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Historical Orientalist Approaches towards the Sirah of Prophet Muhammad (PHUH)

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ABSTRACT:

This research looks at how orientalists see the character of Muhammad's (peace be upon him). The objective of this research is to explain and critique both fair and unfavorable remarks made by orientalists. This study disproves orientalists' accusations in order to damage the credibility of enlightened Islam by twisting the image of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Despite their disparities in tactics, the study indicates that Islam's opponents have one goal: to ruin the reputation of Islam and its Prophet (peace be upon him). This skewed picture of Master Muhammad (peace be upon him) arose as a result of orientalists' animosity, which was based on weak bogus scriptures written by Muslims. As a result, more research and suggestions are offered.

KEYWORDS: Prophet Muhammad, Orientalist, Seerah, Approaches, History

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INTRODUCTION: The subject of the Sirah and Orientalism is not new. Scholars have discussed it in the past as well as in modern times. Recently, several substantial works on orientalist's methodologies and approaches to Islamic issues in general, and the Sirah in particular, have surfaced. There have also been some individual works published, mainly in Arabic, on the topic of the Sirah and orientalists. The opinion of any scholar on any given subject are not entirely his own. He is compelled to reflect the state of knowledge at the moment and to draw and expand on the findings of his forefathers' study. To examine the work of any one scholar, one must first look at the works of his predecessors. As a result, it has been regarded to be more valuable to study a couple or more academics who are not contemporaneous with one another but whose works span a period of time. To have a brief view in the historical orientalist approach we have selected four orientalists, Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), Aloys Sprenger (1813-1897), William Muir (1819-1905) and Margoliouth (1858-1940), in the western history to observe the historical orientalist approach. These Four orientalists have great impacts not only in western world moreover in Muslim world also. Later western scholars also adopted their way of thinking in Seerah study of Muhammad.

Objectives of the Study: The following are the objectives of this research:

To look at the fairness of orientalist's views on the character of Master Muhammad, peace be upon him.

To examine the orientalist's fair assessment of the sirah of Muhammad (peace be upon him).

To examine the orientalist's erroneous assessment of Muhammad's (peace be upon him) character.

Limitations of the Study: The scope of this research is confined to the expression of orientalist' perspectives on the Sirah of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The current research does not provide orientalist's opinions on other topics, such as the Holy Quran, the Sunnah, or the revelation. It is also limited to the viewpoints of orientalists throughout the last two centuries.

Literature Review: Although some serious studies have appeared on this topic by the different researchers. But as it's a grand topic so there still remains a good deal to be done. Different Muslims scholars have done their jobs to show the partiality of orientalists. But in this article one could easily find that how the orientalists follows their predecessors and keeps on doing the same job with different words.

Methodology: The analytical technique is applied by compiling the opinions of orientalists on the character of Muhammad (peace be upon him). After collecting the data, of different orientalists it will be discussed, analyzed, and criticized to determine whether the statements are true or false. How the opinions are changed in different times and how the

orientalists followed their predecessors on the pattern of knowledge they already had?

Analysis and Exposition:

Thomas Carlyle: The approach to the Sirah by orientalists changed dramatically in the mid-nineteenth century. On Friday, March 8, 1840, Thomas Carlyle began delivering his Second Lecture on Heroes and Hero Worship, marking the start of a new age. In stark contrast to the atmosphere of pure vituperation that marked Voltaire's deliverances a century before, Carlyle emphasized the Prophet's truthfulness, among other things. Carlyle's suggestion was picked up on by his contemporaries and later writers in general. They began to emphasize Muhammad's sincerity in order to suggest, through various devices, that while he sincerely believed himself to be a Prophet and the recipient of Allah's revelations, he was mistaken in that belief, that the entire process was a psychological phenomenon, and that the "revelations" he gave out were the result of that psychological process or his intuition. As a result, Muhammad was gradually demoted from the character of a conscious false Prophet or impostor to that of an unconscious false Prophet or, at most, the victim of an innocent hallucination in the arena of European thought. Besides this, Carlyle (1840) presented lot of good aspects of Muhammad as he asserts:

Much has been said of Mahomet's propagating his religion by the sword... the sword indeed: but where will you get your sword! Every new opinion, at its starting, is precisely in a minority of one. In one man's head alone, there it dwells as yet. One man alone of the whole world believes it; there is one man against all men. That he takes a sword and tries to propagate with that, will do little for him. (pp. 395-96)

On another point while delivering his lecture, Carlyle, commented that "Mahomet [sic] himself, after all that can be said about him, was not a sensual man. We shall err widely if we consider this man as a common voluptuary, intent mainly on base enjoyments, — nay on enjoyments of any kind (1840, p. 83)".

Carlyle's presentation of Prophet Muhammad's life in a very positive light stands as a very clear, concise, knowledgeable, and fair account, despite his lack of Arabic knowledge and his forming his judgment on the Qur'an from the translations available to him, assuming them to be fair and sufficient. The Prophet was a true man of insight, a wonderful leader, a devout and modest man, yet the truth of his religion was "rooted in a portentous mistake and deception," according to him. Carlyle, on the other hand, praised Islam to the utmost degree, declaring it to be "truly the essence of Christianity" (1840, p. 84).

Mahomet is examined by Carlyle as an example of "The Hero as Prophet". Carlyle (1840) clarifies that "We have chosen Mahomet not as the most eminent Prophet; but as the one we are freest to speak of" (p. 53). Carlyle

did not go on to explain how or why he came to the conclusion that Mahomet is "the one we are freest to talk of," or why different prophets are more restricted from speaking. Carlyle's use of the plural pronoun in this assertion also piques my attention. Carlyle appears to be slyly attempting to strengthen the legitimacy and validity of his arguments in the minds of his readers by framing them as belonging to a 'we'. Carlyle later considers his readers again when he remarks that "there is no danger of our becoming, any of us, Mayodan's" (p. 53). Carlyle makes it plain that his article is not intended for Mahomet worshippers to read.

Carlyle (1840) goes on to call Mahomet a prophet. "Spontaneous, passionate, yet just, true-meaning man! Full of wild faculty, fire and light; of wild worth, all uncultured; working out his life-task in the depths of the Desert" (p. 84).

Mahomet, according to Carlyle, has mysteries that we must strive to "get to" in order to "try to fathom what he meant with the universe." With this knowledge, Carlyle believes we may answer the issue of "what the world meant and means to him." Mahomet is definitely regarded as a great figure by Carlyle, who has designated him as a hero. However, when considering Carlyle's sentimental and clichéd portrayal of Mahomet, this classification becomes problematic. Mahomet is not so much a hero who should inspire "us" (as in Carlyle's intended audience), but rather one who inspires Muslims, and hence requires our scrutiny. Because of his lack of knowledge, spontaneity, and primitivism, Mahomet is a fascinating example of a hero, according to Carlyle. Carlyle emphasizes Mahomet's enormous impact and large number of followers several times, yet the words he chooses to characterize the prophet reflect Carlyle's conviction in the superiority of a white Christian man like himself, who is educated, careful, and "cultured."

Many of these questions may be explored in light of Carlyle's depiction of Mahomet's dominant opinions:

Our current hypothesis about Mahomet, that he was a scheming Impostor, a Falsehood incarnate, that his religion is a mere mass of quackery and fatuity, begins really to be now untenable to anyone. The lies, which well-meaning zeal has heaped round this man, are disgraceful to ourselves only . . . The word this man spoke has been the life-guidance now of a hundred and eighty millions of men these twelve hundred years. These hundred and eighty millions were made by God as well as we . . . Are we to suppose that it was a miserable piece of spiritual legerdemain, this which so many creatures of the Almighty have lived by and died by? I, for my part, cannot form any such supposition . . . One would be entirely at a loss what to think of this world at all, if quackery so grew and were sanctioned here . . . more godless theory, I think, was never promulgated in this Earth. A false man found a religion? Why, a false man cannot build a brick house! . . . It will

fall straightway. (1840, p. 53)

Carlyle also talks about his experience with the Koran and his feelings about it:

I must say, it [the Koran] is as toilsome reading as I ever undertook. A wearisome confused jumble, crude, incondite; endless iterations, long-windedness, entanglement; most crude, incondite; — insupportable stupidity, in short! Nothing but a sense of duty could carry any European through the Koran . . . It is the confused ferment of a great rude human soul; rude, untutored, that cannot even read; but fervent, earnest, struggling vehemently to utter itself in words . . . We said "stupid:" yet natural stupidity is by no means the character of Mahomet's Book; it is natural uncultivation rather. The man has not studied speaking; in the haste and pressure of continual fighting, has not time to mature himself into fit speech . . . The man was an uncultured semi-barbarous Son of Nature, much of the Bedouin still clinging to him: we must take him for that. But for a wretched Simulacrum, a hungry Impostor without eyes or heart . . . we will not and cannot take him. Sincerity, in all senses, seems to me the merit of the Koran; what had rendered it precious to the wild Arab men . . . Curiously, through these incondite masses of tradition, vituperation, complaint, ejaculation in the Koran, a vein of true direct insight, of what we might almost call poetry, is found straggling. (1840, p. 76)

The value of Islam and the dedication of its adherents are asserted and defended by Thomas Carlyle. He also supports Muhammad's and the Quran's virtues and honesty... However, Carlyle's claims that he is an unconscious false prophet cast doubt on this assumption.

Carlyle (1840) also considers the allegation of profligacy leveled against Muhammad, pointing out that many people miss the fact that he (Muhammad) remained with Khadija alone until her death, and only acquired spouses after the heat of his "youth had passed - after he had passed his prime" (p. 53). With reference to Ibn Ishāq, he is able to present a human account of Muhammad. Without a doubt, he regards him as a significant historical figure. However, being a Christian, he examines the Prophet through the lens of Christianity, and so denies his Prophet-hood, whereas Thomas Carlyle only recognized the Prophet as a hero. The first Westerner to describe Muhammad as a sincere guy with an open, serious soul was Thomas Carlyle. Still, according to Watt, Carlyle had to overcome one major obstacle, one that has plagued and may continue to haunt European scholastic circles. The major impediment, he claims, is "deep-seated prejudice that dates back to medieval 'war propaganda'" (Theobald, 1968, p. 45).

Aloys Sprenger (1813-1897)

Aloys Sprenger (1813-1897) produced the first ever full length biography of the prophet (SAW) titled *Life of Muhammad from Original Sources*

which was published in India in the year 1851.¹ He was a renowned Austrian orientalist who joined the East India Company in 1843, as a medical doctor. In 1850, he became the principal of Delhi College, where he wrote *Life of Muhammad*, and many other books.³ Following is a short critical analysis of the major themes he discussed and the methodology he used. His biography received a lot of attention from his contemporary evangelical orientalists. He made an unproductive effort and tried to convince his readers to reject the conceptions related to the illiteracy of the Prophet (SAW) and how Ka'bah was built after the advent of Islam.⁴

In addition, he also mitigated the role of the Prophet (SAW) in spreading Islam to all the parts of the world. As he states; “the successful prophet of the Arabs, in founding a new religion, did nothing more than gather the floating elements, which had been imparted or originated by others, in obedience to their resistible force of the spirit of the time” (Muir, 1894, p. 13). Sprenger, firstly denied the historicity of the event of surah al-Feel⁵ and then questioned the Muslim historical method employed in it. Moreover, he also suggests an alternative method in relation to Muslim Muhaddisīn. He questions the authenticity of Hadīth literature declaring it as a fraud and fictitious writing, which was later carried by Muir in his books; revolving around the life of Muhammad. He states, “To supply what seemed to be wanting, pious fraud assisted imagination, by furnishing arguments for its creations. Well calculated fictions were believed in the age of faith; and many of them became dogmas for succeeding centuries.”⁶ While talking about the source of *Sīrah*, he considered the Qur’ān, Ibn Ishāq (704-768), Ibn Hishām (d.833) and Wāqidī (747-823) as the prominent sources. Later, he expresses his ideas about these sources in a way which would make them seem unreliable and appreciated the work of Wāqidī alone. He states “There is no trace of a sacrifice of truth to design, or of pious fraud, in his work. It contains few miracles; and even those which are recorded in it admit of an easy explanation.”⁷ Sprenger also confirmed classical Christian theme of epilepsy and suggests that like all “hysterical people had a tendency to lying and deceit” and it is epilepsy that causes his nymphomania.⁸

SIR WILLIAM MUIR: Under European imperial dominance, a new period of vigorous Christian missionary activity among Muslims began in the mid-nineteenth century. The demands of imperial administration had pushed Europeans into greater contact with the Muslim populace under their control. This closer interaction, along with the evangelistic intents of the period, revealed that the earlier strategy of simply vilifying the Prophet had been abandoned in favor of at least a rational and compelling approach to the Prophet of Islam. Thus, Carlyle's and Sprenger's suggestions were in tune with the times. On the one hand, William Muir's work arose in the framework of European imperial interests, and on the other, Christianizing

intents. He was a high-ranking administrator in the administration of the English East India Company in India. In his spare time, he assisted and sympathized with Christian missionaries working in India. He was really close to her. Carl Gottaleb Pfander, a well-known Christian missionary, was at the time engaged in missionary operations among the Muslims of northern India. Indeed, Muir was one among the Christian umpires at the famous Agra argument between Pfander and Rahmat Allah KeranawT in 1854. Pfander was relocated by his missionary society (the Church Missionary Society) first to Peshawar and subsequently to Constantinople, and the discussion clearly swung against him. 1 In the foreword to the first edition of Muir's book, he states that he prepared it "at the request" of Pfander. Between 1858 and 1861, a four-volume first edition of the work was published. In the early 1970s, a second edition was published, omitting the sections on sources and pre-Islamic Arabia. In 1894, a third edition was issued. In 1923, a new version of this third edition was released, with the addition of a section on sources. The original first edition was just republished in 1988. This is a critical study of Sir William Muir's book on Muhammad's Life, with the goal of evaluating his contribution to the creation of Muhammad's image in Western academia, which our thesis intends to criticise. We picked Muir as the beginning point for our study of nineteenth-century Western scholarship since it was the most extensive at the time. Second, it was one of the earliest English-language works to use actual Arabic materials.

Many following writers frequently refer to Muir's work as the sine qua non source - book on Muhammad in the West, demonstrating its legitimacy. It was meant to represent a significant departure from the medieval era's polemics and hostility. For these reasons, it was greatly praised for its 'objectivity' by many, who rapidly recognized it as the mainstream English presentation of the life of Islam's prophet.⁹

Muir's work cannot be overlooked in order to verify our premise that vestiges of Medieval attitudes toward Muhammad became an inheritance for the West and persisted into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. We'll try to evaluate his appraisal of Muhammad critically, looking for evidence of impartiality and objectivity as well as signs of prejudice, bias, and other elements of bad research. We're also keeping an eye out for any evidence of a medieval approach to Muhammad. The following are some of the basic questions we could try to answer:

1. How does Muir's clear dedication to the Christian church and Christian mission, as well as his support for the British Raj, impact his assessment of Muhammad's life?
2. Has his Western upbringing kept him in step with his predecessors in the Middle Ages?
3. How sincere has Muir been in his quest to learn more about Muhammad,

a guy whose image had been so badly tarnished in the West previous to his birth?

4. Is there any evidence that the fundamental transformation in technique has resulted in a shift in attitude? As we progress through the criticism, these and many additional ramifications of these concerns will be examined.

Muir articulated the tremendous theological, social, and political problems that needed to be addressed in Arabia.

He believes Muhammad handled these issues by employing a variety of strategies, including "war" and "plunder," which the "wild Arabs" found appealing.¹⁰ However, he recognizes that Christianity and Judaism, as they were in Arabia in the sixth and seventh centuries, were unable to address the issues. "The stuff for a tremendous revolution was here," he writes. But it had to be built, and Muhammad was the builder.¹¹ What Muir finds difficult to believe is that Muhammad's amazing ability to handle the issues of the "wild" people came from somewhere other than him. The ancient idea that Muhammad took most of his ideas from Judaism and Christianity resurface to deny him any unique spirituality in his mission.¹² This concept of Muhammad's copying that has survived in the West cannot be proven decisively. What stops God from revealing to Muhammad notions comparable to those found in earlier texts if the source of revelation is one and the same (that is, God)? Indeed, the Holy Qur'an indicates, and Muslims believe, that the revelations given to Muhammad corroborate the substance of previous revelations.¹³

Muir believes in both the pathological and auto-suggestion theories. He cites an incident that occurred to Muhammad as a youngster while he was living with Halimah as proof of epileptic fits.¹⁴ It's worth noting that Muslim devout texts have interpreted the opening of Muhammad's chest as an angelic purification of the heart. There is no credible evidence that Muhammad had any pre-prophetic experiences that might be described as fits. Emile Dermenghem puts it succinctly that "Neurotics, false mystics and authentic visionaries present certain phenomena in common. The one is purely passive; the other active and creative. At the most we might say that the morbid tendency may facilitate trances which, in their turn, would increase the tendency. But one finds no traces, as it seems, of this pathological state in Mahomet".¹⁵

Despite the epilepsy problem as Muir sees it, Muhammad is described in He lived largely within himself, according to the book, having a refined intellect and delicate taste, quiet and introspective, and the ponderings of his heart no doubt provided occupation for leisure hours spent by others of a lesser caste in crude sports and profligacy.¹⁶ Perhaps he rejects it not because the two could not have met, but because it fits with his overall plan to disprove any idea that a high-ranking monk proclaimed Muhammad prophet. He also states that Christianity as it existed in Syria and its

surrounds at the time was not pure, and that Muhammad would have become a Christian if he had experienced true Christianity.¹⁷ He goes on to say, "We may well lament that the empire's misnamed Catholicism so grievously deceived the genius of the age, and through him, so big a part of the eastern world."¹⁸

Muhammad's visits to the cave of Hira are reduced to simple moments of self-reflection and a period during which he... would express his anxiety in wild rhapsodic language, frequently accompanied by incomprehensible oaths, the outward manifestation of an interior fight for truth.¹⁹ Muir finds it hard to accept that the change in Muhammad's life reflected authentic prophet hood because of his emphasis on the auto-suggestion idea. He says, "How such ambitions evolved into conviction that the topic of them was divinely inspired is an obscure and complex matter."²⁰

Muir is sympathetic to Muhammad's cause throughout the book, at least in Makkah. He, on the other hand, holds to a strictly psychological view of Muhammad's mission, believing that he was not receiving signals from beyond himself but rather from his subconscious. He struggles to reconcile this notion with the well-known truth that there is a heavenly presence behind his words. He claims that: "It is certain that the conception of the Almighty as the immediate source of his inspiration and author of his commission soon took entire and undivided possession of his soul; and that this conception, moreover colored by the events and inducements of the day, or interacted with apparently incongruous motives and desires, retained an attached excel until his death."²¹ There appears to be a paradox here, because in Islam, it would be extraordinary for a prophet whose life is completely in Allah's hands to fall into a scenario where he is exclusively concerned with secular goals. This might put serious doubt on the entire concept of divine direction. Muir, on the other hand, unknowingly acknowledges Muhammad's genuineness. He adds that the early converts' upright character and the social position of his intimate friends and family members "could not fail otherwise to have recognized those disparities which ever more or less occur between the hypocritical deceiver's statements abroad and his deeds at home."²² He looks at Abu Talib again, who, although not being a Muslim, risked his dignity and possibly his life to defend Muhammad. He acknowledges that it couldn't have been due to a simple familial bond, and finds that they provide solid evidence of Muhammad's sincerity at the same time. Abu Talib would not have operated in this manner for a self-interested deceiver, and he had many tools of investigation at his disposal.²³ Muir's rejection of the concept of Muhammad's imposture may thus be discerned from them, even if he does not express it explicitly, and following debates seem to contradict this. Sir William Muir is intrigued by the incidence of the so-called demonic poems and makes a reference to it.²⁴

He sees the source of the problem in Muhammad's confused personality, who struggles to reconcile the Ka'ba as God's home and the Makkan's use of it for their idols with his teaching of just one God. He claims that in order to resolve the matter and convert the people to the worship of the one true God, Muhammad had to make certain concessions, as seen by his remark tacitly admitting the idols' power and efficacy. Given Muhammad's previous declaration of his strong anti-idolatry stance, determining how he will knowingly bend over and therefore withdraw the entire premise of his mission is a challenging task. Syed Ahmad Khan examines this subject in depth, citing seventeen sources and studying the traditions on which the narrative is based. The episode is highly corroborated by tradition, according to Muir, who mentions Ibn Hishām, Ibn Sa'd, and at - Tabari. Syed Ahmad Khan denies the tradition upon which Muir and others have formed their tale after a comprehensive examination of the traditions.²⁵

He points out that the section that was intended to sustain the idols was an interpretation by one of the idolators there, who had predicted that Muhammad would criticize their gods based on the way the chapter had started. However, because the perpetrator has yet to be identified, Muslims have decided that whomever did it was acting on Satan's orders.²⁶ Syed Ahmad Khan goes on to say that as the narrative grew in popularity, it was referred to by some academics, and in the same manner that certain experts have documented false traditions, this one did as well. He goes on to say that Sir William Muir's experience as a first-class literary figure should have taught him that simple claims, unsupported by argument and proof, always rebound to the detriment of the very goal they were supposed to serve.²⁷

The Mi'rāj presents itself as a topic for debate. In a page and a half, Muir rejects this, using language that minimizes the significance of the entire issue in Islam. When Muhammad wished to inform his followers about the incident, he was urged not to... expose himself to unbelievers' ridicule. But he didn't give up.... Unbelievers laughed at the account, but believers were taken aback; some are even believed to have returned.²⁸

He has no tradition to back him up this time. He characterizes Muslim views on the subject as "full of colorful fables." To him, the fact that it is only referenced in SSURAH AL ISRAA OR BANI ISRAEEL demonstrates its insignificance, if not its falsehood..²⁹ Muir's dismissive attitude toward the occurrence appears to us to be just another example of his inconsistencies and bias. If he believes in Jesus' transfiguration and bodily ascension, as well as the Bible's claim that Elijah was taken into heaven in fiery chariots, it's remarkable that he can't accept Muhammad's experience as a profound and true spiritual experience.³⁰

We may learn from religious psychology that Muhammad's experience in the Mi'rāj tale is not absurd. In religious experience, it is a universal phenomenon. Muir demonstrates a lack of acquaintance with nineteenth-

century modern sciences by disparaging it in this manner. He didn't know what was going on in science at the time. Even though William James's work *The Varieties of Religious Experience* was published in 1902, after Muir had completed his work, it demonstrates that adequate scientific research of religion was popular at the time, and he should have been aware of it. Syed Ahmad Khan also addresses this subject, examining diverse traditions in eighteen sections.³¹ He, on the other hand, opposes the popular belief among some Westerners that all Muslims believe in Muhammad's physical ascension. He attacks Prideaux for considering the Miraj incident to be a religious event.³² He emphasizes that the event was spiritual, and therefore denying it, particularly the physiological interpretation, does not make a Muslim an apostate.³³

Muir finds it hard to infiltrate Muhammad's cultural and theological surroundings since he is a perfect child of his Western civilization. The scholar resurrects an ancient chapter about Muhammad's inability to perform miracles in order to establish his legitimacy. He describes himself that "The prophets of old were upheld (as we may suppose) by the prevailing consciousness of divine inspiration, and strengthened by the palpable demonstrations of miraculous power; while with the Arabian, his recollection of former doubts, and confessed inability to work any miracle, may at times have cast across him a shadow of uncertainty".³⁴

The most remarkable thing about Muhammad, according to Bosworth Smith, is that he never claimed the ability to do miracles. On the same page, he expresses his ardent belief that Christians would one day recognize Muhammad as a prophet.

Leitner also mentions that "If self - sacrifice, honesty of purpose, unwavering belief in one's mission, a marvelous insight into existing wrong or error, and the perception and use of the best means for their removal, are among the outward and visible signs of inspiration, the mission of Muhammad was inspired".³⁵

Muir's allegation might be seen as a rehash of the older Christian strong argument that miracles are an important, if not the most important, part in proving true prophet ship. St. Thomas Aquinas held a similar viewpoint and blamed Muhammad.³⁶ Miracles, of course, have a place in the Islamic tradition as verifiable proof of prophethood. Islam accepts prior prophets' miracles as authentic, but only with the knowledge that prophets can only execute miracles with God's permission. God produced miracles to support the prophets Falih, Ibrahim, Mūsā, and 'Isā, for example. Another prominent source of fascination for the West and Muir is the subject of Muhammad's sexuality, particularly in terms of polygamy. He writes: By marrying a second woman, Muhammad took a significant step away from Christianity, whose beliefs and practices he must have understood forbade polygamy.³⁷ Muir is using a dubious 'Christian' standard to judge Muhammad, and he

even ignores the fact that Muhammad married more women when he was fifty. At that old age (of fifty or more), the notion that Muhammad married so many people for a variety of reasons other than sexual hunger appears to make a lot of sense. From the eleventh chapter onwards, Muir's study deviates more and more from fairness. He provides us an indication about how he planned to handle the rest of Muhammad's life when he says the reader would experience more exciting episodes.³⁸ He accuses Muhammad of harboring animosity for the Quraish in his heart, and that all he lacked was a fertile site to turn that animosity into action. Madina provided him with that fruitful ground. Muir does not appear to agree with the popular belief that Muhammad left Makkah for Madina principally to re-arm himself against Makkan resistance and persecution, but rather to seek peace. He was to preserve his people from extinction while also preventing more chaos in Makkan culture. The multiple expeditions that Muhammad orchestrated against the 'innocent' Quraish caravans are also mentioned, according to Muir and many others like him. They are a key component of a broader plot to assassinate Muhammad in Madina. Muhammad looks to be the aggressor in each of them. Muir's judgment is typically one-sided. Muir extensively explores the major conflicts, characterizing Muhammad as instilling "savage spirit" and executing innocent people in cold blood. For example, he could not find anything beneficial in the directions Muhammad provided to the head of the Nakhla expedition.³⁹

For example, Muir portrays Muhammad as launching the battle of Badr, but it is plausible to infer that if the agreements reached with the Madman delegation at al-Aqaba had survived, and Muhammad had apprehensions of invasion from Makkah, he would not have dared to 'stir the beehive.' Muir even speculates that the Makkan army's failure at Badr may have improved Muslim morale in Madina. It may be claimed that the true morale boost could only have been achieved if the war was morally defensible, as most people believe. It was for the sake of repelling assault that the Muslims attained spiritual exhilaration. Muir's own reference to the treatment of some of the Badr prisoners of battle appears to contradict the claim of Muhammad's harshness. In reality, he doesn't think about it. He claims that Muslims have no qualms about going to battle. The entire debate is skewed in favor of Muhammad's opponents, who are portrayed as victims.⁴⁰

The story of the Banu Qainugā and their eventual exile is told in an emotional tone. By rejecting 'Abdallah Ibn Ubayy's pleadings, Muir paints Muhammad as heartless and cruel.⁴¹ It does not appear to be the same Muhammad who released captives. The so-called "secret assassinations" are described with the same intensity. The execution of Ka'b Ibn al-Ashraf, for example, is described by Muir as "one of the heinous acts of cruelty" that "darkens the pages of the prophet's life."⁴² Muhammad's suggestion, agreement, and go-ahead were all provided by him, according to his

account. He does, however, note that he is "far from claiming that every aspect in the... tale, whether of Muhammad's encouragement or the assassin's deceit, is beyond doubt."⁴³ The way he interprets the accounts about these assassinations appears to be consistent with his concept that any narrative that puts Muhammad at a significant disadvantage must be accurate. He even finds a tradition to back up his claim that some Muslims were complaining about the prophet's behavior.⁴⁴

His comparison of the use of violence in Christianity and Islam is terrible, as it demonstrates the flawed technique of comparing the ideal in one religion with actual occurrences in the culture of the other. If Christians are assessed according to Tu quoque' standards, we would find that history is littered with stories of conflicts against idolaters. The legends of the fall of Jericho, the Amalekites, the Amorites, and the Jebusites alone demonstrate that various times saw things differently, and hence the Children of Israel cannot be blamed for 'creating' these occurrences.⁴⁵

It's worth noting that the classical writings don't have the same problems as modern literature when it comes to such concerns since they don't utilize nineteenth-century liberal idealism as a standard. Muir casts doubt on the circumstances that led to the Banu Nadir's exile, claiming that no mention of them can be found in the Qur'ān. Muir should have known that the Qur'ān is not essentially a historical book, given his intellectual abilities. As a result, the greatest place to look for this will be in the traditions; but, because of his concept, the narrative will portray Muhammad in a positive light, and hence it will not be real. The Banū Quraiza is perhaps the most important problem that gives detractors the most ammunition to criticize Muhammad. Unsurprisingly, Muir devotes a significant amount of time on it. He dismisses the claim of an existing covenant between Muhammad and the Jews of Madina, implying that they were justified in making whatever decision they desired. He agrees with Sprenger that Banū Quraiza's indifference in the Khandaq skirmishes stems from their experience at the battle of Uhud, where the Jews' aid was turned down, and the events of the two expulsions. However, it is not unreasonable to believe that after learning what happened to the Nadir and the Qainugä, as well as the fact that they were stopped from fighting at Uhud, the Banta Quraiza would grow so enraged that they would view their only future as weeding out the Muslims from Madina. He agrees with Sprenger that Banū Quraiza's indifference in the Khandaq skirmishes stems from their experience at the battle of Uhud, where the Jews were turned down for assistance, and the events of the two expulsions. However, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the Banta Quraiza, knowing what happened to the Nadir and the Qainugä, and the fact that they were prohibited from fighting at Uhud, would have been so enraged that they would view their only future as weeding out the Muslims from Madina.⁴⁶

Muir, after Sprenger and others, provides the groundwork for understanding the case as barbaric, brutal, and Muhammad himself unworthy of the sublime office of prophethood by rejecting any collaboration between the Quraiza and the Quraish. This might explain why he remains mute about the 'Constitution of Madina.' Even if the premise of conspiring were to be adopted, there is no foundation for Muhammad charging the Banu Quraiza of violating a covenant or being guilty of treason by omitting it. Surprisingly, the scholar swings around to acknowledge that the Banu Quraiza's action was disloyal and warranted "serious vengeance," but complains to what happened, stating it "cannot be regarded as anything other than an act of horrible cruelty."⁴⁷

Even though he deems the execution a "barbarous deed which cannot be justified by any explanation of political necessity," he believes that the Banu Quraiza deserved harsh chastisement for joining "the enemy at such a vital juncture" in the Mahomet and Islam."⁴⁸ He finds that the decision was in full accordance with the laws of war as they were recognized by nations throughout the world at the time... these individuals chose their fate. ⁴⁹ Barakat Ahmad re-examines the entire topic of Muhammad's relationship with the Jews, and appears to usher in a new era. Intergroup ties, especially where religion is involved, are fraught with conflict and misery, he says. The story is fed by martyrology, and prejudice adds venom to the fable. Political expediency and skewed scholarship elevate the tale to historical legitimacy. One of these stories is Muhammad's relationship with the Jews of the Hijaz.⁵⁰

He adds a fresh perspective to the occurrence by casting doubt on the facts of the events as portrayed in numerous history books, as well as Muir's work. After carefully analyzing Ibn Ishāq's j7-rah and noting the isnād, he discovers that just nine (9) of the thirty-four (304) were Jews or Jewish converts, and the themes they reported on do not allude to the 'heinous and horrible death' of the Jews as we commonly hear. Barakat also points out that Jewish academics have not mentioned the Quraiza genocide, which is remarkable because Jews are not known for forgetting their tragedies..⁵¹ He reminds out that Samuel Usque, a "deft painter of Jewish sorrow" who "allowed the lengthy procession of Jewish history to file past the sad eyes of his contemporaries in all its majesty and splendour and unfathomable tragedy," did not relate to the Banu Quraiza narrative.⁵² We're not thinking that just because Jewish authors didn't mention it doesn't imply it didn't happen. We quote Ahmad just to demonstrate that the subject may be approached from a completely different perspective. Muir then discusses the episode at al-Hudaibiyah in detail, but without delving into what it reveals about Muhammad's character. After all of the preceding portrayals of Muhammad as inhumane, vindictive, warlike, and murderous, here we see Muhammad accepting some unimaginable changes to an already

"insulting" deal with his arch adversaries, who are now nearly prostrate at his feet. When Muir recounts the episode, he says that the foundation is suspect and that, while it may have happened, it is highly colored. We assume Muir doubts its legitimacy because this is another another opportunity for us to see a rational, diplomatic, peaceful, just, and truthful Muhammad. He makes a law out of his thesis of 'disadvantageous tradition.'⁵³

In reality, this argument requires further examination since it's possible that what Muir and his colleagues consider to be detrimental using nineteenth-century Victorian criteria was not considered such by the broadcasters in the seventh and eighth centuries. As a result, the procedure suggests anachronism once more. It's even conceivable to flip the notion around and claim that the sort of tradition conveyed is a sign of what seventh and eighth century broadcasters think beneficial, resulting in a totally different value system than Muir's. However, a more in-depth examination of this hypothesis is outside the scope of this thesis. The focus has shifted back to excursions. Kināna, the chief of Khaybor, was slain after the conquest, and the account is written in a style similar of the Medieval era, when the main goal was to portray Muhammad as terrible as possible.⁵⁴

Muhammad's compassion for the poor and destitute is always mentioned briefly, generally in a line or two. After highlighting M4ammad's distribution of state property to his own household and a portion to the army, he mentions in passing that "the destitute were also not forgotten."⁵⁵ We understand that emphasizing his sympathy for the poor, the needy, and others would contradict the callous image of Muhammad he has cultivated. Muir falls quiet at M4ammad's return to Makkah for the shorter pilgrimage (Umrah) pursuant to the provisions of at - Hudaibiyyah. The fact that Muhammad agreed to depart Makkah without even enjoying his wedding feast (when he married Maimūna) says a lot about him. Unfortunately, these will be favorable, which Muir is not fond of. If the Prophet had been callous, of doubtful character, and always willing to falsify revelations to meet his own personal needs, he might have utilized one of these routes to stay in Makkah until his marriage was consummated. Muir is hell-bent on viewing Muhammad in Madina as a completely different person. There is no debate regarding the lessons we might take about Muhammad from the triumphal arrival into Makkah. Muhammad astonished all his detractors, according to Lane-Poole, who were anticipating carnage in the streets now that his old bitterest adversaries are powerless in front of him..⁵⁶

Some claim that Muhammad spared his opponents because he knew his arrival would be met with no discernible P resistance. Even so, it would have revealed something about his personality. Muhammad, who is nasty, aggressive, and cruel, has now issued an order to his warriors not to injure anybody.⁵⁷ If he was implacable and spiteful by nature, it wouldn't have

mattered whether he showed kindness when there was no resistance or was harsh when he was resisted. Muir, on the other hand, concedes that Muhammad's magnanimity on this occasion was laudable, but he quickly adds that Muhammad did it for strategic purposes to rebut any suggestion that he had exemplary morals. He claims that forgiving the past and putting its slights and injuries behind him was in his best interests.⁵⁸ Many times, Muhammad's strategic abilities are exalted for the wrong reasons. The point of the argument is to demonstrate that he is not just intelligent but also cunning.

David Samuel Margoliouth: Professor David Samuel Margoliouth was born on the 17th of October 1858 in London and died on the 22nd of March 1940 at the age of 81. Ezekiel Margoliouth and Sarah Iglitzki had only one son. The father, who used to be a rabbi, became an Anglican Jewish missionary. Moses Margoliouth, his father's uncle (1818-1881),⁵⁹ Margoliouth was a Jewish convert to Christianity who was well-known for his knowledge in Biblical and Oriental studies and served as a clergyman at Little Linford, Buckinghamshire, in his later years.⁶⁰ He comes from a long line of Anglican missionaries. It is critical to recognize the author's roots since they will influence his cognitive habits. Margoliouth excelled in school and received a first class honors in New College, Oxford, for his efforts. In 1889, he was appointed to the Laudian Chair of Arabic at the University of Oxford, which he held until 1937, when he withdrew owing to declining health. He was ordained in 1899 as a perfect child of his family and quickly became known as an articulate and clever, but rather strange, speaker. He was a natural traveler, and he went on lecture tours to India and, for a while, Iraq. According to Gilbert Murray, who describes the individual, "he built himself a reputation of understanding Islamic topics better than the Moslems themselves."⁶¹

Margoliouth had an almost legendary reputation among the Islamic peoples of the East, and also among Oriental intellectuals in Europe, at the time of his death, according to the author of this historical work.⁶² For his brilliance in a wide range of subjects, including Arabic, Greek, Hebrew, Latin, Sanskrit, Syriac, and Turkish, he was awarded a number of academic scholarships. The following remark from *The Dictionary of National Biography* attests to his knowledge of Arabic literature: He was a good linguist, unlike most academicians, and while he was quiet in English, he got animated when addressed in Arabic or Turkish.⁶³ His inherent gift in the realm of academia may have blinded him, causing him to grow arrogant. Someone criticized some of his beliefs on ancient Greek literature, according to the story. In response to his critic, he put on a show of his brilliance.⁶⁴

He made a name for himself as an Oriental scholar by writing extensively on practically every subject. He had little trouble dealing with some of the

most difficult aspects of Arabic literature. His work *Mohammad and the Rise of Islam* (1905) was largely regarded as a masterpiece that persuaded many that he was a capable Islamic scholar. Margoliouth became regarded as one whose writings were standards in their disciplines, thanks to his *Mohammedanism* (1911) and the Hibbert Lectures on the Early Development of Mohammedanism (1913).⁶⁵ Some scholars, on the other hand, saw him as a divisive figure. As Murray points out, his writings' sardonic tone upset his Muslim audience at times.⁶⁶

We have largely justified our selection of the scholar's work *Mahomed and the Rise of Islam* as the major textbook, which highlights his views on Muhammad's life. Each of the thirteen chapters in the book is skilfully dealt within the framework of English Orientalist literature. It opens with an examination of Muhammad's ancestors in pre-Islamic Arabia. The argument then progresses through his early life, including how Islam formed in secret and later became open, as well as a study of the Hijra event, the first war, and the ups and downs in the newborn religion's rise. The picture continues with the conflict with Jewish communities, which he treats in a theatrical manner for obvious reasons, as we will discuss later. He then discusses Muhammad's re-entry into Makkah before concluding with Muhammad's last moments. He pays honor to both Muslim and non-Muslim authors on Muhammad in the prologue, and deems Sir Walter Raleigh's *The Life and Death of Mahomet*, published in London in 1637, to be the most renowned of the biographies. However, he claims that Gibbon "may easily be given the palm of eloquence and historical insight".⁶⁷ He states that, whereas other books attempt to demonstrate the superiority or otherwise of Islam over another faith, his does not. He claims to have broken free from all of these preconceptions.⁶⁸

These are quite favorable words, and coming from such a distinguished researcher, the student should have no reservations about the content he has chosen to study under normal conditions. He contextualizes his beliefs by studying pre-Islamic Arabian history and Arabia during Muhammad's time. He argues, "Religious extremism was introduced by Islam as an addition to the country's perils; otherwise, the twentieth-century Arabia is comparable to the sixth-century Arabia."⁶⁹

He begins his critique of Islam by referring to evidence that the ancient Arabs worshiped stones. As a result, he thinks that the black stone associated with the Ka'bah was formerly supposed to be the true Meccan divinity.⁷⁰ He speculates on Allah's origins, saying, "It seems possible that Allah, a male deity of which al-Lat was the female, identified by Mohammed as the object of monotheistic adoration, was the tribal god of the Kuraish; and indeed, the Kuraish are called Allah's family in lines which may possibly be pre-Islamic."⁷¹ In his usage of Muslim sources, Margoliouth is always suspicious. In his article on Muhammad in the

Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics he plays down the authoritativeness of almost every classical Muslim writer.⁷²

He criticizes Ibn IsI q's work, claiming that while it is not extant, major portions may be found in the writings of Ibn Hishām and al-Tabari. He then claims that: Its author was in contact with prominent members of the prophet's family, but is said to have been a man of dubious morals, in addition to being a Shiite and a Qadari (believer in the freedom of will); he used versifiers to compose poems to be read by the characters in his story, and his credibility was otherwise questioned..⁷³ This, he claims, demonstrates Ibn Ishaq's mental independence in refusing all types of influence from society or those in power, as many intellectuals at the time did. Margoliouth lays bare his impassioned attack on Muhammad and Islam in a sermon presented in St. Aldgkte's Church, Oxford, on the occasion of the Oxford Church Missionary Association on February 11, 1900. He criticizes Muslim academics for attaching edifying stories to the Prophet in an attempt to turn him into a moral man..⁷⁴ This, he claims, demonstrates Ibn Ishaq's mental independence in refusing all types of influence from society or those in power, as many intellectuals at the time did. Margoliouth lays bare his passionate attack on Muhammad and Islam in a sermon presented in St. Aldgkte's Church, Oxford, on the occasion of the Oxford Church Missionary Association on February 11-1900. He criticizes Muslim academics for attaching edifying stories to the Prophet in an attempt to turn him into a moral man.⁷⁵

The preacher's message was well-suited to the circumstances. He undoubtedly felt compelled to speak these things to a Church Missionary Association audience. It may be argued, however, that given his position and reputation among the top researchers of Islamic Studies, a little less vitriol would have been anticipated. Margoliouth's distrust of Muslim intellectuals appears to be profoundly ingrained in his psyche, most likely as a result of his combination Jewish and Christian upbringing. Margoliouth's choice of subjects is seen in the way he addresses the age-old issue of Muhammad's epilepsy very immediately. The issue has been discussed in the preceding chapters of Medieval study and Muir's work analysis. Its reappearance here, however, seems to reinforce our earlier claim that many Medieval conceptions about Muhammad had a substantial effect on the academic landscape and were able to persist despite changes in study. According to Margoliouth, "the popular belief among Christian writers that he suffered from epilepsy finds curious confirmation in the notices recorded of his experiences during the process of revelation, the significance of which is not diminished by the likelihood that the symptoms were frequently artificially produced."⁷⁶

Conclusion: To conclude, first of all, Islam's opponents have a common goal: to tarnish the credibility of Islam and its Prophet Muhammad (peace

be upon him), through various ways. Second, this misleading picture of Muhammad (peace be upon him) arose from the animosity that certain orientalists feel, as well as the reliance on weak misleading narratives found in Muslim authors' publications. Third, the outcomes of their twisting about Muhammad's (peace be upon him) image were the polar opposite of what they desired in terms of the West's recognition of Islam's Prophet and the conversion of many Westerners to Islam. Fourth, there are inconsistencies in certain orientalists' works (Badawi, 1993). Additionally, there are books that are not translated in a way that makes it much more difficult in that regard.

Recommendations of the Study: The following aspects are suggested by the researchers. First, when it comes to religious matters, one should not depend on the literature of some orientalists. Second, steps should be taken to study and translate the works of orientalists in order to expose the falsity, deception, and reality for both Arabs and Westerners. Third, the use of modern technology to portray Islam and Muhammad (peace be upon him) in the proper light.

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⁴ Life of Mohammad from Original Sources, op. cit., 13-38.

⁵ Al-Qur'ān: Feel 105:1-5.

⁶ Ibid., 48.

⁷ Ibid., 72.

⁸ Ibid., 210.

⁹ Lyall, Cl: "Obituary of Sir William Muir" in Journal of Royal Asiatic Society, (1905), p. 876.

¹⁰ Muir: Life, p. xciv.

¹¹ Ibid., p. xcvi.

¹² The Sources of Islam, a Persian treatise by the Rev. W. St. Clair-Tisdall, (1901), esp. Chpts. 3&4.

¹³ Holy Qur'an 2: 41,89,97; 3: 3; 4: 47; 5: 48.

¹⁴ Life, pp. 6-7.

¹⁵ Emile Dermenghem: The Life of Mahomet (1930), trans. by Arabella Yorke, pp. 251-2.

¹⁶ Muir: Life, pp. 19-20.

¹⁷ Muir: Life, p. 21.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 22.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 38.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., p. 47.

²² Ibid., p. 55.

²³ Ibid., p. 106.

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 80-86.

²⁵ Khan: Life, pp. 317-332.

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 328-329.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 332.

²⁸ Muir: Life, pp. 121-122.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 126

³⁰ Ameer Ali, in A Critical Examination, p. 59, poses a similar question and wonders why Christians who believe in the bodily ascension of Jesus and the case of Elijah feel the Muslim belief is less rational or improbable. See Holy Bible: 2 Kings 2: 11, Matthew 17: 1 if. and Acts 1: 11.

³¹ Khan: Life, p. 344 if.

³² Ibid., p. 347.

³³ We need to note here however that the subject of acceptance of the bodily journey is a touchy one and Cannot be dismissed as easily as Sir Syed Ahmad Khan does here. He was known not to be particularly disposed to accepting the miraculous and we suspect this is behind his reasoning. The issue has much to do with obedience to the Prophet.

³⁴ Muri: Life, p. 126.

³⁵ G. W. Leitner: Muhammadanism, (1889), p. 4.

³⁶ See James Waltz: "Muhammad and Islam in St. Thomas Aquinas", Muslim World Vol. 66, (1976) No. 2, pp. 81-95. See also Daniel: Islam and the West, pp. 73-77.

³⁷ Muir: Life, p. 202.

³⁸ Muir: Life, p. 202.

³⁹ Muir Life, pp. 227

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 233-34

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 241-2.

⁴² Ibid., p. 245.

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- ⁴³ Ibid., p. 248.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid., see footnote on p. 248-249.
- ⁴⁵ See Davenport, *An Apology for Muhammad and the Koran*, (1882), pp. 135-144. See also Holy Bible: Joshua 6: 10,1 Samuel 15, Judges 1: 21.
- ⁴⁶ Muir: *Life*, p. 316 ff.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 322.
- ⁴⁸ Muir: *Mahomet*, p. 151.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 112.
- ⁵⁰ Ahmad Barakat: *Muhammad and the Jews-A Re-examination*, (1979), p. ix.
- ⁵¹ Ibid., p. 24.
- ⁵² Ibid.
- ⁵³ See Muir: *Life*, Chpt. XIX.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 376-8.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 380.
- ⁵⁶ See S. Lane-Poole: *Selection from the Qur'an and Hadith* (1882) (1975 reprint) pp. 28-29.
- ⁵⁷ Muir *Life*, p. 411.
- ⁵⁸ Ibid.
- ⁵⁹ *Encyclopedia Judaica* Vol. 11, (Jerusalem, Ketter Publishing House Ltd., 1971), pp. 966-7; Other dates given are 1820-1881. See: Singer, Isidore (Ed.), *The Jewish Encyclopedia* vol. VIII, (New York & London: Funk & Wagnalls, MDCCCIV (1904)), p. 330. and also: Sir Leslie Stephen & Sir Sidney Lee (eds.), *The Dictionary of National Biography - From the Earliest Times to 1900*, vol. XII, (London: Oxford University Press, 1921-1922), p. 1044.
- ⁶⁰ *The Dictionary of National Biography* Vol. XII, Ibid. lists thirteen major works to his credit.
- ⁶¹ Wickham Legg, L. G. (Ed.), *The Dictionary of National Biography 1931-1940*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), (Hereinafter cited as DNB), p. 597.
- ⁶² Ibid.
- ⁶³ Ibid., p. 598.
- ⁶⁴ Ibid. One of his critics was known to have pointed out by some other arguments that his work on the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* of Homer were not unique; he became enraged. Murray says: "... he retorted by producing not merely 'signatures' by anagram but also dates in the first three couplets of various tragedies". He then continues: "It is difficult to know how far he was serious in these exercises of ingenuity. * In another controversy, he took pains to try and justify his claim that the Egyptian papyri with information of Jewish settlement in Egypt as early as the 5th. and even 6th. century B. C. were phonies. Murray again points out that despite the fact that only a few people agreed with him, his critics seemed silenced because he raised some complex questions which could not be answered.
- ⁶⁵ See his *Mohammedanism*, (London, Williams & Norgate, ca. 1911). *The Early Development of Mohammedanism* (Hibbert Lectures), (London, Williams & Norgate, 1914).
- ⁶⁶ DND, p. 599.
- ⁶⁷ Margoliouth, Mohammed, p. iii.
- ⁶⁸ Mohammed, p. vii.
- ⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 2.
- ⁷⁰ Margoliouth, MQhammed, p. 8.
- ⁷¹ See: Ibid., p. 19.
- ⁷² See: Hastings, James (ed.): *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, (Hereinafter cited))Vol. VIII, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1915), pp. 871-880.
- ⁷³ Ibid., p. 872.
- ⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 873.
- ⁷⁵ See: *The Church Missionary Intelligencer*, Vol. 51, (1900), pp. 241-248.
- ⁷⁶ Margoliouth, Mohammed, pp. 45-66.
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