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A BRIEF LOOK INTO ORIENTALISTS' VIEW ON ISLAM AND THE MUSLIM

Abstract

Most orientalists are not only convinced that a thorough going adoption of Western culture by the muslim world is inevitable, but many of them are actively participating in the process of westernization to hasten its completion as a speedily as possible.

Paradoxically it seems to some of them, that the more they study Islam, the more fervently they felt compelled to prove that it was malicious and distorted.

Based on the statements made by orientalists about Islamic teaching it is clear that they can not refute the truth of Islam. The favourable theme of all their writings is that Islam must be abandoned on the premise that anything, revealed fourteen centuries ago is necessarily irrelevant for the technological civilization of today.

Therefore they conclude, that if the Quran and Sunnah and the sacred Syariah that derives from these sources can not be reconciled with the current fashionable philosophies, then Islam must be false.

Key Words: Orientalist , Islam, Religion, Civilization

PREFACE

There is scarcely an academic pursuit in the field of humanities which has more unfortunate antecedents than Islamic studies in the West. It is not purpose of this paper to go into details of its sad history. Suffice it therefore, to give a mere synoptic view of that history in a very through outline to serve as a general introduction.

From the beginning, the roots of Judeo-Christian hostility to Islam were seen in the Quran. The people of the Book (*Ahul Kitab*) were quick not only to deny, but also to challenge Muhammad's role as the bearer of the Divine Message (*ar-Risalah as-Samawiyyah*), and thus began a chain of polemics that continued, parading under different banners, almost to our own times. With the political and military actions of the Islamic state under Muhammad (p.b.u.h) and his successors, the hostility was exented

from the confined Arabian Peninsula to embrace the Byzantine empire, and later still Western Christendom today.

The Byzantine polemicists were not ignored by the conquest of Islam, nor did it neglect to reciprocate the venomous effusion. But the Byzantine were in due course even surpassed by their medieval European successor in cultivating hatred and prejudice through the disseminating of abusive and false accounts. Thus to them Islam was the work of devil, the Quran was Muhammad's own composition,¹ Muhammad was a false prophet or imposter and anti-Christ.² Therefore they branded the adherents of Islam as the Muhammadans instead of the Muslims.

To what extent such propaganda continued in Europe to respond to the call for the crusades is hard to determine. But the crusades turned up to be an unforgettable lesson for Christendom. Instead of attempting to regain former Christian territory by force of arm, a new approach had gradually been gaining recognition. Thus Francis of Assisi sought, through missionary persuasion, to evangelize the Muslim. And Raymond Lull, with similar motives in mind, was instrumental in the introduction of the teaching of Arabic in the Christian institutions of Higher Learning "To know more about Islam, as to be better equipped to expose its defects."³

Although the religious polemicist were still as bitter and active as ever, although the aim was increasing its hold on the imagination of ecclesiastical authorities, new secular motives had now been recognized as equally, if not more. The change is perhaps exemplified in the statement formulated by the academic authorities of the University of Cambridge in connection with the founding of the chair of Arabic. In a letter dated May 9, 1636, addressed to the founder of the chair, they stated:

The work itself we conceive to tend not only to the advancement of good literature by bringing to light much knowledge which as yet is still locked up in that learnt tongue, but also to the Eastern nations. And in God's good time to the enlargement of the borders of the church, and propagation of Christian religion to them who now sit in darkness.⁴

Islamic studies that were cultivated for any of these reasons---polemics, missionary, commercial, diplomatic and even scientific or academic---continued for long time to be almost coloured by some measure of the same deep-rooted animosity.

Prior to the middle of the 19th century, the bulk of Western literature attacked Islam on the purely theological basis of Christian dogma.

However as the Christian missionary enterprise became increasingly identified with the aims of British and French imperialism, the emphasis gradually shifted from the religious to the secular. For a long time, the former was completely mixed up and confused with the latter. And at the turn of 20th century, the favourite technique of the missionary was to claim that Christianity was responsible for all achievements accredited to the Western way of life. Thus Christianity and Western civilization are inseparable and indistinguishable. At the same time the European military power was completely gripping on large Muslim territories, the missionary was actively propagating Christianity to the Muslim subjects, and the orientalist were writing and continue to write on Islam and the Muslim world.

The loose alliance between the three sides was continued throughout the 19th century down to the early 20th century. But since the end of the world war II however, the Christian pretence has been almost entirely discarded in favor of pure, unadulterated materialism. Islam is no longer condemned because of its rejection of the Trinity, the divinity of Christ or the dogma of original Sin. It is no longer a question as to which are the true attributes of God, which Scripture is the most authentic Divine revelation or the validity of the Muhammad's prophethood.

The Muslim world was alarmed by a new crusade when the General Allenby, after capturing Jerusalem, was reported to have said, "Today ended the Crusades." This boastful statement has stuck in the Muslim's memory ever since, that manifested by a steady of hostile treatment of Islam in contemporary Western literature.

ISLAM CHALLENGES

Despite such anti-Islam propaganda and the decay of Muslim civilization as well as the corruption of so many Muslims swayed by alien ideologies, Islam is still an active and vital force in the world today, the only formidable potential rival to the atheism and materialism of contemporary culture boldly challenge all it stands for. The valiant resistance of the Mujahideen of Afghanistan against the tyranny of Soviet-Russian military occupation is proof of this. The small Mujahideen has triumphed over the wild Soviet bear.⁵ Furthermore, the bulk of simple, common people and even a considerable number of the modern educated youth in secular universities still retain their love and zeal for faith and want it to prevail as the decisive factor in their individual and

collective life. Thus if the non-Muslim finds the forces favouring Islam weak at present, he should understand that this is not due to any intrinsic deficiency or inadequacy in its teachings, but only to the lack of effective organization and leadership.

The learned orientalist and shrewd politician of the West are well aware of these facts. Hence the special departments in universities and seminaries scattered through Europe and America are dedicated to understand Islam only to enable its enemies to destroy it.⁶ These Islamic institutes and Islamic research centres are now busy establishing their satellites in one Muslim country after another, the purpose of which is to subvert the Islamic cause from within and frustrate any attempt for a genuine Islamic Renaissance.

The Western world ever since continues to fight Islam with increasingly sophisticated weaponry. On the advanced level of scholarship, Islam is being bombarded by a number of American and European periodicals devoted entirely to Islamic studies; *The Muslim World*, *Middle-East Studies*, *Middle East Journal*, *Der Islam* (German) and *Mir Islama* (Russian) etc.⁷

As a result, misconception about Islam grows in the West. The Muslim world has often been projected by the West as Arabian Nights or Egyptian Girl Dance, in which dark-eyed Arab sheikh on Arab stallion charged across the desert carrying off reluctant maidens to exotic harems. Even in these modern days, there are some highly intelligent Europeans who seriously believe that regarded by men as unintelligent and inferior. Even in Britain, there is a startling number of people who really believe that most Muslim men have four wives hidden away in domestic subservience, restricted to a life of toil and unceasing satisfaction of their husband's carnal lusts.

The Western publishing-houses print a steady stream of literature dealing with Islam and the Muslim world. Unless the publication is a pure edition of text by definite marks of antagonism and prejudice characteristic of Western attitude to Islam.

But among sincere scholars have devoted their lives to Islamic studies, because of sincere interest in them. Were it not for their work, much valuable knowledge found in ancient Islamic manuscripts would have been lost or remaining forgotten in obscurity. English orientalist like Reynold Nicholson and the late Arthur Arberry as well as many others accomplish notable work in the field of translation of classical Islamic literature and making them available to the general readers for the first time in European language. Orientalism is thus not totally evil.

Paradoxically it seems to some of them, that the more they study Islam, the more fervently they felt compelled to prove that it was malicious and distorted. They grew convinced that the implicit acceptance of this faith was the only most potent medicine for mental health.

ORIGIN OF ISLAM

The believing muslim and the sceptical orientalist are poles apart with regard to the origin of Islam. The orientalist tend to create ill-feeling among muslims, and in consequence place serious obstacles in the way of intellectual traffic between the two sides. For having on the whole rejected the muslim doctrine of the divine origin of Islam, and having more over decided that Muhammad the man and has not any divine agency was responsible for the composition of the Qur'an, the orientalist have been busy since the dawn of the scientific historical method, trying to discover Judeo-Christian origin of Islam without reaching conclusive results.

The Jewish and Christian orientalist feel compelled to search for the original sources of the teaching of Islam and expound their conjectures as to how it borrowed Jewish and Christian practices. Here Solomon David Gotein, a Jewish orientalist, wrote about the achievements of the Holy prophet:⁸

All this leads us to the great question : Which religion or which sect served Muhammad as his immediate model or since the Quran alludes in various places to person who instructed the prophet, who were his teacher? Why is it so difficult to find its solution to this problem? The main reasons are these:

The Quran contains a huge mass material which can be traced to both Jewish and Christian sources. This is true not only of biblical and apocryphal literature with which Muhammad might have been acquainted through Jewish and Christian channels but it also holds good for elements from the Jewish liturgy and lore which had found their way into Christian circles very early....

Such are the views held by almost all Jewish orientalist. Being himself a Jewish, it is quite natural and understandable for Gotein to follow this line, for he could not accept the premise of the Quran as divine revelation without renouncing Judaism and embracing Islam.

In the Quran the Jewish and the Christians are constantly referred to as the people of the Scriptures and the close affinities of the muslims with them are repeatedly affirmed. It is also a fact that in addition to the Bible, same teaching in the Torah is found in the Quran and in the

Sunnah. Thus Jewish scholars immediately jump to the conclusion that Islam is merely a distorted version of Judaism.

Indeed the convincing and conclusive answer as to the origin of Islam is that given by the Quran itself, since all the prophet of God preached the same message and the revealed scriptures taught the same truth. The similarity between the Quran and the early scriptures are due not from borrowing but proof of their common origin. That the Syreah incorporates so much of the Mosaic law is not the result of what the Jewish orientalist allegedly thought of Muhammad, but because Allah revealed the same legislation of the older scripture again in its final form. Since Islam upholds transcendental values and absolute truth, the precepts revealed to Moses (a.s) were deemed by Almighty Allah to be just valid when revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad. The mission of Muhammad was not to invent a new religion but to confirm the eternal truth of the early revelations to the other prophets of God. Thus did Islam affirm the ethical monotheism and much of the law practiced by Jews, while vehemently rejecting Judaism's over-emphasis on ritualism and its racial parochialism. Islam also upheld the universality of the Christian message, while condemning the pagan practices that had corrupted it almost from its birth.

Another orientalist disputed the origin of the Quran saying: "The sources of the Quran was unmistakable Christian, Jewish and Arab heathen. Hijaz itself had Jewish but no Christian colonies, but had Christian slaves and merchants. It was surrounded by centres whence Christian ideas could have radiated into it. The Prophet had two Abbassinian slaves, his muazzin Bilal and his future adopted son Zaid. He also has a Christian wife, Marya the copt as well as a Jewish one, Sofia born to one of Medinese tribes he destroyed....."⁹

Thus the Quran is discredited as forgery according to the writer. Islam is merely the arabized and nationalized Judeo-Christian heritage. There his view about the origin of the Quran was based on a speculative consideration. The same view was also upheld by other orientalist that the Quran was Muhammad's utterances.¹⁰ A.J. Arberry considers the Quran to be a supernatural production, but he does not subscribe to the muslim view that it is of divine origin.¹¹ Let us forget for a moment what the muslims believe, and let us consider the problem as a purely historical one. Granted for the sake of argument that the Quran is Muhammad's own composition. How is a student of history to prove Muhammad

borrowing from previous sources? If by guess work, then it is not profitable to spend time examining details. It would be highly imaginative to assume Muhammad who according to tradition was unable to read and to write though in the scheme of thing constructed by the orientalist he was sat down in his study to consult and quote previous author for the composition of work known as the Quran. No doubt this is an exaggerated way of putting it, but this is in brief what Hitti and HAR Gibb as many other orientalists proclaimed in details. The Holy Quran itself challenges that, it is not only insuperable but inimitable. Even if men and jinn were to collaborate, they could not produce the like of it. Muhammad was authorized by god to challenge his critics to produce one comparable surah. The challenge as expected was never successfully defied.

ISLAMIC HISTORY

Many orientalists tried to distort the genuine essence of the Islamic history which has been splendidly recorded in the history of humanity in its different periods. Here we would like to look the statement made by well-known orientalist, who is now responsible for the trend of orientalism in America. In his book P.K. Hitti wrote as follow:

Arab historian, mostly theologians, had a simple explanation for that spectacular expansion from a hitherto internationally insignificant Arabian resulting in the utter destruction of the greatest power in the West of its fairest provinces. It was all providential, in line with the Hebrew interpretation of the conquest of Canaan. The motivation we are assured, was religious to propagate the faith. The fact is that the motivation was primarily economic. The surplus population of a desert peninsula had to seek elbow-room in adjacent lands. The lure of booty did not entirely escape the early historians of conquest. The Islam that first conquered was not religion but the state, not upon an unsuspecting world as a nationalist theocracy, seeking fuller material life. Two or three centuries had to pass before Syria, Iraq and Persia presented the aspects of muslim lands. When their people flocked to the fold of Islam, they were in general motivated by self-interest, economic, social and political.¹²

Here Hiti denied the moral and spiritual validity of Islam as the primary for outsiders to its fold. If the real explanation for the rapid expansion of Islam was economic what has inspired them to spend their wealth and belongings in the cause of Islam, fearing neither poverty or starvation? What had made it easy for them to take their children and

women to distant field of war as if they were walking into garden orchards? No doubt it was their faith. Again, if their motives were purely worldly interest, as Hitti assumed, how to explain the fact that under the prophet Muhammad and the rightly Guided Caliphs, these God-fearing mujahideen had no desire for the fruits, of this world but fought for selfish reason to attain the fruits of hereafter. If they fought for selfish reason they would have never achieved the discipline, the morale, the cohesiveness and the spirit of sacrifice that vanquished their adversaries who were far more numerous and better armed. Had Islam been synonymous with the Arab nationalism, what would attract the Affrican origin Bilal, the Roman Suhail and the Persian Salman (r.a) to become the most devoted companions of the prophet? If non-muslim embrace Islam for worldly reason, what could stop them from becoming apostate when the circumstances become adverse? And after centuries of hostile foreign domination, how to explain the phenomenon of 1000 milion muslim today? The genuinness of Muhammad's prophethood is proved by the fact that he revolutionized life over a huge portion of the world and secured the love, loyalty and devotion unto death of so many milions for fourteen centuries. Historical fact is a living evidence, when Salahudin al-Ayyubi showed his conduct to his enemy Richard The Lion Hearted. It was not due to the individual superiority of the former over the latter, but rather because the former felt accountable before God for his dealing with the enemy, while the latter was on the reverse.

Salahuddin had only to follow the precedent of all God-fearing mujahideen in the law of the sacred Syareah pertaining to jihad. Salahuddin's victory was not that he drove out the crusaders and recaptured the baitul-Muqaddas for Muslim. His real triumph was his good treatment of the defeated enemy with justice and humanity under law, so that he won the sympathy of his enemy, thus practically demonstrating to the whole world that jihad has no place for the horrors of ordinary warfare.

In discussing the contributions of Islamic civilization to humanity, Hitti devotes several pages to describing of "The Arabian Nights" which, however popular they may be in the West, enjoy absolutely no literary reputation in the Arabic speaking world. He is very much interested in the extravagant splendor of the various monarchs, their concubines, the lovely Persian and Byzantine singing girls and the wines of Syam or the contributions of Spanish muslim to European folklore. The really valuable gifts of muslim shcolars in mathematics, science, medicine, education and philosophy are considered worthy of only passing

mention. He fail to point out that not until the advent of muslim civilization did the world know of free hospital and dispensaries as public institution. He never enlightens his readers that under muslim rule, pharmacy first became a separate specialized branch of medicine nor does he inform us that Islamic civilization gave us the format of books as we use them today. And the most precious contribution of all is the contribution of Islam itself to the moral welfare of humanity, to which Hitti completely ignored. He further said:

The question arises as to how much of the scientific knowledge discussed above seeped down into the lower strata of society. The answer is simple: not much. As a book religion, Islam did encourage study of the Quran and memorization of prescribed prayer but other than for facilities for education ere largely inaccessible, if not unavaible. The mases must have lived in utter ignorance, poverty and misery.¹³

Contrary to this black picture depicted by Hitti, it is fairly certain that in and around such large cultural centres as Baghdad, Damascus, Cairo and especially in Muslim Andalusia, the incidence of literacy was very high. From Cordoba to Delhi, the muslim world was filled with academic and intellectual activeties.

Although a half page is given over the life and work of al-Ghazali, the contributions of Ibnu Taimiyah who was deeply learned in Jewish and Christian lore are not mentioned at all. Hitti is also silent in regard to the great imam of Islamic jurisprudence, Abu Hanifah, Syafi'i, Malik and hanbal. Not a single word about the contribution of the Syareah to the progress of law.

After a brief paragraph and backwardness of the Arab under the Turkish rule where his criticism of the Turk is unjustifiably harsh, the narration in the concluding chapter, he enthusiastically louds the modernization of the Muslim world in the Western sense, taking for granted without question that all these innovation are indispensable for the ultimate welfare of the people. As an historical episode, Islam may have been good for its time and place, but now its worldly glory is past history, it has become obsolete and irrelevant. Again Hitti preach the muslim what they should do for their religion:

Modernization on the intellectual-spiritual level involves secularization. secularization means more than separation between church and state. It replaces providential interpretation of historic events and current happenings to the individual with rational interpretation based on physical

and psychological forces. Hardly of birth and death, sickness and health, fortune and calamity, success and failure- a relic of bygone thingking.¹⁴

In other words, Hitti is openly pleading for the adoption of atheism as a prerequisite for progress. Although this progress in the socialist Muslim lands today (Iraq, Syria, Tunisia, South Yaman and many other muslim countries), despite the frontal campaign for the westernization combined with the virtual liquidation of the so-called "reactionaries" (*roji'yyun*). That is the entire religious leadership, nothing has been achieved except the growing hostility between the rulers and the ruled (Ikhwanul-Muslimin in Egypt, Said Nursi in Turkey, Masyumi in Indonesia and now Mujahideen in Afganistan are all outstanding examples). Consequently, the secular muslim lands are the most politically unstable, weak and impotent countries in the world. They are dependent economically upon America and Rusia. The Arab people and the muslims as a whole should understand that it was not they that had made Islam great but on the opposite.

A long before this time, when attemp was made by the Ottoman and Egyptian for westernization without reservation. Both of them established school and colleges on the Western pattern and sent a large number of students so that they may bring back with them Western sciences, arts and manners. In fact al that constitutes Western culture. But what have the Ottoman and the Egyptians gained from these efforts which have been continuing for a long time? The answer, of course, would be quite unsatisfactory.

ISLAM AND MODERNISM

When an orientalist speaks of reformation in Islam, he is at least unconsciously making some mental comparison with the events of Renaissance in Europe and all that therefrom, which manifested in a total secularization of Europe.

Kenneth Gragg, looks through his Christian dark galasses, when he speaks that Islam must either baptize change in its spirit or renounce its own relevance to life.¹⁵ While if a muslim writer speaks of *islāh*, he has no such reservation. He is more likely to mean restoration of the practices of muslim from authorized accretions.¹⁶ In this connection AS tritton refers to Muhammad Abduh's place in Modern Islamic Thought saying, "He

become the leader of those who felt something wrong with Islam and yet remained faithful to it.”¹⁷

If any coherent meaning could be extracted from these remarks, it must be that the authors assumed its first part to be so sure that only one way opened to muslim, that is to throw their faith away. Of course Muhammad Abduh never thought or felt that something was wrong with Islam. To him and to his follower, the fault was with the muslims, not Islam. The muslim, not their religion, needed *islāh*, because Islam reformed is Islam no longer.

Most orientalist are not only convinced that a thorough-going adoption of Western culture by the muslim world is inevitable, but many of them are actively participating in the process of Westernization to hasten its completion as speedily as possible. K.Cragg further wrote as follows :

We have neither the right nor desire to insist that Islam shall remain perpetually what we have at one time though it was. Like all living things it changes, decomposes to recompose. While never ceasing to be itself it can often puzzle us with what that self is no small element in our Christian duty of understanding and discernment in our would be relationship in Christ with the people of the minaret.¹⁸

Here Cragg used a strange terminology to explain Islam as a concept of moral relativity. Like so many other orientalists, he does not recognize one Islam but many. He glibly refers to the old Islam, the medieval Islam, the traditionalist Islam. Likewise he can discuss Arab Islam, indonesian Islam, etc. it seems to him he would be fully excited when he comes across an Indonesian muslim proudly claim, “I am muslim but I am an Indonesian”, or “I am muslim but I am a Turkish”, not on the reverse, because Islam and muslim are used by Cragg interchangeably with no distinction drawn between the two.

Like so many other collaborators in orientalism, Cragg reserves for himself the supreme authority to judge the practices of our faith, point out where we are wrong and how we should change and improve upon them.

An increasingly widening gap in the eyes of orientalist developed between traditional ideologi and modern reality which undermined the existing political community and threatened to condemn muslim society to a permanent state of instability and tension, unless the gap were bridged by means of readjustment of the traditional belief-system or the formulation of a new one capable of serving as a foundation for new political community, then the solution, of course according to them, is the outright rejection of Islam in favour of secularism and materialism.

This statement is merely based on the assumption that the total westernized of the non Western world is the natural law of history and an integral part of evolutionary progress. Therefore the only muslim nation favorable in the eyes of orientalist in the modern Muslim World is the Kamalists (supporters of Mustafa kamal Attaturk) in Turkey, who can regard their participation in modern Islamic history as reasonably affective.¹⁹ That has evolved intellectual and social foundation in line adequate to modernity. But the hard fact is that the westernizers have enjoyed little more success in Turkey than other muslim countries. And the Kamalist reforms never enjoyed popular support and could only be imposed by force of arm and the ruthless suppression of all opposition, so great was that resistance that during his dictatorship, Attaturk was compelled to declare Martial Law nine times. It is indeed paradox that the so-called Liberal and progressive in the Muslim World exhibit the least respect for democratic ideals and are the staunch upholders of rigid authoritarianism with all the media of information and communication under strict control of the state, and organized opposition banned.

Let's look what an orientalist praised the Kamalist in Turkey:

There are three Islam, the religion of Quran, religion of ulama and the religion of the masses. This last is superstition, obscurantism, fetishism. The second is bogged down with the whole weight of out-of-date legalism impossible stuff making it necessary to get a fatwa before one can have one's teeth filled by a dentist. Turkey has got rid of the way of the Muslim World. Islam needs reformation. To this extent Turkey is the forefront of the muslim World.²⁰

Here synical language was used by the writer, by which he suggested among other things, the abolishing of the Syareah, the banning of Arabic the language of Quran in prayer and adzan as well as introduction of style hymns into the mosque, as the institution of Islam to him is not in tune with the contemporary condition. And Islam was progressive only for its time, and condition has meanwhile changed.

In four decades since his death, the Turkish pople has discovered the real Mustafa kamal Attaturk a quite different from the glorified image that official propaganda machinery sought to impose upon them. Beside the reign of terror he unleashed against his political rivals, the sordid detail of his private life which included alcoholism, fornication and adultery. It is a revealed secret that Mustafa Kamal Attaturk was a dedicated member of the Freemason lodge of Salonika.²¹ He is also the commander who betrayed his fellow officers by making a secret treaty with General Allenby, a pawn British imperialist and freemason scheme

and vacillating negotiator at the Lusanne Conference. The orientalist claim that the secular kamalist is giving new birth to the nation, transforming it from decadence into strength and honour. Examine his following statement :

Few deny that the Turk have been dramatically successful in re-making themselves into dynamic nation able to stand on its own feet in the modern world.²²

Again the writer repeatedly stresses the 'creative' nature of Kamalism:

These Turk have actually shared in what is the most fundamental experience in modern Western civilization: the experience of remaking one's environment. Modern Turk, like modern occidentals have through brilliant hard work and well-applied intelligence come to feel themselves the directors of their destiny.²³

Had Kamalist been as genuinely creative as the orientalist alleges, then these reforms should have resulted in a cultural renaissance and the Turk should have made great contribution to humanity in the arts and sciences. Unfortunately these dreams have never been realized and despite being dominated for sixty five years by regime which regards the westernization of the country as its *raison d'être*, Turkey has remained culturally and intellectually sterile as any other muslim lands. Despite more than a half century of the imposition of the Latin alphabet, more than fifty percent of its adult population is illiterate. The economic position of Turkey under Attaturk was worse than under Sultan Abd.Hamid. Militarily Turkey is totally dependent upon foreign powers. Despite very favorable endowment in territory and natural resources Turkey has made under kamalism no notable strides in industry and commerce. All the slogans of economic development and technical assistance can not hide the fact that Turkey is unable to achieve national strength and real independence.

CLOSING

From the proceeding statements made by orientalists about Origin of Islam, Islamic history and the transcendental nature of the islamic teaching; it is clear that they can not refute the truth of Islam. Despite the fact that most of these orientalists hold an important position and can boast of considerable erudation, they can do no more than curse, denounce, ridicule and in some cases even distort living fact. The favourable theme of all their writings is that Islam must be abandoned on

the premise that anything revealed fourteen centuries ago is necessarily obsolete and irrelevant for the technological civilization of today. With rejection of transcendental value, changes are upheld as the supreme good, and anything old must be discarded as useless if mankind is to progress. The premise that Islam is out-of-date is considered by these orientalists as sufficient proof of its inadequacy and irrelevance for contemporary man. Islam is merely condemned because it is in conflict with the prevailing materialist outlook. Therefore, they conclude that if the Quran, Sunnah, and the sacred Syareah that derives from these sources can not be reconciled with the current fashionable philosophies, then Islam must be false. Modern civilization is neither infallible and invincible nor destructible. None of these orientalists can satisfactorily convince us that the Western civilization is superior to Islamic civilization in explicit terms. Neither can they explain in a specific detail why the orientalists can deny the authenticity of the Quran and the careful preservation to this day in its original form. Even Khalil Gibran and Khalil Nuaimah two Christian writers who have international reputation are reported to have been memorizing the whole verses of the Quran. When people asked, both sincerely acknowledge that the Quran is the word of Muhammad, because it has a quasi-hypnotic effect upon its readers, even though they do not subscribe it as a divine origin.

Even the most hostile critics of Islam can not deny the greatness of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, but the more being severely criticised, the greater is actually he being acknowledged. The imposter can never stand in the difficulties, nor does he ever any constructive works to support his claims. The entire life work, personal character, and his combined influence in revolutionizing society over such an extensive area of the world for so many centuries, infinitely more than any other great man ever achieved, is sufficient to prove the supremacy of the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

End Notes:

¹ HAR Gibb, *Muhammadanism*, Oxford Press, 1950, p. 35.

² Philip K. Hitti, *Islam and the West*, D. Van Nostrand Co Inc. Princeton, New Jersey, 1962, p. 11.

³ H. Rodshall, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, Oxford Press, p. 30.

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- ⁴ A.J. Arberry, *The School of Arabic*, Cambridge, 1948, p. 8.
- ⁵ *Weekly Time*, December 26, 1988.
- ⁶ Nadzir Hamdan, *Mustashriqun, Jami'yyatun, Majma'yyun*, Maktabah al-Shadiq, Thaif, p. 22.
- ⁷ WAMY, *Al-Mansu'ah al-Muyassarrah fi al-Adyan wa al-Madqahib al-Mu'asirah*, Riyadh, 1989, p. 39.
- ⁸ S.D. Goten, *Jews and Arab, Their contacts Through the Ages*, Schoehen Books, New York, 1955, p. 52.
- ⁹ Philip K. Hitti, *Op. cit.* p. 14.
- ¹⁰ HAR. Gibb, *Loc. cit.*
- ¹¹ A.J. Arberry, *The Holy Quran*, London. 1953. p. 32.
- ¹² Philip K. Hitti, *Op. cit.* p. 26.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 47.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 93.
- ¹⁵ Kenneth Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1965, p. 17.
- ¹⁶ Muhammad Abduh, *al-Islam wa al-Nasraniyah*, al-Manar, Kairo, 1954, p. 144.
- ¹⁷ AS. Tritton, *Islam Belief and Practices*, London, 1951, p. 144.
- ¹⁸ Kenneth Cragg, *Op. cit.* p. 298.
- ¹⁹ Wilfred Cantwell Smith, , *Islam in Modern History*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1957, p. 163.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 176.
- ²¹ Ali Guraishah, *Wajah Dunia Islam Kontempore*, Indonesian translation by Mushtolah Maufur, Yogyakarta, 1989, p. 63.
- ²² Wilfred, *Op.cit.* p. 172.
- ²³ *Ibid.* p. 180.

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Busthomi Ibrahim adalah dosen Jurusan Tarbiyah STAIN "SMHB" Serang.