judge according to the Book of Allah'. The Prophet added, 'If the case is not referred to in the Book of Allah, what will you do?' Mu'aad said, 'I will turn to the Messenger's Sunnah'. The Prophet said 'If there is nothing in the Sunnah, what will you do?' Mu'aad answered, 'I will have recourse to personal interpretation, making sure not to err'. The Prophet (PBUH) tapped his own breast and said, 'Praise be to Allah, Who has made the messenger of the Messenger of Allah succeed in hitting upon a view which coincides with that of the Messenger of Allah».*

Similarly, it is reported that 'Umar Ibn Al-Khattab (MABPWH) wrote to Sharih (one of his judges) advising him as follows:

*«When you have a case, try it according to the Book of Allah. When you have a case which is not referred to in the Book of Allah, then try it according to the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH)»*

The same is also reported on the authority of Abu-Mass'ud.

In a like manner, the Rightly-guided Caliph Abu-Bakr adopted the same attitude with regard to the case of a grandmother who came to him, asking him to show her the part of heritage allotted to her. He told her, 'I do not find anything about your case in the Book of Allah and I do not know whether the Prophet (PBUH) had mentioned anything about a case such as yours or not'; then Al-Mughira stood up and said, 'I witnessed the Messenger of Allah allotting her one sixth'. Abu Bakr asked him whether anyone else had been present with him then ; Muhammad Ibn Maslama corroborated Al-Mughira's statment; thus Abu Bakr gave the grandmother her due.

There are many Hadiths which support our argument here and show that the misleading ideas advanced by Robson are removed from the truth, and do not deserve the amount of time we have spent to refute them. If it had not been for the fact that this Encyclopedia article is widely consulted by researchers from all races and countries and is read by specialists and non-specialists, we would not have responded to them.

## **II. Discrediting the Fact that Hadiths Were Compiled before the End of the Second Century of the Hegira**

It has been mentioned earlier that Robson raises doubt about the fact that the 'Sunnah' was a source of Islamic Law during the days of the Prophet (PBUH) and those of the Rightly-guided Caliphs *«because there was no written material in terms of the Hadith»*. Under the

subtitle: «The Collection of Hadith», the author states that there are some scholars who adhere to the idea that the Prophetic Tradition was transmitted by word of mouth, and that there are even Hadiths which corroborate this view. He goes on to say that the Companions of the Prophet (PBUH) took note of Hadiths for their own guidance, adding that

*«although it is said that the texts of Hadith were collected since the first century, the books themselves were first compiled only from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century onwards».*

Then, he mentions that the Arabs were known for being good genealogists, stating that:

*«because of this one may not unreasonably assume that the texts of the Hadith which are said to belong to the earliest periods were available for anyone who needed them».*

It is obvious that the author uses here vague expressions which are at the same time explosive, so the speak. They can mislead the non-specialist. As to the specialists who are knowledgeable in ancient and modern writings of Ulemas on the issue of the compilation of the Hadith and who are acquainted with the Orientalists' attitude towards them, they discern what is between the lines in the language of the author, who wants to assert, in a twisted way, that the recording of Hadiths and their compilation was postponed until the third century, and that their texts have thus suffered loss and confusion.

This is an unfounded claim, because the recording of Hadith started since the time of the Prophet (PBUH); the narrations that testify to this abound and have been transmitted on attested authority. But this does not mean that they were completely recorded during the

Prophet's days in the form and with the content that they have today, which shows that such an act was permissible. It is also confirmed that a number of Companions had their own records of some part of Hadith, the most important of which are:

1. The '*Sahifa*' (Script) of Abdallah Ibn 'Amru, known as the authentic '*Sahifa*'.
2. The '*Sahifa*' (Script) of Ali Ibn Abi Talib.
3. The '*Sahifa*' (Script) of Sa'ad Ibn 'Ubada

Moreover, there are the letters sent by the Prophet (PBUH) to his governors in which religious precepts, such as Zakat, blood money, etc. are elucidated. Then, there is his letter to his governor in Yemen in which the founding principles of Islam are expounded. Finally, there are the treaties which he concluded with the Unbelievers and the order he gave to Abi Shat Al Yamani to record the Prophet's speech delivered on the occasion of the Conquest of Mecca. In this Hadith which is related by Al Bukhari, namely in the section. *«If you Find him on the Way»*, it is reported that *«one of the Companions named Abu Shat stood up and said, 'Write for me'. The Prophet said, 'Write down my speech on the day of the Conquest of Mecca, for it is Abu Shat who wants it thus»*.

This may suffice to confirm that the recording of Hadith had started since the time of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), and that what was recorded then included a major part of Hadith.

However, unlike the Hadiths which assert that the recording of the Prophetic Tradition was both allowed and practiced, there is one Hadith (related by the two Imams, Muslim and Ahmad Ibn Hambal on the authority of Abi Sa'ad Al-Khudari) which prohibits such recording. It states that the Prophet (PBUH) said, *«Do not record*

*anything about me. If one of you has written something on my authority, except the Quran, he should erase it.»*

The opinions of Ulemas differ about this contradiction, but the majority agree on the fact that the latter Hadith was abrogated by the Hadiths which assert the permissibility of recording the Prophetic Tradition. Some Ulemas assert that the prohibition only applied to those people who would confuse the Quran with the Hadiths, while permission was given to those who would not make such a mistake.

Some modern scholars think that the reason behind the prohibition of writing down Hadiths at the time of the Prophet (PBUH) resulted from the fear that people might give more importance to Hadith and its recording at the expense of the Holy Quran. One of these scholars gives strong scientific evidence in support of this view, and comes to the conclusion that the type of recording the Prophet (PBUH) had allowed was one which did not take the form of a detailed recording of Hadiths so that the Companions would not use them as a reference. As a result the Messenger of Allah did not order any of his Companions to compile Hadith<sup>(1)</sup>.

The recording of the Prophetic Tradition took place at an early period and included a larger part of the corpus. What has been said refutes the statement of the Orientalist Robson, which specifies that *«as far as Hadith is concerned, there has been no recording of it»*.

Similarly, the recording of Hadiths and their compilation according to subject matter, in books and collections was not postponed until

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(1) Dr. Nur Eddine, *'Itr, Manhaj An-Naqd Fi 'Ulum Al-Hadith*, pp. 42-44, Dar Al- Fiqr Al Mu'assir, Beirut, Dar Al Fikr Al 'Arabi, Damascus, 3rd Edition, 1992.

the third century of the Hegira. On the contrary, it started before the second century, as it is attested by many ‘Ulemas, such as Abi Talib Al Makki<sup>(1)</sup> from among the ancient ones, and Fouad Sziqin from among the modern ones<sup>(2)</sup>. Concrete evidence of this is the existence of a number of books in the field whose authors died before mid-second century of the Hegira. Examples of such works are the collection compiled by Mu’amar Ibn Rachid (d. 151 H), the work of Sufyan At’-Thawri (d. 161 H), that of Hisham Ibn Hassan (d. 148 H), that of Ibn Jurayj (d. 150 H) and so on. As to the compilation and recording of the whole body of Hadith during the reign of ‘Umar Ibn Abdelaziz, it does not mean that no recording had taken place before. Indeed, this was the first step towards an advanced stage, namely the complete recording of the whole corpus.

The Ulemas were able to find the collection compiled by Mu’amar Ibn Rachid, which they published. This alone can refute the false allegations made by Orientalists, and confirm the fact that the Prophetic Traditions were transmitted by means of sound methods.

### **III. Giving Little Importance to the Efforts Made by the ‘Ulama in their Criticism of Hadith**

After praising the efforts of the ‘Ulemas in subjecting Hadith to severe critical analysis, Robson qualifies his statement by saying: «*But Western scholars do not consider that this criticism has gone far enough in clearing away fallacies*». Then he goes on to report

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(1) *Qut al qulub*, Vol. 1, p. 350.

(2) *Tarikh At-Turath Al-‘Arabi*, Vol. I, p. 229. Quoted in *Manhaj An-Naqd Fi ‘Ulum Al Hadith*.

the opinion of a Hungarian Jewish Orientalist, Goldziher, who raises doubt about the authenticity of the Prophetic Traditions which refer to towns and places far away from the Arab Peninsula. Robson also mentions the Islamic parties which appeared only after the death of the Prophet (PBUH); he refers to the Day of Judgement along with the events which will accompany it or precede it, and he talks about the Umayyads and the Abbassids. The author agrees to the dismissal of all these Hadiths on the grounds that the Western mind finds it difficult to accept them, ending the paragraph as follows:

*«It is quite clear that much of the material coming from a later date has been attributed to the Prophet (PBUH), which makes it very difficult to find a satisfactory criterion by which one may recognise what is genuine».*

This paragraph is a distorted summary of the opinions of the Orientalists on whom Robson drew with regard to the science of Hadith criticism and the efforts of its ‘Ulemas. These Opinions tend to underestimate this science on the grounds that it is only a formal and external criticism, so to speak; thus it cannot be used as a criterion by means of which authentic Hadith can be distinguished from apocryphal Hadith.

Actually, anyone who takes a scientific and objective look at the science of the Hadith and the efforts made by the Muslims to study the lives of the transmitters will have to acknowledge that these efforts are not matched in any other culture or civilisation. The methods they had adopted were the most appropriate and scientific for the criticism, authentication, and close scrutiny of the Hadith corpus. Nevertheless, these Orientalists, who have deviated from objective analysis, persist in turning the qualities of Muslim scholars into weaknesses, in a prejudicial and deceptive way.

Therefore, the statement of the author: «*This criticism has not gone far enough in clearing away fallacies*» is an unfounded claim which is belied by the close scrutiny of the lives of the transmitters found in a large number of volumes dealing with the apocryphal or weak Hadiths, and the encyclopedias of authentic Hadiths on whose compilation 'the Ulemas spent their whole lives. All these works were the fruit of rigorous investigation and genuine efforts.

As to the work of Goldziher on which Robson drew, it is replete with generalizations and distortions, for it does not make any distinction between the Hadiths that were authenticated by sound methods-such as the Hadiths concerning the miracles of the Prophet (PBUH), and those dealing with the disasters and events associated with the Day of Judgement, on the one hand, and the fabricated Hadiths which glorify the Umayyads and the Abbassids, on the other hand.

Actually, the Divine Secrets related to the past and the future are contained in many authentic Hadiths whose transmission is better than that of a 'Mutawatir' Hadith (i.e. the one which has many transmitters). These Hadiths deal with the emergence of the Jewish Anti Christ, the descent from Heaven of Jesus Christ (PBUH), as well as the tribulations and the signs that will augur the end of the world, which none can deny, except if he denies the validity of his own reasoning and the scientific criteria.

Muslims, however, have not accepted these Hadiths indiscriminately and with no distinction whatsoever. On the contrary, they submitted them to severe scrutiny. For instance, there are many Hadiths whose subject is the denigration or the glorification of the Umayyads ; they abound in books reserved for fictitious Hadiths. Similarly, there are many rejected Hadiths which deal with the glorification of the Abbassids or predict their coming to power. These were also compiled with the fictitious Hadiths.

As to Robson's statement that the Western mind cannot accept the material of the Prophetic Tradition as genuine, it is of no importance whatsoever as far as the sciences of Hadith are concerned, because the criterion set up by the 'Ulemas (authorities in the field) so as to authenticate, invalidate, accept or reject a Hadith consists in sound transmission methods, unbroken chain of transmitters traced back to the Prophet, reliable narration and sound text. When a Hadith meets all these requirements, it is considered as genuine, whether it deals with the visible or the invisible, and whether it concides with the customary or the extraordinary.

As to the irresponsible judgement passed by Robson on the Hadiths collected in a later period, which he rates as fictitious, it is unimportant and unfounded. For we have shown that the recording of the Hadith started at the time of the Prophet (PBUH), and that the compilation of large collections was undertaken before mid-second century of the Hegira. All this is a strong proof which refutes the opinions of the Orientalists and throws their allegations into disarray.

These are the errors made by the author of the section on Hadith in The Encyclopedia of Islam. We have identified them and corrected them as best we could, while trying hard to adhere, in our discussion, to scientific methodology and to argue them in the best possible way. We beseech Allah -be He exalted- to make the truth prevail and to reward those who are right.

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