

THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD'S LEADERSHIP

By:

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Abstract

The article is a logical and positive argument to William Montgomery Watt's Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman,¹ which represents to the Western reader imperfect depiction about the Prophet Muhammad's successful statesmanship as part of his Prophethood. This claim represents a secular ground that the Prophet Muhammad has politically founded Islam. In spite of misunderstanding of Islamic leadership as being religious, Prophet Muhammad cannot be branded as a statesman. It is fairly clear that the Prophet's leadership is a worldly method which is applicable in real life even without being an Islamic state. The Prophet Muhammad's techniques in his leadership played a significant part in achieving his goal to deliver the message of Islam to the world. He had all the necessary leadership attributes for success in every aspect of life. Allah the Almighty says, 'Most certainly, you have in the messenger of Allah an excellent pattern (of behaviour)'²

Keywords: Allah, Muhammad, Divinity, Prophethood, leadership.

Introduction

The light of divinity emerged in Arabia with the mission of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The world was in competition between the Roman and Persian imperialism down to the seventh century. The pagan Arabs had not been affected by the evil influence of the natural social systems and civilisations of the great nations of the world. On social basics, they had good human qualities of that time. They had been brave, generous, and honest, lovers of freedom and politically independent - not subject to the hegemony of any of the imperial powers. There were not also certain undesirable aspects of their life as well. For thousands of years, neither a prophet had risen among Arabs, nor had emerged a reformer who might have civilised them and removed impurities of their moral life. Centuries of free and autonomous desert life had raised and promoted extreme ignorance among them. They had, thus, become so permanent in their traditions of ignorance so that to improve the religious principles was beyond ordinary. Meantime, the light of divinity sparked in the lanes of Makkah to renew their ancestral teachings of Ibrahim in Arabia.

There is a common misconception, mostly among Western writers, that Islam owes its origin to Prophet Muhammad. And some of the writers even go to the extent of calling him 'the founder of Islam.'³ This is a parody of the truth. Islam has been the religion of all the Prophets of Allah, the Creator. They all have brought the same message from Him. Prophets have not been the founders of Islam or their sects. They have only been the messengers of Islam. The religion of God is Islam which conveyed to mankind by the truthful Prophets. Unfortunately man's outlook towards God's Prophets has been strange. He has abused

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¹ William Montgomery Watt (1909 –2006) is a Scottish historian, an Emeritus Professor in Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Edinburgh. Watt is one of the foremost non-Muslim interpreters of Islam in the West. He is an enormously powerful scholar in the field of Islamic studies. Watt's comprehensive biography of the Prophet Muhammad, "*Muhammad at Mecca*" (1953) and "*Muhammad at Medina*" (1956) are considered to be pioneer studies in such a field. Watt's *Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman*, is designed for the general audience, not for university dons.

² *The Glorious Qur'ān*: 33:21.

³ David Samuel Margoliouth. *Mohammed and the Rise of Islam*. (Putnam,1905), p.88.

them and declined to accept their teachings. Some of the prophets had been ousted out of their lands; some had been murdered: some, faced with coldness, advocated the whole of their lives without prevailing more than a few followers. But although the aggravation, disrespect and humiliation of the prophets were idle, they did not give up spreading the message of Allah to His people. Their tolerant determination at last accomplished large groups of people and nations converted to their faith.

Prophet Muhammad was a realistic man dealt with words and language that Arabs and non-Arabs read day and night. The Qur'ān is a great legacy for understanding the message of God. His mission does not go far from other heavenly religions. His Prophethood is the last as he informed in the Qur'ān and it is true. His life was for the sake of conveying the message which was and is still valid and acceptable for all generations. The Prophet's techniques in his leadership have played a significant part in achieving his goal to deliver the message of Islam to the world. A casual reading of the sources might suggest that Islam had grown out of the petty preaching in Medina. By time, Islam, in the whole of Arabia, had become entangled in the network of the politics of the great powers of the day.

Muhammad, the Man

Muhammad was born in Makkah on the 29th of August, 570 CE/17 Rabi'ul Awwal (Friday) into an Arabian tribe that worshipped idols. He was born an orphan but belonged to the noblest of the Arabian tribes. In particular, he was always solicitous for the poor and the needy, the widow and the orphan, the slave and the downtrodden. At twenty, he was already a successful businessman, and soon became the director of camel business caravans for a wealthy widow called Khadijah Bint Khuwaylid. When he was twenty-five, his employer recognized his merit, and proposed marriage. Even though she was fifteen years older than him, he married her, and as long as she lived, remained a devoted husband. Diwan Chand Sharma, a Hindu scholar, says: 'Muhammad was the soul of kindness, and his influence was felt and never forgotten by those around him.'⁴ Moreover, Dr. Gustav Weil (1808-1889), a German orientalist, says that the Prophet 'Muhammad was a shining example to his people. His character was pure and stainless. His house, his dress, his food - were characterized by a rare simplicity. He would receive no special mark of reverence from his companions, nor would he accept any service from his slave which he could do for himself. He was accessible to all and at all times. He visited the sick and was full of sympathy for all. Unlimited was his benevolence and generosity. He was also his caring for the welfare of the community.'⁵

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) had come out as a complex individual, complete with occasional doubts about his mission and methods. When the first revelation came to him, he was accused of being possessed by a jinn or evil spirit. Despite being divinely inspired, Prophet Muhammad insisted that he was just a man, something many Christians misunderstand. Therefore, Westerners had been referring to Islam as "Muhammadanism."⁶ He is an example of the best of men, but it is his message that makes Prophet Muhammad so important in the eyes of Muslims.

The Qur'ān means "the recitation." For Muslim tradition the Qur'ān is thus the word or speech of God, and the Prophet Muhammad himself must also have regarded it in that way. Allah the Almighty says, "*And most certainly, thou (O Muhammad) are of most sublime and exalted character.*"⁷ When he died at the age of 63, the whole of the Arabian Peninsula had changed from paganism and idol worship to the worship of the one God; from tribal quarrels and wars to solidarity and cohesion; from lawlessness and

⁴ Diwan Chand Sharma, *The Prophets of the East*, (Calcutta, 1935), p. 122.

⁵ See A. A. Al-Sheha, *Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah*, (Riyadh, Islamic Propagation Office in Rabwah, 2006), p. 56.

⁶ See the meaning of the word *Muhammadanism* in *The Cambridge History of Islam*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1970).

⁷ *The Glorious Qur'ān*: 68:4.

anarchy to disciplined living; from moral bankruptcy to the highest standards of moral excellence. Prophet Muhammad is the pride of humanity. For the past fourteen centuries, many thinkers, philosophers, scientists, and scholars, each a radiant star in our intellectual world, have stood behind him in respect and admiration, and taken pride in belonging to his community. Human history has never known such a complete transformation of a people or a place before or ever since. Thomas Carlyle states that 'the lies, which well-meaning zeal has heaped round this man, are disgraceful to ourselves only... His companions named him "Al-Amin, The Faithful." A man of truth and fidelity; true in what he did, in what he spoke and thought.'⁸

Prophet Muhammad's style of communication was as a world leader. The Encyclopaedia of Britannica calls him the most successful of all religious personalities of the world. He is an Arab man who has been contacted by the messenger of divinity, and served as an intermediary with humanity, delivering this newly founded knowledge from the supernatural entity to other people. The message that the Prophet conveyed is called a prophecy. He was a "foreteller" of the knowledge he got from a divine source. Muhammad is the last Prophet, who in Islam called the seal of the prophets. It is an exemplary life of the blessed Prophet Muhammad and his distinguished, exalted personality. The "water of life" for the salvation of humanity and he should be made known to everyone. George Bernard Shaw says: 'I have studied him - the wonderful man - and in my opinion far from being an anti-Christ, He must be called the saviour of humanity'.⁹

James Albert Michener (1907-1997), an American author of more than forty titles, says that the Prophet Muhammad was like other prophets: "Like almost every major Prophet before him, Muhammad served as the transmitter of God's word, sensing his own inadequacy. But the angel commanded "Read." So far as we know, Muhammad was unable to read or write, but he began to dictate those inspired words which would soon revolutionize a large segment of the earth: "There is one God." Michener finds out that Muhammad was devoted to his mission; "In all things Muhammad was profoundly practical. When his beloved son Ibrahim died, an eclipse occurred, and rumours of God's personal condolence quickly arose. Whereupon the Prophet Muhammad is said to have announced, "An eclipse is a phenomenon of nature. It is foolish to attribute such things to the death or birth of a human being." At Muhammad's own death an attempt was made to deify him, but the man who was to become his administrative successor killed the hysteria with one of the noblest speeches in religious history: "If there are any among you who worshipped Muhammad, he is dead. But if it is God you worshipped, He lives forever".¹⁰

Like Abraham, whom he used to say that he resembled, the Prophet Muhammad was mild, imploring, clement, and penitent,¹¹ as well as gentle to believers and full of pity and compassion for them.¹² Abraham was never angry with people, regardless of how much they tormented him. He wished good even for his enemies and implored God and shed tears in His Presence. Since he was a man of peace and salvation, God made the fire into which he was thrown cool and safe.¹³ Washington Irving (1783 -1859) was an American author, essayist, biographer and a historian in the early 19th century. In his book, *Mahomet and His Successors* (1850), Irving says that in his private dealings Muhammad was just; he treated friends and strangers, the rich and poor, the potent and the weak, with equity, and was beloved by

⁸.See Thomas Carlyle *Heroes and Hero Worship and the Heroic in History* on <http://www.readbookonline.net/read/54979/105978/>

⁹ George Bernard Shaw. "The Genuine Islam, Vol. 1, No. 81936. (London, n.d.),p. 97.

¹⁰ J. Albert Michener . "Islam: The Misunderstood Religion," in *Reader's Digest* (American edition), May 1955. (68-70).

¹¹ *The Glorious Qur'ān*, 11:75.

¹² *Ibid*, 9:128.

¹³ *Ibid*, 21:69.

the common people for the affability with which he received them, and listened to their complaints. Once the Meccan leaders came to him and said: 'If you meet with us on a day when others, especially those poor ones, are not present, we may talk to you about accepting your religion.'¹⁴ They despised poor Muslims like Bilal, Ammar, and Habbab, and desired special treatment. The Messenger rejected such proposals without a second thought. The verses revealed addressed him were as follows: '*Send not away those who call on their Master morning and evening, seeking His Face*',¹⁵ and '*Persevere together with those who call on their Master morning and evening, seeking His Face*'.¹⁶ 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*'.¹⁷ Yet his character is a significant model in the popular Muslim view. The Prophet was a man who had been marked out from his early youth, even from before his birth, by supernatural signs and qualities. Even when one views the Prophet Muhammad in an entirely secular perspective, he still remains a superhero.

The Prophethood of Muhammad

The Prophethood of Muhammad has been in question and for investigation in the West. Orientalists used to create doubts to reject Islam. For instance, Watt claims to examine Muhammad's Prophethood in a scholarly approach. Watt comments on the Islamic identification of God and the Spirit changed overnight. There is no investigation over this issue, but what he has stated in his writing that Muhammad did not recognise the Spirit but later he may have thought that it was a superior kind of angel called the Spirit. Finally he identified it with the angel Gabriel. Watt concludes that 'the change of interpretation is probably due to Muhammad who has become aware of the Jewish teaching that God cannot be seen.' Watt assumes that these precise interpretations of the visions, however, do not matter; what is important is the support these gave to Muhammad's belief in himself as a man who had been given a special commission by God'.¹⁸ Watt understands out of the story of the monk Bahira, as an 'essential legend,' which 'depicts truly the kind of world in which Muhammad lived'.¹⁹ In this confusion for Watt, one realizes that if the story happened to Christ, he would not need to question it.

Watt unjustly claims that Prophet Muhammad had pretended to receive revelations from God.²⁰ Watt proclaims in his book to raise severe concerns over 'How are we then to attain to a sound view of Muhammad's personality? If he was neither a messenger from God, nor (as a scholarly English dean called him in 1697) an old lecher, what was he? It is not an easy question to answer. It involves not only judgements about facts, but also theological and moral judgements. He refutes historical facts by simple words. He says 'to say that Muhammad was sincere does not imply that he was correct in his beliefs. A man may be sincere but mistaken.'²¹ Watt is taken by the early Western Orientalists. He illustrates that 'the modern Westerner has no difficulty in showing how Muhammad may have been mistaken.'²² Watt inconsistently contradicts his individual investigation. He denies the possibility of a divinity delivered to a poor Arab Bedouin in a desert land. He says, 'for a man in the remote seventh-century Mecca thus to believe that he was called by God to be a prophet was something stupendous.'²³ On the other hand, what Watt intends to rise up is

¹⁴ Washington Irving, *Mahomet and His Successors* Vols. II (New York: G.P. Putman's Sons, 1868), p. 275.

¹⁵ *The Glorious Qur'ān*, 6:52.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 18:28

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 3:31

¹⁸ William Montgomery Watt. *Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman*, (Oxford, 1961), p. 3.

¹⁹ *Ibid*.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 59.

²¹ *Ibid*, 17.

²² *Ibid*.

²³ Watt, *op cit*, p. 2.

the similarity of the Qur'ān with the Biblical or Judaeo-Christian tradition.²⁴ As an investigator Watt claims to examine the Qur'ān out of the surface of words and stories of old prophets or faithful answer for confused worshippers over a crisis like the divinity of Jesus. After faith, the second important requirement of religion is purification of morals. Islam has a solution for all world problems. This is what is termed as a righteous deed. *Shariah* is the system of social, economical and political outlines. The system of government of a state is based upon this quoted verse: 'And their system is based on their consultation.'²⁵ The wide meaning of this short verse takes in the guidance attained from it about the political set-up visualized by Islam that needs a detailed discussion.

Some Western writers, knowingly, disregard Islamic social and economic, political law in the Qur'ān. For the superiority of Islam, they claim that Islam avoids any suggestion of inferiority since there is no mere pale reflection of the older religions. They believe that Islam arises from the fusion of Biblical elements with an independent movement of the human spirit arising from local conditions. All these aspects must be retained in explaining the birth of Islam.²⁶ On the contrary, Hans Kung states 'there is no doubt that Muhammad was an authentic Prophet, in many respects not dissimilar to the Prophets of Israel.'²⁷ But Muslims attach great importance to the fact that Muhammad does not stand at the centre of Islam as Jesus Christ stands at the centre of Christianity. For Muslims, Allah's word is the Qur'an which in its original version and it forms the centre of Islam.

One of the common allegations against Prophet Muhammad is that he was an impostor, who was to satisfy his ambition and lust propagated religious teachings which he himself knew to be false. Such insincerity makes the development of the Islam incomprehensible. This point was first vigorously made over a hundred years ago by Thomas Carlyle in his lectures, 'On Heroes,' and it has since been increasingly accepted by scholars. Only a profound belief in himself and his mission explains Prophet Muhammad's readiness to endure hardship and persecution during the Meccan period when from a secular point of view, there was no prospect of success. Without sincerity how could he have won the allegiance and even devotion of men of strong and upright character like Abu-Bakr and 'Umar? For the theist there is a further question; how God could have allowed a great religion like Islam to develop on a basis of lies and deceit. There is thus a strong case for holding that Muhammad was sincere. If in some respects he was mistaken, his mistakes were not due to deliberate lying or imposture.²⁸

Many orientalist such as Lewis, Muir, Margoliouth and Watt maintain their opinions on the falsehood of Islam. For instance, Watt 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 had become much Jewish than the Judaism. On the other hand, Watt declares his doubts on the Prophethood of Muhammad. He says, 'I do, however, believe that Muhammad, like the earlier prophets, had genuine religious experiences. I believe that he really did receive something directly from God. As such, I believe that the Qur'ān came from God, that it is divinely inspired. Muhammad could not have caused the great upsurge in religion that he did without God's blessing.'²⁹

²⁴ Ibid, 55

²⁵ *The Glorious Qur'ān*, 42: 38.

²⁶ Watt, *op cit*, p. 55.

²⁷ Hans Kung, *Tracing the Way Spiritual Dimensions of the World Religions* Translated by John Bowden (London, 1999). p.249.

²⁸ Watt, *op cit*, p. 229.

²⁹ See (Interview: William Montgomery Watt) Alastair McIntosh by http://www.alastairmcintosh.com/articles/2000_watt.htm)

The Prophet is the personification of divine compassion, one sent by Allah as a mercy for all worlds. Prophet Muhammad is like a source of light in an all-omnipresent gloom. Whoever insists to this spring can take as much water as required to please their thirst, to become purified of all their sins, and to become lighted with the light of faith. Mercy was like a magic key in his hands; for with it he opened hearts that were so combined and dulled that no one thought they could be opened. 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 of 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 turns 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.³⁰

There is no similarity between the Qur'ān and other scriptures on earth. The Qur'ānic themes have no parallel in Testaments. 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.³¹

The earliest verses of the Qur'ān are about monotheism that stands within the tradition of Judaeo-Christian theology with its conceptions of God, the Creator, of resurrection and judgement, and of revelation. In later verses the dependence on the Biblical tradition becomes even more stained, for they hold some material from the Old and New Testaments. For Christian investigators, this point of view establishes some complications to understand the reason for Prophet Muhammad's preaching to begin about the year 610. The Prophet Muhammad set his sights on conquering the hearts and minds of the Meccans.

Like many other Western orientalisks, Watt strongly insists that the Judaeo-Christian influences may have affected Prophet Muhammad. The possibility of reading the Bible or other Jewish or Christian books may be ruled out. Historians hold that the Prophet was unable to read and write. But this assertion is suspect to the modern Western scholar. They realize that it is made to support the production of the Qur'ān as a miraculous scripture that no illiterate person could ever have done by himself. In contrast, it is known that many Meccans were able to read and write, and there is, therefore, an assumption that a competent trader, as Prophet Muhammad, knew something of these arts. Although it is certain that the Prophet had never read the Bible, it is unlikely that he had ever read any other books. Such information, then, as he had of Judaeo-Christian theology must have come to him vocally. The form of the evangelic material in the Qur'ān does not mean that he has received education about religions. This Qur'ānic material does not even belong to any Christian or Jewish sect. In contrast it strongly criticises the Christians and Jews for their theological violation of revelation.

The period between the Prophet Jesus and Prophet Muhammad is five hundred years. Nevertheless Christians are waiting to have a prophecy to get the Messiah back or new prophet called patriarch. Watt

³⁰ *The Glorious Qur'ān*, 57:1-6.

³¹ *Ibid*, 42:11.

tries to avoid this Christian informative promise. He unfairly claims that 'after Muhammad had publicly come forward as a prophet and had claimed to be preaching the same message in essentials as Moses and Jesus, he took advantage of such opportunities as he had in order to increase his factual knowledge of the contents of the Bible by questioning Jews and Christians although he always maintained that the wording of the Qur'ānic references to Biblical stories came to him by revelation.'³² To refute the historical facts that Prophet Muhammad was unable to read or write, Watt's stand is weak enough to get a single reliable source of oral inspiration to the Biblical information, though Watt realizes 'among the more intellectual Meccans some familiarity with Biblical conceptions.'³³

To get down to the conclusion of the Judaeo-Christian influence, Watt goes to the idea that 'a little before the time of Muhammad there are said to have been some Arabs who set out to discover the true religion, which was believed to be some forms of monotheism; and the early passages of the Qur'ān assume that the Lord of the Ka'bah, worshipped as such, is identical with God, the Creator of all things.' Out of this feeling Watt shows that 'in certain circles in Mecca men had already accepted a vague monotheism... The monotheism was vague, however, because there was no specific form of worship attached to it and because it involved no specific renunciation of polytheism.' However, Watt concludes 'that Muhammad received his knowledge of Biblical conceptions in general (as distinct from the details of some of the stories) from the intellectual environment of Mecca and not from reading or from the communication of specific individuals. Thus, Islam in a sense belongs to the Judaeo-Christian tradition because it sprang up in a milieu that was permeated by Biblical ideas.'³⁴

No doubt that the methods of teaching and the lawful codes of different Prophets varied in line with the needs and the stage of culture of the people among whom they were hoisted. The particular teachings of each Prophet were determined by the kind of evils, which he was trying to destroy. When people were in the primitive stages of society, civilisation and scholarly improvement, their laws and regulations were simple; they were modified and improved as the society changed and developed. Such differences were, however, only superficial. The basic teachings of all religions were the same, i.e. belief in the Oneness of God adherence to a life of piety, goodness and peace, and belief in life after death with its just mechanism of reward and punishment.

In the Qur'ān, it is given a new turn and meaning; a monotheist who is neither a Jew nor a Christian. The Christians continued to use it for 'pagan', and to taunt the Muslims with it. This may have been why it passed out of favour with the Muslims. For a time they were content to say they followed, the religion of Abraham, the *Hanif*. Eventually, however, they came to prefer the form 'the religion of Abraham, the *Hanif* or the first Muslim'. A Muslim is a participle meaning 'surrendered' [to God]. It was appropriate to apply it to Abraham, who along with his son whom God had told him to sacrifice 'surrendered himself (to Allah).'³⁵ *Islam* is the corresponding verbal noun with the meaning 'surrender (to Allah)' and is a good name for a religion. Islam is the name had been given to Muhammad's religion in the Medinan period.

The Qur'ān repeated this call in very clear and unequivocal terms in a Medinan revelation when it invited the People of the Book, Christians and Jews, to join hands with the Muslims to serve Him as to be done in the common cause of the divine religions, which form an unbreakable chain of divine blessings for humanity. According to the Qur'ān, it is essential to make up a Muslim to have faith in all Prophets and Messengers sent by Allah, the Almighty. A Muslim has to believe in the Prophethood of Abraham,

³² Watt, *op cit*, p. 40.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 41.

³⁵ *The Glorious Qur'ān*, 37: 103.

Moses, Jesus and all other biblical prophets to remain within the faith of Islam. This conviction is indispensable to highlight the continuity of this chain of Prophethood which is unbreakably connected. As mentioned in the Qur'ān, it was to emphasise this relation further, that the coming of the last Messenger and the revelation of the last and the perfect message had been foretold by earlier prophets and divine messages. On the basis of such Qur'ānic statements, Muslim scholars have been engaged in the study of earlier religious scriptures to find out verses containing predictions about the advent of Prophet Muhammad.³⁶ Not only those statements of the Qur'ān, but also reports attributed to a number of companions who had entered the fold of Islam from the Jewish or Christian backgrounds had encouraged research in earlier scriptures. They came out with findings supporting the Qur'ānic and other Islamic pronouncements. Moreover, the majority of the Jewish and Christian scholars have not only been denying the existence of any such predictions in their scriptures, but they have also been refuting Muslim point of view, either through modifying the translations of the applicable words or verses or giving them different interpretations.

Watt also does not find in the total rejection of the Christian thought to the Prophethood of Muhammad the persuaded answer to stop the challenge of Islam as an attractive religion to simple men. He admits that 'to suppose Muhammad an impostor raises more problems' rather than solving them. He adds that 'Moreover, none of the great figures of history is so poorly appreciated in the West as Muhammad.'³⁷ Watt is devastated over the high morality and success of the character of Muhammad which made men believed in him and looked up to him as a leader because of his greatness and ultimate achievement. In fact, this is an evidence of the graceful mission of the Prophet which is always under aggression and prejudice by non-Muslims.

Some European views about Prophet Muhammad went to the extremes. It was in medieval times when his name, distorted to 'Mahound', which regarded as a name of the devil. This fictional portrait of "Mahound" for devil persisted at a popular level for a long time. This is not as strange as appears at first sight as a result of the first rush of expansion of the Arabs in the Christian lands after the Prophet Muhammad's death. From the eighth century onwards the Muslims were attacking Christendom along its southern and south-eastern borders. Medieval Christian ideas about Islam were a little bit better than war-propaganda. At their worst they were so manifestly false that they damaged the Christian cause. Fighting men were supported to believe that the Muslims were cruel and bestial savages; and when, in the contacts of war, they found among them not a few gentle knights that they leaned to lose faith in their cause. So from the twelfth century onwards scholars have been working to correct the crudest errors. Bernard Lewis, a twentieth century Orientalist, comments on the common Western Medieval attitude of Muhammad as an egocentric impostor.³⁸ Lewis does not believe that a very great group of Islamic World was begun by a self-centred impostor or a product of a purely supernatural explanation. Yet, like modern scholars, Watt has not eradicated that sense of the bitterness of the medieval attitude.

The conception of Islam as a restoration of the pure religion of Abraham offends modern Western standards of historical objectivity. Yet, from a sociological standpoint, it must be admitted that Islam is effective in its original environment. It has enabled Prophet Muhammad to uphold with only a slight modification to the set of ideas on which Islam is based, and to elude the hostile criticisms of the Jews. For early Arabs, Islam is the adaptation of a set of great ideas which leads to the creation of a new society. Islam is perfect. It has brought some social and economic laws which were not in other previous religions.

³⁶ *The Glorious Qur'ān*, 16: 4.

³⁷ Watt, *op cit*, p. 52.

³⁸ Bernard Lewis. *The Arabs in History*, (London,1984), pp.45-46.

Allah says that *'today I have completed to you your religion, and I have fulfilled my grace and I satisfy Islam as your religion.'*³⁹

The Prophet Muhammad's Leadership

Messenger Muhammad conveyed Islam, the religion of universal kindness. No other religion in history disseminated so rapidly as Islam. However, some self-proclaimed humanists say that Islam is "*a religion of the sword.*" This is exclusively wrong. The West has widely believed that this surge of religion was made possible by the sword. But no modern scholar accepts this idea, and the Qur'ān is explicit in the support of the freedom of conscience. Some modern scholars make a great deal of press freedom when writers unjustly mistreat Islam or when one of their own interests is spoiled, but they are silent when Muslims are slaughtered. Their world is built on individual interest. It should be pointed out that abusing the feeling of sympathy is just as destructive-sometimes even more destructive-than having no compassion at all. Watt admits that *'it would be wrong to dismiss Islam as a religion of fire and sword and not to see its religious substance. For there is no doubt that through Prophet Muhammad's time, the Arabs were raised to the level of an ethical high religion based on faith in one God and on a fundamental ethic of humanity.'*⁴⁰

Successful leaders get the love and trust of their people and are pursued by them in amount to their aptitude to solve their problems. These can be personal or public, or related to individual's private life, or the community's social, economic, and political affairs. Messenger Muhammad resolved all problems so skillfully and easily that no one confronted him. Although his people were by nature argumentative, ignorant, wild, and rebellious, he delivered a Message to them that was so grave that *'If We had sent down this Qur'an onto a mountain, you would have seen it humbled and rent asunder out of fear of God.'*⁴¹ He converted them into a harmonious community of peace, happiness, knowledge, and good morals. Reflect closely upon the utopias imagined in the West, such as *The Republic* (Plato), *Utopia* (Thomas Moore), and *Civitas Solis* (T. Campanella), and you will see that, in essence, they dreamed of Medina during the time of Prophet Muhammad. Humanity has never observed the equal of that society.

The Messenger was enormously a just man. His universal kindness did not avert him from carrying out divine justice, and his compassion and tolerance kept him from violating any Islamic rule or degrading himself. For example, during a military operation Usama ibn Zayd tossed down an enemy soldier to kill him. When he was about to kill him, the man spoke out his faith in Islam. Judging this to be the product of a fear of imminent death, Usama killed him. When the Messenger was informed of the incident, he reprimanded Usama severely: *"Did you cleave his heart open and see (if what you suspected is true)?"* He repeated this so many times. Usama said later: *"I wished I had not yet become a Muslim on the day I was scolded so severely."*⁴² This is only a story, of course. It is based on primitive ideas. It is the kind of story one expects to find among people who look upon all writing as akin to magic.

The key leadership skills displayed by Prophet Muhammad allow a reader to share his wisdom. The leadership skill intertwines the story of the Prophet's life together with the aspects of pure Bedouin culture and with ancient faith to supply key points for leaders and aspirant leaders. Prophet Muhammad had all

³⁹ *The Glorious Qur'ān*, 5:3.

⁴⁰ Watt, *op cit*, p. 248.

⁴¹ *The Glorious Qur'ān*, 59:21.

⁴² Al-Bokhari, M. *Sharah Fatah Al-Bary; Saheh Al-Bokhari* (Eygypt, Dar Al-Nahdha, 1991), p.: 236.

the necessary leadership qualities for success in every aspect of life. Allah the Almighty says, 'Most certainly, you have in the messenger of Allah an excellent pattern (of behaviour).'⁴³ The Prophet is the source from which flowed all later developments related to command, statecraft, religion, spiritual development, and so on in the Islamic world. In general, he has apparently the following qualities:

- Realism: his message and demand did not contradict reality. He understood the prevailing conditions as he actually was aware of the advantages and disadvantages.⁴⁴
- Absolute belief in his message: his conviction did never falter, and he did never renounce his mission.⁴⁵
- Personal courage: Even if left alone, he did have enough courage to persevere. When some of his pursuers reached the mouth of the cave in which he was hiding, Abu Bakr was afraid something would happen to the Messenger. However, the Prophet only said: *Don't worry, for God is with us.*⁴⁶
- Strong willpower and resolve: He did never experience even one moment of hopelessness.⁴⁷
- Awareness of personal responsibility: Everything was directed toward fulfilling this responsibility. In no way should he be seduced by the world's charms and life's attractions.⁴⁸
- Far-sighted and goal-centered: He was able to discern and plan for potential developments. He knew how to evaluate the past, present, and future to reach a new synthesis. He frequently changed their opinions that only spread chaos in the community.⁴⁹
- Personal knowledge of each follower: He was fully aware of each follower's disposition, character, abilities, shortcomings, ambitions, and weak points.⁵⁰
- Strong character and praiseworthy virtues: He was determined, but flexible, while carrying out decisions, and knew when to be unyielding and implacable or relenting and compassionate. He knew when to be earnest and dignified, when to be modest, and always be upright, truthful, trustworthy, and just.⁵¹
- No worldly ambitions or abuse of authority: He lived like the poorest members of their community. He did never discriminate among their subjects; rather, he strived to love them, prefer

⁴³ *The Glorious Qur'ān*, 33:21.

⁴⁴ Before Islam Muhammad as a man is named "*Al-Amin*," the Faithful.

⁴⁵ The Messenger rejected many proposals without a second thought. The verses revealed addressed him were as follows: *Send not away those who call on their Master morning and evening, seeking His Face* (Qur'ān: 6:52), and *Persevere together with those who call on their Master morning and evening, seeking His Face* (Qur'ān: 18:28). 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'ān,3:31).

⁴⁶ *The Glorious Qur'ān*, 9:40.

⁴⁷ On the day of Ohad battle, Muslims were defeated but Prophet Muhammad was determined and steady.

⁴⁸ Allah the Almighty says, "*And most certainly, thou (O Muhammad) are of most sublime and exalted character.*" (Qur'ān, 68:4).

⁴⁹ On the day of opening Makkah: when he conquered Mecca without bloodshed in the twenty-first year of his Prophethood, he asked the Meccan unbelievers: "How do you expect me to treat you?" They responded unanimously: "You are a noble one, the son of a noble one." He then told them his decision: "You may leave, for no reproach this day shall be on you. May God forgive you? He is the Most Compassionate of the Compassionate" (Ibn Hisham: 4:55; Ibn Kathir: 4:344).

⁵⁰ Pasquier, a British Arabist adds that it is hard to the West to understand why Muhammad has many detractors; 'in the fact, for centuries Christianity treated Islam as its worst enemy;' see Roger Du Pasquier, *Unveiling Islam*, (New York, 1995), 47

⁵¹ Michael Hart speaks admirably about the success of the Prophet Muhammad. He unfortunately received much animated criticism from some of his critics when he listed the Prophet Muhammad as the most influential person of all times in his book entitled *The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History*. Hart sums up that his 'choice of Muhammad to lead the list of the world's most influential persons may surprise some readers and may be questioned by others, but he was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular level' (Michael Hart. *The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History*, (New York: Hart Publishing Company Inc. 1978) p, 33).

them over themselves, and act so that their people will love them sincerely. He was faithful to their community, and secured their community's loyalty and devotion in return.⁵²

Some Western orientalists strongly believe that Prophet Muhammad's experiences as his supreme justification for thinking that he was 'the messenger of God'. They look at the Qur'ān as his visions to confirm the assertion that the passages which they claim to be revelations from God, indeed have objective validity, and are not delusions or deliberate inventions. They must also have meant much to Muhammad himself. When things were not going well with him and he took a pessimistic view of the future, he remembered these visions and renewed his faith in his divine commission.⁵³ For instance, Watt displays that the conduct of Muhammad as a Prophet was of 'his own human inspiration, not a godly guidance.' He says 'it is axiomatic that the new religious movement of Islam must somehow or other have risen out of the conditions in Mecca in Muhammad's time.'⁵⁴ In the experience of Watt, he feels that Muhammad must have been in need for some practices and doctrines to complete the embryonic religion.' Arthur Jeffery like other orientalists was captured by Christian thought about Prophet Muhammad. Jeffery assumes that 'If it is true, as we are often told, that Christianity is Christ, there is also a sense in which it is true that Islam is Muhammad. It was from his preaching in seventh-century Arabia that the religion got its start. Its Scripture, the Qur'ān, bears the impress of his mind, with its enthusiasms and limitations, from the first page to the last. The Sunnah enshrined in the corpus of Traditions, both canonical and uncanonical, is from one point of view nothing more than an attempt to get Muhammad's personal authority as backing for every detail of public or private conduct. In this sense it is an attempt to provide the faithful Muslim with material for an *imitatio* Muhammad is more far-reaching in its consequences than any *imitatio Christi* has ever been.'⁵⁵

The message of Islam was not only for the people of the Arabia, but also was intended to be universal. As Islam came after Christianity, there has been a great debate between Islam and Christianity as old as Islam itself. During the past fourteen hundred years, the encounter between Islam and Christianity has been overtaking throughout various phases. From the very beginning, Islam wanted to make this long encounter graduate into an eternal cooperation and understanding. Though the earliest Meccan phase of mission, Prophet Muhammad worked to convince pagans to give up idols, he tried to establish and maintain friendly relations with the Christians around him when chance presented itself. In fact, the first encounter of Islam with Christian theology occurred instantly after Prophet Muhammad received the first revelation. Within hours of his maiden experience with divine revelation, the Prophet met Waraqah ibn Nawfal, a cousin of his wife Khadijah and perhaps the only savant in his hometown having knowledge of Christianity.⁵⁶ Waraqah not only recognized the divine origin of the new message but also explained to his young visitor other dimensions of the Prophethood. What the old Christian divine accelerated to recognize and acknowledge is accurately what was anticipated from the followers of other divine faiths.

William Montgomery Watt's book, *Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman* is essentially an abridgement of the account of the biography of the Prophet Muhammad in his two volumes *Muhammad at Mecca* and

⁵² Some scholars wrote crucially about the Prophet Muhammad. William Muir, a nineteenth century scholar, asserts that the Prophet worked for his self-purpose. He says, 'there [in Medina] temporal power, aggrandisement, and self-gratification mingled rapidly with the grand object of the Prophet's life, and they were sought and attained by just the same instrumentality.' he charges the Prophet Muhammad of mechanized "messages from heaven" in order to justify a lust for women and reprisals against enemies, among other sins (see William Muir. *Life of Mahomet*. (Kessinger Publishing, 1878).p.583).

⁵³ Watt, *op cit*, pp. 14-15.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Arthur Jeffery, *Islam: Muhammad and His Religion*, (New York, 1958), pp.3-4.

⁵⁶ Saifur Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri. *Ar-Raheeq Al-Makhtum*. (dar Ihia al-trath: 1994),p.57.

Muhammad at Medina. In the book Watt supposes to reach a perfect conclusion. He says that 'In Muhammad, I should hold, there was a welling up of the creative imagination, and the ideas thus produced are to a great extent true and sound. It does not follow, however, that all the Qur'ānic ideas are true and sound.'⁵⁷ Watt is mistaken in declining the revelation of God to Muhammad. He thinks that the Qur'ānic information seem to be unsound. He identifies the revelation as an idea. For him, this revelation is 'the product of the creative imagination' which is 'superior to normal human traditions as a source of bare historical fact.' He adds that there are several verses in the Qur'ān⁵⁸ based on the effect these verses 'this is one of the reports of the unseen which We reveal to thee; thou didst not know it, thou nor thy people, before this.' Watt wants to conclude that to 'admit a claim that the creative imagination was able to give a new and truer interpretation of a historical event, but to make it a source of bare fact is an exaggeration and false.'⁵⁹ This idea is baseless as it is a conclusion of Christian polemics. It draws Watt's failure to get evidence over responding to the information and historical and scientific facts mentioned in the Noble Qur'ān.

For Western historians, the Islamic history counts for much among non-Muslims, and what apprehended in 632 or 656 may still be live issue for research. By the beginning of the third millennium, it seems probable that Islam will be one significant political force in the world. From the point of view of those who perceive God's hand within history, the Prophet Muhammad's life cannot be comprehended in other than positive terms. Subsequently, in an interfaith environment, more and more non-Muslims have come to know that God stands behind Islam and the Prophet Muhammad. Many people recognize the genuineness of the Prophet Muhammad's spiritual experience and leadership. Although they do not accept every aspect of Islamic faith, they decline the view that the Prophet Muhammad was insincere or he had invented Islam. They all realize the equality, justice and impartiality of the essence of Islam.

Conclusion

Prophet Muhammad was made by Allah, the Almighty as the best sample of world leader. He was given a rich and powerful language expresses high ideals with the most subtle aspects of Divine Knowledge. The Qur'ān impresses the heart of Arabs and non-Arabs. It was therefore, a manifestation of God's enormous wisdom that He chose Arabia as the birthplace of the world Prophet. Indeed, the spirituality of Islam is completely neglected by Western examiners. None of the orientalist discusses the theology of Islam or its laws as attractive points for many people to embrace or at least respect Islam. Therefore, the allegation against his successful Prophetic leadership as to please his ambition and his lust to make a state in Arabia is a baseless and incomprehensible conclusion.

A critic like Rudi Paret has the same opinion that "Muhammad was not a deceptor."⁶⁰ Paret also holds that 'the really powerful factor in Muhammad's life and the essential clue to his extraordinary success, were his unshakable belief from the beginning to the end that he had been called by God.' A conviction such as Paret's, which once firmly established, does not admit any uncertainty of Islamic accounts. The confidence with which Muhammad came forward as the perpetrator of God's will gave his words, commands and decrees to the new believers in Islam an authority which finally proved forceful. For Watt's hypothesis, he looks at the force of Muhammad as a military power which might be gained by others. Watt analyses the leadership of Muhammad in a secular vis. Some Western writers concluded that Prophet Muhammad was disappointed to complete his holy mission in Mecca. This allegation of moral defect is appended to events belonging to the Medinan and not to the Meccan period, but according to the

⁵⁷ Watt, *op cit*, p. 238.

⁵⁸ *The Glorious Qur'ān*, 2: 51; 3: 39; 12: 103.

⁵⁹ Watt, *op cit*, pp. 229-235.

⁶⁰ See Minou Reeves, *Muhammad in Europe*, (New York University Press, 2000).p. 9.

interpretation of these events described by orientalists as failures, Watt marks that there was ‘no failure in Muhammad to live to his ideals and no lapse from his moral principles.’⁶¹ In fact, the Meccan period was based on the use of the principle and reason. The Prophet was mistreated by his people in Mecca. Watt overlooks the conflict and decline of the pagan Arabs to the Prophethood of Muhammad. Watt jumps into conclusion by saying that it was an opportunity to the Prophet to have his time to be ‘the ruler of Medina.’⁶²

The present research recommends a logical and positive argument that presents the truth forward to the reader to make up his views about the real presentation of the Prophet’s leadership as part of his mission. In spite of misunderstanding of Islamic leadership as being religious, it is fairly clear that Islamic leadership is a worldly method which is applicable in real life even without being an Islamic state. In fact, Prophet Muhammad ruled by revelations sent to him by Allah and not set by himself. He applied the rules religiously. His mission was to spread Islam with love and affection. Therefore, he cannot be branded as a statesman. His character represents all types of peaceful human beings. The Prophet Muhammad is a model for every person-father, brother, friend, head, labour, and rich or poor man.

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⁶¹ Watt, *op cit*, p. 326.

⁶² Ibid.

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