

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF MICHAEL HART'S VIEW ABOUT MUHAMMAD (PBUH) (IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF "THE 100")

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Michael H. Hart is writer of the book The 100. In the list of most 'influential' persons he ranked Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) on first number. Usually the perception is that he appreciated Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), but the fact is contrary to this notion. He made serious attacks on Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and Islam. In this article, I have presented his views about Islam and the standard of his selection of a personality to make the picture clear in front of a reader.

Michael H. Hart is writer of the book *The 100*¹ which consists on most 'influential' persons in history, not 'greatest men' as mentioned by the writer in preface of the book. He describes his method in these words

*I must emphasize that this is a list of the most influential persons in history, not a list of the greatest. For example, there is room in my list for an enormously influential, wicked, and heartless man like Stalin, but no place at all for the saintly Mother Cabrini*².

In the list of most 'influential' persons he ranked Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) on first number. He wrote approximately six pages on Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Although his writing is not a standard to measure the authenticity of Islam yet Muslims feel proud that he ranked our Prophet (PBUH) on the top of the list. Most of them never tried to see Michael's writing but they quoted very often. The fact is that Michael has made serious attacks on Islam by this writing. He clearly mentions in the preface that he will consider only influential persons not greatest, and influence can be attained through positive or negative tools respectively. He writes that "Hitler meets the criteria for inclusion."³ By saying this he ranked Prophet (PBUH) and Hitler on same level and criteria which is influence. He tried to make Muhammad (PBUH) a suspicious personality. His views are discussed as under:

- **'Secular' personality**

The author is of the view that:

*"He was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular levels"*⁴

Under Para 13 he repeated his earlier views as under:

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“Furthermore, Muhammad (unlike Jesus) was a secular as well as religious leader.”⁵

Under concluding Para he 3rd time expressed his hypocrisy by saying:
“Unparalleled combination of secular and religious influence”⁶

By using the word “*Secular*” (which means *not connected with spiritual or religious matters*) the author has made a serious attack on prophet hood of Muhammad (PBUH) who had no concern with Secularism. Secular is an antonym of Religion and one could be either secular or religious. Actually the author has tried to mitigate personality of the prophet by using words secular and religious in one personality which is absolutely impossible. Such type of remarks by the author depicts his enmity with the holy prophet.

- **Economic allegation**

The author further distorted the facts that *“His economic position improved when, at age twenty-five, he married a wealthy widow”*.⁷ Actually Hazrat Khadija by impressing his pious life and honesty herself sent a message for Nikah to the Prophet. There are number of instances that Prophet (PBUH) never liked to accumulate money for him.

- **Inappropriate words**

The author used some inappropriate words for prophet (PBUH) by saying that ‘*Muhammad fled to Medina*’ which depicts his perverse state of mind. The word ‘Fled’ gives negative sense and shows connection of a person with the state crime or obnoxious acts. Muhammad (PBUH) was famous for his honesty, truthfulness and nobleness, but Islam was not acceptable for the Non- Believers of Mecca. In these circumstances he migrated to Madina, not fled to Madina.

Michal used another incorrect word by saying:

“Islamic tradition tells us that he was illiterate”⁸

This statement is not based on reality. Muslims say that he never acquired formal education from any institution or any person, but he was directly guided and instructed by Allah. ‘Illiterate’, who knows nothing, is incorrect and Muslims used the word ‘*ummi*’ for him.

- **Primary sources of “Islam”**

Michal wrote that

“There were however, in Mecca, a small number of Jews and Christians; it was from them, most probably, that

*Muhammad first learned of a single, omnipotent God who ruled the entire universe.*⁹

The word “probably” shows lack of knowledge and research. After seeing this quotation a question raise that how can you impute an idea to a person by your own perception? Is this honesty or open bias attitude? The history shows that he never attended the sittings of Jews and Christians; he adopted loneliness in cave *hira* for the thinking and searching of God. Michael has no ground for this statement; he merely quoted wrong conception of non- Believers.

- **Foundation of a new ‘religion’**

The author reported the Prophet an “illiterate” under Para 3 whereas subsequently declared him *an absolute and effective ruler*¹⁰ *who was supremely successful*. He wrote that

*“Mohammad founded and promulgated the religion.”*¹¹

A plain reading of the author’s views loudly speaks of contradictions and inner state of his perverse mind that how an illiterate person could be an author of such scriptures (Koran). The prophet never claimed to be an author of the holy Quran whereas it is very clear in the holy book that

“He does not speak out of (his own) desire. It is but revelation revealed (to him)”¹².

Moreover, theoretically it is impossible to say that an ‘illiterate’ person have a magical and impressive capacity of extracting laws and code for everyday life. This needs a long term study and Muhammad (PBUH) never gained formal or informal education from Jews and Christians respectively.

- **Author of the Holy Quran**

Another major blunder of Michael is that he measured the New-Testament and the Quran on same background. As he dedicated the major portion of the New-Testament to St. Paul similarly he said that:

*“Muhammad is the author of the Moslem Holy Scriptures, the Korana collection of Muhammad’s statements that he believed had been divinely inspired’.*¹³

Under Para 12 page 9 the author tried to misguide the readers as under:

*The Koran, therefore, closely represents Muhammad’s ideas and teachings and, to a considerable extent, his exact words ”.*¹⁴

What is the basic source of this statement? Muhammad (PBUH) never said that and the same objection was raised by non-believers of that

time but they remained fail to present even a single verse. This shows that Michael wrote this without research and original knowledge.

- **Political allegation**

The author's maliciousness is evident by choosing the words "an absolute ruler, the effective ruler"¹⁵ about the prophet who had no concern with such "political powers"¹⁶ and he was a messenger of Almighty Allah. He preached divine teachings of Allah because he was final and last messenger of him.

- **Basic factor of Arab's unity**

It is also incorrect as stated under Para 15 of the article that

"The Arab nations united not merely by their faith in Islam, but also by their Arabic language, history, and culture".

Interestingly the author under the same Para rebutted his views by stating that:

"Differences and divisions between these Arab states exist, of course, and they are considerable, but the partial disunity should not blind us to the important elements of unity that have continued to exist. For instance, neither Iran nor Indonesia, both oil-producing states and both Islamic in religion, joined in the oil embargo of the winter of 1973-74".

This is also a biased statement which has no grounds. History proved that Arabs united merely on the base of religion Islam. Before Islam factors (language, history and culture) mentioned by Michael were same but they were scattered and used to fight on slight issues of routine life. What was the basic glue which tied them in one string? Obviously it was their religion Islam and its teachings which converted them into blessed and successful in both worlds.

وَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ لَوْ أَنْفَقْتَ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مَا أَلَّفْتَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ أَلَّفَ بَيْنَهُمْ إِنَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٣١﴾

And united their hearts. Had you spent all that is on earth, you could not have united their hearts. But Allah did unite their hearts. Surely, He is All-Mighty, All-Wise.

Conclusion

Michael H. Hart wrote a book "The-100", in which he collected the details of most influential persons of the history, not greatest men as he clarified in the preface of this book. He ranked Muhammad (PBUH) on top of the list of these people only because of his influence.

Unfortunately, Muslims feel proud on this and they quote it very often in writings and speaking without knowing and reading this article. He made very serious attacks on Islam and tried to prove it a promulgation of absurd ideas taken by others. It is a point that why Muslims spread a false writing without research and even without knowing it. I have tried to mention the major points of Michael writing in my article. In the end the gist is that Michael's writing is not an appreciation to Islam but a trying to make Islamic beliefs susceptible and suspicious.

NOTES & REFERENCES

¹ Michael H. Hart, The 100 -A ranking of the most influential persons in history, A Citadel press book (carol publishing group), Second edition, 1992

² Preface The 100, Second edition, 1992, Pg. xxviii

³ Preface The 100, Second edition, 1992, Pg. xxviii

⁴ The 100-A ranking of the most influential persons in history, Pg. 3

⁵ The 100-A ranking of the most influential persons in history, Pg. 9

⁶ The 100-A ranking of the most influential persons in history, Pg. 10

⁷ The 100-A ranking of the most influential persons in history, Pg. 4

⁸ The 100-A ranking of the most influential persons in history, Pg. 4

⁹ The 100-A ranking of the most influential persons in history, Pg. 4

¹⁰ The 100-A ranking of the most influential persons in history, Pg. 4

¹¹ The 100-A ranking of the most influential persons in history, Pg. 3

¹² *al-najm* 53: 3-4

¹³ The 100-A ranking of the most influential persons in history, Pg. 9

¹⁴ The 100-A ranking of the most influential persons in history, Pg. 9

¹⁵ The 100-A ranking of the most influential persons in history, Pg. 4

¹⁶ The 100-A ranking of the most influential persons in history, Pg. 4

¹⁷ Al- Infal 8: 63
