

Western Polemic Writings about Muhammad's Prophethood

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Abstract

This research examines those distorted polemics and outright dubieties about Prophet Muhammad in the Western writings. The anti-Islamic polemical practice was universal. Many more examples of similar polemic biographies can be found in numerous texts of the medieval and early modern period. The Western attitudes to Prophet Muhammad failed to establish sound theoretic basis. The denial phenomenon is the strength in their argument. The Western and Christian polemics on Islamic issues disgrace Islam and its Prophet. It is only new attitudes to research depend clearly on the intentions of the researchers. The modern Western trends work on the history of Prophet Muhammad by avoiding any fabricated accounts while preserving the traditional denial attitude. The study identifies the recurring themes of deception, misinformation and misrepresentation, and confusion in the Western library.

Keywords. Muhammad, Islam, Prophethood, Qur'an , Polemic biography, Sirah.

INTRODUCTION

Western prejudice against Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) is anchored in misapprehension and misrepresentation of the life of Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh). The anti-Islamic propaganda directed against the Prophet is typified in polemical biographies or Sirah literature. These biographies are the worse ever written on Prophet Muhammad. Such polemical works stand behind the Western Tradition in distorting the image of the Prophet are like John of Damascus's (d. 750 AD) *De Haeresibus*, Robert of Ketton's *The Koran* (in Latin, 1143), John Lydgate's *Fall of the Princess* (c.1440), William Bedwell *Mohammed's Imposter: That is, A Discovery of the Manifold Forgeries. Falsehood, and horrible impieties of the blasphemous seducer Mohammed: with a demonstration of the insufficiency of his Law, contained in the cursed Alkoran* (1615), Isaac Barrow's 'Of the Impiety and imposture of Paganism and Mohammedanism'(1675), and Humphrey Prideaux's 'The True Nature of Imposture Fully Displayed in the Life of Mahomet'(1697) James Miller's *Mahomet The Imposter* (1764), George Sale's *The Koran, commonly called the Alcoran of Mohammed: translated into English immediately from the original Arabic* (1734), Simon Ockley's *The History of the Saracens: Lives of Mohammed and His Successors*, Samuel Bush's *Life of Mahomet* (1830), David Price's *Chronological Retrospect of Mahommedan History* (1811-1821), Charles Mills' *History of Mahommedanism* (1820), William Cooke Tylor's *History of Mohammedanism and its Sects* (1834), Bosworth Smith's *Mohammad and Mohammedanism* (1874), Sir William Muir's *The Life of Mahomet* (1859), Washington Irving's *Mahomet and His Successors* (1850), and Richard Southern's *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages* (1962).

The Western claim was that the knowledge of Prophet Muhammad about the word of God was available in Christendom from after the early expansion of Islam. The translation of a polemical work by John of Damascus, used the phrase "false prophet" for Prophet Muhammad. This distorted image of Prophet Muhammad was made to seem unpleasant to the Western people (Daniel, 1993: 264). This created a general attitude among those who had no personal knowledge of Muslims. This suspicion was inevitable in the circumstances of

misunderstanding. It was challenging to launch scholarship upon a foundation of ignorance, to establish understanding in thoughts designed among inherited prejudice and suspicion. The Medieval European writings viewed Islam as 'heresy', Muslims as 'Infidels', and Prophet Mohammad as 'a renegade cleric'. These writings about the biography of Islam and its Prophet Muhammad had not been assembled academically engaging in (often polemical) comparative religious issues with representatives of other faiths.

The pious and learned reader is going to be effectively and fully condemning Islam. As Norman Daniel, a British eminent historian at Edinburgh University, states in his work *Islam and the West*: "The use of false evidence to attack Islam was all but universal . . ." (p. 267). Since the light of divinity spread worldwide with the mission of Prophet Muhammad, the West looks at Prophet Muhammad as a challenge to fight him with a scholarship or without it. Many Christian people and others from different religions embraced Islam in a hundred years. This conversion became a big challenge to Christendom. From the seventh century on, the anti-Islam polemics started with John of Damascus to the modern day Robert Morey, very little thinking has been changed as far as the content is concerned. Western prejudice against the Prophet Muhammad is anchored in misapprehension and misrepresentation.

The image of Prophet Muhammad was distorted in the eyes of the Western peoples. The refutational tradition of the Churchmen such as Peter the Venerable brought them to study of Islam after completing polemic analyses. Some British academicians show better understanding of Islam and Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh). Authentic information about Islam and the Prophet was brought to the West through the traveler's exploration of Makkah and Madinah. Some books are of Henry Stubbe's *An Account of the Rise and Progress of Mahometanism with the Life of Mahomet and a Vindication of Him and His Religion from the Calumnies of the Christians* (1671). James Silk Buckingham's *Travels among the Arab Tribes Inhabiting the Countries East of Syria and Palestine* (1825), Sir William Ouseley *Travels in Various Countries of the East* (1819-1823), Robert Burton's *Personal Narrative Pilgrimage to Meccah and Madina* (1893), Godfrey Higgins' *An Apology for the Life and Character of the Celebrated Prophet of Arabia called Mohamed, or the Illustrious* (1829), Norman Daniel's *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (1960); David Samuel Margoliouth's *Muhammad and the Rise of Islam* (1905), and William Montgomery Watt's *Muhammad at Mecca* (1953), and *Muhammad at Medina*, (1956). They examined the Islamic sources and acknowledged their knowledge. Furthermore, Patricia Crone wrote *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam* (1987) about the trade in Arabia. She approves of many references to impeccable Muslim authorities (114). In fact, in his call to Islam, the Prophet informed early Christians and Jews in Madinah that he had come to testify Jesus and Moses. Allah the Almighty says, 'Say! (O Muhammad) If you love God then follow me; God will love you and will forgive your sins; Indeed God is Forgiving and Merciful' (The Glorious Qur'an, 3:31). Although he proves that Jesus was neither a god nor part of God the Almighty; he was an elect Messenger of God (The Glorious Qur'an, 5:115-118).

Islam means "submission to God". Islam is the belief that there is only One God, whose proper name is Allah, which means "the God". Islam is the same message given to all the prophets, from Adam, Noah, Moses, Abraham, Jesus, and finally to the Prophet Muhammad, the last messenger (peace and blessings be upon them). They all brought the same message: worship only God, and stop worshipping human beings and their ideas. Conversion to Islam was optional as it provided an effective platform from which Islam analyses the previous Christian,

Jewish and pagan traditions. At the main time, particularly as Islamic teachings possess a well-developed polemical and apologetic literary tradition. Norman Daniel writes:

Throughout the near fourteen centuries of Islam, Christians have defended their faith in the Trinity and Incarnation from Muslim attack; and they have in turn attacked Islam for accepting the claim of Muhammad to be the vehicle of Revelation, chiefly on the grounds that his character made it impossible reasonably to do so. Finally they have had to decide upon the admixture of truth and error: how to estimate its value, how to allow for the error, how to balance judgement upon the significance of each, and how to assess the final result. In respect of these points the mediaeval concept proved extremely durable; this outline of it is still a part of the cultural inheritance of the West to-day (Daniel, 1993: 275).

This broad anti-Islam polemics were destructive in its assessments with a different tone due to more or less political and hypothetical reasons. The purpose, that the biography of Prophet Muhammad is taken so little into account in Western research, delays the progress of a healthy interpretation on this subject. The prefatory remarks demonstrate the ways in which an objective approach or discussion of Islam and its Prophet was simply not possible, when the available models for analysis existing in the West were rooted in centuries of exegetic and polemic tradition. For instance, Western researchers, like Watt, argue on the falsehood of Islam. He claims that the Prophet Muhammad had full knowledge of Judaism. He was successful in reviving Judaism in a new form called Islam. Watt considers that throughout monotheism, Islam becomes much Jewish than the Judaism. Indeed, the Jewish people although many of them realized the mission of Muhammad (Pbuh), declined to embrace Islam because they sought this prophet to be a Jew. The Noble Qur'ān notes on such behavior of the Jews in the subsequent verse:

"And when the Book was sent to them by God verifying what had been revealed to them already even though before it they used to pray for victory over the unbelievers and even though they recognized it when it came to them, they renounced it. The curse of God be on those who deny!" (The Glorious Qur'ān, 2:89)

Often mediaeval arguments against Islam which were capable of being applied against any religion were now used against Christianity (Daniel, 1993: 288). In the Middle Ages, Islam was always related to the effective exposition and defence of the faith of Christ. There was little academic interest in a subject for its own sake but the polemic purpose failed. Medieval attitudes were all homogenous. The Christian harangues were alert. Therefore many Western writers misunderstood the Prophethood of Muhammad. The earliest identifiable roots of the tradition of the polemic biography of Muhammad can be found in the orthodox Christian community which were under the influence of the work "The Heresy of the Ishmaelites" John of Damascus (known in Arabic Yanah ibn Mansur ibn Sargun). The work confronts Islam—a heresy according to John—with respect to essential dissimilarities between Christians and Muslims regarding the divinity of Christ, the dogma of the Trinity and the authenticity of Muhammad's Prophethood and revelation. This work of John of Damascus constitutes the sum of his polemic conceived anti-Islamic polemic as essentially interwoven.

MEDIAEVAL ANTI-ISLAMIC POLEMIC BIOGRAPHY

The Mediaeval European writings about the biography of Islam and its Prophet Muhammad had not been assembled academically. Many Catholic theologians had dismissed Islam "as the summit of all heresy" (Jefferson, 47). In their views, the Qur'ān, Islam's holy book, was nothing but a mere repetition of the Bible, and its claim of new divine origin from God was a form of "blasphemy" (Jefferson, 16). European scholars have long endeavoured to describe the Qur'ān's material on Christianity with reference to the interpretations of Christian heretics.

The prototypical work of the Christian heresies influenced Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh). It became a Western theme of Orientalist scholarship on studying the life of Prophet Muhammad and the Qur'ān. This theme is a very misrepresentative view of religion, because religion is not the result of ignorance, or not knowing the answers to tough questions. Islamic religion is the very basis that provides good, coherent, and logical answers to key questions. For instance, the Qur'ān itself points to human surroundings and the way things work as a sign of God:

"It is He who sends down water from the sky. From it you drink and from it come the shrubs among which you graze your herds. And by it He makes crops grow for you and olives and dates and grapes and fruit of every kind. Therein is certainly a sign in that for people who reflect. He has made the night and the day subservient to you, and the sun, the moon and the stars, all subject to His command. Therein are certainly signs in that for people who use their intellect. And also, the things of varying colors He has created for you in the earth. There is certainly a sign in that for people who pay heed. It is He who made the sea subservient to you so that you can eat fresh flesh from it and bring out from it ornaments to wear. And you see the ships cleaving through it so that you can seek His bounty, and so that perhaps you may show thanks. He cast firmly embedded mountains on the earth so it would not move under you, and rivers, pathways, and landmarks so that perhaps you might be guided. And they are guided by the stars. Is He Who creates like him who does not create? O will you not pay heed?"(The Glorious Qur'ān, 16:10-17)

Islam is free of the blasphemy. The profoundest truth is in both the Christian and Islamic traditions. The aesthetic argument finally comes down to this: once one has had a taste of the exquisite beauty and charm of the Islamic theological tradition, one can hardly imagine not engaging it further (Cragg, 276-95). Cragg viewed Islam as a sum of all Christian heresies. According to Peter, Mohammed himself had been taught by a Nestorian monk named Sergius who "made him a Nestorian Christian," and Mohammed's teaching was a mish-mash of Sabellianism, Nestorianism, Manicheanism, and Judaism. False teaching was bad enough, but Peter was equally concerned with Muslim practice. Even if, as Peter concedes, the Qur'ān records truths about the prophets and Jesus, Muslims reject the sacraments, which are something that "no one besides these heretics ever did" (Kritzeck, 129-136).

The Mediaeval Christian writings on the life of Prophet Muhammad were written in Latin and a few were in English such as Jacob de Voraigne's Golden Legend (c.1260), Ranulph Higden's Polychronicon (c.1442-4), William Langland's Piers Plowman and the anonymous Mandeville's Travels (both late fourteenth century). These texts were produced in at least one edition during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In medieval polemic biographies it had always been essential in establishing the life of Muhammad as 'an essential disproof of the Islamic claim to revelation' (Daniel, 1993: 100). Any sample of seventeenth-century opinion shows polemic continuity. There was a sensible diminution of bias, which showed in William Lithingdow's strictly scientific enquiry into the phenomena of travel. Lithingdow claims that he saw the Prophet's grave in Mecca.

The impression of the destined role of Islam in punishing Christian sins was popular in the Christian West. The rise of Islam in Palestine and the failure of the crusades and then the fall of Constantinople by the forces of Mehmet II in 1453 were dominated by theological concerns 'detected scourges of God everywhere' (Patrides, 126-135). This article provides a detailed. It was read by the early modern writers as an overview of Islam as a punishment of God. The

early modern providentialist vision of the success of the Turks was as God's punishment for Christian sin. Although Christian mediaeval writers wrote was in fact divorced from the realities of controversy, it contained a number of warnings about what Prophet Muhammad's teachings about, so that real encounter with them would have had its surprises, but would not have had only surprises. The Christian Mediaeval points of view are most alike lies in the fact that they study Islam selectively, rather than in pursuit of an abstract and judicial assessment (Daniel, 1993: 303).

The attitudes of some Christians who could appreciate Islamic virtues and argue that Muslims took their religion more seriously than the Christians did, or that Muslims fasted and gave to the poor more rigorously than the Christians did (Taylor, 154). It is worth nothing that Abraham's Geiger's "What did Muhammad Acquire from Judaism?" (1833), is not particularly interested in the idea that heretical, or better, non-Rabbinic (or otherwise non-standard) Jewish sects might have found their way to Arabia and influenced Muhammad. C. Rabin, for example, argues: "To sum up, there can be little doubt that Muhammad had Jewish contacts before coming to Medina; it is highly probable that they were heretical, anti-rabbinic Jews; and a number of terminological and ideological details suggest the Qumran sect" (Rabin, 128). During the Early Middle Ages, the Christian world largely viewed Islam as a Christological heresy and Muhammad as a false prophet. By the Late Middle Ages, Islam was more typically grouped with heathenism and Muhammad viewed as inspired by the devil. In the article on Islam for the Encyclopædia Britannica, Fazlur Rahman notes how the Muslim concept of God relates to the religious context in which the faith arose:

This picture of God-wherein the attributes of power, justice, and mercy interpenetrate-is related to the Judeo-Christian tradition, whence it is derived with certain modifications, and also to the concepts of pagan Arabia, to which it provided an effective answer. The pagan Arabs believed in a blind and inexorable fate over which man had no control. For this powerful but insensible fate the Qur'ān substituted a powerful but provident and merciful God. {In "Islam." Encyclopædia Britannica (Encyclopædia Britannica Premium Service, 2004). }

The Western twelfth century attitude toward the Saracen became more belligerent (Daniel, 1979: 114–15). The stereotype of the Saracen as a heretic or enemy of the faith that was promulgated by Western writers like Guibert of Nogent, Peter the Venerable, Robert of Ketton, and, especially the authors of the chansons de geste, first found expression in the early eleventh-century works of Ademar of Chabannes (ca. 989–1034). For instance, in the French songs chansons de geste (1150–1250) Saracens are portrayed as idolaters who practiced perverse rites, blasphemed the Christian God, and worshipped the gods Muhammad, Apollyon, and Termagant. Although faring better in learned works, the Saracen remains the focus of Western polemic. Many commentators include slanderous accounts of the life of Muhammad and vehement denunciations of the Qurdan and Islam in their works (Daniel, 1979: 235–40). Guibert of Nogent provides a particularly good example of the growing hostility toward Islam. In his history of the First Crusade, Guibert provides the most scandalous account of the life of Muhammad, declaring "it is safe to speak evil of one whose malignity exceeds whatever ill can be spoken" (Southern, 31). Even Peter the Venerable, who provided one of the most enlightened approaches to Islam, identifies the Saracen as a heretic and precursor of Antichrist. Indeed, learned and popular writers developed the image of the Saracen as enemy to justify the crusades and express their own religious fervor (Jones, 202–203).

The thirteenth century European biographers completed their work on the life of Muhammad in a series of works by scholars such as Pedro Pascual, Ricoldo de Monte Croce, and Ramon

Lull in which Muhammad was depicted as an Antichrist while Islam was shown to be a Christian heresy. For instance, in depicting the Islamic rituals by Christians, the Saracen, according to Ademar, does not merely reject Christian teaching but also mocks it by parodying Christian rites. Thus, with his scandalous portrayal of Islamic ritual Ademar further separates the Saracen from the community of the Christian faithful. In fact, those churchmen and Medieval scholars held that Islam was the work of Muhammad who in turn was inspired by Satan. Muhammad was frequently calumniated and made a subject of legends taught by preachers as fact. For example, in order to show that Muhammad was the anti-Christ, it was asserted that Muhammad died not in the year 632 but in the year 666 – the number of the beast – in another variation on the theme the number "666" was also used to represent the period of time Muslims would hold sway of the land (Setton, 4-15). A verbal expression of Christian contempt for Islam was expressed in turning his name from Muhammad to Mahound, the "devil incarnate" (Reeves, p.3). Others usually confirmed to pious Christians that Muhammad had come to a bad end (Reeves, 1-5). According to one version after falling into a drunken stupor he had been eaten by a herd of swine, and this was ascribed as the reason why Muslims proscribed consumption of alcohol and pork (Reeves, 1-5). In another account of the alcohol ban, Muhammad learns about the Bible from a Jew and a heretical Arian monk. Muhammad and the monk get drunk and fall asleep. The Jew kills the monk with Muhammad's sword. He then blames Muhammad, who, believing he has committed the crime in a drunken rage, bans alcohol (Bushkovich, 128). It is not that Lull was deceitful, but that the capacity for self-delusion is infinite. He and all his predecessors who were addicted to the Trinitarian argument in its more rationalist forms show no suspicion that it was inadequate for any but a Christian audience.

The Western people find themselves drawn to Islam, because the attraction of a faith often popularly misconstrued as representing a hostile and alien culture in an increasingly secularised society (Poole 2002; Fetzer and Soper 2003; Asad 2002). Englishmen often travelled to Spain in order to study at the great centres of learning like Cordoba, and witnessed first-hand the 'cultural superiority' of the Muslims there, which must have left some mark upon them (Daniel 1979: 273). As early as the 8th century, King Offa, the Anglo Saxon King of Mercia (d. 796) ordered the minting of a coin inscribed with the Arabic words 'la ilaha illa-Allahu wahdahu la shareeka lahu'; there is no god except Allah and He has no partner (Carlyon-Britton 1908: 55-7). The crusades led to a profounder misunderstanding of Islam in the West. The crusade movement continued for many centuries, Muslim communities were for the first time brought under Western rule. The Western people had the opportunity of prolonged contact with them in the newly conquered territories. One consequence of this was that it became possible for Western Catholics to obtain a more accurate picture of the Islamic faith (France, 247-57). Some Western theologians sought to become better informed about the faith of Islam. Although they obtained a good deal of high quality information, understanding of the faith eluded them by that route. However, the greater degree of contact with Muslims and their civilization which the crusades produced resulted in a growth of respect for some individual Muslims and a widespread admiration for some aspects of their culture. Travelers like Marco Polo's Travels (1298), in the Middle East were often impressed with the kindness, generosity, strictness, and honesty of Muslim culture, while they were offended by the call to prayer, Muslim marriage practices, and the Muslim rejection of lifelong asceticism and celibacy. On the other hand, Westerners' travels in Arabia got the West to learn more about Islam and Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh). European travelers like Zen, John Cabot, Pero de Covilha, Von Harff, Da Silveira, Da Quadra and later Francisco Alvarez made travel to Arabia and the Islamic world. They claimed seeing 'Mohammed's tomb at Mecca' (Beckingham, 158). For example,

Mandeville explains that Prophet Muhammad prohibited the drinking of wine after he had slaughtered a Christian hermit while being drunk (Oueijan, 11-12).

Those medieval treatments of Islam find little favour today, even among Christians, yet as a purely historical matter, the medieval accounts have some points in their favor. That Mohammed had contact with a Syrian monk is mentioned in the hadith, collections of Mohammed's words and actions that serve for most Muslims as a second source of authority alongside the Qur'ān (Sahas, John of Damascus, p. 73). As Sahas points out, the monk's prophecy was frequently used by Muslim apologists to rebut the claim that Mohammed's prophetic ministry had not been announced (Netton, 112). And it is clear that Mohammed had wider contact with Christians. One of the key themes of the Qur'ān is a denial of the Trinity, since it is "far from his glory" for Allah "to beget a son" (Kritzeck, 144-145). It has a polemic value, rather than one purely for edification. It might most reasonably edify a Christian to understand the great praise of Christ that there is in the Qur'ān. Islam's account of history has a place for Jesus and Christianity. To be sure, the Jesus of Islam is not the Jesus of the New Testament: He is not the divine Son incarnate, He was not crucified and raised (The Glorious Qur'ān, 4.157), and he is not reigning at the Father's right hand. Of course, Islamic rejection of the Christian gospels as 'corrupted' would have been anathema to Christian writers.

Many in the Western medieval world believed that Muhammad himself had apostatized from Christianity, and some even believed he had once been a cardinal (Singleton, vol. 2, 503). In these religious polemics, incidentally, Islamic theologians were generally handicapped by the fact that Jesus and Moses are repeatedly and reverentially mentioned in the Qur'ān, and Mary has a whole chapter of Islam's holy book named after her. Thus Moses, Jesus, and Mary could not be subjected to nasty attacks similar to those hurled at Islam and Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh). Prophet Muhammad was sent to reconcile Moses and Jesus. Islam was and is a reasonable religion and Prophet Muhammad was and is admirable like Abraham or Jesus. Muhammad's role as the final prophet of God was to confirm the authentic teachings of previous prophets and to rectify mistakes or innovations that followers of previous monotheistic faith traditions had introduced into the original religion of humankind. Muhammad is also viewed as the conduit for the completion of God's guidance to humanity; the scope of his mission is seen as encompassing all people, rather than a specific region, group or community. Furthermore, his life serves as a perfect model of how to practice Islam fully. Allah, the Almighty, says: "We have sent you forth to all humankind, so that you may give them good news and warn them." (The Glorious Qur'ān, 34: 28). For Muslims, the Qur'ān is thus the Word or Speech of God, and Prophet Muhammad's teachings are instructed by God Himself. Allah the Almighty says, "And most certainly, thou (O Muhammad) are of most sublime and exalted character" (The Glorious Qur'ān, 68:4). And says: "Verily in the messenger of Allah ye have a good example for him who looketh unto Allah and the Last Day, and remembereth Allah much" (The Glorious Qur'ān 33:21).

Many English students graduated from schools and universities of Muslim Spain and Sicily. Among them were famous scholars as Roger Bacon (1214-92), William of Malmesburg (1090-1143), John of Salisbury (1115-1180), Thomas of Erceldoune (1220-1297), Mathew Paris (1195-1259) and Ranulf Higden (1300-1364) as well as John Erigena (810-877). They drew the Medieval Tradition to attack on Muhammad's Prophethood was worked out in great detail. The creation of a legend of his life was an important part of anti-Islamic polemic and of the Christian approach to Islam. For instance, the notion of Muhammad not only as a false prophet, but as a god or idol to be worshipped, found regularly in chansons de geste, not unexpectedly reappears in many Italian texts such as Orlando—Muhammad is expressly called false and fallacious. (*Falso Malchometto*” Orl. VIII, 39, 5; XIX, 7, 1). Prophet Muhammad is called

“Muhammad God” or “Muhammad our god” on several occasions in Pulci’s *Morgante* (*Macometto Iddio*” *Morg.* IV, 43, 2; VIII, 9, 6). Muslim idols are at times called Jupiter, Apollo, or Mahomet; chroniclers of the First Crusade occasionally refer to their adversaries as “Mahummicolae”: “Muhammad-worshippers.” Therefore, the terms “Muslim,” “Islam,” and their equivalents are never used. Raoul de Caen wrote his *Gesta Tancredi*, in mixed prose and verse, sometime between Tancred’s death in 1112 and Raoul’s before 1131. Raoul glorifies (and exaggerates) Tancred’s military achievements during and after the First Crusade.

The fact is ignored. Prophet Muhammad himself abolished the idol-worship that he found (Daniel, 1993: 205). There was no polemic purpose to say anything on idol worshipping since the Qur’anic condemns it. Such remarks on Arab idolatry may have been misunderstood by careless writers. St John of Damascus relates that there was such a stone, without asserting that Muhammad did not have it destroyed; the natural way to understand his text would be that pagan worship had ended (Daniel, 1993: 312). On the other hand, the Messenger Muhammad (Pbuh) also said: “the ink of the scholar is more holy than the blood of the martyr” and he encouraged his disciples to seek knowledge as far as China, if necessary (Ameer Ali, 361). Moreover Watt calls for a complete rejection of the medieval charges of “imposter” and “liar” levelled against Muhammad explaining that contemporary sound scholarship does not accept such frivolous charges anymore. Prophet Muhammad’s proven sincerity leaves no room to question the fact that he was able to discriminate the revelation from his other activities. Watt’s description of Muhammad introduces a variant from the traditional image in the West, he emphasizes:

His readiness to undergo persecutions for his beliefs, the high moral character of the men who believed in him and looked up to him as leader, and the greatness of his ultimate achievement - all argue his fundamental integrity. To suppose Muhammad an impostor raises more problems than it solves. Moreover, none of the great figures of history is so poorly appreciated in the West as Muhammad (9).

The lack of interest in Islamic religious practice marks the failure to recognise any kind of spiritual life in Islam; but this does not apply evenly to all aspects, and it is not that the authentic Islamic accent in religion was wholly unfamiliar. As an alternative of a positive argument, Christians thought that Muhammad had taught his followers more and greater evil things. The point is that there was in the West some knowledge that Islam was a system of positive requirements, and not only a series of relaxations (Daniel, 1993: 203). Praise of Muslim practice, to shame Christians, equally with attempts to describe Islamic morals, made it clear that to some extent Islam and Christianity drew upon a common stock of precepts. For instance, the Saracens were accused of the dishonoured practice by turning the Christian rite of prayer upside down and indulge in a ritual anal kiss.

Islam affirms the existence of a universal bond that unites all humans. The Glorious Qur’ān addresses itself to all humanity saying (IV: 1): “O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your Lord Who created you from a single soul (nafs) and from it created its mate and from them twain hath spread abroad a multitude of men and women.” This verse refers to the unity of mankind and to its diversity. All humans are seen as the children of God since they originated from the same soul (Steigerwald, 2007). In the early times of the Prophethood of Muhammad the Meccan merchants disbelieved and contempt the simplicity of the poor Prophet. Prophet Muhammad and his followers experienced the usual ups and downs of warfare. “As a paradigmatic personality, Muhammad has important lessons not only for Muslims, but also for Western

people. His life was a jihad: as we shall see, this word does not mean "holy war", it means "struggle". Muhammad literally sweated with the effort to bring peace to war-torn Arabia, and we need people who are prepared to do this today. His life was a tireless campaign against greed, injustice, and arrogance" (Armstrong, 2006: 7).

Peter's translation of the holy Qur'ān was backed by polemic purpose. Ian Jenkins remarks on the purposes of Peter the Venerable and the commissioning of the first Western translation of the Qur'ān in 1143, the investigation of Islamic material, and in particular the Qur'ān, had generally been intended to serve two purposes: firstly to facilitate the conversion of the 'infidel' through disputation and, secondly, to provide warnings and homiletic material aimed at deterring the faithful from conversion and to inculcate a hostile and anathematic attitude towards Islam in the audience or readership. In early modern efforts, usually purported to be aimed at achieving and communicating a more accurate picture of the beliefs of Muslims, this dual purpose continued to hold true, although the ambition towards conversion became less prominent, perhaps suggesting a more realistic assessment of the direction in which conversions tended to happen and of the limited possibilities, given the balance of power between East and West, which existed to convert Muslims to the Christian faith.

In the history of Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh), the Meccan pagans persecuted the Prophet for his call to Islam. As well the lawlessness of the desert nomad was tough to bring creativity. Islam was a perfect revelation to Muhammad (Pbuh). The providence of God was behind him and the documentation of the Islamic revelation. Daniel states that "the world situation in Muhammad's day was better documented and understood than that in the Arabian Peninsula" (Daniel, 1993: 80). The Qur'ān is of God who says:

We believe in Allah, in what has been revealed to us, what was revealed to Abraham, Isma'il [Ishmael], Ishaq [Isaac], Jacob and the Tribes, and in what was imparted to Moses, Jesus and the other prophets from their Lord, making no distinction between any of them, and to Him we submit (The Glorious Qur'ān, 2:135).

The contrast between Muhammad and Christ, the thought of Muhammad as a false Christ, were often present in Christian minds (Daniel, 1993: 87). The Western Writers dealt with Islamic events as legends, fables and myths. As well as authentically Islamic legend, some genuine history was recounted (Steigerwald, 176). Prophet Muhammad plays a major role in the Divine quest; he is the Universal Man, the Perfect Human Being, the total theophany of Divine Names, the prototype of creation. Muhammad is the Logos "Divine Word," whose light was manifested in a particular aspect in each of preceding Prophets (Abraham, Moses, Jesus). Muhammad is the best example of the perfect spiritual realization. The notion of union does not mean becoming one with God, but the mystic must realize the already existing fact that he is one with God since God is Immanent.

The Western manifest falsity account on Islam and its Prophet is a tradition never ends. The Western writings about Prophet Muhammad contain little information that it would have been altogether hopeless to maintain a significant attention to his life in the Western public debate. Treatment and substance in the Western writings about Prophet Muhammad are traditionally Christian, but it is characteristically Western in presentation. The Western audience is unable to make better understanding of Islam and its Prophet. They become left neutral or even sensitive. Chronological research discipline of the life of Prophet Muhammad is of comparatively ongoing growth. The European strange and remote societies are on reconstruction of the Prophet's biography or Sirah research and work on a sympathetic

exploration of Christian beliefs. Mediaeval society did not achieve a better knowledge and understanding of Sirah.

EARLY MODERN WESTERN UNDERSTANDING OF ISLAM

The early modern Western view of the biography of Prophet Muhammad merely masks the ancient tradition. To examine totally the attitude of any age towards Prophet Muhammad, the distance is very close of those of the Medieval tradition in the two centuries before 1150. Many early modern Western writers were certainly aware of the arguments against Islam and its Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh), most of them originating in Europe at the time. European evangelists gave their attention in examining Islam and Prophet Muhammad's biography chiefly to Christians, Latin or Oriental, living under Islamic rule, rather than to the Muslims themselves. For centuries, most Christian theologians refused to even accept Islam as an Abrahamic religion – they stubbornly refused to call Muslims by their chosen name, instead insisting on labelling them as “Mahometans” or some other iteration of Prophet Muhammad's name. Saracens, another pejorative used to refer to Muslims, was also commonly used and essentially equated all Muslims with Arabs.

Some early modern Western writers permanently seem to display independent judgement most when they are talking of authentic encounters and least when they argue theory, dogma, or the life of Muhammad (Pbuh). Therefore, Norman Daniel in *Islam and the West* called that kind of biography of Prophet Muhammad as ‘polemic biography,’ a form of anti-hagiography, which represented the prophet of Islam as a deceptive, violent and sexually aberrant figure. The polemic biographies of Muhammad (Pbuh), within early modern writings on the Islamic world, remained an essential component in the refutation of the beliefs of Muslims and in the depiction of the behaviours of Muslims through the representation of Muhammad as the root of their many perceived vices. The polemic biography and the form found in the *chanson de geste*, medieval romances and miracle plays, which represented him as a pagan deity, constitute the two major tropes of representing Muhammad in medieval and early modern texts. Throughout the period that this thesis examines, these two approaches to Muhammad paradoxically coexisted, although it was the sub-genre of the polemic biography, included as it was in a multitude of texts across genres, which would eventually constitute the dominant discourse in relation to Muhammad during the early modern period and which will form the focus of this investigation.

The polemic biography found in theological works, histories and travel writings. The mythologies contained in the polemic biographies, regarding the perceived nature of Muhammad's life, personality, behaviours, teachings and cultural and religious background, function in the history of Western representations of Islam and in anti-Islamic polemic as the roots of all Islamic belief, and to great extent as the foundational matter for constructing the ‘nature’ of Muslims. During the medieval and early modern periods the attempt to discredit Muhammad (Pbuh), through the production of the scurrilous legends contained in the polemic biographies, constituted a central technique in the critique of the religion of Islam, its cultures and believers.

Ross reinforces the idea of Islam as a religion of violence and of its spread through conquest and compulsion of the vanquished, an idea which will be discussed at greater length in a later section of this thesis. Ross even goes on to state that Muslims themselves are unable to find any other justification for their faith aside from a providential argument based on expansion through conquest, describing how:

[...] the greatest Doctors of their Religion have never alleged anything for the truth thereof; but the success of their Wars, and greatness of their Empire, than which nothing is more fallacious: for that which both in former, and these latter Ages hath been common to the bad with the good, cannot be a certain evidence of the justice of a Cause, or the truth of Religion. (Ibid., Sig.A3).

Renaissance writings of the history of the Prophet seem extremely indebted to mediaeval prototypes. In the Christian theological 'deformity' of Prophet Muhammad as the 'Imposter' is a distorted image. In his introduction to his Qur'ān, Ross goes further and attributes to Prophet Muhammad physical deformity in the form of a scabrous ('scald') head caused by scurvy ('scurf'). Ross possibly derived his description of the prophet from George Sandys Relation of a Journey, who describes Muhammad (Pbuh) in the following terms:

Meane of stature he was, & evill proportioned: having ever a scald head, which (as some say) made him wear a white shash continually; now worn by his sectaries (Sandys, 53).

The description has Sandys making the incredible suggestion that the wearing of turbans by Muslims originates in the emulation of Prophet Muhammad's use of a white sash to cover his diseased scalp. The connection between physical deformity, disease and spiritual and moral turpitude was a common one in medieval and renaissance writings, and although little mention was made of Prophet Muhammad's appearance in the polemic biographies, many included references to Prophet Muhammad as an epileptic (with all its contemporary associations with demonic possession) or as being otherwise diseased through his dissolute lifestyle. In introducing the topic of Islam in *The Preachers Travels* (1611), in the context of describing Arabian society, John Cartwright observes that:

[...] it shall not be amisse to insert a word or two, of Mahomet and his superstition, who was borne in this country, and hath seduced the greatest part of the world with his abominable religion (Cartwright, 105).

Once again Cartwright sets up an oppositional approach to the subject of Islam, and also demonstrates the trope of Prophet Muhammad as 'seducer' which was so often repeated in early modern texts. The attitude of the texts examined in this section in approaching Islam and the figure of Prophet Muhammad are typical of those found across genres in early modern writing in English on the topic, demonstrating the contention of this thesis that an objective approach to an examination of Islam in Britain during this period was all but impossible, the negative dominant ideologies, which had been operating in Europe for centuries in respect to the Muslim world, being too powerful for the Christian commentator to overcome. Like John Cartwright, other early modern writers' view of the Muslims and Prophet Muhammad in general is destructive, an attitude towards Islam that was indeed common in sixteenth-century Europe.

The unity of Christendom broke down in the sixteenth century, secular attitudes gradually emerged that transformed the Turk from an enemy of Christ into an enemy of the nation; but when literary critics such as Samuel C. Chew took up the question, they found that distorted medieval perceptions about Islam were still well represented in Tudor culture. Refutation of Islam by Churchmen was not an easy task. Luther makes it clear that in his judgement it is difficult for a Christian theologian to refute Islam successfully and remarks that:

If it should come to the point of arguing about religion, the whole papistry, with all its trappings would fall. Nor would they be able to defend their own faith and at the same time refute the faith of Muhammad, since then they would have to refute those things that they themselves most approve and for which they most strive (Simon, 260).

There is a list of false accounts about Prophet Muhammad which contains only stories that seemed to confirm Christian allegations (Daniel, 1993: 236). For instance, though, Luther was unconvinced with the Prophethood message of Prophet Muhammad, he located his attempt at analysing The Glorious Qur'ān in the context of the refutation of other erroneous faiths, stating that:

As I have written against the idols of the Jews and the papists, and will continue to do so to the extent that it is granted to me, so also have I begun to refute the pernicious beliefs of Muhammad, and I will continue to do so at more length (Ibid., 263).

Many early modern attitudes to Prophet Muhammad have developed because of the secular approach to the history of Islam. For instance, in the Enlightenment and of the Romantic age, there were no longer Christian attitudes though some Christian ideas survived explicitly and implicitly the Mediaeval tradition. Hachicho remarks that Joseph Pitts was the first known Englishman to visit Al-Ka`bah in Mecca, and the first to write in 1704 about Makkah and Medinah, and he described the holy Hajj from personal experience (Hachicho, 197). Pitts gives detailed descriptions of the whole ceremonies of al-Hajj, and of the great Harm, or sanctuary, and of the Ka`bah, which he visited, and even had a peep into its interior. In addition, there is a fair description of the cave of Hira, and of the holy grave of Prophet of Muhammad (Pbuh) in Medina. Pitts' remarks about Makkah give the man credit for his veracity. Two centuries later, Richard Burton, who made the same pilgrimage, testified to Pitts' account. For a short period of time, books about Islam became the sources of public libraries with denigrated writings about the Prophet (Pbuh). These works were all unfair to describe the Prophet. Some books are James Silk Buckingham's Travels among the Arab Tribes Inhabiting the Countries East of Syria and Palestine (1825), Sir William Ouseley Travels in Various Countries of the East (1819-1823), David Price's Chronological Retrospect of Mahommedan History (1811-1821), Charles Mills' History of Mahommedanism (1820), Washington Irving's Mahomet and His Successors (1850), Samuel Bush's Life of Mahomet (1830), Godfrey Higgins' An Apology for the Life and Character of the Celebrated Prophet of Arabia called Mohamed, or the Illustrious (1829). The fair and accurate information in those books had enlightened the English Knowledge with reality about Islam and its Prophet.

PROPHET MUHAMMAD IN THE MODERN WEST

The Western historians used to use a corrupt spelling of Prophet Muhammad such as 'Mohmet', 'Mahmet', or 'Mahoo' (As in Shakespeare's King Lear). These corrupt spelling have become synonymous as imposter for centuries. Now the West identifies Muhammad with 'The Prophet' or 'Prophet Muhammad'. Stubbe, a pioneer European scholar, urged that the Prophet of Islam should be identified in accordance with his own spelling 'Muhammad,' and not as Europeans called him 'Magmed,' or 'Machomet' (Bosworth, 32-3). Some Christian writers are abided with the Mediaeval tradition of distorting the image of the Prophet without any scientific proof. For example, Thomas Aquinas states that the false prophet seduced the gullible with promises of carnal pleasure, filled their minds with naive fabrications, and forbade them to read the Christian scriptures lest they show him up for a liar (Aquinas, 22-25; Waltz, 81-95).

It is a more complex mode of cross-reference finds connection less in evident parallels than in issues on which Islam and Christianity appear to agree on some point, making mutually acceptable assertions, but for very different reasons. So Professor Kenneth Cragg remarks that the God of Islam is like the God of Christianity. He builds his inter-theology on less obvious grounds in his discovery of intriguing Christological crossovers. In the Qur'ān, 4:172: "The Messiah would never shrink from being servant of God," calls to mind Paul's startling affirmation of Jesus' refusal to avoid servanthood by claiming a son's privilege (Cragg, 1-10). In fact, Professor Norman Daniel admits that there is no similarity between the Glorious Qur'ān and other scriptures on earth since the Qur'ānic themes have no parallel in the Testaments (1966, 35). The Testaments description of God is inferior to the Islamic description of God in the Qur'ān. The evangelic God is weak and less powerful than the perfect God in the Islam, 'Allah (God) is unlike other things' (The Glorious Qur'ān, 42:11).

The greatness of the Prophet's message in describing Allah, the Almighty which becomes evident from His attributes of perfection, mentioned in the Qur'ān. He is free from all faults and is without any blemish, and beyond any allegation:

"All that is in the heavens and the earth gives glory to God. He is the Mighty and Wise. To Him belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. He only gives life and He only gives death, and He has power over all things. He is the First and the Last, the Apparent and the Hidden and has knowledge of all things. It is He who created the heavens and the earth in six days, and then sat on the throne. He knows all that goes into the earth and all that emerges from it and all that comes down from heavens and all that ascends to it. He is with you wherever you are and is aware of whatever you do. He has sovereignty over the heavens and the earth and to Him turn all affairs. He makes the night pass into the day, the day pass into the night and He has knowledge of what is concealed in the hearts" (The Glorious Qur'ān, 57:1-6).

The total rejection of the Christian thought to the Prophethood of Muhammad does not give a persuaded answer to stop the challenge of Islam as an attractive religion to simple men. The West is still unprepared to understand the term 'prophet' for Muhammad. Like Professor Martin Forward, many Christian writers prefer not to use this title 'prophet' for Muhammad. As Forward remarks, "Christians deceive themselves when they think that by calling Muhammad a prophet, they mean the same or even a comparable thing" (Forward, 120). Therefore, Jomier and Forward, unlike the other contemporary writers such as Watt, Küng, Cragg, and Kerr, regard Prophet Muhammad as a political and religious genius without assigning him the term 'prophet'. Although these attempts by Jomier and Forward seem to be an honest Christian response to the question of Muhammad's status, they do not contribute to the understanding of Muhammad's religious and spiritual vision (Armstrong, 1992: 14).

Western scholars of religious studies define Islam explicitly in terms of Christian doctrine, and attempt to measure it against the standard of Christian truth. The basic assumption is that it is possible to distinguish a collective essential ground between Christianity and Islam without denying that their devout traditions are certainly different. The wide span of the Western interest in Islam in general and in Prophet Muhammad in particular makes it extremely difficult to cover in one research or academic work. For the last fourteen centuries many Western writers have been reacting to Prophet Muhammad as a subject and to his message, therefore the point of research focus is to be narrowed down here.

The Western biographers and writers namely; Sir William Muir, Professor David Samuel Margoliouth, Professor William Montgomery Watt and Karen Armstrong are the most latter-

day renowned Western non-Muslim biographers of the Prophet. Their writings are considered to have played a key role in reshaping the inherited distorted image of the Prophet in the minds of the Western readers. These three in particular are usually included in books about Western views of Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh). More details will be given below about these three major biographers (Buaben's and others). Out of these widely circulated biographies, Professor Montgomery Watt's works like *Muhammad in Mecca* (1953), *Muhammad in Medinah* (1956) and *Muhammad Prophet and Statesman* (1961), are probably the most read. Amongst many of his widely circulated works, these particular ones about the Prophet were the most popular in the Muslim and the non-Muslim world alike. They have been reprinted several times and translated into many languages like Arabic, French, Japanese, Spanish and Turkish. Watt and Armstrong are chosen here as examples because both are comparatively recent and less biased biographers and because of their considerable academic and scholarly approaches and research methods. Watt's *Muhammad in Mecca* and Armstrong's *Muhammad a Prophet of Our Time* (2006), Martin Ling's *Muhammad His life Based on the Earliest Sources* (2006) is probably one of the most unbiased biographies of the prophet however it is not to be discussed here as he converted to Islam and naturally his views will be more reflective to the Islamic prospective.) are to be examined here in details.

The misrepresentation of Prophet Muhammad in the Western writings is made of biased outlooks to Prophet Muhammad and continually misrepresents him accordingly. This distorted image became one of the received ideas of the West and formulated the Western line of thought about Islam and the character of its Prophet (Gunny, 26.). Maxime Rodinson finds that the rise of the field of study of Orientalism which mainly originated in Europe in in the Middle Ages and that the field was born out of pragmatic necessity and the result was a greatly distorted vision of things (Rodinson 117). The Christian approaches to other faiths lack enough knowledge. It is sometimes imperfect. For many European thinkers, Islam is a parody of Christianity, and, more particularly, Islam is a Judaizing parody of Christianity. Peter Leithart believes that a more responsive look at the face in the mirror will be better than not ignoring the warts (Leithart, 1).

The Christian conception of religion takes as the basis of the Divine revelation not the revealed book, i.e., the Qur'an or the Bible but Jesus Christ. Seen through the eyes of Christology, Islam could not be anything other than 'Muhammadanism', and any scholarly treatment of it was bound to be based on the figure of the Prophet of Islam. It was within this framework that a number of historicist and materialist accounts were given to prove that the Prophet Muhammad was not an authentic prophet and that his motives were basically political, tribal or economic. The two-volume work of Montgomery Watt, the celebrated Western scholar of Islam is on the life of Prophet Muhammad. It has become one of the most widely read books on the life of the Prophet both in the West and the Islamic world. It has also been acclaimed as an objective book based on historical sources, without, thus, necessarily following the footprints of received prejudices and ignorance about Islam and its Prophet. Dr. Watt has presented a highly distorted picture of the life and teachings of Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh).

Western prejudiced and distorted delineation of the character of Prophet Muhammad and Islam is awful. Instead of being grateful to the Prophet of Islam for ameliorating the lot of the Christians of the East by relieving them from the tyranny and thralldom of the Byzantine Church and cultural advancement of the Christians of the West in various realms of thought, and the general advancement of science and civilization in the world, Christians and Western

writers have reacted to by presenting the personality of the Prophet of Islam in a highly distorted manner. Phillip K. Hitti, for instance, writes in his book *Islam and the West*:

Memories of Crusades past and hopes for others to come lingered for generations. Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and other less highly developed religions were never subjected to such a barrage of abuse and condemnation. It was primarily fear, hostility, and prejudice that coloured the Western views of Islam, and conditioned their attitude. Islamic beliefs were enemy's beliefs, and, as such, suspect, if not false (Hitti, 48-49).

The Western and Christian polemics on Islamic issues are all surface to disgrace Islam and its Prophet. In the history of ideas, many Western people are suddenly more interested in Islam could be a positive development, but if the knowledge that is produced only reinforces an Orientalist perspective then this will be an opportunity lost" (Poole, 2002: 3). Muhammad was central as a source of guidance for the world communities. In fact, Prophet Muhammad was a charismatic leader with many admirable qualities. He was not founder or inventor of Islam. Prophet Muhammad was as a model and a source of inspiration for mankind to emulate in their lives. Prophet Muhammad deserves a place among the great influential figures of human rights history. Therefore, many early Christians believed in Prophet Muhammad due to his mission and references to him in Christian scriptures which are clear to have faith in his mission. The idea that prevailed throughout the centuries was that the Islamic value of an individual is to be judged by God alone, not by other humans. Thus, when compared with the history of Christianity, there have not been in Islam as many massacres in the name of religion. This tolerant legacy which characterized Islamic history is quite different from the recent attitude of certain extremists (Steigerwald, 2006).

Some more objective studies and writings about the Prophet's life appeared on the surface and a whole wealth of literature about Islam was being introduced. Increasing numbers of scholars, writers and researchers are becoming known for their more sympathetic approaches to Islam. Writers like Montgomery Watt, Karen Armstrong and others are becoming generally accepted in the Muslim world as they show some deviation from the traditional divisive and subjective approaches followed by earlier biographers and writers. In his introduction to his second edition of *Islam and the West- The Making of an Image* 1993, Norman Daniel concludes that despite all the attempts of Christian writers to pursue impartiality there is still lingering remnants from the medieval biases:

Christians have always tended to make the same criticisms; and even when, in relatively modern times, some authors have self-consciously tried to emancipate themselves from Christian attitudes, they have not generally been as successful as they thought (Daniel, 1993: 11).

Their reliance on authentic Islamic sources is not to overwhelm the Muslim reader and prevent him from questioning their motives and methodology. Like many other orientalists', their writings are to be read deeply from a Muslim lenses and such works need to be scholastically examined before being introduced to the public as fully objective works. The work of sincere Muslim scholars is extremely needed in the present time to assist in reshaping and recreating the image of Islam, its concepts and Prophet in the Western minds.

CONCLUSION

The establishment of the Western academic awareness about the Prophethood of Muhammad helped the West to appreciate Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh). Western consensus made faults and deformities of opinion on Prophet Muhammad. It was universal to defame him. Norman

Daniel remarks that the unpleasant image of Islam that the Christians drew was drawn to seem unpleasant to the Christian eye (Daniel, 1993: 264). The whole Western polemic on Prophet Muhammad was really intended to defend Christianity or Western civilization. Western hypothesis about Mahomet, that he was a scheming imposter, 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 around this man, are disgraceful to the West only (Carlyle, 895). Often mediaeval arguments against Islam which were capable of being applied against any religion were now used against Christianity. The other contrary movement is more than a tease; the same device of Muslim authorship had already been used to attack Christian doctrine and the Churches. Later, there was change in the Christian and European culture.

Islamophobia existed in premise before the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, but it increased in frequency and notoriety during the past decade. Moreover, the misappropriation of religious labels by Jihadist ideologues and leaders is deliberate and designed to mobilise support for, and divert criticism from, what are in effect, highly political goals (Awan, 209). However, these are rendered moot points, for whatever the distorted theological justification behind Jihadist acts, it remains an indelible sociological fact that these individuals considered themselves to be Muslim, and indeed Islam provided (at least in their minds) the *raison d'être* for their acts of violence and terror (Awan 2007b, 208). It is with more investigation in the English Oriental library to the sources of information on Islam and the life and the mission of Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) which is needed by the Western and Muslim writers for a proper understanding of the life and the mission of the Prophet (Pbuh).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This project was funded by the Deanship of Scientific Research (DSR), University of Jeddah, Jeddah, under grant No. (G- 189-857-1436). The author, therefore, acknowledges with thanks DSR technical and financial support.

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