

WILLIAM MUIR'S VIEW ABOUT THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE HOLY QURĀN

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Abstract: Qurān and Hadith are the coherent components of life of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). The grand edifice of Islām stands on the teachings of both Qurān and Sunnah. A Muslim can never decrease the importance of any of the two nor can he accept any one as less important. The Qurān being Allah's word was bestowed to the Holy Prophet (PBUH) via revelation. The Hadith is word of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). The Muslims never mix both of them, but think them separate accordingly. The Qurān, Hadith and Revelation, all the three are points of discussion and criticism of Orientalists. They always tried to prove them forged and unauthentic. William Muir has dual ideas about the authenticity of the Qurān. Although he thinks that the present Qurān is the same as it was compiled during the time of Hazrat Usman yet he has some contradictory ideas. He expressed his view that at the beginning of revelation the Holy Prophet (PBUH) did not know that it was Qurān. He also thinks that the Satan had complete hold on the mind and tongue of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and he could change it. His other view is that some verses of the Qurān were abrogated, which could not be possible in a book that is certainly revealed by God. In the present study these views and ideas are evaluated in the lights of teachings of Islām and Christianity and the followers of both of the religions.

William Muir stated in his book "The Life of Mahomet" that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) lived under deep and constant conviction of the personality of Satan and he had his angels, and his own exposure to their influence. He referred many verses of the Holy Qurān to be consulted

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which (mention Satan or evil spirits) are: 4:117; 6:67, 113, 121; 16:98-100; 19:82; 22:53, 54; 23:99; 41:35; 43:34 and Surat 114. (1)

Perhaps Muir means by ‘Angels of Satan’ as his ‘agents’. He thinks its memoir in Qurān is for deep relation with Prophet (PBUH). He stated that in Surat an-Nas, the whisperer is Devil. No doubt it is a Devilish power as mentioned in the same Surah, which may be among Jin or mankind. But the stress of Muir is on the idea that the Devil has a power to incite evils and suggest wicked thought in the minds of people not excluding the Holy Prophet (PBUH). Muir's demonstration on Qurānic verse is illogical. Among his referred demonstrations is the following.

“And if (at any time) an incitement to discard is made to thee by the Satan, seek refuge in Allah. He is the One who hears and knows all things.” (2)

(Muir cited wrong reference as Fussilat, 41:35, while correct verse is number 36)

Satan could make attempt but could not succeed all the times especially in case of Prophet (PBUH), he could never be successful.

The following verses of the Holy Qurān contain a challenge of Iblis to Allah to mislead all the human being except His sincere and purified servants. Allah said to him you would not have any authority over my sincere servant.(3)

It is very clear from the up given verses that Satan’s attempt against Allah’s chosen people will surely be resulted in vain.

It is part of Muir's faith to put allegations on prophets. They victimized David of drinking and forgery. How could they spare the Holy Prophet (PBUH), whom they think their opponent.

1. The Authorship of Qurān

It is heavy attack of the non-believers that the Qurān was authored by the Prophet (PBUH) himself. The difference among the orients is that some think it his own words and some think imitate of Bible, some others think words taught by Christians. Surprisingly, William Muir favours all these theories.

The authorship of Qurān is one of the more controversial points. Muslims firmly believe that Qurān is the word of Allah which He revealed by parts to His last prophet Hadhrat Muhammad (PBUH) through angel Jibrael.

Muir, several times used different words to claim that Qurān is word of the Prophet (PBUH). Some examples are as under: (i) “Mahomet himself speaking in Coran....” (4), (ii) Mahomet thus alludes in the Coran....” (5), (iii) “in the words of Mahomet himself....Surat al Furqan.” (6), (iv) “Prophet pretended to receive the revelation” (7), (v) “a pretended revelation from Heaven of treachery....” (8). In favour of his argument he has presented the translation of “انه لقول رسول كريم” (9) ‘I swear that this verily is the word of an honoured Messenger’.

Muir took this verse in favour of his idea that Qurān was word of the Prophet (PBUH). In fact the situation is something else. He took the word رسول (messenger) for the Holy Prophet (PBUH), while it is used for the angel Jibrael.

Abdullah Yousuf Ali mentioned here three false theories of pagans about the Qurān, as being from the prophet himself or from evil spirit or the word of soothsayer magician. He says:

“They are told here that all their three theories were foolish. The Revelation was really from Allah. Their wonder should cease if they observe the daily miracles worked around them in nature. The bringer of Allah’s message was the angel Gabriel, and not an evil spirit.” (10)

Here is another strong internal evidence of Qurān for non Muslims, after which many of them accept the reality. Surat Ar-Rum contains the prediction of defeat of Romans by Persians and then their victory over Persians within few upcoming years. It was a prediction of Qurān which proved true in later years.

Moreover, the word ‘*rasul*’ is translated as messenger and messenger is not specified for the person selected by Allah for conveying His message. It can only be specified when it is related to Allah i.e. ‘*rasulullah*’ Messenger of Allah.

Muir thinks that it was Muhammad’s wording which was just to show his sympathy to Christianity as it was Divine Religion. He mentioned another reason for this prediction that pagans of Makkah were in favour of Persia; therefore, Muhammad (PBUH) predicted so.

The corroboration of this prediction in later years was a strong favour of Islām. It surprised even to the bitterest enemies of Islām.

Edward Gibbon analyzed the situation of time of war. When the power of Persians was growing very fast, they were defeating the Romans rapidly. It seemed that the power of Romans would be crushed completely. They had even reached the boundaries of Constantinople when suddenly their power started to lose. Now Romans started to wretch back their territories. The prediction of the Qurān which seemed very strange to the non believers, proved true. Gibbon thinks that at the time of this prophesy its accomplishment seemed impossible because the first twelve years of Heraclius seemed the approaching dissolution of the empire. (11)

George Sale is a translator of the Qurān. He has written a detailed preface of his translation 'The Koran'. He made his full attempt to prove the Qurān as word of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). He also mentioned that chief teachings of Qurān include unity of God, necessary laws, examples of punishments and several stories.

But finally he admitted such facts about the Qurān which are solid evidences that Qurān is Allah's word. He says:

"There are a great number of passages which are occasional, and relate to particular emergencies. For whenever anything happened which perplexed and gravelled Mohammed, and which he could not otherwise get over, he had constant recourse to a new revelation, as an infallible expedient in all nice cases; and he found the success of this method answer his expectation." (12)

The above given statement of Sale shows the conceding behaviour about the revelation coming from Allah whenever he was in difficult situation. He accepted that revelation was only source to release the Prophet (PBUH) from such emergencies.

The verses of each revelation were recorded by the vigilant scribes of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). The Orientalists, on the other hand, though admit the Qurān as divine revelation but due to certain reasons, they reject it on various occasions.

Maurice Bucaille is a famous French Orientalist; he has studied many works of Muslims on different scientific aspects in the Qurān, but he could not find any such work made in the West. He thinks that abundance of subjects discussed in these works make the reader confronted. Bucaille has admitted the fact that Qurān is Allah's word. He says:

William Muir's View About The Holy Qurān

“Whereas monumental errors are to be found in the Bible, I could not find a single error in the Qurān. I had to stop and ask myself: if a man was the author of the Qurān, how could he have written fact in the Seventh century A.D. that today are shown to be in keeping with modern scientific knowledge? There was absolutely no doubt about it: the text of the Qurān we have today is most definitely a text of the period.....” (13)

A famous Orientalist, Karen Armstrong accepts the authority of Qurān in these words: “The Qurān is the holy word of God, and its authority remains absolute.” (14)

William Muir admitted that Gabriel the Spirit was messenger of Allah to bring revelation from Allah to the prophet. He said that this angel sometimes appeared before the Prophet physically. (15)

This confession of Muir matches the following verses of the Holy Qurān:

وَإِنَّهُ لَتَنْزِيلُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ . نَزَلَ بِهِ الرُّوحُ الْأَمِينُ . عَلَى قَلْبِكَ لِتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُنذِرِينَ . بِلِسَانٍ عَرَبِيٍّ مُبِينٍ (16).

“Verily this is a Revelation from the Lord of the Worlds: With it came down the Truthful spirit. To thy heart that thou mayest admonish. In the perspicuous Arabic tongue”

The Qurān was revealed by stages as mentioned in the following verse: “It is We Who have sent down the Qurān to thee by stages.” (17)

The Holy Qurān itself challenged the people who were doubtful about the Qurān to present ten surahs or one surah or even some part like it. This challenge is mentioned in following verses.

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِعَشْرِ سُوْرٍ مِّثْلِهِ مُفْتَرِيَاتٍ وَادْعُوا مَنِ اسْتَضَعْتُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ (18)

“Or they may say, “He forgot it” Say, “Bring ye ten Suras Forged, like unto it, and call (to your aid) whomsoever ye can, other than Allah- if ye speak the truth!”

The following verse challenges the non believers to forge only one Surat:

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُوْرَةٍ مِّثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ (19)

“And if ye are in doubt as to what We have revealed from time to time to Our servant then produce a Sura like thereunto; and call your witnesses or helpers (if there are any) besides Allah, if ye are truthful.”

And the following verse challenges the non believers to forge something like Qurān:

قُلْ لَّيِّنَ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ
ظَهِيرًا (20)

“Say: “If the whole of mankind and Jinns were to gather together to produce the like of this Qurān, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and support.”

Allah gradually decreased the requirement from pagans. In spite of all challenges, no eloquent Arab was able to form anything like Qurān. But they also confessed the superiority of Qurān.

The enemies of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) though opposed him and did not show their belief in Qurān but they were also impressed by its recitation. Walid bin Mughirah, after listening Qurān was much surprised. Utbah said I have listened strange Qurān I have not listened like unto it. (21)

G. Sale accepted that the language of Qurān was superior to all fluent people of Makkah. There were numerous eloquent people in Makkah at the time of revelation of Qurān. Many people of Makkah had objected the Holy Prophet (PBUH) as being the composer of Qurān. They also taunted him that some non-Arab taught him the Qurān, but when the Qurān challenged them to produce such Qurān even a single verse, they were helpless to do so. Sale has accepted this fact and mentioned it in his ‘The Koran’. Later he mentioned one instance of the period after challenge of Qurān. A famous poet of his time Labid also admitted after reading two verses of Surat Al Baqara that these words could only be uttered by an inspired person. (22)

2. External proofs:

Most of the Orientalists study Islām only with critical eye. Their target is to criticise Islām, Prophet of Islām and the Qurān. Most of them think that Qurān is authored by the Holy Prophet (PBUH). Though they are sure about its divinity but they never believe it.

Watt, who is a successor of Muir, mostly follows the ideas of Muir. On the point of quoting Qurānic verses he has adopted different style which is better than Muir's. It is also a careful way. While quoting Qurānic references, he refrained from use of ‘Allah says’ or ‘Muhammad says’. He simply mentioned ‘Qurān says’. This style of Watt is also a plus point on his

part and it seems as if he admits the Divinity of Qurān but he is hesitant to declare it.

Maurice Bucaille has deeply studied the Bible and Qurān and compared them with science. The results of his scientific study of the sacred books are much surprising. He examined the texts of the Holy Qurān with open mind with total objectivity. He had no faith in Islām while there were certain credentials to remind the authenticity of Qurān. But after the study of Islām, he is totally surprised. He says:

“I therefore admit that before I was given a view of Islām, different from the one, I received in the West, I myself was extremely ignorant.” (23)

3. Preservation of the Qurān

The Orientalists unwillingly accept Qurān as Divine book, but they raise another issue about its preservation. Many Orientalists have given mixed comments on this issue.

Muir's own comments about preservation of Qurān are different. He mentioned how Qurān was compiled:

“By labours of Zeid, these scattered and confused materials were reduced to the order and sequence in which we now find them, and in which it is pretended that Zeid used to repeat the Coran in the presence of Mahomet.”(24)

Muir admits the authenticity of Qurān by saying:

“There is probably in the world no work which has remained twelve centuries with so pure text”. (25)

The above given statements of Muir show that he acknowledges the authenticity of Qurān. He has also mentioned that Hadhrat Usman's copy of Qurān was honest re-production of Abu Bakr's copy. Muir mentioned Shiah's objection that Hadhrat Usman left some surahs or passages from Qurān which favoured Hadhrat Ali. He rejected all such objections with collateral evidence that it was not possible in the presence of Hadhrat Ali and many other companions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). Among his evidences is at the time of compilation that there was no clash between Usman and Ali.

4. Objections on Qurān

Although Muir believes that Jibrael used to bring revelations of Qurān yet

he has some doubts about it. He has raised some objections on the Holy Qurān. We will analyze these objections.

4.1 Objection of Abrogation

Abrogation (*Naskh/نسخ*) in Qurān is a very important issue. The Muslim *Ummah* unanimously agree on its essence. It is usually described as alteration of Allah's any existing commandment with His new commandment. The knowledge associated with it is known as abrogating and abrogated. (*An-Nasikh Wal-Mansukh*). The previous verse which is omitted from Qurān is known as abrogated (Mansukh), while new verse which takes its place is known as abrogating (Nasikh).

The system of cancellation is normally experienced by us in our routine life. many political, legal and judicial ordinances are issued and cancelled, then new ordinances take their place. There are always room to change any commandment which is no more necessary for later days. Allah gave many commandments which were necessary for early time while in the later time new commandments or verses took their place as good alternative.

Muir thinks where reconciliation between two passages was not possible and meanings were opposite the earlier, was declared abrogated by later. (26)

- i) Muir's theory of opposite meaning is very strange. Abrogation is possible only in case when preceding order is to be cancelled. For this purpose, the new command will definitely be different from the earlier. Therefore, contradiction in abrogating and abrogated is natural; it is not a valid objection.

This rule is mentioned in the Qurān in following words:

﴿مَا نَنْسَخُ مِنْ آيَةٍ أَوْ نُنسِئُهَا نَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ مِّنْهَا أَوْ مِثْلَهَا أَمْ تَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ﴾ (27)

“None of Our revelations do We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, but We substitute something better or similar: Knowest thou not that Allah Hath power over all things?”

Here is a system and solid purpose to abrogate verses i.e. to send better verses. The wisdom behind this purpose is above logic and understanding of common people.

- ii) Muir should have noticed the abrogation in the Bible. There are various examples in this connection.

Abrogation is not confined to Islām only but it was also common before

Islām. It was in different ways. The messengers of Allah abrogated previous legislation as in case of Hadhrat Musa, following 'a, b, and d' are its examples. Some commandments of previous prophets were abrogated by later prophet as in following example 'c' it is apparent. The basic beliefs were same in all religions, they could never be abrogated.

- a) In legislation of Hadhrat Nooh every moving animal was meat for his followers. (28) while many animals are declared unlawful by Hadhrat Musa. (29)
- b) In Hadhrat Yaqub's legislation a person could marry two real sisters, he himself married two real sisters i.e. Laban and Rachel. (30) while it is not allowed in Hadhrat Musa's legislation. (31)

The first prophet is Israel and the second is his follower and Israelite.

- c) The religion of Hadhrat Musa generally allowed divorce. (32) while the religion of Hadhrat Isa allowed it only in case of adultery. (33)

Both Prophets are Israelites and later prophet claims to follow the religion of the former. He also confirmed the religion of Musa. The Christians follow Old and New Testaments. Here is a question, the Christians claim to follow Old and New Testament. Old Testament allowed divorce generally while the New Testament bounds its followers to the case of adultery. In such case what will the Christians follow? Undoubtedly, they will have to accept the importance of abrogation and to stop opposing this issue.

- d) Bible mentions that Hadhrat Musa's father Imran married to his father's sister (paternal aunt) who was mother of Musa and Haroon. "And Amram took him Jochebed his father's sister to wife: and she bare him Aaron and Moses"(34)

Later Hadhrat Musa banned the marriage with father's sister:

"Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father's sister: she is thy father's near kinswoman."

Here it is noticeable that the first ruling or commandment is abrogated by the later. The critics can easily analyse the opposition of meanings of abrogating and abrogated orders in Bible. There may be more examples in this connection.

- e) Old Testament is a major part of The Bible, it is considered as Divine book. It lays emphasis on following Sabbath. It bears such examples to

stone death such people who did not regard this day. Bible describes that Hadhrat Isa did some things on this day; so, he had to suffer persecution: “And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these thing on Sabbath day.” (35)

This example shows that Hadhrat Isa opposed Sabbath which was not allowed according to Old Testament. Although Hadhrat Isa claimed to follow the religion of Hadhrat Musa yet he had changed many of the commandments of Old Testament. So, the followers of Hadhrat Isa must have to accept that Hadhrat Isa abrogated the legislation of Hadhrat Musa.

The following verse of the Holy Qurān also shows an example of abrogation in the religion of Israelite. At first the fat of animals was allowed to the Jews but afterwards Allah abrogated the legislation and forbade the fat of ex and sheep except that was adhered to their backs or entrails or that was mixed with their bones. The animals with undivided hoof were also forbidden for them. (36)

The verse mentions that the legislation was changed and the fat was forbidden due to their sinful attitude.

4.2 The Legend of *Ghraniq*

William Muir stated that during the recitation of Surat An-Najam, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) was deviated by devil; when he suggested the words of reconciliation and compromise with the gods of Quraish to the Prophet (PBUH). According to Muir Jibrael came in the evening and said to the Holy Prophet (PBUH) “What is that thou have done? Thou hast repeated before the people word that I never gave unto thee.” The prophet became much grieved. (37)

Following result can be concluded from Muir's statement:

- 1) The devil suggested his words to the Holy Prophet (PBUH).
- 2) The devil added his words in the Qurān.

Here, these points will be analyzed.

1) *The devil suggested his words to the Holy Prophet (PBUH).*

This concept is against the basic teachings of Islām. The Qurān describes that devil has no authority to cast his evils to Allah’s chosen people. Allah says in Qurān:

﴿إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانٌ﴾ (38)

“As for My servants no authority shalt thou have over them”.

When devil was expelled from paradise, he asked from Allah for relief, which was given to him. On that occasion he challenged Allah to deviate the human. He also said that Allah’s chosen people will be safe from his attacks. His wording is mentioned in the Qurān as follows:

﴿قَالَ رَبِّ مَا أَغْوَيْتَنِي لَأُزَيِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا أَغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ. إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلَصِينَ﴾ (39)

“(Iblis) said: "O my Lord! because Thou hast put me in the wrong, And I will put them all in the wrong. Except Thy chosen servants among them”.

Qurtubi referred a tradition mentioning that the prophet erroneously said during recitation of Surah An-Najam “ان شفاعتهم ترنجي” but its *isnad* is *munqate* (broken chain of transmitters) which is unreliable. (40)

2) The devil added his words in the Qurān.

It is not possible for devil to interfere in Qurān. Allah has taken responsibility to safeguard it. Even He has given warnings to the Holy Prophet (PBUH) in case of following the non-Muslims and adding anything in Qurān from himself. Although it was impossible case but Allah warned him of severe punishment for this. Where the matter is so strict even for Allah’s beloved Prophet –thought it was not possible that he could add anything in Qurān– how is it possible that He will give chance to devil to add his words which are against the spirit of Islām.

It is attempt of devil to give help to his followers. The Qurān says:

﴿وَإِنَّ الشَّيَاطِينَ لَيُوحُونَ إِلَىٰ أَوْلِيَائِهِمْ لِيُجَادِلُوكُمْ﴾ (41)

“But the satans ever inspire their friends to contend with you.”

Moreover, Allah has given guarantee to guard Qurān from all types of corruptions. Allah has clearly stated the following:

﴿إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ﴾ (42)

“We have, without doubt, sent down the message and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)”.

It means that Qurān is completely preserved from any attack. How it was possible for devil to add anything in Qurān while Allah promised the following:

﴿لَا يَأْتِيهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِ ۖ تَنْزِيلًا مِّنْ حَكِيمٍ حَمِيدٍ﴾ (43)

“No falsehood can approach it from before or behind it: It is sent down by One Full of Wisdom, Worthy of all Praise.”

Ibrahim Urjun⁽⁴⁴⁾ has declared it as fabricated legendary fiction, void in its origin and malicious lie on Islām, which is fabricated by a riddled, idiot, ignorant, a heretic or a hypocrite licentious, riotous disciple”. (45)

Imam Ibn-e-Hazam commented on this event as: It is not true by transmission nor by meaning, anyone can engage him in fabricating such lie.(46)

Imam Qurtubi analyzed several traditions which narrate this event. Eventually, he concluded that there are many narrations in this perspective, all of them are fabricated which have no base. (47)

Muhammad Abduhu says that infallibility of all prophets is among the fundamental beliefs. Any Hadith which causes denunciation will not be accepted any way. According to the decision of fundamentalists of Hadith, such tradition will be declared fabricated. He says when such decision is given about *marfu* tradition then what assumes the talk of *mursal*. (48)

4.2.1 Attempt to Amalgamate Revelation with Epilepsy

The Orientalists claimed that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) was epileptic. They have based their claim on two things. The first is miraculous incident of opening the chest of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). Second is the change of his condition at the time of receiving revelation.

Muir is one of those Orientalists who charge the Holy Prophet (PBUH) as being epileptic. First of all, he has mentioned the incident of opening the chest of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) at the age of four when he was under the care of Halima Sa’adia. Muir hastily declared it as a fit of epilepsy. He said: “It was probably a fit of epilepsy.” (49)

At first Muir has declared the incident of opening of chest as epilepsy. Later on, he attempted to attach it with his condition at the time of revelation. For this, he prepared a ground. He referred the dialogue between Halima and her husband about the Holy Prophet’s (PBUH) matter. The actual wording of Halima’s husband was: *لقد خشيت ان يكون هذا الغلام قد اصيب فالحقية باهله* “I fear that the infant has received an evil spirit –that is, under the influence of an evil spirit– therefore let him be sent back to his family.”

Muir has wrongly changed the under lined word as اصيب and translated it as

epilepsy. This is his approach and command on Arabic language.

In fact, Halima's husband did not mean that the infant was suffering from any actual disease, but he meant that the child might be under the influence of evil spirit. This is the view of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. It seems correct. (50)

Due to this misapprehension, Muir has attached the condition of receiving revelation to epilepsy. Muir says:

“There were periods at which the excitement took the Shape of a trance or vision. Of these we know but little. Some early Christian writers have described them as epileptic seizures, and have connected them with the symptoms noticed in his childhood. Such swoons or reveries are said sometimes to have preceded "the descent of inspiration," even in later life.”(51)

Muir has attributed this accusation to his predecessors but Muir himself is not less than them anyway. Though he thinks opening of chest as epilepsy, but he does not have a single evidence of such other incident in his childhood which could be attributed to epilepsy. Therefore his thought and wording “symptoms noticed in his childhood” is quite wrong.

The Qurān was revealed via revelation through the angel Jibrael. This angel used to bring Allah's message to all the previous prophets. On the occasion of revelation the Holy Prophet (PBUH) used to feel some difficult situation, which is mentioned in Ahadith. William Muir has damaged its origin. He says:

“At the moment of inspiration, anxiety pressed upon the Prophet, and his countenance was troubled. He fell to the ground like one intoxicated or overcome by sleep; and in the coldest day by forehead would be bedewed with large drops of perspiration.” (52)

The statements of Muir show his belief that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) was epileptic since childhood. And the change of condition at the time of arrival of revelation was also the same type of epileptic fit. It was connected to the incident of opening of his chest during his childhood.

It is evident dishonesty the first portion in the up given statement is mentioned with a reference of Ibn-e-Sa'ad while the later sentence (underlined) is mentioned without any reference. It is fact that Muir's this claim could not be favoured by any reference from History. It is just linked to the first part so that the reader could think it part of the same tradition.

This thinking is attached here just to claim that the Prophet (PBUH) was epileptic and the revelation was epileptic fit. He wanted to teach his reader that the Qurān was nothing except what he told his companions after this epileptic fit.

It was a thinking of Greeks that epilepsy is resulted by evil spirits. That's why they have attached it to the Holy Prophet (PBUH). Therefore, Davenport says:

“The assertion, so often repeated, that Mohammed was subject to epileptic fits, is a base invention of the Greeks, who would seem to impute that morbid affection to the apostle of a novel creed as a stain upon his moral character deserving the reprobation and abhorrence of the Christian world.” (53)

In fact, such beliefs of Greeks were part of their faith. They subjected the Holy Prophet (PBUH) of such disease to prove that he was caught by evil spirits. Their purpose was to reveal the mental disability of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) so that his message could be declared void.

Gibbon also rejected this claim against the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and said that the strength of Holy Prophet (PBUH) was able to continue his mission till the age of sixty three. He also said that the claim of being epileptic is an absurd claim of Greeks which is an object of pity for Muhammad (PBUH) rather than abhorrence. (54)

Gibbon also mentioned the base of this claim against the Holy Prophet (PBUH):

“The epilepsy, or the falling sickness of Muhammad, is asserted by Theophanes, Zonaras, and the rest of the Greeks; and is greedily swallowed by the gross bigotry of Hottinger, Prideaux and Maracci. The titles (the wrapped up, the covered) of two chapters of the Koran (73,74) can hardly be strained to such an interpretation: the silence, the ignorance of the Mohammedan commentators, is more conclusive than the most peremptory denial.” (55)

Watt, who always followed Muir but sometimes his point of view is quite different. He has not followed Muir in his view of epilepsy. Watt mentioned the feelings of Holy Prophet (PBUH) and change of his condition at the time of revelation. He mentioned how the Holy Prophet (PBUH) felt cold and perspiration would be seen on his forehead. After mentioning this

situation he says:

“Such accounts led some western critics to suggest that he had epilepsy, but there are no real grounds for such a view. Epilepsy leads to physical and mental degeneration, and there are signs of that in Muhammad; on the contrary he was clearly in full possession of his faculties to the very end of his life.” (56)

According to Watt the Holy Prophet (PBUH) had no symptoms of epilepsy but he was quite fit till the end of his life. Same statement is given by Gibbon. He says that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) led prayers till the third day before death.

William Muir himself stated:

“Mahomet had not hitherto suffered from any serious illness”. (57)

Muir's statement goes against him, because an epileptic person cannot perform his duties so vigilantly till such long life. While Gibbon, Watt and even Muir admit him quite active throughout his life up till his death.

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- (5) ibid
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- (29) Leviticus, 11:7; Deuteronomy, 14:9
- (30) Genesis, 29: 23-30
- (31) Leviticus, 18:18
- (32) Deuteronomy, 24:1-2
- (33) Mathew, 19:15
- (34) Exodus, 6:20
- (35) John, 5:16
- (36) Al-Anaam, 146

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