

CHAPTER 5

MUSLIM RESPONSE TO THE CRITICAL APPROACH OF ORIENTALISTS TO *SĪRAH* OF PROPHET MUḤAMMAD (PEACE BE UPON HIM)

The era of Western colonial powers in different parts of the Muslim world since late nineteenth century onwards depicts an interest of Western scholars in the *sīrah* writing in new dimensions. It was the era when Orientalists produced a number of works on *sīrah* especially British (discussed in previous chapter).¹ Up to the end of the nineteenth century almost all, the *sīrah* and *maghāzi* books were printed and published with their translation in Europe. As a result, a large number of biographers and historians of Islam developed and sustained this crucial field of study in the West.²

Although some Orientalists done this job with an academic purpose and for the sake of advancement of knowledge. But in most of writings their vindictive, partisan and squint-eyed approach becomes particular and visible while dealing with the life of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). They ignore the well-established and authentic traditions and put forward their own quaint theories unsupported by historical evidences. Their main purpose was, the casting aspersion on the life of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and discrediting his personality which prejudice the minds of even those who are sincere to study Islam and Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him).³ It was due to their (West) lack of knowledge and biased views about Islam and Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). They used to change their approach from time to time according to different circumstances or demands of time. Muslim scholars were very much bothered to this production of the text by the West that was giving wrong perception of the life of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) to the non-Muslim world.

As a result of the intense intellectual encounter between the Muslim scholars and colonial orientalists new dimensions in the study of *sīrah* were explored and a new genre of literature began to be flourish mostly in response to the abundance of works produced by Western writers. Writings of scholars like Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khan, Mawlana Shibli Nu‘mani, Sayyid Sulayman Nadwi, Qaḍi Salman Maṣṣurpuri, Manazir Aḥsan Gilani, Abul ‘Ala Mawdudi, Ḍafar ‘Alī Qureshi, Mawlana Abul Ḥasan ‘Alī Nadwi, and Amīr ‘Alī were the best examples of this response as it

emerged in the Indian subcontinent. With the passage of time, institutions established to formulate a collective response to this challenge. Several efforts made to present Islamic point of view in a scientific and collective way about the issues raised by new Western scholarship.⁴

Mawlana Shibli Nu‘mani and his associates have earned the gratitude of the Muslim world for their heroic attempt in this regard by producing the “*Sīrat al-Nabī*” in seven volumes covering over four thousand printed pages. The work has entailed vast, extensive and intensive, research and collection of material and its linking with *Qur’ānic* precepts. The result has been a comprehensive picture of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and which portrayed more clear and authentic picture of *sīrah*. Mawlana Shibli has given a true response to the Orientalist wrong approach to *sīrah*.⁵

Many counter and encounters have seen between Orient and Occident resulted a high quality of works of *sīrah*. The first sincere and valuable initiative has been taken in the response of Orientalists works on *sīrah* of prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) by Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khan the founder of Muhammadan Anglo Oriental College (later on which became Aligarh Muslim University).

5.1 Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khan

William Muir’s work “*Life of Mahomet*” in the late nineteenth century instigated Muslim scholars, ‘*Ulama* as well as intellectuals to pay attention towards Orientalists’ approach to the life of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). Consequently, Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khan (1817-1898 C.E.) was the first Muslim who wrote “*Khuṭbāt e Aḥmadiyah*” and countered the questions raised by William Muir on the life of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khan expressed his views in the preface of “*Khuṭbāt e Aḥmadiyah*” that when Muir’s work appeared, the curiosity it excited among the reading public was only equaled by their impatience to scrutinize it. But no sooner was it found that simplest and plainest facts connected with Islam and Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) had been strained, twisted and distorted. In short, subjected to the vigorous process in order to make them the catalogs or exponents of the author’s prejudices, then the interest created by the announcement of the work fell to zero. As the young Muslims who were studying English literature, and were perfectly ignorant of their own theology the assessment of the work under consideration raised in their youthful mind the

question, if William Muir has misrepresentation of plain and simple facts, then what are those facts in reality?⁶

Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khan critically examined and refuted several questions raised by William Muir regarding the life of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). He has briefly discussed about the ‘historical geography of Arabia’, ‘various religions of pre-Islamic Arabia’, ‘history of Makkah’, ‘pedigree of the Prophet Muḥammad(peace be upon him)’, ‘manners and customs of pre-Islamic Arabia’, ‘birth and childhood of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him)’. Moreover, he also discusses about the ‘the holy *Qur’ān*’, ‘Mohammedan theological literature’, ‘Mohammedan traditions’, ‘*Shaqq-i-ḥadr* and *Mi’raj*’, prophecies regarding the Prophet Muḥammad(peace be upon him) and has deliberated whether Islam has been beneficial or harmful for humanity.⁷

Sir Sayyid said the use of Islamic traditions is not enough to authenticate any work; the authenticity of a traditionist and the narrator is equally important in it.⁸ Orientalists accept al Waqidi’s (747-822) “*Kitāb al Magahzī*” as a reliable and valuable source for the life of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and for the period immediately following the death of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). William Muir used this work as basic source in the biography of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). Sir Sayyid has rejected the authenticity of traditions upon which William Muir and other Orientalist built their assumptions and stories about the prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). He mentions in *Khuṭbāt e Aḥmadiya* that Muslims do not consider Waqidi’s work as an authentic source. It contained many traditions that have not been traced up to the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him), many tradition in it have not been complete as a chain of narration, many traditions whose narrators are of suspected character or accused, many that have entirely unknown narrators and many have not been subjected to any examination whatever.⁹

The dealings of *Khuṭbāt e Aḥmadiya* with the questions of Orientalists regarding the Islam, the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and his time included opinion of the Orientalists about the Abrahamic tradition. Generally Orientalists deny that Prophet Abraham ever came to Makkah that Hajar and Isma‘īl (A.S) were ever left there by him. They also assert that it was Ishḩā and not Isma‘īl

(A.S), who was intended to be sacrificed. These views are as old as Orientalism itself. It was Muir, however, who gave those views their modern form and pattern and ever since his time others have mainly reproduced his arguments and assumptions.¹⁰

William Muir obstinately denied the Abrahamic origin of Ka'ba; but for the denial of this indisputable truth, a truth which has never been, in the least degree, questioned by any historian except him, he brought forward no substantial and convincing reasons. Weak in their very selves, as are the grounds upon which he bases truth of his erroneous notion, they appear to us to be the following:

First, he firmly considered the settlement of Isma'īl (AS) near Makkah, and the circumstance of Joktan's being that patriarch of the Arabians, which are just fictions and fables far from historical truth and probability. According to Sir Sayyid, William Muir should give reasons that why these people claim their connection to Isma'īl and Joktan? And why those people who were always fighting to each other had common claim? Mere denial is not enough without any evidence while all European historians, indisputably accepted the facts established and acknowledged by history, both sacred and profane.

Secondly, he affirms that there is no trace of anything Abrahamic in the essential elements of the superstition. To kiss the black stone, to make the circuits of the Ka'bā, and perform the other observances at Makkah, Arafat and the value of Mina, to keep the sacred months, and to hallow the sacred territory, have no conceivable connection with Abraham, or with ideas and principles which his descendants would be likely to inherit from him. These were according to him "either strictly local" or being connected with the system of the idolatry prevailing in the south of the peninsula, and imported to Makkah by Banu Jurhum and others. "And when the Abrahamic legend was grafted on "the indigenous" worship, the rites of sacrifice and other ceremonies were now for the first time introduced, or at any rate first associated with the memory of Prophet Abraham. "In the refutation of this allegation, Sir Sayyid gave a detailed account of historical evidences with logical arguments taken from the geography books and previous religious and literary works by Western writers. He proves that Black Stone and the Ka'ba possesses a manifest and close connection with the religious practices of Abraham and his descendants. Ka'ba bears the name of "The House of God" or *Bayt Allah*, a designation which is

the distinguishing characteristics of all such altars erected by Prophet Abraham himself. And the Ka'ba was also built by Prophet Abraham in conformity with those religious practices, according to which, after a lapse of time, descendants of his second son built the temple of *Bayt Allah*.

Thirdly, Muir says that the native systems of Arabia were Sabeanism, idolatry and *stone-worship*, all closely connected with the religion of Makkah. Sir Sayyid refuted this allegation with sound evidences and logic by giving the example of Moses (AS) Jesus (AS).¹¹

Apart from above questions raised by William Muir and other Orientalists, Sir Sayyid Aḥmad refuted many other allegations regarding the *Qur'ān*, its revelation, Islamic traditions, pedigree of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). He also refuted many events of his childhood and early days in Makkah, miracles like *Shaqq-i-ṣadr* and *Mi'raj*. Sir Sayyid thoroughly and logically refuted the questions of William Muir. He has also presented careful and exhausted analysis of various aspects and pointed out the serious errors of Muir's judgment and interpretation.

Khuṭbāt e Aḥmadiya is an excellent addition for the understanding of the approach of William Muir and other Orientalists.¹² The great achievement of this book is, it provides a collection of information or notions about the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) in the previous revealed books (*Torah, Zabūr, Injīl*), because Sir Sayyid had studied the previous revealed scriptures especially *Torah* to write this work. The book has started a new trend in the *sīrah* writings, as now every *sīrah* writer has started to criticize the sources of *sīrah* of Orientalists' writings. Sir Sayyid was the first Muslim who included Islamic culture in the *sīrah* of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him).¹³ Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khan's *Khuṭbāt e Aḥmadiya* is an influential work and after reading this book, William Muir himself said, "I did not object to Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khan's views but to the views of Muslims".¹⁴

5.2 'Allama Shibli Nu'mani

Shibli Nu'mani (1857-1914 C.E.) in his famous work "*Sīrat al-Nabī*" (discussed in first chapter) critically analyzed the views of European scholars on the life of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). It contains seven volumes; it is such a reliable and authentic Urdu book, which no other composition has equaled in acclaim and authenticity. This book is the result of a deep research and it

convincingly answers the objections raised by Orientalists and examines Western writers' works on *sīrah* of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). The western writers may be divided into three kinds, the Western general trend and common mistakes, sources of information and the reason for the common errors, which they commit while investigating *sīrah*. It presents the Islamic philosophy of life and proves from the life of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) that no other religion is as natural and practical as Islam.¹⁵ Shibli Nu'mani has also discussed the approaches of Orientalists in seventeenth to nineteenth century about *sīrah* of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him), while giving a list of books written by Orientalists on the life of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and divided European scholars into three different groups. Pointing out the faults of Orientalists' methodology in studying Islam, Shibli Nu'mani has discussed the common views expressed by Orientalists about the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him).¹⁶

The first volume of this book deals with the life of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) including his battles in which Shibli Nu'mani presented the real image of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) with the help of reliable and authentic sources.¹⁷ The second volume covers the era of peace in Islam and deals with the worship, mutual dealings, Prophet's characteristics, his wives and children. In this volume Shibli Nu'mani discarded the allegations raised by Europeans about the personality of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and gives the details of his marriages.¹⁸ The subject of third volume is miracles, which covered comprehensively in it. It deals with the evidences of miracles, existence of spiritual laws, the natural and spiritual footprints of Prophethood, causes and motives of spiritual law. It resisted the criticism of Western writers about the miracles with evidences, proofs, signs in the life of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and miracles in the light of intelligence.¹⁹ Fourth volume discusses the Prophethood and beliefs, Prophet's mission and his success. It clears doubts about prophecy by distinguishing Prophet from a non-Prophet, inherent capabilities of a Prophet *wahy* and skills of Prophethood, *Ijtihād* of the Prophet. It also provides information of religious and moral conditions of the world in general and Arabs in particular at the time of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him).²⁰ The further volumes fifth, sixth and seventh deal with the basic teachings of Islam, worship, morality and ethics in Islam and the *Shari'ah*, Islamic law its importance and execution.

In short, Shibli Nu'mani refuted Western objections applying logical and historical arguments and presented comprehensively an appropriate and perfect image of Islam and the life of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him).

5.3 Sayyid Amīr ‘Alī

Sayyid Amīr ‘Alī (1849-1928 C.E.) another Muslim thinker dedicated his book titled “*The Life and Teachings of Muḥammad*”, a work which has been applauded round the globe for his critical rethinking of the Western mind in respect of *sīrah* scholarship. First part of it deals with the details of *sīrah* and second describes the achievements of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him).²¹

In this book, he has discussed in detail the approaches of Orientalists like Maurice, Stanley, Carlyle, Emerson, Parker, Channing, Draper, Weil, Springer, Noldeke, Caussinde Perceval, William Muir, Dozy and some other Western scholars.²² Sayyid Amīr ‘Alī has also critically presented the names of French Orientalists like Oelsner, Deutsch, Barthelemy St. Hilair, Devenport, Higgins and Carlyle.²³ Most popular subjects of Prophetic biography like ascension (*Mi‘raj*), tradition, *Jihād*,²⁴ Prophet’s response towards Jews and Christians,²⁵ polygamy and some other aspects of *sīrah* of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) are the main themes under discussion. Hence, this volume got a huge recognition in understanding the case of Orientalists, especially towards *sīrah*. However, one must keep one thing in mind that the author (Sayyid Amīr ‘Alī) has taken up a view, which differ the majority of *Ummah* on the same issues.

The main works on them Amīr ‘Alī showed his critical attitude or relied on them to refute the Western writings against Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) include William Muir’s “*Life of Mahomet*” (1861) and James Freeman Clarke’s “*The Great Religions*” (1871). Amīr ‘Alī’s acquaintance with English intelligentsia and study of the literature on Islam in English language convinced him that the knowledge of Islam in the West is not accurate. Amīr ‘Alī writes about his experience on the issue in his Memoirs, “Henry Channing the famous Unitarian preacher and writer took great interest when I explained him what is Islam? Human chattelhood and brutality is not Islam, Channing advised me for perusal of the “*Great Religions*” of Clarkes and referred the errors with which the book was teemed.” This led Amīr ‘Alī to write the first book “*Examination of the Life and Teachings of Muhammad*”.²⁶

Clarke's work was a production of mid-nineteenth century. It was not a polemic against other religions as such, but it certainly aimed at showing the superiority of Christianity over other faiths.²⁷ Clarke goes on to argue that Christianity is the only true monotheistic religion and it is the religion of progress and universal unity.²⁸

Clarke's work, however, is not free from polemics against the Islam. He praises the character of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) up to the time of the migration to Madinah. Like many other Orientalists Clarke also claimed that "Islamic era was started with the migration to Madinah from here Prophet Muḥammad's (peace be upon him) history of his fortune rise, but his character degenerates, now his chief weapon was sword or force, he became materialist only." He further says "it would have been better for Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) if he had continued to be as he had been when he began his Prophetic career." He commented: "what a noble religion would Islam have been, if Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) could have gone as he began."²⁹ Clarke supported Sprenger and Muir in the views that Prophet Muḥammad borrowed the essential truths of Islam from Judaism. He finds manifestation of cruelty in Prophet Muḥammad's (peace be upon him) treatment with the Jews of Madinah. According to him, the Prophet treated the Jews of Madinah cruelly because Jews resisted his purpose. And expound the Prophet's treatment of the Jews at length, accused the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) of the deliberate execution of seven or eight hundred Jewish prisoners, the killing of a Jewish poetess and taking Jewish women and children into slavery.³⁰

Clarke elaborates on the subject of the Prophet Muḥammad's (peace be upon him) polygamy, discusses about the wives of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). At the end of his discussion on Islam and the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him), Clarke says:

"Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) was the impersonation of two principles that reign in the government of the God, destruction and salvation. He would receive nations to his favour if they accepted the faith, and destroy them if they rejected it. Yet, in the end the sapless tree must fall."

William Muir's work "*Life of Mahomet*" on which Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khan had already accused Muir of being biased against Islam and refuted his arguments,³¹ before the entrance of Amīr 'Alī into the controversy. Amīr 'Alī appears

to have changed his position concerning his view of Muir. In the preface of the first edition of his *A Critical Examination of the Life and Teachings of Mohammad*, he says that Muir's *Life of Mahomet* possesses the merit of real earnestness but requires a refutation of every false theory and apocryphal story stated in it.³² That is how Amīr 'Alī begins his work on Islam, but at a later stage, Amīr 'Alī considers Muir as an enemy of Islam.³³ On the issues of the Prophet Muḥammad's (peace be upon him) treatment of the Jews of Madinah Muir attacks the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) in the similar language to destroy his image which a man such as Amīr 'Alī finds to be filled with anti-Muslim sentiments. Consequently Amīr 'Alī in his book on Islam treats these issues at length.

Amīr 'Alī's involvement with the Western critics of Islam is clearly manifested in few of his articles; these articles were appeared in a London journal "*The Nineteenth Century*". He wrote at least three articles in response to other articles, which appeared in "*The Nineteenth Century*" itself and in two other journals, "*The Fortnightly Review*" and "*The Quarterly Review*". In this connection, the first article Amīr 'Alī wrote was in response to "*Mohammedan Women*" written by someone called Mrs. Richard, which was published in "*The Nineteenth Century*" in its January-June issues. In her article, she described her experience in Turkey, Egypt and Iraq with particular emphasized on the life of Muslim women in the so called *haram* and charged Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) in this respect. She blamed Islam as a system for the condition of Muslim women who denied of all kinds of rights.³⁴ The tone of her attack against Islam and Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) was not new in the Western world. It resembled what Norman Daniel notices as a general attitude towards the issue in the West.³⁵

Apart from above writings Amīr 'Alī's book "*History of Saracens*" which was first published in 1889 from London and widely acclaimed by Non-Muslim readers as the best introductory book on Islam. This was actually Amīr 'Alī's response to the criticism of the Western Orientalists who were distorting the image of Islam during the colonial period in order to undermine the role of religion as a tool of resistance. This book served as a response to William Muir's "*Life of Mahomet*".³⁶

5.4 Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal

Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal (1888-1956 C.E.) is one of the first Western educated Egyptians to produce a modern biography of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace

be upon him) “*Hayat e Muḥammad Sallallahu Alaih Wa Salam*” in Arabic in 1933. Regarding this book, Haykal sets out his primary aim in the introduction: to resist the Christian attacks on Islam and Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him), a religious polemic that in his time had been advanced by European colonialism, missionary activities and Orientalist scholarship.³⁷ Haykal observed a close connection between missionary attacks on Islam and the distortions of Islamic conservatism. Both patronized by modern imperialism: “this imperialism supports, in addition to the missionaries, the advocates of stagnation among the Muslims.” In an interview Haykal asserts that “the activity of Christian missionaries in Islamic nations and the support of Western policy for the spokesmen of Islamic stagnation” were the main factors leading him to write the biography of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). Muslim reactionaries, in presenting an ancient image of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him), were in fact providing ammunition for Western imperialists, missionaries and others who wished to present Islam as a backward and inferior civilization.³⁸ Haykal intended his book for young educated Muslims who had turned away from Muslim religious authors to read Western works, believing them to be more scientific.³⁹

Haykal says Orientalists who write on Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and Islam are influenced by a basic motive of Christian fanaticism. Although Haykal admired the scientific methodology utilized by Orientalists and their contribution to the empirical store of historical data on Islam, he also believed that, as non-Muslims, Orientalists could not furnish a non-tendentious study of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him).⁴⁰ He also clarifies that, “if we were to disregard those foolish fanatics, such as the missionaries and their like whose purpose never goes beyond denigration and vituperation of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him), we could still find a clear and distinct respect for greatness in the life of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) in the works of Western Orientalists.” In his “*On Heroes and Hero Worship*” Thomas Carlyle accepted that the revelations that Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) received were divine and holy. He understood Prophet Muḥammad’s (peace be upon him) greatness and portrayed it in its full strength. Likewise, Haykal also mentioned other names such as Muir, Irving, Sprenger and Weil who describe the greatness of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). So it is a lack of vision, penetration and critical skill that prevent some of the

Orientalists from regarding one point or another of Prophet Muḥammad's (peace be upon him) life as other than blameworthy. It is probable that they had relied in their investigation on unreliable biographies and books of exegesis on the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him).⁴¹

Haykal lectured on and debated, attacked and defended many questions of belief, of social organization and politics. The perfection of his knowledge and the wide range of his readings match the maturity of his mind. He debates with powerful, convincing arguments and treats his subject with sound logic and style, all his own. Such preparation stands behind Dr. Haykal's book.⁴² Haykal's firm conviction is supported by real events, what he have witnessed today of the West's concern for the study of our heritage and the care with which Western scholars study the legacy of Islam and the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). Haykal related the events of Prophet Muḥammad's (peace be upon him) life closely to one another. His book therefore presents a closely interweave argument. In every case, he has elaborated strong evidence and articulated it clearly and convincingly.⁴³

The dominant theme of Haykal's book is defense of Islam against Orientalist claims regarding the offences of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and his followers as well as their sensuality. Haykal critically examines the stories of Prophet Muḥammad's marriage to Zaynab and the wives of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) in general, in preface.⁴⁴ This subject explored in depth in a chapter on the prophet's wives that open with a section on 'The Zaynab affair and the Orientalists'.⁴⁵ After describing Orientalist and Christian missionary claims about Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and Zaynab, Haykal admits that these are based on reports in questionable biographies and books of *ḥadīth*. If these claims are true, Haykal explains, they do not constitute a flaw in the character of prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him), since the rules for regular people do not apply to great men. Moses committed murder and the whole life of Jesus was a violation of natural law. While the 'great men' theme may hard back to Carlyle, the strategy of attacking the heroes of Judeo-Christian civilization is undoubtedly drawn from Amīr 'Alī.

Such explanation, in Haykal's view, would be an injustice to history because Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) was not a man given to passion and desire.⁴⁶ His monogamous marriage with Khadijah, an older woman, was clearly for

love, and he remained loyal to her although polygamy was prevalent at that time and despite the fact that none of her male offspring survived. Prophet Muḥammad's (peace be upon him) subsequent marriages are explained as a kindness to widows and a consolidation of ties within the Islamic community. Moreover, Haykal, following the *Qur'ān* and the Prophet Muḥammad's (peace be upon him) example, recognizes the need for polygamy with certain limitations. A 'critical history' of the story of Zaynab, however, reveals, it was not physical attraction that led to the union. Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) himself arranged Zaynab's marriage to Zayd to exemplify the idea of social equality in Islam and to reform inheritance laws. The failure of the marriage resulted from Zaynab's pride and difficult character. While cognizant of classical Islamic attitudes towards the Prophet's sexuality and Amīr Ali's counter-attacks, Haykal has clearly internalized Western Christian negative views of Prophet Muḥammad's (peace be upon him) virility.

The charge of Orientalists that Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) was patient of epilepsy to cast suspicion upon his revelation is also countered by Haykal. He explained that the patient of epilepsy is unable to utter and memorize anything; he cannot recollect what has happened with him in the meantime because the process of sensing and thinking come to a complete stop during this condition. These symptoms established by science for epilepsy. But this was not the case at all with the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) at the moment of revelation, for his cognitive faculties used to be strengthened rather than weakened and do so to a superlative degree hitherto unknown by the people who knew him the most. Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) used to remember with utmost accuracy what he received as revelation and recited it among his Companions without a flaw.⁴⁷

5.5 Shaykh Qaḍi Muḥammad Sulayman Salman Maṣṣurpuri

Another eminent Muslim scholar, Qaḍi Muḥammad Sulayman Salman Maṣṣurpuri has written a valuable book in three volumes on the biography of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) titled "*Raḥmatal lil 'Alamīn*" focusing different topics like *tafsīr*, history and *sīrah* of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). In his book, he has critically evaluated the negative approach of the Western scholars towards *sīrah* while refuting the queries made by Orientalists on the life of Prophet

Muhammad (peace be upon him), applying logical reasoning and statistics related to polygamy.⁴⁸

In the first volume, Salman Mansurpuri repelled the allegation raised by Orientalists that Islam is a cruel religion and the sword spread it. He described various expeditions between Muslims and disbelievers and the objectives of holy wars. He has given a comparison chart of holy wars with other world wars. There is also an account of his approach to different social problems concerned with law and order. Other treaties of non-aggression and peace with non-Muslim communities Jews, Christians and Pagans, which establish the fact that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) recognized the rights of other communities for coexistence and never did try to thrust Islam by means of force and threat. Preaching was the only way to propagate Islam and where it became impossible to preach Islam he not only resorted to allow migration for his Companions but himself took to the same course. At the same time when Quraysh mobilized other communities to commit aggression against Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and other Muslims, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) compelled their aggression by force and has remain courteous and friendly to all non-Muslim communities, ensuring his behavior by mean of treaties. His behavior of mercy has remained by all mean a unique feature in war and peace. This volume also puts up comparatively the versions of the Bible and Torah in the context of the predecessors of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and points out the correctness of the version of *Qur'ān* in respect thereof. As such the ingredients of this volume are highly valuable and challenging for all kind of wrong allegations against Islam and Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).⁴⁹ This volume has considered as an excellent work in understanding the case of Orientalists' objections on the subject.

The second volume proves grudging and menacing to the Western scholars in their study on marriages of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the purpose behind polygamous aspect, the concept and status of polygamy in Hinduism and the description about wives of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). It also describes predecessors since Adam (AS) and progeny of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The unique and perfect character of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) at the time of war highlights his sublime character. Apart from these subjects, Mansurpuri also provides a comparative study of *Qur'ān* and previous revealed books

to establish or prove the facts mentioned in the *Qur'ān* especially regarding the Prophecy. Finally, Manṣūrpuri draws conclusion that Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) is a leader and Mercy for the worlds.⁵⁰

In the third volume Manṣūrpuri discusses about the Prophecy its merits, miracles happened in the life of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him), its kinds, *Qur'ān* and Islam.⁵¹

5.6 Dr. Muḥammad Ḥamidullah

Among the eminent writers Dr. Ḥamidullah (1908-2000 C.E.) of Hyderabad, who had settled down in Paris, is one of them who critically examined the writings of Orientalists on Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). His literary (and research) works have made him well known in the East as well as in the West. He is a famous researcher of *sīrah* and Islamic religious sciences, exceptionally, writes meticulously on original themes in relevance with the biography of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him).⁵² Some of his famous books include “*The Battle Field of Prophet Muḥammad*”, “*Introduction to Islam*”, “*Muḥammad Rasulullah*”, “*The Muslim Conduct of State*” and “*The First Written Constitution*”. A volume titled “*The Battle Field of the Prophet Muḥammad*” is the most important work, which presents various aspects of Prophetic life and refutes misleading questions of Orientalists in a logical way. Firstly he presented the system of Islamic state of Madinah in the period of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him), while highlighting the role of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) as a leader in establishing peace in the pluralistic society. Whereas in the second part of the book he has given, a detail of holy wars separately one by one and their status and justification, applying maps for better understanding about the wars.⁵³ His work “*Muḥammad Rasulullah*” is also a good contribution to the study of *sīrah*. It has made thousands of modern educated persons familiar with the life of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). It has also made corrections in the statements by Western scholars’ statements regarding the life and events of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) by explaining his each event of life with logic and historically approved facts. Late Dr. Ḥamidullah received a high regard and appreciation by his contemporaries like Dr. Mahmud Aḥmad Ghazi who declared him *Imam of sīrah* in the modern era and *Mujaddid of ‘Ulūm-e-sīrah*.⁵⁴

5.7 Sayyid Sulayman Nadwi

In the continuation of this chain of Muslim scholars, Sayyid Sulayman Nadwi, (1884-1953 C.E.), who is one of the eminent scholars, presented eight lectures on *sīrah* in November 1992 at Madras (India). This was on invitation of “Muslim Educational Association of South India” to counter the efforts of Christian scholars in order to avert Muslim social circles to take up eccentric ideology or to be mixed up with their Christian creed. These lectures are widely been appreciated among all Muslim communities throughout the world.⁵⁵

Sayyid Sulayman Nadwi’s *Khuṭbāt e Madrās* is, perhaps, the best book to introduce the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and the message of Islam to the Western world, while delivering these lectures Mawlana Nadwi had in mind basically the non-Arab and non-Muslim audience. He was in unique position to introduce the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) because he had already co-authored with Shibli Nu‘mani’s seven volume biography of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him), *Sīrat al Nabi*, which is highly regarded in the Muslim world for its scholarly merits. Sheikh Abul Ḥasan says about this book that it is a miracle of scholarship.

Khuṭbāt e Madras dedicated to the Western world in particular and all users of English languages in general.⁵⁶ The focus of these lectures remained the life of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) while taking an evaluation of Western scholars’ methodology and historical fallacies in addition. In the third lecture, he discussed the approach of German Orientalist Dr. Springer⁵⁷ and evaluated the views of some Orientalists like William Muir, Goldziher,⁵⁸ and attitude of Bosworth Smith and John Davenport about the biography of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him).⁵⁹

In *Khuṭbāt e Madras* Mawlana Nadwi made certain inevitable comparisons between the life and personality of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and of other Prophets of Allah. However, these comparisons have been made by way of argument and are in reply to what the Western writers believe about certain Prophets and what has been written about their personalities in their own religious books. As far as from the Islamic point of view, every Prophet of Allah had the purest of

character, was infallible in his conveyance of the divine message and was an ideal personality for the guidance of mankind.⁶⁰

While making comparative study Mawlana Nadwi proved that Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) is the only Prophet or ideal man whose biography, after a long period, is not only available and still worked upon with full enthusiasm but is unequivocally authentic. It is free from all doubts, and all of its major events supported by sound historical proofs. It has been miraculously preserved to its smallest details. It is only the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him)'s life which is completely known today, even to the minutest details.⁶¹ Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) was an ideal man or divine law giver who has set personal examples for others and his life explained and proved itself to the world that the rules he has set forth are practicable.⁶²

5.8 Zafar ‘Alī Qureshi

Zafar ‘Alī Qureshi is a contemporary Muslim *sīrah* writer who has been devoting his undivided attention for several years to “this momentous research undertaken for refuting all the baseless allegations leveled against the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) and vindication of his fair name and honour”. He has taken care to follow the research methodology according to the exact standards of modern scholarships. He has undertaken a somewhat more detailed critique of the writing of W. Montgomery Watt on the biography of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him), but as all informed readers know the detractors of the Prophet merely differ in their approach and ways of expression, the conclusions arrived at by them is hardly different. Zafar ‘Alī has attempted to bring out “in some detail and in their true historical perspective the military and political clash between Christendom and Islam”, which is at the bottom of the deep-seated rancor against Islam and Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) for it persists in the subconscious mind of the West.⁶³

Zafar ‘Alī Qureshi’s well-known work under the title “*Prophet Muḥammad and his Western Critics*” contains thirteen chapters in two volumes which refutes most of the allegations charged by W. Montgomery Watt. Zafar ‘Alī has made detailed critique of the writing of Watt given in his two-volume biography of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). Watt, the Chairman of British Orientalists

Association, generally considered as the leading Western authority on the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and Islam.⁶⁴ Watt has presented a highly distorted picture of the life and teachings of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). Zafar ‘Alī refuted his untenable hypotheses, biased and prejudiced conclusions, and tried to put the record straight.⁶⁵

The first and second chapter of Zafar ‘Alī’s book focuses on the objections regarding the battle of *Mutah* and the third chapter discusses *Mutah*, the “Northern Policy” of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). In the subsequent chapter, his tribal policy has been discussed, while doing so, he writes on his “Hypotheses of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) being moved” by material consideration. Qureshi discusses alleged general lines of Prophet’s “Tribal Policies”, “*Hijrah to Abyssinia*”, “rise of opposition of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and persecution of Muslims”; “Prophet’s preaching mission, spread of Islam in Madinah, the beginning of Prophet’s war with *Quraysh* and other enemies”.⁶⁶ The author has countered critically the views of William Montgomery Watt on the life of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) highlighting the main reasons of their biasness and prejudice. He comments:

One of the main reasons of the wild attacks of Western writers on the person on the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) has been for many a century due to their ignorance about Islam and Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). Although the middle ages down to the eighteenth century, they had most fantastic, immature and absurd notions about the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). Tales were spin round his person whose ingenuity surpassed only by their absurdity. The reality and gullibility of the Westerners in this respect were the most astounding and staggering. And all connections and fabrication about Islam were made by Christian priests in the name of religion and glory of Christendom.⁶⁷ Therefore, in the modern era this polemical attack on the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) is being carried on by his detractors, with the full knowledge of the Arabic sources. They camouflage their ulterior motives under the loudly proclaimed slogan of “objective historical research” by sheer distortion of facts and motives, and, with the subtle play of inventive hypotheses and assumptions. The irony of the situation is that most of the Orientalists, specializing in the study of the Life of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). They associated subjects’ cover-up as professors and scholars, but in

reality, mostly ordained Christian priests, and the people, in general, not knowing their background and motives, and carried off their feet by their subtle propaganda technique and methodology. As regards the Jewish scholars, their hatred and enmity towards Islam and Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) is all too well-known and need not be stressed.⁶⁸

Zafar ‘Alī Qureshi asserts that the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) brought about a complete revolution in the lives of his early followers. After embracing Islam, they no longer remained the old Arabs; they became God fearing and pious folk who were very concerned with the life hereafter rather than riveting their attentions on material considerations. In view of these realities, it is highly insensitive on the part of Watt to denigrate Muslims for what they sought to achieve. No fair-minded historian would point out any character failing in these noble men. Also they could not simply think of invading neighboring lands, as Watt would have us believe. Likewise Watt’s whole chain of hypotheses about the economics and political reasons for the emigration to Abyssinia is without any solid foundation.

Watt’s attempt to criticize the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him), Abu Bakr (RA) and other Muslims fails, as does his quest to play down the untold hardships and persecutions suffered by Muslims at the hands of the pagan Quraysh. As is well known, the Quraysh forced the Muslims to migrate to Abyssinia, which considered as safe haven for the persecuted Muslim community.

Watt tries to belittle the revolutionary spirit of the message by relating it to mere economic and political considerations. This is indeed a gross distortion of history. Likewise, he seeks to downplay the severe persecution perpetrated on Muslims and the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). By doing so, Watt indulges in a complete distortion of historical realities.

With this discussion Zafar ‘Alī Qureshi point out that Watt knowingly and willing fully ignores the thing that Prophet’s vocation and mission were the propagation of the Unity of God and the condemnation of idolatry in every shape and form. He directed all his energies to this focal point, not to any idea of nationality, country, or race, which suggested by Watt. Watt consistently seeks to decree the revolutionary appeal of the Prophet’s mission by stressing material considerations that, in reality, had hardly anything to do with the true role of the Prophet Muḥammad

(peace be upon him). Zafar ‘Alī not only discarded the Western writers’ allegation that Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) used force to propagate Islam but also presented a true picture of the life and teachings of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him).⁶⁹ In short, Zafar ‘Alī Qureshi comprehensively examined and analyzed the case of Orientalists and their criticism on *sīrah*.

5.9 Mawlana Abul Ḥasan ‘Alī Nadwi

Mawlana Abul Ḥasan ‘Alī Nadwi (1914-1999 C.E.) always appreciated the works with genuine scholarship and research by Orientalists and speaks of their careful study and inevitable efforts. He invites attention towards the prevailing desire of a majority of the Orientalists who exhibits a censorious attitude towards Islam and Prophet Muḥammad(peace be upon him) and tries to bring out something derogatory about the *Shari‘ah*, history and culture of Islam.⁷⁰

Abul Ḥasan ‘Alī Nadwi’s book “*Islamiyataur Maghribi Muṣṣashreqīn wa Musalman Muṣannafīn*” is a collection of long essays on Orientalists and their intellectual activities. These papers red in an International Seminar entitled ‘Islam and Orientalists’ organized by Dar al Muṣanefīn, Azamgarh on February 21-23, 1983. It was an analytical work on the intellectual contributions of Orientalists to Islam. Mawlana Nadwi appreciates the intellectual efforts of some famous Orientalists. To him it is a moral duty of every Muslim scholar to acknowledge the service rendered by the Orientalists to the Islamic branches of learning. But simultaneously he condemns those Orientalists who try to destroy the real figure of Islam. Their only purpose to study Islam was to point out objectionable concepts and criticize it on intellectual grounds as well as to misguide non-Muslims particularly the West, against Islam and Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) to widen the difference between Islam and the West.⁷¹ Abul Ḥasan ‘Alī Nadwi considered those Orientalists more dangerous who express their biased views regarding Islam, Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him), Islamic culture and civilization in a hidden way. Such interpretations veiled by coloring the events in a careful and cautious manner, in a way that the reader is never given a cause of alarm and continues to take the writer as an honest scholar trying to make an objective analysis of the events and circumstances. The writings of such Orientalists are much more harmful than those who openly attack Islam through distortion of facts. Such Orientalists who pose as

sympathetic savants of Islamic knowledge normally take in readers with a smattering.⁷²

Abul Ḥasan ‘Alī Nadwi expressed need of preservation of original works on different topics along with the norms of modern scholarship to counteract the negative influence exerted by Orientalists as well as to provide the Muslim world with correct, authentic and dependable facts and concepts relating to Islam. He also focuses on the necessity of a thorough survey and critical examination of Orientalists’ work in the light of known facts. An analysis of sources and mistakes committed in rendering of Arabic text into European languages should be brought to light, so that the wrong conclusions and erroneous theories based on illogical and doubtful premises may be demolished. Apart from these suggestions Abul Ḥasan ‘Alī Nadwi also discusses the works prepared by Muslim scholars in response to the Orientalists’ works.⁷³

5.10 Dr. Jabal Muḥammad Buaben

One among the contemporary scholars is Jabal Muḥammad Buaben, an Associate professor of Islamic History and Civilization in Centre for Islamic Studies, (SOAS) University of London, who wrote “*Image of the Prophet Muhammad in the West: A Study of Muir, Margoliouth and Watt*”. Jabal Muḥammad bring out the real sketch of Western scholarship on the life and achievements of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). In his book Jabal Muḥammad highlights the reasons why Western scholarship have failed to provide an objective account of the life of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) in the past. They bring into focus the urgent need to understand Islam and the life of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) from an objective and scholarly perspective. He has given a survey of biographies of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) written by Western scholars during the last two centuries with special study of the works of prominent Orientalists William Muir, David Samuel Margoliouth and William Montgomery Watt. He traces remnants of the negative image of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) found in these polemical works. Along with this he was mapping out the chequered history of relations between the West and Islam, to renew acquaintance with the exemplary life and great achievements of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). Jabal Muḥammad seeks most of all Orientalists who wrote on the life of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) remained misled to varying degrees in pre-

enlightenment thought, leading them to exhibition of secular and un-objective prejudices towards Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). They show that, despite the epistemological transformations brought about by the enlightenment, especially in the areas of secularism and objective rationality.⁷⁴

Jabal Muḥammad begins by giving a brief survey of Medieval European representations of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him), especially Medieval Christian European war propaganda against Islam and its Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). He highlights that medieval Western scholars selecting purposefully subjective materials and sources to portray the image of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) to encounter progressive Islamic religious and cultural advancement and these polemical studies were originated by church authorities. Jabal Muḥammad exposes the different stages of thinking about Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) in the medieval period, this thinking of Westerns showed by their writings portray Islam and *Qur'ān* as heretic to the Christianity and Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) as imposter, epileptic, magician, anti-Christ and indulged in excessive sexual life. On the bases of that Jabal Muḥammad urges the need to re-examine the image of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) in the medieval age since much of the present scholarship, especially secular fundamentalist scholarship, resembles that particular medieval polemical approach.

He then proceeds to critically examine Muir's writings on Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and the themes Muir emphasized. Such themes include Makkah before Islam, with attention to the birth and childhood of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him); Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) as Prophet in Makkah; Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) in Madinah; as well as Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and Arabian Jewish tribes. Although Muir attempts to follow enlightenment methodologies of scholarship, Jabal Muḥammad shows him to fall short of them due to Muir's emphasize on "the falsity of Muḥammad's Prophethood, faking of revelations to justify evil acts, violence, sexuality, immorality and the like".⁷⁵ Jabal Muḥammad attempts to analyze both Muir's objectivity and prejudice. Important events related to the life of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him), such as the Chapter of Madinah, treatment of the poor, the peaceful entry into Makkah and so on, are given scant attention by Muir because they do not lend themselves to a negative portrayal of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him).

The third chapter deals with the David Samuel Margoliouth's writings on *sīrah* especially his "*Muhammad and the Rise of Islam*". Jabal Muḥammad after briefly outlining Margoliouth's work critically analyzed his sources. He pointed rightly, Margoliouth rejected not only apologetic Muslim works but he also criticized extensively Western historical works on *sīrah*. Margoliouth supported his objective approach in the study of *sīrah* by relying on classical sources of al-Ṭabari, Aḥmad b. Hanbal and Ibn Hajar. Then Jabal Muḥammad analyzed various controversial themes of *sīrah* beginning with the issue of "epilepsy".⁷⁶ The following theme includes Jabal Muḥammad's analysis of the reliability and authenticity of the *Qur'ān*. As he asserts, Margoliouth brings back the old theory that *Qur'ān* was Prophet Muḥammad's own creation.⁷⁷ Jabal Muḥammad considered Margoliouth's scholarship and methodology of a higher caliber than Muir's in that he consulted more sources (especially Muslim sources) for his research. This, however, did not liberate Margoliouth from his subjectivist biases. He continued to write about Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and his followers' moral life, which are described as "bloodletting people".⁷⁸ Another medieval influence and legacy was Margoliouth's belief that Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) was an imposter who skillfully manipulated his followers even at the expense of practicing idolatry. The line of arguments moves to the idea of borrowing by the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) from Jews, Christians and pagans. Additional themes analyzed by the Jabal Muḥammad included Muḥammad's sexual indulgence, insistence on violence and war and oppression of Jews and Christians.⁷⁹

Jabal Muḥammad also analyzed William Montgomery Watt's major works that deal with *sīrah*, *ḥadīth*, history, exegesis, philosophy and theology. Watt also wrote extensively on the contemporary Muslim affairs related to politics, peace and interfaith dialogue. Jabal Muḥammad affirms Watt's scholarship, specially his criticism of the medieval war propaganda as projected by some Orientalists. Although Watt shifted from confrontation to dialogue, he was not immune from Jabal Muḥammad's criticism regarding his emphasis on political and socio-economic approach and neglecting of divine approach in the study of *sīrah* and Islam. Then, following the foregoing approach, Jabal Muḥammad analyzed Watt's works on the biography of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). He selected major themes of biography with the belief that "this approach enables us to understand Watt's favorite

issues and hopefully makes it possible for us to discern whether he merely follows other late nineteenth and early twentieth century scholars.”⁸⁰ Jabal Muḥammad responded both as very critically and affirmative of Watt’s work on Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). According to him Watt’s rough theories and assumptions raise question to his scientific historical sincerity. Although, Jabal Muḥammad discusses most of the twentieth century’s Orientalists such as Canon Edward Sell, Henri Lammenes, Richard Bell, Emile Dermenghem, Michael Cook, Patricia Crone and Maxime Rodinson. But he relied extensively on the works of Norman Daniel and Edward Said, who argued medieval outlook have shaped modern so called enlightened perceptions of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and Islam. He quoted Daniel who holds that Orientalist scholars “are not able to be free from the medieval legacy of hatred and bias.” In this regard Jabal Muḥammad argued that Muir, Margoliouth and Watt remained loyal to their medieval predecessors. Yet he asserted that Watt was a scholar who was more sympathetic to Islam than Muir and Margoliouth. He also provided some degree of methodology in the study of religion, perhaps with the aim to create awareness for the need of objective and impartial study of religions.⁸¹

5.11 Muḥammad Mohar ‘Alī

Professor Muḥammad Mohar ‘Alī (1932-2007 C.E.) was a renowned scholar of *sīrah* and *ḥadīth* who served as a lecturer in Islamic history at the Islamic Universities of Madinah for a long time. He has written many books and his work “*Qur’ān and the Orientalists*” and “*Sīrat al-Nabi and the Orientalists*” have been appreciated through width and breadth. The book “*Sīrat al-Nabi and the Orientalists*” has two volumes and seven different sections.⁸² In this book the author has critically examined the works of three well-known Orientalists, William Muir, David Samuel Margoliouth and William Montgomery Watt and has successfully refuted the charges by them against the life and character of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) with an appropriate scholarship which the treatment of such a subject requires.⁸³

In the first section, the sources and the background of *sīrah* have been discussed. In this section, the author also discussed the traditions and socio-religious conditions of Arabs and critically examined the Orientalists’ view on them as well as on previous revealed religions and origin of Islam. Section second deals with the

interpretation of Orientalists about the family background, birth and childhood, adolescence, youth and of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). The allegation on the ambitions of Prophethood in Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him), the influence of Judeo-Christian traditions on the Islam and the allegation of contemporary errors in the *Qur'ān* are also discussed.⁸⁴

In section third, various topics have been discussed such as Prophet Muḥammad's (peace be upon him) reaction and response on the eve of the call to Prophethood, Hanifs (Number of persons who, shortly before Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) call to Prophethood, gave up idolatry and polytheism and sought the true Abrahamic religion called *al-hanifiyyah* like Waraqahibn Nawfal), (the Jeffery- Bell theory) Orientalists' view about the Hanifs Watt's views.⁸⁵

In section fourth, 'divine communication (*wahy*)', 'beginning of this mission', '*wahy* and the Orientalists' Watt's views have been critically examined, Muir's and Margoliouth's distortions concerning the traditions about the coming of revelation. It also examined Bell's theory about revelation, Watt's dealing of al Zuhri's report about revelation and in the last but not least Mohar 'Alī mentions *Qur'ānic* evidences on the nature of revelation.⁸⁶

Section fifth deals with 'the early phase of the mission of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). The early three years of preaching which is called secret preaching by Ibn Ishāq and Al-Ṭabari, the early people who embraced Islam, mainly about Ḥaḍrat Khadijah, Ḥaḍrat Abu Bakr, Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Ḥaḍrat 'Umar and others. Mohar 'Alī analyzed the theory of Margoliouth who also considered it secret society, in particular and all Orientalists in general regarding the early converts in the light of historical evidences. Orientalists say that the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) was an imposter who pertained to be a Prophet by saying that he received revelation from God and to prove his claim he converted people who were closer to him. Further, 'the Bell-Watt theory about the contents of early revelations', 'the early phase of the mission and Watt's socio economic interpretations' have been contemplated upon.⁸⁷

In section sixth, 'the Makkah opposition: nature, causes and immediate allegations' including madness, sorcerer and poet, on the Prophet Muḥammad(peace be upon him), 'the migration to Abyssinia', 'the spurious story of the Satanic Verses',

‘the climax of opposition and calamity’, ‘Watt’s theory about the causes of opposition’, ‘the unbelievers’ objections vis-à-vis the Orientalists’ have been brought under discussion. The persecution and attempt to kill the prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) also discussed in this part.⁸⁸

The last section of this book is started with the discussion of the last Makkan phase and migration after the extent persecution of the people of Madinah, in which Mohar ‘Alī Includes the migration to Ta’if, Muslims’ approach to the other tribes and the situation of Madinah, here’s atmosphere for the people who had to migrate there. Mohar ‘Alī discusses the pledges of ‘Aqabah, their importance to make the migration easy for Muslims and the reasons for the success of Islam at Madinah. Further discussion includes the migration to Madinah, its causes and circumstances, the difficulties before the migration such as the last attempt to kill Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) by Banu Hashims and journey to Madinah. In the last portion the Orientalists’ views on the migration to Madinah’ have been discussed.⁸⁹

The works of some other eminent scholars have been widely appreciated such as Sheikh Mubarak Aḥmad (1910-2001 C.E.) a scholar and writer of most recent work entitled “*A Critique of Professor Arnold G. Toynbee Understanding Concerning the Holy Prophet*” in response to the Orientalists’ charges on Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). This book is originally written in Urdu and published in the weekly “Lahore” in four installments. Sheikh Mubarak Aḥmad is a noted author and lecturer, who continued to engage himself in valuable literary work till his last time. He has translated the book of *Aḥadīth* “*Riyāḍ as Ṣālihīn*” and “*The Words of Wisdom and Purification*” in Swahili.

In his book, Mubarak Aḥmad has undertaken a demoralized and discouraging task of challenging a world-renowned historian and author. Mubarak Aḥmad has succeeded admirably in showing how Professor Arnold G. Toynbee has misinterpreted the situation and has drawn conclusions which historical record of the Madinite era of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) is unable to support.⁹⁰

The Lahore *Aḥmadiyyah* Movement’s English language weekly organ, “*The Light*” of Lahore published a special issue on twenty fourth March 1934, in the response of an article of a magazine “*Pearson’s Weekly*” of London, published in February 1934. This issue contained nine articles by Lahore *Aḥmadiyyah* scholars.

Each article refuting a different allegation against the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) made in the “*Pearson’s Weekly*” article.

This special issue dealt with the charges regarding the life of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) such as did the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) suffer from epilepsy? Ḥaḍrat ‘Aisha’s age at the time of her marriage with the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). The Prophet Muḥammad’s (peace be upon him) marriages and the real motive behind them, are the Biblical narratives in the *Qur’ān* the result of the Prophet Muḥammad’s (peace be upon him) contact with the Jews and the Christians and the direct revelation of Allah? The so-called raid of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) on a caravan to provide funds for his movement, did the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) have any doubts as to his mission when the “call” first came to him? These false allegations have completely dispelled by various *Aḥmadiyyah* scholars with the help of sound historical evidence and rationality.⁹¹

Dar al Muṣannefīn Shibli Academy Azamgarh has compiled different articles on “Islam and Orientalists”. The work has made available the most important literature for understanding the nature of Orientalists works on Islam and the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). “*Islam aur Mustashreqīn*” has seven volumes. First volume covers proceedings of seminar, held on 21 to 23 February 1986.⁹²

Islam aur Mustashreqīn volume second focuses on different articles related to Orientalists’ approaches about Islam. Volume third includes six research papers. These papers are related to ‘*Russian Orientalism*’ presented by Muḥammad Asad, ‘*Islam and Mustashreqīn*’ by Prof. Sayyid Ḥabībūl Nadvi and ‘*Study of Sīrah and Mustashreqīn*’ by Dr. Niṣār Aḥmad, ‘*Ḥaḍrat Ibrahīmaur Mustashreqīn*’ presented by Mawlana Ḥifẓur Reḥmān, ‘*Arz al Qur’ān*’ by Mawlvi ‘Umair Ṣiddiq Nadwi and ‘*Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khanaur Mustashreqīn*’ presented by Mawlvi ‘Ubaidullah Koti Nadwi.⁹³ These are very important articles in the context of Islam and Orientalism. *Islam aur Mustashreqīn*’s volume fourth highlights on status of compilation of *Qur’ān*, *sīrah* of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him), Islamic law, Ḥanafi school of jurisprudence, religion and science, Islamic culture, minorities rights, these articles are worth of greater scholarly value.⁹⁴

Volume fifth of *Islam aur Mustashreqīn* contains ‘The interests of Orientalists in Islamic literature and arts’. The basic causes of their interests and efforts in Islamic literature and arts have been discussed very briefly. The objections levied by Orientalists on Islam, the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and Islamic history have been refuted very logically.⁹⁵ Volume sixth comprises seven different research articles on different topics like ‘*Qur’ān and Mustashreqīn*’ by Dr. al Tahami, ‘*Schacht aur Ḥadīth e Nabvi*’ by Dr. Muḥammad Muṣṭafa al Ā‘zami, ‘*Shakat and Fiqh*’ by Dr. Muḥammad Anas Zarqa, ‘*Sīrah of Prophet Muḥammad and Critical Analysis of Watt Approaches*’ by Dr. Imaduddin Khalīl, ‘*Social Structure of Islam in the Perspective of Orientalists’ Approaches*’ by Dr. Abdul Wahab and ‘*The Islamic Culture of Spain in the Perspective of Orientalists’ Approaches*’ presented by Dr. Muṣṭafa al Shak‘a.⁹⁶ These articles being valuable contribution which could help to understand Orientalism in its proper context. Volume seventh contains different research articles, these articles have presented the critical analysis on different approaches of Orientalists towards Islam, *Qur’ān*, Divine commandments, Prophethood and Islamic literature and arts.⁹⁷

In these works, many dimensions of Orientalism have been discussed. They have covered historical background, objectives, resources, research methodology, efforts and contribution of Orientalists, and some other aspects of this movement as well.

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