



Prophet Hazrat Muhammad's S.A.W Personal Names; Approaches of Contemporary Orientalists

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Abstract: *In the sixteen to twenty-first centuries a number of Seerah books were written in the aspect of anti-Islamic view. Orientalists started to research on the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W different aspects of life. They started their biased research to fulfill their missionary aims. In that situation, the orientalists of the mid-nineteenth to the twenty-first century had changed their vision towards Islam and Prophet Muhammad's S.A.W Seerah as well. These orientalists are less biased and show a soft image of Islam and Prophet Muhammad's S.A.W Seerah. They show their positive face towards the East. Prophet Muhammad S.A.W carries an abundance of attributive names Asmā'u 'n-Nabiyy which are given on His S.A.W noble characteristics and also Allah Almighty calls his beloved Prophet S.A.W with different epithets. The main focus of this research work is to explore the approaches of orientalists and somehow clear the doubts of orientalists and western scholars of the modern age in regard to Prophet Muhammad's S.A.W pious names.*

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Orientalism is a methodology by scholars in the West to create a whole body of knowledge and learning with concern to the Orient. This activity is the study of Eastern philosophies, traditions, religions, psychologies, cultures, languages along with economic structures. It can be said that Orientalism is that branch of scholarship which is used to build, understand, and gather knowledge about the Orient. Orientalism is a movement that flourished under the influence of the Church. It has played a vital role in the accomplishment of the political and cultural objectives of imperialism. In fact, Orientalism is a broad range of enterprise. As Edward Said says "The Orient is an integral part of European material civilization and culture. Orientalism expresses and represents that part culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies, and colonial-style"¹

Contemporary Orientalism

The Orientalism of the nineteenth century up to the twenty-first century is known as contemporary orientalism. These types of orientalists are less biased. They researched Islam regarding Quran and Seerah broadmindedly. In this era, Western scholars translate many Arabic manuscripts into English. It is defined as "the sometimes-biased perspective through which Western's view languages, lifestyles, art, cultures, values, and sciences of the East, notably the Middle East and North Africa.

In "Orientalism" Edward Said describes "Current Western stereotyping of Arabs as irrational, menacing, untrustworthy, anti-Western, dishonest, and perhaps most importantly prototypical" ²

Different scholars declared different counting of names of Prophet as 'Jalāl al-Dīn Al-Suyūṭī' mentioned two hundred one names in his famous book 'Alasma un Nabwiya'. 'Qadi Iyaad mentioned thirty names in his famous book Ash-Shifa. Abu Anees Muhammad Barkat Ali Ludhianvi mentioned more than two thousand names in his book Asma'al Nabi al-Karim³ 'The Bounteous Names of Holy Prophet SAW'. But some scholars declared that the number of Prophet Muhammad SAW names will equal to Allah Almighty names as they were ninety-nine in famous.

'Muhammad and Ahmed' the Personal Name of Prophet Muhammad S.A. W and Contemporary Orientalism

Names are of several cultural variables such as identity, power, norms, values, and belief system. Names can talk much about the person's dignity and honor.

Similarly in the Oxford dictionary "A word or set of words by which a person or thing is known, addressed, or referred to"⁴

It is therefore not astonishing that Muslims have always assigned special devotion to the Prophet Muhammad's S.A.W names. The names of the Prophet S.A.W are of two types: The first type includes the names that are exclusive to him and which no Prophet or messenger shared. The second type includes the names that referred to Prophet Muhammad's S.A.W various good qualities. A renowned Muslim mystic poet Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938) calls in his poem

"Light the world, too long in darkness,

With Muhammad's radiant name" ⁵

Thus, the blessed name of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W enlightens the groping world. People of pre-Islamic Arabia were in darkness and felt proud of their misery. In the world of wilderness, Allah has sent his Messenger, the last Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. It is obvious from the name that Muhammad S.A.W is the person who is highly praised. The name 'Muhammad' has one of the highest numbers of English spelling variants in the world"⁶According to the Columbia Encyclopedia "Muhammad is probably the most common given name [in the world], including variations"⁷It is stated in the Quran that name of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W always comes with the name of Allah.

مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ⁸

"Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah"

"Muslims have always abided upon the fact that the Prophet's name is mentioned in the profession of faith directly after the name of God: Lā ilāha illā Allāh, Muḥammadun rasūl Allāh. This combination has long served to remind the Muslims of the Prophet's unique position, and not only have the theologians pondered this mysterious connection and its implications."⁹

Muhammad S.A.W was named Muhammad before Adam and Adam was the one who called out to Muhammad in his Dua. Scholars tell us that he said, "When Adam made his mistake he said, 'O Allah, forgive me my sin by the right of Muhammad!' And Allah inquired (gently although He already knew), 'How do you know Muhammad?' He replied, 'I S.A.W written everywhere in the Garden: There is no god except Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, so I knew that he was the most honored of creation in Your eyes. So, Allah turned to him and forgave him'" ¹⁰

It is a continuous objective of orientalists to charge against the character and personality of Prophet Muhammad's S.A.W early phase of life. The orientalists of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth hundred of years were so anxious in underlining the pessimistic periods of the Prophet that they exhumed the limits to dishonor Prophet Muhammad S.A.W character. Their energy in such a manner is justifiable considering the way that had

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next to no data about the first wellsprings of the Prophet's S.A.W history. Yet, the contemporary orientalist of the nineteenth and twentieth hundred years had scholarly twisted of the brain and they acknowledge that Prophet Muhammad S.A.W is no question the all-around cited man ever. The orientalist Michael Hart (born: 1932) in his book, "The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History" says, "My 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" ¹¹Indeed Michael Hart accepted the fact that no man in history was as perfect as Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. Regardless of numerous great personalities he chooses Prophet Muhammad S.A.W in the top of his list regarding world's dominant persons. Along with Michael Hart 'Karen Armstrong' is a well-known profuse writer of 20th century. She keenly studied Christianity, Islam, and Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. In contrast to other orientalists, she wrote books on Prophet Muhammad S.A.W to create a soft image of the last Prophet S.A.W. She attempts to demonstrate that Muhammad S.A.W is the Prophet of our times and for eternity. Notwithstanding her real endeavors, there are numerous unpleasant suppositions found in her books. She expressed in her book "Muhammad: Prophet of Our Times" (2006): "We know practically nothing about Muhammad's early life before he began to receive what he believed were revelations from God at the age of forty" ¹² It is clear from this point that she didn't aware of the original sources of Prophet Muhammad's S.A.W biography. It is known that Holy Prophet Muhammad S.A.W is the only personality in history whose every moment of life is saved in the books of Seerah and Hadith. As Allah Almighty stated in Quran:

لقد كان لكم في رسول الله أسوة حسنة¹³

"There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone".

The name of Prophet Muhammad has likewise been tried in contention. They transmit vulnerability over the names of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. As we probably are aware no less than two individual names are found for the Prophet S.A.W in Islamic writing just as in the Quran: 'Ahmad' and 'Muhammad'. The orientalists have added a few unique names also to make questions about his character. An Austrian Orientalist 'Alloys Sprenger' was the most prominent scholar of 19th century. Sprenger was delegated as the Principal of Calcutta Madrasah (1852-1854) to wipe out that multitude of courses of study that established genuinely Islamic subjects including the Quran and Hadith. He began composing his work on the Prophet of that

time. It was distributed in the German language under the title. "Das Leben Und Die Lehre Des Mohammad' in 1862'and translated as "The Life of Muhammad: From Original Sources" (1851). "That the original name of the prophet was Qath 'am but it was subsequently changed to Muhammad"¹⁴

Sprenger gives these remarks only to convey wrong information about the name of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. It is clear that the name of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W was decided before his birth. Qath 'am the son of Abd al-Muttalib who died three years before the birth of Prophet Muhammad.

¹⁵David Samuel Margoliouth (1885-1940) wrote about the name of Messenger Muhammad S.A.W:

"The name Muhammad S.A.W (of which Ahmed and Mahmud were varieties) was given Prophet. It was apparently not uncommon and belonged to a distant connection"¹⁶ He writes as footnotes: "It is worth noticing that the name of the elephant brought by Abraha against the Kabah was Mahmud. Was the Prophet then supposed to have been born in the year called after it"?¹⁷ He says that name uncommon Ibne Hisham (d.833) stated only three men before him S.A.W were called with the same name Muhammad.¹⁸ In the Pre-Islamic era people who have named Muhammad never claimed the prophecy. Allah all knows where he shows his prophecy. Margoliouth said that 'Muhammad S.A.W' was derived from elephant of Abraha 'Mahmud'. He has given no reason on his assumption as the name of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W decided before his birth. As Ibne Hisham quoted that: "The mother of messenger of Allah S.A.W used to say that she was pregnant with the messenger of Allah, that it was said to her (in a vision), "You are conceiving the master of this nation and when he has been born, then name him Muhammad"¹⁹

John Davenport admits that: "The name of Muhammad's father was Abdullah, that of his mother Aminah. On the seventh day after the Childbirth, Abdul Muttalib gave a grand feast to the heads of his tribe and presenting Child to them on the occasion, as the dawning glory of their race, gave him on that account the name of Muhammad"²⁰

"Ronald Victor Courtenay Bodley, MC (3 March 1892 - 26 May 1970) was a British Army officer, author, and journalist. Bodley spent three years in India before the outbreak of the 1st World War. After the resolution, he served as a British military envoy in Paris. At the advice of T.E. Lawrence, he went to live with the Arabs for 7 years. He invested in a flock of sheep & for several years. He lived like a Moslem, praying five times a day, reading nothing but the Koran, and abstaining from alcohol."²¹He keenly observed the life and culture of Arab. In 1946, he wrote a book on the title 'The Messenger (The life of Muhammad)'. "Muhammad, a name which, in varying forms, has since been given to millions of little boys born into the faith which the son of

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Abdullah and Amina was destined to found and spread all over the world"²²It is obvious that Allah Almighty also raised the name of Holy Prophet S.A.W and mentioned in 'Kalima Shahada' and salutation of formal prayer. In the Quran Allah Mentions:

وَرَفَعْنَا لَكَ ذِكْرَكَ²³

“And raised high for you your repute”

With every supplication, the believer recites within his formal prayer. Allah increases His never-ending peace and showers his blessings on him, each time he blesses the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W.

Derivation and Meaning of the Prophet Muhammad Personal Names
Muhammad S.A.W explains as praised, commendable, laudable. The one who is worthy of praise by Allah and his Angels. Ahmed means the one who praises. Both names derived from the same root 'Ḥamada'. William Muir (1819-1905) a Scottish orientalist. He wrote "The life of Mohammed" was initially published 1861 in four volumes with Christian bias. Muir's book the Life of Mahomet, as different biographers of the Prophet, talks about exhaustively the record of the Prophet's life from his adolescence until his passing. The creator additionally examines social, strict, and political states of Arab. He writes: "Then he (Abd al Muttalib) took the small kid in his arms and went to Kabah, and as he remained alongside the Holy house, he expressed gratefulness to God. The youngster was called Muhammad. This name was uncommon however not obscure. It is derived from the root Ḥamada and signifies "The Praised".²⁴ William Muir avoids mentioning that Muslim Historians while discussing the name Muhammad always mention that there were few people of same name.

Encyclopedia of religion explains: The name Muhammad may be translated as the 'highly praised one'²⁵ Ibne Hisham stated in this regard that When it was enquired from Abd al Muttalib to why he had named his child "Muhammad", while this name was very rare amongst the Arabs, he replied, "I wished that he should be praised in the heavens as well us on earth".²⁶

Different Spellings and Pronunciations of 'Muhammad'

The Orientalists take it their duty to level any kind of charge against the Prophet S.A.W name. They had also misspelled the name of the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W to assume the meanings of their own view point. In different span of time, they spelled it differently. Dr. Henry Stubbe (1632–1676) was English, writer and researcher. In 1671, he wrote An Account of the Rise and Progress of Mahometanism, He tried to exhibit the similarity between the beliefs of Islam and Christianity. He stated that: "Ti's certain that tire Christians which lived under the Mahometans, do mention Muhammad S.A.W with great respect as Mahomet of glorious memory, as

Mahumetes super auopax and benedictio etc., whereas others have proceeded so far as to say that he was even Antichrist, and have found out the Number of the beast 666 in his name, writing it Maoquetis, then which nothing can be more ridiculous. Is it Maoquetis not mere folly to spell a name wrong, and then imagine mysteries in it? Some of the Greeks write his name Max'μco, oilier Mayπεo; the Latin's Machumet, Machomet, Magmed and Maomethes; in Arabic if rightly pronounced, it is Muhammad (PBUH) or Mohammad which signifies 'much desired'? ²⁷

Henry Stubbe explains that the Christians who lived Mahometans mentions name Muhammad with great respect because they were all aware of the personality of Prophet S.A.W as he S.A.W was generous both in Religious and worldly life. Other spelled differently to assume meaning of own choice. It is pronounced differently in Greek and Latin. However; it is worth-mentioning that, 'Muhammad' is an Arabic word as مُحَمَّد, pronounced 'Muhammad'. "In West Africa, forms like Mamado are in use. In Turkey the pronunciation Mehmet was generally accepted for private use, and the correct Muhammad was exclusively reserved for the Prophet. One may also shorten the name, especially in combination with other names, to an M, pronounced Mim (as in M. N. Rashid = Mim Nun Rashid), for 'M' is the most important letter in the name of the Prophet. It can also be used as an abbreviation for Mustafa²⁸ Ann Marie Schimmel briefly explains the pronunciations of name 'Muhammad' in different regions by different people through pronunciations. She explains that 'M' is most important letter in Prophet Muhammad's name.

Views of Contemporary Orientalism on 'Paraclete' and 'Ahmed'

'Ahmed', another variant and heavenly name of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W was assigned by his mother Aminah. Antiquarians express that the Prophet S.A.W was given the names of both Muhammad and Ahmed since his outset. Orientalists make confusion in first and second name. Tor Andréa (1885-1947) was a Swedish scholar of comparative religion. In his book "Mohammed, the Man and His Faith", here marked that the concept of the period of illumination and appraisal of Prophet Muhammad's S.A.W personality. Tor Andréa also throws light on the achievements and versatile and vibrant personality of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. He quoted: "While Aminah was carrying Muhammad S.A.W in her womb, she encountered none of the weights of pregnancy. one day she heard a voice which said, the child whom you are to bear will be the ruler and prophet of his People. "After this she heard a voice commanding her to name the child Ahmed"²⁹ William Muir writes, "Ahmed has been erroneously employed as a translation of 'Paraclete' in some Arabic versions of New Testament, became a favorite term with Muslims, especially an addressing Jews and Christians,

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for it was the titled under which the Prophet had been in their books predicted" ³⁰

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (1817-1898), an eminent Muslim scholar and reformer, had insistently prohibited the allegation of William Muir by giving sensible arguments.

He emphasizes that "the Abdul Muttalib gave the name of "Mohammad" to the child, while Amina gave him that of "Ahmed" in obedience to the command of an angel who had appears her in a dream, thus accomplishing the prophecies both of the old and New Testament"³¹ Mohammad Mohar Ali Professor of history of Islam rejected William Muir statement in these words: "The assumption of Muir that Ahmed is a mistaken translation of the text in New Testament and the name is later adoption or popularization by the Muslims in the course of their confrontation with the Jews and Christians is no way supported by the known facts. The prophet Muhammad S.A.W had bearing the name Ahmed since his childhood" ³²

According to Muir's view that 'Paraclete' was mistaken translation of 'Ahmed', then question arises here that when they became aware of this mistake in Bible? This allegation of Muir has no reason. Since the Qur'an plainly expresses that the coming of Prophet Muhammad's S.A.W was anticipated by Jesus Christ, who alluded to the Prophet with the name "Ahmad".

*"And when Jesus son of Mary said: O Children of Israel! Verily, I am the apostle of God sent unto you, confirming the law which was delivered before me, and bringing good tidings of an apostle who shall come after me, and whose name shall be Ahmad"*³³

William Montgomery Watt was a noted Orientalist and one of the prominent historians of Islam in the West. Watt's works about Prophet Muhammad S.A.W mainly including "Muhammad in Mecca" (1953C.E.), "Muhammad in Medina" (1956C.E.) and "Muhammad Prophet and Statesman" (1961C.E.), are probably the most read and popular among many of his widely circulated work. He gives the expression on Ahmed that: The Ahmed is taken as an adjectival sense rather than regarded than as an interpolation. ³⁴ In this context Muhammad Ibne Ishaq said that:

"Certain trustworthy men of my tribe told me that Hazrat Hassan bin Thabit R.A once said,

"I was a mature lad of seven or eight, capable of understanding all I S.A.W and heard, when one morning a Jew in Yathrib began shouting for the attention of his people. When they gathered about him I heard all that

myself they asked him what the matter was". He replied, "The star has raised beneath which 'Ahmad' will be born this night." ³⁵

It is highly notable that William's assumption had no truth but only to create doubt and confusion on the name Ahmed's that it was adjective and afterward used as a name. Actually he was not aware of the fact that Ibne Ishaq the earliest scholar mentions the name Ahmed in his Seerah and also in the holy books of contemporary orientalist, Jesus mentions the name of coming Messenger:

"And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor (Parakletos), that he may be ever with you forever"³⁶

'Parakletos' means the counselor, helper, the one whom who help people. Jesus Christ did not spoke this. He expressed the word 'Parakletos', which means extracted or eminent. It gives the some meanings of the Arabic word 'Ahmad'. Since the word Parakletos extracted as Ahmad. A disciple of Jesus predicted about Muhammad in his Gospel:

Then said the priest: "How shall the Messiah be called, and what sign shall reveal his coming?" Jesus answered: "The name of the Messiah is admirable, for God himself gave him the name when he had created his soul. God said: Wait Mohammed; for thy sake I will to create paradise, the world, When I shall send thee into the world I shall send thee as my messenger of salvation, and thy word shall be true. Mohammed is his blessed name." Then the crowd lifted up their voices, saying: "O God, send us thy messenger: O Mohammed, come quickly for the salvation of the world!" ³⁷

Ahmad Deedat, a South African writer. He wrote and delivered many comparative books on Islam, Christianity and Bible. He stated "To the sincere seekers of truth, it is obvious that Muhammad S.A.W is the promised Paraclete or comforter, alternatively called Helper, Advocate, Counselor, etc., of the prophecies of Jesus Christ in the Gospel of John." ³⁸

It is clear that Muhammad S.A.W is promised Prophet who was predicted by Jesus Christ. We conclude this discussion that name of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W was inspired to his mother Aminah in her dream by Gabriel; he advised her to name the child Muhammad or Ahmed. Abdul Muttalib and the grandfather of the Prophet had profound forethought. For this he named the child Muhammad, he was confident that one day the whole world will praise his grandson. But orientalist tilt the seeds of doubts to create confusion in their minds. While they don't read the early biographies written on Prophet Muhammad S.A.W in which name of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W was clearly mentioned. Orientalists don't believe that the name of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W was commanding by an angel. Although there

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are evidences about the appearance of an angel telling the names of Prophet in dream. The Bible says:

"Now you have conceived and shall bear a son;

*you shall call him Ishmael"*³⁹

"She will bear a son, and you (Joseph) are to

*name him Jesus"*⁴⁰

All the Christian scholars and Orientalists believe in these verses of Bible. But they don't admit the fact that Gabriel also told the name of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W to his pious mother Aminah. It is also the reality that the name of coming Prophet was foretold in the Bible. Also both of the name of the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W mentions in Quran and predicted by early Prophets. So the Orientalists should try to understand the reality and truth about the Messenger.

Conclusion

The orientalists of nineteen to twenty-first century are less biased and they display the soft image of Islam. Although they seem to be impressed by the qualities and characteristics of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. On contrary to this, these contemporary orientalists are manifest and spreading Islamophobia through their intellect. Orientalists also study the blessed names of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W and they create doubts and confusions regarding the personal names of Prophet S.A.W. They often misspelled and pronounced the name "Muhammad" in wrong way. And also, they don't agree on the fact that Muhammad is Prophet Muhammad's heavenly name decided by Allah Almighty before his S.A.W birth. Also, in early books Allah has predicted about the coming Prophet Muhammad S.A.W by the name "Ahmed". Orientalists don't use the authentic sources of Islam like Hadith and Quran. If they study them thoroughly, they easily understand that Allah has choose this name for his beloved Prophet Muhammad S.A.W.

Recommendations

- A declaration should be passed through all Muslim countries under OIC regarding the use of the personal name of 'Muhammad' and its spellings.
- Spelling and pronunciation of name 'Muhammad' should be practiced same in all Muslim regions and countries.
- It should be corrected in Seerah books where it is mentioned that name 'Muhammad' was never used before the Hazrat Muhammad SAW especially in Urdu Seerah literature.
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