

Dichotomies and Controversies of the Orientalists Regarding the Lineage, Birth and Childhood of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

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Abstract

Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), the Prophet of Islam was sent by Allah Almighty with an unblemished character and sublime moral authority. He was protected from every misconduct and indecency that could damage his reputation. Not only he but his all ancestors were protected from falling in any depravity. His birth was accompanied by signs of good fortune, his childhood carried innocence and his youth proclaimed his excellence in character. Despite their claims of being unbiased, some orientalist had been partial in their account of the lineage, birth and childhood of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). However, their statements bear dichotomies and their views contradict with each other. This research article aims to highlight such controversies of the orientalist as are present in their narration of the family background, birth and childhood of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

The genealogical lineage of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was connected with piety, honour, respect and purity of ancestral character. His maternal relation consisted of women who were symbol of chastity, modesty and piety. His ancestors were born by lawful marriage system. In his family no one could be blamed of any illicit relationship. His forefathers were leaders and statesmen of their age and occupied a dignified place in the society. Their generosity and piety was well-known in different regions of Arabia. It has been highlighted in hadith literature as follows:

“Narrated by Ibn ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, “Authority of ruling will remain with Qurāysh, even if only two of them remained”¹

Imām Bukhārī has transmitted the following ḥadīth on the authority of Abū Hurayrah:

"Narrated Abū Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) Allah's Apostle (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "I have been sent (as an Apostle) in the best of all the generations of Adam's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) off springs since their creation"²

Imām Bukhārī has narrated in chapter 27 the chain of the ancestors of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as follows:

"(He is) Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) bin ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib bin Hāshim bin ‘Abd Manāf bin Quṣayy bin Kilāb bin Murra bin Ka‘b bin La’ayy bin Ghālib bin Fihri bin Mālik bin An-Naṣr bin Kināna bin Khuzayma bin Mudrika bin Ilyās bin Mudar bin Nizār bin Ma‘d bin ‘Adnān"³

The eminence of Prophet’s (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) family according to another ḥadīth quoted by Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī is narrated as follows:

"Narrated Jubayir bin Muṭ‘im (may Allah be pleased with him): Uthmān bin ‘Affān (may Allah be pleased with him) went to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and said, “O Allah’s Apostle you gave priority to Banī al-Muṭṭalib and did not give us, although we and they are of the same degree of relationship to you.” The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, “Only Banī Hāshim and Bani al-Muṭṭalib are one thing (as regards family status)”⁴

Imām Muslim has narrated the following ḥadīth:

"Wāthila b al-Asqā reported I heard Allah’s Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) saying: Verily Allah granted eminence to Kinānā from amongst the descendants of Ismā‘il and He granted eminence to Quraysh amongst Kinānā and He granted eminence amongst Quraysh Bani Hāshim and He granted me eminence from the tribe of Banī Hāshim"⁵

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) explained about the eminence and honour of his family in many of the traditions. ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) has narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, God Almighty created the human beings; then out of them chose Banī Ādam; then out of them chose Arabs; and out of Arabs Muḍir were chosen; and out of Muḍir Qurāysh were chosen; and out of Qurāysh Bani Hāshim were elected; and out of Bānī Hāshim I Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was chosen; I, therefore, have specially been chosen after making completion of many elections; so that whosoever, loved Arabs he loved them, because of my love and whosoever have envy with the Arabs, he has the grudge against me"⁶

There are various traditions in ḥadīth literature which tell about Quraysh, the family of Holy Prophet, (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him):

"Ibn Ishaq has also transmitted the genealogy of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the following tradition. “This is the book of biography of the apostle of God. Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be

upon him) was the son of ‘Abdullāh b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib (whose name was Shaybā) b. Hāshim (whose name was ‘Amr) b. ‘Abd al Manāf (whose name was al-Mughīra) b. Quṣayy (whose name was Zayd) b. Kilāb b. Murra b. Ka‘b b. Lu‘ayy b. Ghālib b. Fihir b. Mālik b. An-Naṣr b. Kinanā b. Khuzayma b. Mudrika (whose name was ‘Amir) b. Ilyās b. Muṣār b. Nizār b. Ma‘d b. ‘Adnān b. ‘Udd (or Udad) b. Muqawwam b. Nāhūr b. Tayrah b. Yaruh Yashjub b. Nabit b. Ismā‘īl b. Ibrāhīm, the friend of the Compassionate, b. Tāriḥ (who is ‘Azar) b. Nāhūr b. Lamk b. Mattūshalakh b. Akhnūkh who is the Prophet Idrīs according to what they allege, but God knows best (he was the first of the Sons of Ādam whom prophecy and writing with a pen were given) b. Yard b. Mahlil b. Qaynan b. Yānish b. Shīth b. Ādam"⁷

The meaning of Quraysh as given in the famous dictionary of Arabic language "Taj al-‘Urūs" is quoted as under:

"Al-Quraysh means a sea animal (aquatic animal) ; from whom all of the sea animals feel fear and they move here and there when they feel the presence of this leader of them. This great leader is called Al-Quraysh. This word has been used for the clan of Quraysh which declares that the tribe who had been given the leadership of entire human race is called Al-Quraysh. This is the statement of Al-Zubayr bin Bakr and he refers it to Ibn ‘Abbās (may Allah be pleased with him)"⁸

Many Western scholars have written about the ancestors of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Among these orientalist are William Montgomery Watt (1909-2006), Arthur John Arberry (1905-1969), Maxime Rodinson (1915-2004), Samuel M. Zwemer (1867-1952), Reynold A. Nicholson (1868-1945), George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950), H.A.R. Gibb (1895-1971) and Karen Armstrong (1944), Theodor Noldeke (1836-1930) and Springer. The opinions of these orientalist about Prophet’s (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) family background are given below:

William Montgomery Watt has accepted the prestige of the Prophet Muhammad’s (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) ancestry. About his grandfather he says:

"With ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib the position of clan appears to have improved once more, his digging of the well of Zamzam inside the Ka‘bah shows him to have been a man of energy and initiative"⁹

Introducing the mother of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) he writes:

"Muhammad’s mother was Āmina bint Wahab of the clan of Zuhrah of Quraysh, her mother was of the clan of ‘Abd al-Dār and her maternal grandfather of that of Asad. Thus, Prophet Muhammad

(peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was connected with several of the principal families of Mecca"¹⁰

P.De Lacy Johnstone in his book "Muhammad and his Power" has commented on Prophet's ancestors and said:

"Qusāi as we have seen, refound Mecca, greatly enlarged its borders gathered into it the whole Qurāysh clan, regulated the city government, and gradually possessed himself of all authority therein. He kept this power as long as he lived and when he died, full of year and honour, left his whole authority to his eldest son 'Abd al-Dār. A young bother of 'Abd al-Manāf, however, being of strong character, enjoyed the real power, and his four sons, inherited their father's authority. But the family of 'Abd al-Dār asserted themselves, and after much dispute the power of government were divided between the kinsmen: Hāshim and his brothers, sons of 'Abd al-Manāf, kept the right of providing food and drink to the pilgrims and that of leadership in war; whilst grandsons of 'Abd al-Dār had the keys of the Ka'bah, the presidency in the town hall, and the right of raising the banner; Hashīm exercised his office with princely liberty, and his example was followed by the other wealthy Quraysh; the splendor of the annual pilgrimage was enhanced, and glory of Mecca exalted"¹¹

Maxime Rodinson (1915-2004) in his book "Muhammad" has enumerated some qualities of the forefather of the Prophet of Islam Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and also discussed different clans of Quraysh; He says:

"Inevitably, the Qurashite clans were struggling supremacy amongst themselves. The principal ones to come to the force were the clans of Hāshim and 'Abd Shams, both of whom were sons of 'Abd al-Manāf. Hāshim's son 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib seems to have had the upper hand at one time, at approximately the date of Muhammad's birth; but Hāshim lost it, before long to the family of Umayya, the sons of 'Abd Shams. In general, the Qurashites were wise enough not to allow their internal squabbles to disrupt their unity in the face of outside world"¹²

Another eminent Western Scholar Reynold A. Nicholson gives a sketch of the Prophet Muhammad's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) ancestors as follows:

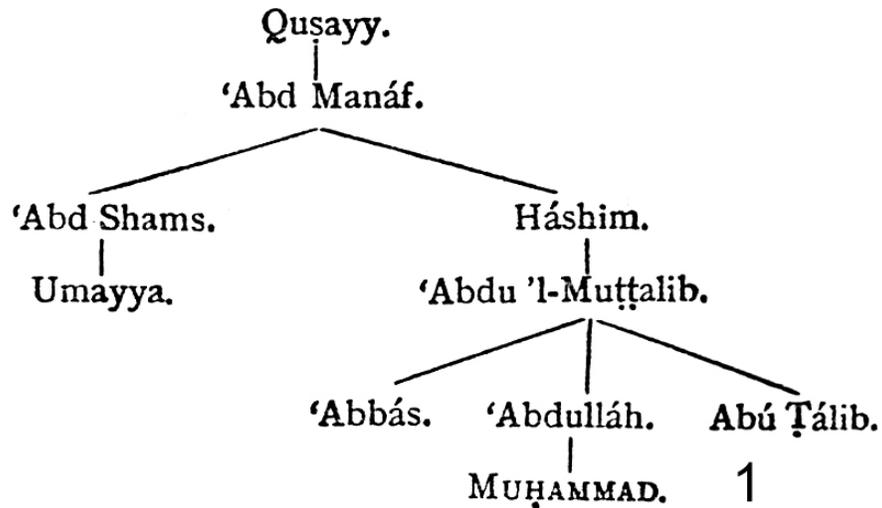
"The credibility of tradition, so far as is concern the life of the Prophet Muhammad cannot be discussed in this place. The oldest and best biography that of the Ibn Ishāq undoubtedly contains a great deal of fabulous matters, but this narrative appears to be honest and fairly authentic on the whole. If we accept the traditional chronology, Muhammad son of Abdullah and Āmina, of the Tribe of Qurāysh was

born at mecca on the 12th of Rabi-ul-Awwal in the year of the Elephant (50-571 A.D). His descent from Qurāysh is shown by the following table"¹³

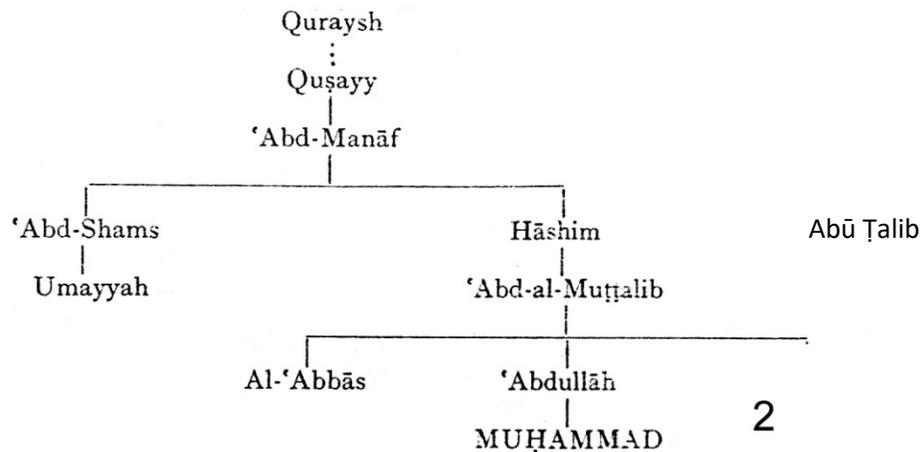
Philip K. Hitti (1886-1978) has thrown light on the lineage of Prophet Muhammad

(peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in his book "A History of the Arabs". He says: "In or about

A.D 571, a child was born to the Qurāysh at Macca and was given by his mother name which may remain forever uncertain. His tribe called him "Al-Amin"(the faithful), apparently an honorific title. The form which his name takes in Koran (3:138, 33:40, 48:29, 47:2) is Muhammad and "once (61.1) Ahmed" In popular usage he is Muhammad (highly praised) a name born by more male children than any other. The baby's father, 'Abdullah, died before his birth, the mother, Āmina, when he was about 6 years old. It, therefore, fell to the lot of his grandfather, 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib to bring up the boy, and after the grandfather's death the duty devolved upon his paternal uncle, Abū Talib". The writer has given the following lineage table¹⁴:



H.A.R. Gibb opines



on the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) family in the following words:

"Of his early life and circumstances little is known with certainty that he was born (the traditional date is A.D 570) in a cadet branch of one of the leading families of Mecca."¹⁵

Karen Armstrong in her book entitled "Muhammad Prophet for Our Time" writes:

"The founding father of the Quraysh was Qusāyy Ibn Kilāb, who had brought together a number of previously warring clans that were loosely related by blood and marriage and formed this new tribe, just as Mecca was becoming a popular centre for long distance trade. The name "Quraysh" may have been derived from Taqqarub (accumulation and organizing). Unlike the Jurham and Khuzā'ah, who had not been able to abandon badawah, they acquired a capital surplus that made a settled life style possible. Before their arrival, they had often been fighting bloody battles around Zamzam and the Ka'bāh, as arrival tribes had been trying to gain control of these prestigious sites. Now with consummate skills the Quraysh established the Haram, a zone with twenty miles radius with Ka'bāh at its centre, where all the violence was forbidden"¹⁶

Objections Raised Against the Ancestors of the Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)

Ibn Hisham has described the customs of the old Arabs in general and the tribe of Quraysh in particular to gauge the status of its leader:

"Within the tribe and outside it an individual's status was gauged by the extent of his murawwah which term bore almost the same significance as that of chivalry. Generally, murawwah found expression through bravery in battle, hospitality even in poverty, fidelity even at the risk of one's life and eloquence. A person who excelled in all these qualities was called kamil or perfect. Suwwayd Ibn Samit of Banū Awf at Medina was one such kamil"¹⁷

All above excellences were present in the family of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) including a particular quality of fidelity which means a complete negation of big and small kinds of actions which cause infidelity. Contrary to the fact, some orientalist have raised objections against the ancestry of the Prophet. Their view point is given below:

Speaking about the eminence of the Prophet's family (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) Karen Armstrong has tried to introduce a very low status of it to the western community. She writes:

"Muhammad became most zealous at this point was because of his friend 'Attīq Ibn Uthmān, who was usually known by his kunya, Abū

Bakr. He was a successful, wealthy merchant but like Muhammad he came from a "Weak" clan that had fallen on hard time. Abū Bakr was "Well-liked and of easy manners," Ibn Ishāq tells us, a kindly, approachable man, specially skilled in the interpretation of dreams"¹⁸

On the other hand, she also mentions that his family was leading one in the Arab. She says:

"The founding father of Quraysh was Qusayy Ibn Kilab, who had brought together a number of previously warring clans that were loosely related by blood and marriage and formed this new tribe, just as Mecca was becoming a popular center for long-distance trade"¹⁹

William Montgomery Watt says about Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) clan that it has no value on behalf of its performance, but due to having marriage relations with clans of Zuhrah, 'Abd Shams and Asad etc., it had got some status in the Arab community. He writes: "The best evidence we have for his standing in the community is the card of marriages of his ('Abd al-Muṭṭalib) daughters. Safīyah (whose mother was from Zuhrah) married first a son of Harb b. Umayyah (chief of 'Abd Shams) and secondly al 'Awwam b. Khūwaylid (Asad). Of the others 'Atikah (whose mother was from Makhzūm) married Abū Umayyah b. al-Mughirah (Makhzūm Umayyah married Jahsh, a confederate of Harb b., Umayyah, Arwa Married first 'Umayr b. Wahb ('Abd) and then a man of the clan of 'Abd ad-Dār, Barraḥ married first Abū Ruhm ('Amir) and then Abū 'l-Asad b. Halal (Makhzūm) Umm Hakīm married Kurayz ('Abd Shams), that is to say, 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib was able to marry his daughters into some of the best and most powerful families of Mecca"²⁰

Watt's dichotomy is that on one hand he accepts the eminence of the Prophet's family and on the other hand, he describes the dignity of Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) family in following words:

"Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was the son of 'Abdullah, the son of 'Abd al Muṭṭalib, the son of Hāshim, the son of 'Abd Manaf the son of Qusayy, the son of Kilāb and Qusayy, as we have seen, was the effective ruler of Mecca during his life time"²¹

"With 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib" the position of the clan appears to have improved once more. His digging of the well of Zamzam besides the Ka'bah shows him to have been man of energy and initiative. 'On the whole the impression we get, is that Muhammad clan had once been in the forefront of Meccans affairs"²²

Contradicting to the observation of Montgomery Watt that 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib have had honour by creating marriage relations with Harb bin Umayyah. P.De Lacy Johnstone states:

"To ensure the quite observance of the rights of pilgrimage Arab, tribal law had enforced peace during four months of the year, the eleventh, and twelfth, first and seventh. During these, all feuds were hushed and the deadliest foe met in mutual security. But the religious chief of Mecca has a singular power of substituting the second month of the year for the first as a month of Truce, the first then becoming common. It may easily be seen how great was this power (called Nasa commutation) and how it might be abused, as was the similar power of the pontifices of Roman in regard to their religious calendar"²³

The can be seen that Armstrong, Watt and Johnstone consummately make joke of their opinions. At first, they called that Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was coming from a weak and menial family, and then they also praised his family in glorious words.

Glad Tidings Before the Birth

Long time before the advent of Islam, the raising of an Arabian Prophet was prophesized in the books of Judaism and Christianity.

Prophecies in the Old Testament:

"The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) from the midst of thee of thy brethren"²⁴

"I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that shall command him"²⁵

"He said, 'The Lord come from Si'nai and rose up from Seer unto them, he shined forth from mount paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints from his right hand went a fiery law for them"²⁶

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall called wonderful, counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting father; the prince of peace".

"For thus the Lord said unto me, within a year, according to the year of a hireling and the glory of ka'dar shall fail".

"And the residue of the number of archers the mighty men of the children of ka'dar, shall be diminished: for the Lord God of Israil hath spoken"²⁷

"God come from te'man and the Holy One from mount of Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens and the earth was full of his praise"²⁸

"And I will shake all the nations and the desire of all nations shall come; and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts"²⁹

"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in, behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts"³⁰

Prophecies in the New Testament

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you forever"³¹

"But the comforter, which the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you"³²

"But when the comforter is come whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the spirit of Truth, which Protected from the Father, he shall testify of me"³³

Further Prophecies in the book of John are:

"But when he, the spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you in all truth: for he shall speak of Himself: but whatsoever he shall hear (from God) that shall he speak; and he will show you the things to come. He shall glory me; for he shall receive of mine and shall show unto you. (John 16: 13-14)"³⁴

Again the prophecy is in the book of John:

"I will request our Lord, and he will send you another counselor, the praised one who will be permanent for you until the end of time"³⁵

Glad Tidings in the Gospel of Barnabas

Jesus answered: 'The name of the Messiah is admirable for God himself gave him the name when he had created his soul, and placed it in a celestial splendor. God said:"Wait Muhammad, (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), for thy sake I will to create paradise, the world, and a great multitude of creature, whereof I make thee a present, insomuch that whose shall bless thee shall be blessed, and whose shall curse thee shall be accursed. When I shall send thee into the world I shall send thee as my messenger of salvation, and thy word shall be true, insomuch that heaven and earth shall fail, but thy faith shall never fail."Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is his blessed name. Then, the crowd lifted up their voices, saying: 'O God send us thy messenger: O Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) come quickly for the salvation of the world."³⁶

"Hath willed that I be mocked by of men in this world by the death of Jesus, making all men to believe that I died upon the cross. And this making shall continue until the advent of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), the messenger of God, who, when he shall come, shall reveal this deception to those who believe in God's law."³⁷

"Then said God: "Be thou welcome my servant Adam, I tell thee that thou art the first man whom I have created. And he whom thou hast seen (mentioned) is thy Son, who shall come into the world many years hence, and shall be my messenger, for whom I have created all things who shall give light to the world when he shall come, whose soul was in celestial splendor sixty thousand years before I made any thing."³⁸

'Adam besought God, Saying!"Lord grants me this writing upon the nails of fingers of my hands."Then God gave to the first man upon his thumbs that writing; upon the thumb nail of right hand it said:"there is only one God,"and upon the thumb nail of the left it said: "Muhammad is messenger of God." Then, with fatherly affection the first man kissed those words, and rubbed his eyes and said:"Blessed be that day when thou shall come to the World"³⁹

For I am not worthy to unloose the ties of the hosen or the lachets of the shoes of the messenger of God"whom ye call 'Massiah," who was made before me, and shall come after me, and shall bring the words of truth, so that his faith shall have no end. Under 'creation of Adam' in Gospel of Barnabas, it is described as "Adam having sprung up upon his feet, saw in the air a writing that shone like the sun, which said, 'There is only one God'. Where upon Adam opened his mouth and said: I thank thee O'my Lord! (My God), that hest designed to create me; but tell me; I pray thee, what meanth the message of these words; Muhammad is the messenger of God. Have there been other men before me? then said God; "Be thou welcome, O' my servant Adam! I tell thee that thou are the first; Whom I have created and the whom thou hast seen (mentioned) is thy son, who shall come into the world many years hence, and shall be my messenger, for whom I have created all things; who shall give light to the world when he shall come, whose soul was set in a celestial splendor sixty thousand years before I made anything "Adam besought, God, saying, Lord grant me this writing upon the nails of the fingers of my hands. Then, God gave his thumbs that writing; upon the thumbnail of the right hand it said; there is only one God; and upon the thumb nail of the left hand it said "Muhammad (peace and blessing of God be upon him) is the messenger of God". Then, with the fatherly affection the first man kissed those words and

rubbed his eyes and said; blessed be that day when thou shall come to the world"⁴⁰

The Life of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) from Birth to Youth

About the year of birth of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), the death of his father before birth, about his grandfather and his foster-mother William Montgomery Watt writes:

"Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was born in the year of the Elephant; The year of the Abraha's unsuccessful expedition against Mecca. This is usually held to be 570 AD. He was probably a posthumous child and was under the care of his grandfather 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib. It was the custom in Mecca for the upper classes gave their children to fostermother of nomadic tribes. This was done with Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) for two years or longer. His fostermother was Halima (may Allah be pleased with her). Misfortune was piled upon misfortune for the orphan. When he was six his mother died, and two years later his grandfather"⁴¹

William Montgomery Watt tells about the war fought between different tribes of Mecca and role of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and this expedition was for upright of justice. He elaborates it in the following words:

"When the war of Fijar took place the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was between fifteen and twenty, and he is said to have played a small part in the fighting at the side of his uncle. He was probably also present at the formation of the Hilf al Fudul, and in later years, is said to have expressed approbation of it. Its aim was to uphold principles of justice against the malpractices of the stronger and richer tribes and that was an aim very close to certain aspect of Qur'ānic Teaching"⁴²

About Prophet Muhammad's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) childhood, Watt tells about the events that took place when his fostermother took him with her. He summarizes the story in following way:

"Every woman of our party found a baby except myself. So, when we agreed to leave for home, I said to my man, By God, I will go to that orphan and take him By God, I do not like to go back with the other woman without any baby. That will not do you any harm, he said; perhaps God will bless us through him. So I went and took him, she continued, and my only reason was that I had not found any other baby. After taking him, I returned with him where my stuff was, then I placed him on my bosom and gave him my breast with whatever milk he wanted. He drank till he had enough, and his brother (her own baby) drank too, both had enough and then slept, although we had taken no sleep with the baby previously. My husband got up and went to that old she-camel of our and to his surprise she had plenty of milk. He milked her, and he and I

drank our full and then had an excellent night. In the morning my husband would say, By God, Halima you know you have taken a best creature, and I replied, By God I hope so"⁴³

Again Watt elaborates another wonderful incident about him which has also come through his foster-mother. She tells us the Excellency of the baby before youth and announcement of Prophet hood, that what type of eminent child was Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He writes in following words:

"We took him to his mother but we were as keen as anything, to have him stay among us, for the blessings we saw he brought. We speak to his mother and said to her, perhaps you would leave my son with me until he grew up, and for I am afraid he may get the Mecca plague. We kept at her until she sent back to him with us. We returned with him and some months after coming, By God, he was among our lambs with his brother behind our tent. When his brother came to us hurrying and said to me and to his father; that brother of mine from Quraysh – Two men with white clothes have taken him and laid him down and split his body open, and they are stirring him up inside. So I and his father went out to him and found standing looking pale. I enclosed him and so did his father and we say to him, what is wrong with you my son? Two men with white clothes came to me, he said, and split open my body and looked for something in it, I do not know what. We took him back to our tent, and his father said to me, Halima, I am afraid something has happened to this boy, take him to his family, before there is anything about him to be noticed. So we carried him and "brought him his mother, what has made you come, nurse, she said, seeing, you were so eager to have him with you? God has made my son grow up, I answered, I have finished my Job, and I am afraid he may have an accident, so I have brought him to you as you desire; tell me the truth about it. She did not leave me alone until I told her the story. Then it is the devil you are afraid of, for him, she asked, yes I said. No, By God, she replied, the devil has no hold on him, "My son is going to be something, shall I not tell you about Him? Yes, I said, "when I was carrying him, she went on; a light went out from me that it lit up for me the palaces of Busra in the land of Syria. I never saw a pregnancy that was lighter and easier for me than with him. At his birth when he was delivered, there he was placing his hands on ground and lifting his head up. Leave him up now; and a safe journey home"⁴⁴

Once again Montgomery Watt tells a very important event of Prophet Muhammad's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) boyhood, his travelling to Syria and meeting with Christian priest Bahira that occurred before the announcement of Prophet Hood:

"Then when the party had finished eating and had broken up, Bahira went up to him, Prophet Muhammad and said, young man I adjure you by al-Lat and al-

Uzaa to answer my questions. Bahira said that to him only because he had heard his people swearing by these two. He said that the Messenger of God said to him, do not ask me one by al-Lat and al-Uzza, for By God's there is absolutely nothing. I detest so much as these two. So Bahira said to him, then, in God name answer what I ask you. Ask what seems good to you, he said, so Bahira began to ask him certain particulars of his condition in sleep, his outward appearance and his affairs. Then the Messenger of God set about answering him and what he said agreed with the description of him Bahira's (book) when he finished Bahira went up to his uncle, Abū Talib, and said, how is this youth related to you? He said, "He is my son. Bahira said to him, he is not your son". This young man's father cannot be alive. He said indeed. He is my brother's son. What did his father do? He said, he died, he said while his mother was pregnant with him. True, he said, return to your country with your nephew, and take care of him against the Jews, for By God if they see him and know what I know about him, they will desire evil, for great importance is in store for this of your nephew. So his uncle Abū Talib set out with him quickly and soon reached Mecca on the completion of their trade with Syria."⁴⁵

Watt has also described the marriage of Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) with Khadija Bint Khuwaylid in the following words:

"The turning point in the early part of Muhammad's career is his marriage with Khadija bint Khuwaylid. The traditional account is that when Khadija heard of the honesty, trustworthiness and high moral character of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him); she invited him to act as her agent on a caravan journey to Syria. She had two husbands of whom the second had been of the clan of Makhzūm, but she now traded on her own account by means of agents. Khadija was so pleased with the result of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) stewardship and so impressed by his personality that she made an offer of marriage to him, which he accepted. She is said to have been forty at this time and Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was of twenty five"⁴⁶

Non-Muslims writers have proved through their statements given above that there was no parallel of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the age of infancy, childhood and youth in the entire universe.

Controversy regarding Jahiliyyah Period:

Various orientalist have discussed the controversies regarding the Jahiliya period in their books. There is no unanimity of views among them on this topic. Their views are reproduced below:

"The term Jahiliyyah is generally translated by the orientalist as 'ignorance or barbarism' and they take it to refer to the period before the rise of Islam. Writing early in the twentieth century, R.A Nicholson divided Arabian history into three periods: The Sabaen and Himariyte period (800 B.C 500 A.C) the pre-Islamic period ('500-622A.C') and the Muhammad period, he called the

second period 'the age of ignorance or barbarism' in explanatory note. He states, "Strictly speaking, Jahiliyyah includes the whole time between Adam (A.S) and down to Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)". While dealing with the history and legends of the pagan Arabs, he further states: 'Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) includes the whole period of Arabian History from the earliest times down to the establishment of Islam in the term Jahiliyyah"⁴⁷

Goldziher rejects the opinion of R.A Nicholson and seconded the view point of P.K. Hitti, P.De Lacy Johnstone and Samuel M. Zwember and contended that no such idea of Jahiliyyah be accepted about such cultured and lettered atmosphere as developed by the South Arabia. The orientalist Goldziher observed that the "term Jahiliyyah (jahl) was to be understood not as an antonym of ('ilm) but of (hilm) and that it should therefore be taken to mean not so much 'ignorance' as 'wildness' 'savagery' the tribal pride and endless tribal feuds, he (Prophet) cut off revenge and other pagan characteristics that Islam sought to remove. He further following the description of Nicholson who asserts in this respect as follows: "that in the sense of Jahiliyyah tends from the creation of Adam down to the mission of Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). In reality, it "mean that the period in which Arabian had no dispensation, no inspired prophet, no revealed book, for ignorance and barbarism can hardly be applied to such a cultured and lettered society as that developed by the South Arabian"⁴⁸

P.K. Hitti rejects the objection of Jahyliyiah by citing a historical reference that this objection has no worth in it because in every era God had sent Prophets (may Allah be pleased with them) and they were highly qualified people of the society. P.K Hitti amended the definition that "Jahiliyyah is the period in which Arabia had no dispensation, no inspired prophet, no revealed book, is equally no cognizant of some very essential elements of Jahiliyyah and is at its best ingenious. It is the result of some confusion about the meaning of being ignorance or barbarism. No doubt that in the period before the emergence of Islam there was barbarism and ignorance due to which they killed their baby daughters alive. But as a whole from Adam till the period of the last Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), it cannot be termed as jahiliyyah because other prophets also spread knowledge in their time"⁴⁹

Some of orientalist had adopted envious way of research about the life span of the childhood of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and called this period a period of Jahiliyyah; but majority of them had contradicted and rejected the igneous and obnoxious view point of their companions and termed this period as a cultured and lettered period. It is a positive message on the part of Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) life to western

people, so that they could think independently and could follow the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) teachings by their free will.

Controversy Regarding Lack of Literature about Prophet's Childhood:

P.De Lacy Johnstone comments are wonderful and he has narrated them in these lines:

"The Arab of the desert then, as we find him in his poetry, was brave, generous, hospitable and loyal of heart. No sacrifice was too great, or any danger too terrible, for him to meet in the course of his family, his tribe, his guest, love for friends or wife or child pride in his own valour and exploits, and in the glory of his clan, and its connection laments for worthy dead, and passionate cries for vengeance, or savages delight in wreaking it, strange weary pictures of dimly guessed existence beyond the joys and troubles of life are past. All these we find in old Arab poetry. Writing of course, there was a little or none: literature of the desert was preserved "Living on the lips of men" and graven on the tablets of their hearts. The perfect warrior was also a famous poet, and the name of many poetesses adorns the Arabs beadroll of glory."⁵⁰

Another oriental scholar Samuel M. Zwember in his book "Across the world of Islam" gives a reference from Muir Book "ef Muir" vol. I, part. Viii and vol. III, p. 123."it is evident that writing of some sort says Muir, was known and practiced at Mecca long before A.D 560. At all events, the frequent notice of written papers leaves no room to doubt that Arabic writing well known, and not uncommonly practiced there in Muhammad's early days. I cannot think with veil, that any great want of writing material could have been felt, even by the poorer Muslims in the early days of Islam reed and palms- leaves would be wanting."⁵¹

The literary rate of Arabs during a course of Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) era has been described in clear & visionary way by P.De Lacy Johnstone and Samuel M. Zwember in their books. It was objected that there was lack of literacy in period of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) childhood but later on they have rejected it themselves.

Conclusion:

The orientalist who have written on the biography of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) harbor different intentions in their hearts. Some seekers of knowledge have tried to narrate the life of the Arabian Prophet as it had been mentioned by the Muslim biographers. Others, with a bent in their minds, have not missed any opportunity of making allegations against the piety of the Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The biased ones have also targeted the lineage, birth and childhood of the Holy Prophet. As falsehood stands on no ground, their own statements sometimes contradict their viewpoints. Hence, one can find dichotomy in their views.

Regarding the ancestors of the Holy Prophet, Karen Armstrong mentions their glorifying attributes individually, but call his clan "weak". Montgomery Watt criticizes ‘Abdul Muṭṭalib that he had gained eminence in the society because he used to marry his daughters with men belonging to powerful families of Makkah, whereas the same orientalist also praises him for being ‘an effective ruler of Mecca’ and ‘a man of energy and initiative’. And others like Johnstone, Rodinson, Nicholson and Hitti accept the prominent position of the ancestors of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

As most orientalists are Christians and Jews, they do not hold the opinion that Muhammad was Prophet by birth. This objection can be removed by citing the prophecies that are present in the Old and New Testaments. The infancy, childhood and pious youth of Muhammad also show that he was no ordinary man. Watt mentions the miraculous events that took place when he used to spend his days with his fostermother Halima.

Some orientalists like Nicholson apply the term Jahhiliyah on the period that extends from Adam to the time of Muhammad. This is absolutely wrong. Hitti has refuted this notion and according to him, Jahiliyah is the period in which Arabia had no inspired Prophet and no revealed book, otherwise other Prophets also spread knowledge in their time.

Regarding the information about the time of Prophets’ childhood, Gibb says that little is known with certainty of his early life, whereas Johnstone says that the literature of the Arabia was preserved in the form of their poetry and it was ‘living on the lips of man’ and ‘graven on the tablets of their hearts’.

From the above discussion, this can be seen that there is dichotomy in the views of some orientalists. Also, some controversies also exist among them regarding the biographic details of the life of Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

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