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## Western Biographers and Sirah Literature: A Historical Review

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## Abstract

*Numerous biographies have been written so far of the Holy Prophet, Hadrat Muhammad (ﷺ). There is no person in human history whose life has been studied extensively with all the details, as has been done on the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and this series will continue till doomsday. So far, millions of Muslim and non-Muslim scholars have written and compiled works on the life of the Holy Prophet in different languages. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Western scholars wrote many books on the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Hundreds of Western scholars have praised the Prophet ﷺ, but a large number of them have also raised various objections to him. John Adam Mohler, John Aiton, William Cooke Taylor, Phillipps De Lisle, Aloys Springer and Reinhart Dozy are the writers who tried to present a fake picture of Islam to Western world. Even though their objections are very stupid, unreasonable and groundless, however, Muslim scholars have written a valid and convincing answer to these objections. It is an undeniable fact that some unbiased and realistic people of Europe have correct knowledge about Islam but in their blind support of Christianity, they preferred fables and baseless rumors to facts. One of the reasons for this is that in their writings they address Christian community only*

*and the Christian people are certainly happy with these statements which condemned Islam and ridicule its principles. In this short article a brief introduction of such authors is being presented so that the readers may be informed of their writings.*

**Keywords:** Sīrah Literature, Western authors, Orientalism, Objection on Holy Prophet (ﷺ)

## Introduction

In the early centuries, Islam was considered an idolatrous religion in which a god Mahomet was worshiped and the Westerns used to twist out of the name of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ).<sup>1</sup> Ordericus in his work described the invocations of Palestinian women in which they call their god Mahomet.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, these were the days when the Muslims were pointed out as the infidels in the west.<sup>3</sup> Michael Curtis claims that Christians began criticizing Islam shortly after it began, beginning with St. John of Damascus in the late seventh century, who wrote "The False Prophet" because according to Christian theology, Muslims were infidels.<sup>4</sup>

The study of Islam in the Western countries started a few centuries ago after the Crusades. A lot of literature, in this chain, has been published so far by the orientalists among which mostly the writings are filled with negative trends. Though some orientalists had tried from their side to show positive behavior but that was just to throw dust in their reader's eyes. They accept the status of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) as a statesman and as a reformer but their writings are deprived of acknowledgement of his status as the Prophet of God.

There were hundreds of publications written in different Western languages in Europe throughout the 19th century, with a generally negative trend. However, in the 20th century, orientalists emerged who publicly criticized the works of their predecessors. They educated their people about Islamic realities that they were still unaware of through their in-depth studies of Islam. After a thorough examination of the Qur'ān, Hadīth, and other Islamic knowledge sources, Islam was produced on these strong foundations. Regarding the Sīrah literature, a great deal of information has been gathered, preserving every aspect of the life of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). Now, the Holy Prophet's (ﷺ) reputation had somewhat altered prior to the arrival of the Europeans. The bigoted Margoliouth was forced to acknowledge that the biographers of the Prophet Mohammed constitute a lengthy series that is impossible to end but in which it would be honorable to find a place because he was regarded as a reputable and successful religious leader.<sup>5</sup>

It is impossible to cover all orientalists whose number may be above hundred, in this short article but, nevertheless, some famous orientalists are being discussed.

### 1. Lancelot Addison (1632-1703)

Lancelot Addison was born in 1632 at Meaburn Town Head, Westmoreland. After completing his early education from Appleby Grammar School he joined Queen's College, Oxford. He completed his B.A. in 1654, M.A. in 1657 and during the same year got B.D. and D.D. from Oxford. He died on 20 April 1703 and was buried in the Churchyard of Lichfield Cathedral. His most famous work is;

Life and Death of Muhammad.<sup>6</sup>

## 2. Henry Stubbe (1632-1676)

Henry Stubbe was born in Partney, Ireland, on 28 February 1632. Due to the civil war (1641) in Ireland, he went to Liverpool with his mother. He got his early education from Westminster School and matriculation from Christ Church, Oxford in 1650. After completing his M.A. (1656) he joined Bodleian Library as second keeper. For some time he did a job in Scotland in the Parliamentary army as well. In 1673 he strictly criticized the marriage of Duke of York with Princess Mary of Modena in Paris Gazette because of which he was arrested and drowned on 12 July 1676.<sup>7</sup>

The famous writing of Henry is “An Account of the Rise and Progress of Mahometanism.” The manuscript of this book was found in British Museum in 1876.<sup>8</sup> Ḥāfīz Maḥmūd Khān Sh’arānī edited this in 1911 and published from London. This book consists of ten chapters. In first three chapters Henry described Christianity, Judaism and the Arabians before the birth of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). After it, he has narrated the Biography of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) till death. The deep study of the book results Henry’s ignorance from the correct information of Islamic History. For example, describing the fight of Ḥarb e Fijjār, he derives the result that the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) joined the Christian army.<sup>9</sup> Further, Henry describes that a noble lady who was a widow and had been courted by numerous Arabian Princes for her wealth and quality, but who had fallen in love with Mahomet, invites him to give up the War and live with her, promising him noble maintenance and to accommodate him, to further travels, with a large cargo that he might improve his intellectuals and Estate together.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, he recounts that the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) travelled into Alexandria, Egypt, Africa and Spain where he observed deeply the religious conditions of these territories.<sup>11</sup>

## 3. Humphrey Prideaux (1648-1724)

Humphrey was an English orientalist. He was born on 3 May 1648 in Cornwall. His early education is related to the grammar schools of Liskeard and Bodmin. He finished his B.A. in 1672, M.A. in 1675, B.D. in 1682 and D.D. in 1686. He was appointed as a Hebrew lecturer at Christ Church in 1679. He passed the last years of his life in Norwich where he died on 1 November 1724.<sup>12</sup> Among his works “Life of Mahomet” is included whose complete title is: *“The True Nature of Imposture in the Life of Mahomet.”*

The title of the book is the proof of Humphrey’s mentality. He has tried, at several places in the book, to ascertain all the teachings of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) imposture. For example, at a place, he writes that in the 40th year of his age Prophet began to take upon him the Stile of the Apostle of God, and under that Character to propagate the Imposture which he had been so long a projecting.<sup>13</sup> In addition to emphasizing Jihād, he claims that Mahomet did not perform any miracles because he did not require them. Instead, he was able to complete his mission by compelling people to believe in it because of the power of the sword with which he was sent. And thus it has come to be believed by all Mahometans that their religion must be spread by violence and that they must all fight for it.<sup>14</sup>

## 4. John Toland (1670-1722)

John Toland, a Protestant scholar, was born in Ireland on 30 November 1670. He joined Glasgow University in 1687 and completed his M.A. in 1690 from the University of Edinburgh.

Moreover, during his stay at Oxford University in 1694, he wrote his most world-famous "*Christianity not Mysterious*" (1696). This was the work that was strictly condemned by the Irish Parliament, and his arrest warrant was issued but he escaped to England. The second popular writing of Toland was "Nazarenus, or Jewish, Gentile and Mahometan Christianity, Containing The History of the Ancient Gospel of Barnabas" (1718).<sup>15</sup>

This book of Toland is divided into three parts. The first part consists of twenty chapters in which The Gospel of Barnabas is discussed and some different aspects of the life of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) are also included. The second part is about the Four Gospels of Christianity while the third comprises two sections in which the first section is included with a brief Jewish history and the second, again, is consisted of The Gospel of Barnabas. In this last section of the book, Toland has described the quotation of Jesus which was an answer of Jesus to Barnabas. Barnabas questioned Jesus, "How the divine goodness could suffer that the Mother and Disciples of such a holy Prophet should believe, even for a moment that he suffered a so ignominious death?" Jesus replied, "O BARNABAS, believe me, that every sin, no matter how tiny, is punished by God with tremendous pain because sin offends God. Therefore, until Mahomet, God's Messenger, enters the world, this mockery will remain. When Mahomet enters the world, he will deceive everyone who accepts the Law of God by using this fallacy."<sup>16</sup>

##### 5. **Simon Ockley (1678-1720)**

Simon Ockley was a British Orientalist. He was born in 1678 in Exeter, a Cathedral city of Devon, county of England. At the age of 15, in 1693, he graduated from Queen's College Cambridge. When he reached 17 delivered a lecture on Hebrew. In 1711, he joined Cambridge University and was appointed there professor of Arabic. He had a good knowledge of Eastern languages, culture, and religions, particularly Islam. He did work in different fields of study but had a specialty in history. His most famous writing is "*The History of the Saracens*".

This book consists of two volumes. The first volume, printed in 1708, was entitled "*The Conquest of Syria, Persia, and Egypt by the Saracens*," while the second was entitled "*History of the Saracens; Lives of Mohammed and His Successors*". The first chapter of this volume is included with the Biography of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) from his birth to death. The main merit of the book is the references from al- Maghazī of Wāqdi at several places. Though Simon has tried to present a good biography, he also could not save his side from Christian bigotry. At a place discussing revelation, he claims that although Prophet Mohammed purported to have high regard for the Old and New Testaments, he ruined both of their narratives with myth. Some of these fables were likely concocted in the Prophet Mohammed's mind or the minds of his aides; others were likely taken from the Jewish Talmud.<sup>17</sup> R.V.C. Bodley has refuted clearly this false statement of Simon Ockley and proved that the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) never saw the Testaments in his life.<sup>18</sup>

##### 6. **Joseph Simon (1687-1768)**

Joseph Simon was born in 1687 to Maronites, a famous family in Syria. After completing his education at Maronite College, Rome, he was transferred to the Library of the Vatican. In 1717, he visited Egypt and Syria and returned with great information for the Pope due to which

he was again sent by the Pope in 1735. After that, he was appointed Archbishop of Tyre and librarian of the Vatican library.

His major work is "*Bibliotheca Orientalis*". It consists of nine volumes and is divided into four parts the second being about the History of Muhammedan and Christianity. Stephen Evodius, nephew of Joseph Simon, provided much assistance in this great work.<sup>19</sup>

### 7. François Marie Arouet De Voltaire (1694-1778)

Voltaire was a famous man of letters and a dramatist. He was born on 21 November 1694 in Paris to a notary, François Arouet. He was the 5th child of his family and was baptized the very next day of his birthday. At the age of seven his mother died. He was sent to Collège Louis-le-Grand at the age of ten where he was encouraged to perform on stage by Jesuits, the manager of the college. Being a dramatist he got publicity during his life. He was died on 30 May 1778 in Paris and here he buried. His famous plays are the following:

The most famous and popular drama which introduced Voltaire to the world as a best and excellent dramatist was Mahomet. It was played first of all in 1741 at Lille,<sup>20</sup> while in 1742 was published entitled "*Mahomet Tragedie*". At the second time, Voltaire performed it in 1752.<sup>21</sup> Explaining this work in a letter written by Voltaire to César de Missy (1703-1775), a theologian and chaplain, he declared the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) a deluder person.<sup>22</sup> This play consists of six characters and in the beginning, Voltaire introduces the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) as "Imposteur à la Mcque, & Prophète à Medine," which means the imposter of Makkah and the Prophet of Madīna. This drama played a vital role in producing a false image of Islam and the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) in the West.

### 8. Edward Gibbon (1737-1794)

Gibbon was a great English historian and a learned man of his time. He was born on 27 April 1737 in Putney, Surrey. At the age of seven, he was sent to a private tutor. His interest in history started at the age of fourteen in 1751 when he visited a library with his father where he studied Roman History. He also joined the army as a captain on 12 June 1759. He published his first work in French at the age of 24 in 1761 entitled "*Essai Sur l'Etude de la Littérature*".<sup>23</sup> He had to face severe conditions in his life and his early years passed in humility because of the loss of his grandfather's property.<sup>24</sup>

The most prominent and splendid work of Gibbon is "*The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*". It consists of six volumes for which thirteen years (1776-1789) were consumed, and it covers the history of thirteen hundred years of the world which commences with the age of Antonines and ends at the victory of Turks over Constantinople.<sup>25</sup> Its volume number five and chapter number fifty are related to the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and it has been published separately entitled "*Life of Mahomet*" edited by O.W. Wight in 1859.<sup>26</sup>

### 9. Joseph White (1745-1814)

Joseph White was a theologian and Christian clergyman. He was born to Thomas White, an expert weaver, at Stonehouse in 1745. He got his early education from a charity school in Gloucester and then with the assistance of his wealthy neighbors he acquired his higher education. He completed his B.A. in 1769, M.A. in 1773, B.D. 1779 and D.D. in 1787. He did

work on Persian texts for the Institute of Timur. In 1784 he achieved a chance to deliver his lectures on comparative study of Islam and Christianity because of being a famous churchman of Whitehall Chapel.<sup>27</sup> These lectures were published with the title *“Sermons Containing a View of Christianity and Mahometanism in Their History, Their Evidence, and Their Effects.”* In these speeches, Joseph White, from his side, tried his best to explain the character and nature of both religions but during his struggle, he failed to do so fairly.<sup>28</sup> He misjudged the progress of Islam and claimed that the Church was responsible for Islamic advancement due to its carelessness.<sup>29</sup>

He declared the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) an impostor and tried to prove that the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) put the foundation of a new religion keeping in view the church's negligence and ignorance of the Arabs.<sup>30</sup> These are baseless charges leveled by the orientalists against the Prophet of Islam (ﷺ).

#### 10. Godfrey Higgins (1772-1833)

Godfrey Higgins was a popular scholar of his time who was born in 1772. He was an expert in the study of ancient monuments and had good command over Hebrew. From London, he got law education but did not think of practice. In 1802, he served as a Major. He was a member of the Royal Asiatic Society and visited Egypt and Samarqand. He died in 1833 at Yorkshire.<sup>31</sup> His most famous work, published in 1829, is about the life of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) entitled *“An Apology for the Life and Character of the Celebrated Prophet of Arabia Called Mohamed or the Illustrious.”* William Cooke Taylor (1776-1834) strictly criticized this work<sup>32</sup> due to, maybe, his soft behavior toward the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). Higgins has tried to prove that many Christian scholars did not get to the bottom of the reality. He claims that some orientalists usually refer to the Holy Prophet as an impostor, but I believe I will be able to demonstrate that he is not entitled to this label, at least not in the way that it is typically applied.<sup>33</sup>

#### 11. Washington Irving (1783-1859)

Washington Irving was an American short story writer, biographer and annalist. He was born on 3 April 1783 at Manhattan, New York.<sup>34</sup> He was given this name by his mother because of the hero of American Revolution,<sup>35</sup> George Washington.<sup>36</sup> Charles Dudley Warner declared him an uninterested student who used to leave the class and went to theater during the study time,<sup>37</sup> and according to Williams Stanley hardly Irving passed his test to be admitted in a law class.<sup>38</sup> He served also as American Ambassador to Spain from 1842 till 1846 appointed by John Taylor (1790- 1862), 10th president of the United States.<sup>39</sup> He was a good biographer and there are almost six biographies of world famous personalities written by him included Christopher Columbus, Captain Bonneville, Oliver Goldsmith, Margate Miller Davidson, Wolfert Asker and the Holy Prophet (ﷺ).

*“Mahomet and His Successors”* written by Washington Irving is the biography of the Prophet of Islam (ﷺ) published in 1849. This book of Irving is consisted of two parts. The first part of the book consists of the life of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) whereas the second starts from Abū Bakar's era and lasts the triumphs of Mūsā b. Nuṣair.<sup>40</sup> This is stated in the preface of the book that the majority of the information for this work was derived from Spanish sources, as well as from Gagnier's translation of the Arabian historian Abulfeda, which the author discovered in the Jesuits' library at the Convent of St. Isidro in Madrid.<sup>41</sup>

**12. Charles Mills (1788-1826)**

Charles Mills was a historian and a man of letters of his age. He was born on 29 July 1788 at Croom's Hill, Greenwich, to a surgeon named Samuel Gillman Mills. He started his practical life as a lawyer but soon took an interest in literature and particularly history. He died on 9 October 1826 at Southampton. "A History of Muhammedanism" (1817); "The History of the Crusades" (1826); and "The History of Chivalry, or Knighthood and its Times" (1825) are his major writings.<sup>42</sup>

The first book includes the life of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and has been translated into French by G. Buisson,<sup>43</sup> while the second is consisted of two volumes in which Charles Mills has tried to point out a false picture of Islam. According to his statement, the propagation of religion was the active principle of Islamism, and war was the instrument. The Christian nations subjugated by the Moslems were treated by their conquerors with stronger feelings.<sup>44</sup> Further, he ratifies that the Muslims are infidels in the Christian sight and produce a wrong image of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). He claims that the phrases "pagan" and "paynim" were frequently used by medieval writers to describe people who adhered to the teachings of the Arabian Prophet. The Westerners believed that Muhammad was worshipped along with a multiplicity of other deities by the Saracens.<sup>45</sup>

**13. Armand –Pierre Caussin De Perceval (1795-1871)**

Armand-Pierre was a French orientalist. He was born in Paris on 13 January 1795 to Jean Jacques Antoine Caussin de Perceval who was an Arabic professor at the College de France. He visited Lebanon and Constantinople in 1814. He started his teaching life at the School of Living Oriental in 1821 and was appointed as an Arabic professor at the College de France in 1837. He died in Paris on 15 January 1871. His most popular writing is a historical work on Islam in French which name is "Essai Sur l'histoire des Arabes avant l'Islamisme, Pendant l'époque de Mahomet."<sup>46</sup> It can be entitled in English as "The Story of the Arabs before Islam While the Time of Muhammad." This book consists of three volumes. The first is related to Arabian history before Islam and till the migration of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) to Madīna, while the second volume consists of three chapters. The first is related to the life of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) in Madīna, the second to the age of Abū Bakr and the third is about the era of 'Umar. The writer has utilized in his writing the basic sources of Muslim authors like Ibn Ishāq, Ibn Khaldūn, Ibn Sa'd, and Tabarī, etc.<sup>47</sup>

**14. Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881)**

Thomas Carlyle was a philosopher, historian and famous writer of his time. He was born on December 1795 in Ecclefechan, a small village of South Scotland. His father's name was James Carlyle who was a legendary stonemason of his age.<sup>48</sup> At the age of eight years, his father put him into Annan Grammar School (also known as Annan Academy), where he had been also a student.<sup>49</sup> In 1809 he joined Edinburgh University and in 1814 was appointed a mathematics teacher in Annan Academy.<sup>50</sup> He did work on various subjects in which history, fiction, literature and religious studies are included. He had a good contribution in articles. Leigh Hunt's Journal<sup>51</sup> was the paper in which he used to write.<sup>52</sup> In 1840 he delivered his well-known six lectures in London "On Heroes, Hero Worship, and the Heroic in History",<sup>53</sup>

The second lecture, delivered on Friday 8 May 1840, was about a brief introduction to the Prophet of Islam (ﷺ). In highlighting the status of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), he claims that the present view of Mahomet—that he was a cunning imposter and the very embodiment of falsehood—as well as the notion that his religion is nothing more than a collection of quack practices and nonsense—begins to seem implausible to everyone at this point.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, replying the charges put on the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) he professes, “When Pococke inquired of Grotius, where the proof was of that story of the pigeon, trained to pick peas from Mahomet’s ear, and pass for an angel dictating to him? Grotius answered that there was no proof!”<sup>55</sup>

### 15. John Adam Mohler (1796-1838)

Mohler was a German scholar, writer, and an expert theologian of his time. He was born on 6 May 1796 at Württemberg, Igersheim. He studied philosophy and theology at Lyceum, Ellwangen. Afterwards, he joined Tübingen University in 1817 where he, later on in 1822, served as a private lecturer of catholic religion and in 1828 as a full professor. In 1838, he was presented the chair of dean at Würzburg University but he could not continue the service and soon died on 12 April of the same year.<sup>56</sup>

J.A. Mohler left several writings on different topics among which “*On The Relation of Islam to the Gospel*” has a touch of the Holy Prophet’s life. This was translated into English by Johannes Philipp Menge which was published in 1847 from Calcutta. The goal of the book was to help lay the groundwork for a fair assessment of the Holy Prophet’s personality, his beliefs and motivations for spreading his new religion, and the nature and tenets of the system he built.<sup>57</sup> During the study of the book, it seems that Mohler, keeping in view the former writers, has discolored the real picture of Islam and tried to ascertain that Islam was derived from Christianity and Judaism.<sup>58</sup>

### 16. John Aiton (1797 – 1863)

John Aiton was born in June 1797 to Lanarkshire (1760-1848), a sheriff substitute to Lanarkshire, at Strathaven. He was very interested in religious writings which is why he chose history for himself. His first work “*A Refutation of Mr. Robert Owen’s Objections to Christianity*” became the reason for his benefice from Lord Douglas. His other famous writings are the following:

The Life and Times of Alexander Henderson (1836); Clerical Economics 1842); Eight Weeks in Germany (1842); *The Lands of the Messiah, Mahomet, and the Pope* (1852); St. Paul and His Localities in their Past and Present Condition (1856).<sup>59</sup>

In his writing, *The Lands of the Messiah, Mahomet, and the Pope*, John Eaton has tried to prove no difference between Islamic Jihad and Christian wars. According to him, both are based on just for achieving eternal bounties in paradise. He writes;

*Those who engaged in that war were promised the forgiveness of all their sins; and as Mahomet had promised immediate admission into heaven to all who should die fighting for him, the Pope, in order not to be behind Mahomet, made a similar promise to all his warriors.*<sup>60</sup>



**17. William Cooke Taylor (1800-1849)**

Taylor was a historian, poet, scholar and an assorted writer of his age. He was born on 16 April 1800 at Youghal, Ireland, to Richard Taylor who was a manufacturer. He got his early education from his native city and then in 1817 joined Trinity College, Dublin. He completed his B.A. in 1825. At the age of 49 on 12 September 1849 he died in Herbert Street, Dublin.

Taylor wrote nearly thirty books on different historical topics. He edited the catechisms of William Pinnock among which “The Catechism of the Christian Religion” and the second “The Ancient and Modern History of the Jews” are the most popular. His few famous historical works are as under:

History of France (1830) ; History of the Civil Wars in Ireland (1831) ; Readings in Biography (1833) ; History of Muhammedanism and its Sects (1834) ; History and Overthrow of the Roman Empire (1836) Illustrious of the Bible from the Monuments of Egypt (1838) ; Popular History of British India (1842) etc.<sup>61</sup>

“*History of Muhammedanism and Its Sects*” is consisted of 15 chapters in which Taylor has described the political state of Arab before the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and at the time of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), declaration of Prophethood, the four caliphs and Islamic effects on science, literature and civilization. Taylor has misrepresented the religious status of the Holy Prophet’s mother. He describes that Amina, the mother of Mohammed, was a Jew, and converted to Christianity by the Syrian monk, Sergius, and because of this situation, the Holy Prophet started his religion from Christianity.<sup>62</sup>

**18. Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer (1801-1888)**

Fleischer was born on 21 February 1801 at Schandau, Saxony, Germany. He got an education in theology and oriental languages from the University of Leipzig. Besides German, he had good command over Arabic, Turkish, and Persian as well. In 1836, he was presented the post of professor of Arabic and oriental languages at Leipzig University. He died on 10 February 1888 and was buried in Leipzig.<sup>63</sup> ‘Abulfeda’s *Historia ante Islamica*, ‘Beidhawi’s *Commentary on the Koran*’, and ‘Ali’s *Hundred Sayings*’ are the most important among his works on Islam.<sup>64</sup>

The first one is the German translation of *Al-Bidāyah al Nihāya* written by Imām Ibn Kathīr and it took him four years to complete (1831-34), while the second is the translation of *Anwār al-Tanzīl wa Asrār al Tāwīl*, *Tafsīr Baḍāwī* by Imām ‘Abdullah b. ‘Umar Baḍāwī which took two years (1846-48).

**19. Gustav Leberecht Flügel (1802-1870)**

Flügel was born on 18 February 1802 in Butzch, Germany. He achieved his early education in his native city while philology and theology at Leipzig University. From Vienna and Paris he studied oriental languages and here in Vienna was appointed in 1851 to make a catalog of Arabic, Turkish, and Persian manuscripts. He died in 1870 at Dresden. ‘An Edition of the Qur’ān, ‘Lexicon of Haji Khalifa, a Latin Translation, and ‘Translation of *Kitab- al-Fihrist*’ are his popular works.<sup>65</sup>

**20. Pascual De Gayangos Y Arce (1809-1897)**

He was a Spanish scholar and born on 21 June 1809 at Seville. He got an early education in 1822 from Pone-le-Voy and in 1828 started Arabic. In 1833 he was appointed as a translator in the Spanish treasury, in England. He stayed at Madrid University for a long time as an Arabic professor from 1843 to 1881. He had an interest in politics and in this regard, he was a senator of the District Huelva. On 14 October 1897, he died in London. His most famous and important writing from him is *“Almakkari’s History of the Mohammedan Dynasties in Spain.”*<sup>66</sup>

**21. Ambrose Lisle March Phillipps De Lisle (1809-1878)**

Ambrose Lisle, a Catholic Christian, was born at Garendon on 17 March 1809. He achieved his initial education from South Croxton and joined the Roman Catholic Church in 1824. He also entered Trinity College, Cambridge in 1826. He was one of the founders of “The Association for the Promotion of the Unity of Christendom” which was established in 1837. After the death of his father, he assumed the name of De Lisle. He died on 5 March 1878 at Garendon and was buried in the church of St. Bernard’s monastery. Among his popular works “Mahometanism in its Relation to Prophecy” is included.<sup>67</sup>

This book consists of six chapters in which Ambrose Lisle has tried from his side to prove the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) as Antichrist in the light of Daniel’s prophesying. Describing these prophecies he strived to maculate the sacred personality of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) relating it with him. At a place, he states the prophesy of Daniel:

*“I considered the horns, and behold, another little horn sprung out of the midst of them: and three of the first horns were plucked up at the presence thereof: and behold eyes, like the eyes of a man, were in this horn, and a mouth speaking great things.....”*<sup>68</sup>

Who is this little horn? He writes:

*“Now, who is this little horn, of which such great and terrible things are here foretold? The holy fathers of the Church, with one consent, declare that it is that great opponent of God and of His Church which, in the language of the New Testament prophecies, is denominated Antichrist.”*<sup>69</sup>

Furthermore, explaining this Antichrist he puts out his inner nefariousness in these words:

*“But now it is time we should reply to the question, Is Antichrist still to come, or is he already come? I answer, he is come: and if the further question be put, Who then is he? I answer, without any doubt or misgiving whatever, Mahomet is he: Mahomet is the great Antichrist foretold in the Sacred Scriptures.”*<sup>70</sup>

In this way he has depicted the blessed Prophet (ﷺ) and his assertions are beyond the fact.

**22. Aloys Springer (1813-1893)**

Springer was born at Nassereit, Tyrol, on 3 September 1813. His father's name was Christopher Springer. He joined the University of Vienna in 1832 where he got a medical education and along with it learned oriental languages. He graduated in M.D. in 1841 from Leyden University and the same year worked on Al Mas’ūdī. In 1844 he accepted the chair of

the Principal of Mohhamaden College, Dehli, where he served for four years. He also worked as the Persian translator for the government from 1851 to 54. After 1858, he joined the University of Berne as a Professor of oriental languages and during the job, he wrote a German book entitled *“Leben und Lehre den Mohammed”*. He passed away on 19 December 1893 at Heidelberg.<sup>71</sup> He had deep observation of oriental knowledge. His famous writings are as under:

Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems, from the Arabic (1841) ; Technical Terms of the Sufees (1844) ; Selections from Arabic Authors (1845) ; The History of Mahmud Ghaznah (1847) ; Gulistan of Sa‘adi (1851) ; Life of Mohammed, from original sources (1851) etc.

The last one is on the biography of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) published in Alā Abād in 1851.<sup>72</sup> Though Springer has tried to explain the biography of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) from Islamic sources and quoted references from original books, he could not refrain from showing his inner nefariousness and prejudice. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) is the picture of dignity and chastity but Springer has tried to draw a bleak image of him.<sup>73</sup> At a place he states that the Prophet was not free from superstition; he believed in jinn, omens, and charms, and he had many superstitious habits.”<sup>74</sup>

### 23. Reinhart Pieter Anne Dozy (1820-1883)

The great Arabic scholar and historian of his day Reinhart P. A Dozy was born at Leiden in February 1820. He achieved his doctorate from the University of Leiden in 1844 and joined the very university as a professor of history in 1850. He had a good command of Arabic and history, which is why his writings are related to Arabian history. Among his major works a few are the following:

Ibn-Adhari’s History of Africa and Spain (1848-52, 3 volumes); Al Marrakushi’s Historie des Mussulmans (1861); Het Islamisme (1863); De Israeliten te Mekka; History of the Almohades (1881).<sup>75</sup>

“Het Islamisme” is the most prominent work of Dozy which is, in fact, a history of Islam. This book consists of 14 chapters. In the first chapter he described a brief history of Christianity and Judaism before the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and after that the biography of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) is narrated. Besides these aspects, the writer has stated different movements occurred in Islam like Ismaelites and Wahabism etc. Moreover, in some last chapters, Dozy has explained the effects of Islam in India, China, and the Western world.<sup>76</sup>

### 24. Richard Francis Burton

Richard Francis Burton was a famous personality of his era. He was, at a time, a writer, translator, geographer, soldier, traveler, poet, and linguist. He was born on 19 March 1821 in Torquay, a seaside town of Devon, England. He got his early education from Preparatory School, Richmond, Surrey.<sup>77</sup> He had a good command over almost 29 languages in European, Asian, and African languages.<sup>78</sup> Burton entered the British Army and joined the East India Company. Here he spent his seven years as a British army officer and learned Gujrati, Sindhi, Saraiky, Punjabi, Marathi, and Persian.<sup>79</sup>

Burton worked on several dimensions like fiction, poetry, biography, history, and traveling. “History of Sindh” is a good work done by him.<sup>80</sup> In 1853 Burton visited Arab with a Muslim caravan in a Muslim garb. This traveling was based on his stay in India where he was

acquainted and impressed by the Muslims and Islamic traditions and he wished to go to Arabia.<sup>81</sup> After this tour, he wrote his feelings in his tremendous work *“Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina.”* His awareness of Arabic literature may be judged by reading the very first page of this book whereupon he set down a verse of Al-Mutanabbī, a great Arabic poet of the time of ignorance. That verse is as under:

الليل والنخيل والبيدا تعرفنى  
والسيف والضيف والقرطاس والقلم<sup>82</sup>

## Conclusion

Orientalists have written numerous biographies of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) in languages other than English. For this reason, anyone who cannot directly benefit from Arabic or Muslim books in general studies Western literature and extrapolates conclusions about the Prophet (ﷺ) from the information that Orientalists want to provide. As a result, the proper perception of Islam won't be propagated, and subsequent generations who see Islam through the biased lenses of these Orientalists will also continue to be cautious of it. What spurred the criticisms of the medieval Orientalists? Additionally, some of the absurd and incorrect beliefs that the defeated soldiers of the crusade spread throughout Europe were taken by the playwrights. Still, each of them conjured up stories when they felt compelled to. It was considered a service to Christianity to distort Islam and to denigrate it, to expose it as a false religion, and to carry out its evils. In light of these conditions, Muslim researchers and scholars must provide the world with an accurate and scholarly assessment of Western publications and the true story of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) so that the next generation of Muslims might know the truth.

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<sup>2</sup> Vitalis, Ordericus, *The Ecclesiastical History of England and Normandy*, edit by, Thomes Forester, Henry G. Bohn, London, vol.3, pp.175-76

<sup>3</sup> White, Joseph, *A Comparison of Mahometism and Christianity*, Oxford, 1811, p.9 ; Mills, Charles, *History of the Crusades*, Longman Press, London, 1821, 2nd edi, vol.1, p.23

<sup>4</sup> Curtis, Michael, *Orientalism and Islam*, Cambridge University Press, UK, 2009, p.31

<sup>5</sup> Margoliouth, David Samuel, *Mohammed and the Rise of Islam*, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1905, p.iii

<sup>6</sup> Stephen, Leslie, *Dictionary of National Biography*, Macmillan & Co, 1885, vol.1, pp. 122, 131-132

<sup>7</sup> Smith, Sidney Lee, *Dictionary of National Biography*, Elder & Co, London, 1898, vol.LV, pp.116-117

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p.117

<sup>9</sup> Stubbe, Henry, *An Account of the Rise and Progress of Mahometanism*, edit by, Sharānī, Hāfīz Maḥmūd Khān, Luzac & Co. 1911, p.74

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, pp.74-75

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p.75

<sup>12</sup> *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th edi, University of Cambridge, New York, 1910-1911, vol.22, pp.315-316

<sup>13</sup> Prideaux, Humphrey, *The True Nature of Imposture in the Life of Mahomet*, 3rd EDI, London, p.15

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p.35

<sup>15</sup> *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, vol.26, pp.1048-1049

<sup>16</sup> Toland, John, *Nazarenus, or Jewish, Gentile and Mahometan Christianity*, London, 1718, p.13

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p.2

<sup>18</sup> Bodley, *The Messenger*, p.77

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, vol.2, p.779

<sup>20</sup> *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, vol.18 , p.199

<sup>21</sup> Stephanie, Mathilde Hilger, *Strategies of Response and the Dynamics of European Literary Culture 1790-1805*, Rodopi, 2009, p.100

- <sup>22</sup> Voltaire, Letters to César de Missy, 1 September 1743, Didier, 1856, vol.1, p.450
- <sup>23</sup> The Encyclopedia Britannica, vol.11, pp.928,931
- <sup>24</sup> Low, D.M, Edward Gibbon (1737-1794, Chatto & Windus, London, 1937, p.7
- <sup>25</sup> Gibbon, Edward, Life of Mahomet, edit by O.W. Wight, 1859, p.x
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid, p.iii
- <sup>27</sup> Dictionary of National Biography, v.LXI, p.62
- <sup>28</sup> White, Joseph, Sermons Containing a View of Christianity and Mahometanism, 2nd EDI, J, Robinsons, London, p.47
- <sup>29</sup> 3 Ibid, p.60
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid, pp.73, 80
- <sup>31</sup> Dictionary of National Biography,1891,v.XXVI, pp.368-69
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid
- <sup>33</sup> Higgins, Godfrey, An Apology for the Life and Character of ...Mohamed, St. Paul's Churchyard, 1829, p.3
- <sup>34</sup> Burstein, Andrew, The Original Knickerboucker: The Life of Washington Irving, Basic Books, 2007, p.7
- <sup>35</sup> American Revolution started in 1765 and continued till 1783 due to political disturbance during which some colonies agreed to overthrow the dominance and monarchy of Great Britain and founded the United States of America.
- <sup>36</sup> George Washington (1732-1799) was the very first president of America and one of the founders of USA. He was, during his lifetime, called the father of Nation.
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- <sup>38</sup> Williams, Stanley , The Life of Washington Irving, Oxford University Press,1935, vol.1, p.77
- <sup>39</sup> Hellman, George , Washington Irving, Esquire, Alfred A. Knopf, 1925, p.257
- <sup>40</sup> Irving, Washington, Mahomet and His Successors, The Co-Operative Publication Society, New York, 1849, pp.3-12
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid, p.15
- <sup>42</sup> Dictionary of National Biography, vol.xxxvii, p.444
- <sup>43</sup> Ibid
- <sup>44</sup> Mills, Charless, The History of the Crusades, 2nd EDI, Longman Press, London, 1821, v.1, p.18
- <sup>45</sup> Ibid, p.23
- <sup>46</sup> The Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th edi, University of Cambridge, New York, 1910-1911, vol.5, p.558
- <sup>47</sup> Cassuin de Perceval, Armand-Pierre, Essai sur l'histoire des Arabes avant l'Islamisme, Librairie de Firmin Dipot, Paris, 1848, vol.2, pp.12,17
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- <sup>49</sup> Ibid, p.36
- <sup>50</sup> Shepherd, Richard Herne, The Bibliography of Carlyle, Elliot Stock, London, 1881, p.viii
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- <sup>53</sup> Ibid, p.171
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- <sup>59</sup> Ibid, p.207
- <sup>60</sup> Eaton, John, The Lands of the Messiah, Mahomet, and the Pope, Fullarton & Co. Edinburgh, 1853, p.535
- <sup>61</sup> Dictionary of National Biography, edit by Sidney Lee, Smith, Elder & Co, London, 1898, vol.LV, pp.478-479
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- <sup>63</sup> The Encyclopedia Britannica, vol.10, p.494
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<sup>65</sup> Ibid, vol.10, p.574

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, vol.11, p.542

<sup>67</sup> Dictionary of National Biography, vol.XIV,pp.321-322

<sup>68</sup> De Lisle, Ambrose Lisle March Phillipps, Mahometanism in its Relation to Prophecy, Charles Dolman, London, 1855, p.24 ; The Book of Daniel, 7:8

<sup>69</sup> De Lisle, Mahometanism in its Relation to Prophecy, p.25

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, p.50

<sup>71</sup> Dictionary of National Biography, vol.LIIL,pp.425-426

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, vol.LIIL, p.425

<sup>73</sup> Springer, Aloys, The Life of Mohammad, from original sources, Presbyterian Mission Press, Alā Abād, 1851, p.91

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, p.90

<sup>75</sup> The Encyclopedia Britannica, vol.viii, Pp.462-463

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<sup>78</sup> Lovell, Mary Sybilla, A Rage to Live: A Biography of Richard and Isabel Burton, Norton and Co, New York, 1998, p.xvii

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid. Title page