

Critical Study Of Dr. Annemarie Schimmel’s “And Muhammad Is His Messenger”

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Abstract

Dr. Annemarie Schimmel was a German orientalist, Islamist and a prolific writer. She was born in Germany on 7th April 1922. At the very young age of nineteen, she did her first Ph.D. in Islamic studies and at the age of twenty-three, she became Assistant Professor of Islamic studies and received her second doctorate at the age of twenty-eight. She taught in various renowned universities such as University of Marburg, Ankara University, University of Bonn and Harvard University. She wrote about hundred books and numerous articles on different Islamic subjects in different languages mostly in German and English. Beside various topics, she also wrote a book on the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings) in English “And Muhammad is His Messenger”. In this book she has particularly focussed on a special subject in sirah which is “veneration of Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings) in Muslim piety”. This aspect of sirah was not discussed in detail by orientalists. She discusses different aspects of veneration of Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings). In this book, Dr. Schimmel gives an outline of the main features of the Muhammad (upon whom be peace and greetings) of faith. In this research paper, brief introduction and critical study of her book “And Muhammad is His Messenger” have been given and merits and demerits of her work have also been discussed.

Literature Review: There has been written many articles on different aspects of Dr. Schimmel and her different books but in detail merits and demerits of her book “And Muhammad is His Messenger” were not discussed. So in this article this deficiency has been fulfilled.

Research Question: What are the merits and demerits of Dr. Annemarie Schimmel’s sirah book “And Muhammad is His Messenger”?

Methodology: The method of research is analytical research. Mostly primary sources have been used and quotations from these sources are also given where it required. Secondary sources have also been utilized. Internet and different educational software were used.

Uniqueness of the article: This is the only and first article of its kind which in depth discusses the merits and demerits of Dr. Schimmel’s Sirah book. By this study reader will be aware of qualities and weaknesses of her work.

Keywords: Orientalist, Veneration of Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings), Sirah, Features

Introduction

There are two kinds of books regarding the biography of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings): historical and devotional. Dr. Schimmel’s book “And Muhammad is His Messenger” is of second category. In this book, Dr. Schimmel gives an outline of the main features of the Muhammad (upon whom be peace and greetings) of faith. She uses vast range of sources in many Islamic languages as Persian, Arabic, Urdu, Turkish, Pushto, Sindhi, Bangali and Swahili etc. As it is known that the mostly modern scholarship has focused on the historical aspects of Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings) and they pay a little attention to the devotional aspects but in her book Dr. Schimmel describes the importance of Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings) as a symbolic focus of popular piety and Islamic religion. ¹

She discusses different aspects of veneration of Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings) for example: as a beautiful model, an intercessor and as the source of miracles and legends. Her writing style is very simple and easily understandable for a common reader. She uses a variety of sources and analyses his role at the heart of sufism. This is her first book in English language and it is an expanded form of her German book *Und Muhammad ist sein Prophet (And Muhammad is His Prophet)*. Here she presents a phenomenological portrayal of the personality of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings). She describes how he was understood by common believers, Sufis, modern religious conservatives and jurists. ² Merlin Swartz gives a beautiful introduction of this book in the following words:

“And Muhammad is his Messenger is an impressive work of very considerable importance both to the field of Islamic studies and to comparative studies in general. It is the first work of its kind

in English and while it draws an earlier works such as Tor Andrae's *Die Person Muhammeds in Lehre und Glaube seiner Gemeinde* (1918), it goes beyond the earlier works both in the range of sources it utilizes and in the diversity of themes explored. Professor Schimmel is to be commended for making available in English a work that will contribute much to our understanding of the religious life of Muslims and the place of Prophet in that life. ³

The book starts with the biographical and hagiographical notes in which she briefly describes the life of Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings). Other chapters discuss his unique position, legends and miracles, his beautiful names, his night journey and ascension and his status as a beautiful model for Muslims. She also throws light on mystical speculations about the light of Muhammad (upon whom be peace and greetings), poetry in honour of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings) and the celebration of the Holy Prophet's (upon whom be peace and greetings) birthday. The final chapters analyse figurations of Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings) that have arisen in modern time including those formulated by modernists and religious reformers. Allama Iqbal's thoughts get a special place in this regard. ⁴

Merits

This book has many merits for example: it has unique chapterization, great touch of mystical thought, folk traditions and poetry, detailed notes, bibliography and various indexes. Unlike other orientalist's works, it has positive approach to the Prophet of Islam (upon whom be peace and greetings) and describes unjust behaviour of the West about Islam and Prophet of Islam (upon whom be peace and greetings). It gives beautiful translation of different important verses of renowned Muslim poets beside rare motifs of Calligraphy. Detail of these merits is given below.

1. Unique Chapterization

The book has unique chapters such as Muhammad the beautiful Model, Muhammad's unique Position, Muhammad the Intercessor and the light of Muhammad etc. Such chapterization is not found in any other sirah book. There are twelve chapters in this book. Each chapter presents an important element in the Muslim view of Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings) as expressed in the devotional literature. In the first chapter, Dr. Schimmel gives a brief introduction of Holy Prophet's (upon whom be peace and greetings) life as described in early sources. In this chapter, she confines purely biographical notes. She describes the life of Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings) and his prominent followers in the light of Holy Quran and Muslim texts.

Dr. Schimmel takes up special themes and finds their articulation and development in Islamic sources from chapter two to chapter nine. Chapter eight and nine deal with the celebration of the Holy Prophet's (upon whom be peace and greetings) birthday, his night journey and ascension in the light of devotional literature. Chapter ten is very lengthy and deal with the poetry in honour of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings) in Arabic traditions and Natiyya poetry in

Persian and popular tradition. In chapter eleven and twelve, Dr. Schimmel narrates the efforts of believers in recent centuries to reconceive the meaning of the Prophet. She begins with the Tariqa Muhammadia (way of Muhammad) ﷺ in subcontinent and analyzes the main interpretations of the Prophet. She deals with the efforts of Allama Iqbal to formulate the meaning of Muhammad (upon whom be peace and greetings)

2. Great Touch of Mystical Thoughts, Folk Traditions and Poetry

As it is clear from the title of the book that this book deals with the veneration of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings) in Islamic piety. So mystical thoughts, folk traditions and poetry is the integral part of the veneration. Therefore, in each chapter reader finds these elements of veneration in abundance. She presents Muslim devotionism towards Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings) to an English reader using her mastery in Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Sindhi and other local languages. In this way she shifts reader's attention from Arabic roots of Islam to the Muslim world with all its cultural and historical variety.⁵

She uses huge amount of detail, prose and poetry from primary and secondary sources of Western and Eastern scholarship to elaborate her point. She makes clear the importance of Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings) in social and religious life of Muslims. At the same time, devotion of the believers to the life and memory of Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings) becomes clear. She is aware of the importance and effectiveness of poetry as a necessary source for the topic. Through the worldwide prose and poetry of Muslims, she studies the attitude of believers to the life and person of Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings) and miracles surrounding him. In Schimmel's point of view poetry is a great source of expression of love as she writes in the first chapter after discussing biographies of Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings) by non-Muslim in the following words "However, none of these authors has devoted himself to the study of the area in which love of the Prophet is expressed most beautifully and most eloquently: the poetry of the Islamic peoples. Not only is poetry in the classical languages of Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman Turkish worthy of attention here, but even more the popular verses in the various vernacular Islamic languages. These are the poems through which children imbibe the love of the Prophet from early childhood, poems that have helped to form and shape the image of the beloved Prophet, the intercessor on Doomsday and luminous Seal of the Prophets, in the hearts of the Muslim masses. To this day Muslim children like to write little poems, using traditional imagery, to express their love of and trust in the Prophet."⁶ She uses poetry of various languages in almost every chapter besides a complete chapter which totally covers the poetry in honour of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings).

3. Positive Approach to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings)

Although Dr. Schimmel was not a Muslim even then comparatively she remained unbiased and wrote positively about the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings). She described the

central position of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings) and his deep veneration in Muslim community. For instance, her positive attitude can be seen in the following paragraphs.

i. In the last paragraph of her introduction of the book she describes that Islam presents interesting examples of loving devotion to the Prophet of God (upon whom be peace and greetings) and the central position which he has and his being a beautiful model for Muslims. She sums up all this in these beautiful words:

“The phenomenologist of religion as well as the psychologist will discover that Islam offers highly interesting examples of loving devotion to the Prophet. All will agree that the personality of Muhammad is indeed, besides the Koran, the center of the Muslims’ life; the Prophet is the one who forever remains the “beautiful model” (Sura 33:21) for the life of all those who acknowledge in the profession of faith that he is truly “the messenger of God.”⁷

ii. She not only described positively the rank of Messenger of Allah (upon whom be peace and greetings) but she also wrote the specialties which biography of Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings) has as she discusses the specialities of the biographical dates of Prophet of Islam (upon whom be peace and greetings) in these words:

“Muhammad’s biographical dates have always been considered the best-known among those of all great religious founders, but even in earliest Islam a “sacred biography,” which nonetheless certainly kept in mind the major external events of his life, including the dates, developed among the Muslims and has remained intact to our day.”⁸

iii. She also described Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings) as Muslims have seen him and his strong influence over believer’s lives, deep love of Muslims and their warm trust in him. She called him the exemplar and model for his community and how Muslims try to imitate him in all their actions. She also narrates his finality in the long chain of messenger. She discusses all such positive things in the following paragraph. “This may justify our attempt to depict how pious Muslims have seen the Prophet Muhammad through the centuries, even though their picture was not always historically correct. Certainly, it reflects his enormous influence over their lives, and the non-Muslim reader will perhaps understand from the witness of theologians and poets, of Arabs, Persians, and Turks, of Muslims in India and in Africa, how deep the Muslims’ love for him, how warm their trust in him is, how widely he has been venerated and called upon throughout the ages, and how he has been surrounded with the most glorious epithets. He will find that Muhammad indeed constitutes the exemplar and model for every Muslim believer, who is called to imitate him in all, even seemingly insignificant, actions and habits, and he will likely be amazed by the way in which the mystics developed the doctrine of Muhammad’s primordial light and accorded to him, in his position as The Perfect Man, and almost cosmic status and function. For Muhammad, the last in the long chain of prophets beginning with Adam the father of mankind, is the one who brought the final revelation that comprehended all earlier revelations and at the same time recapitulated them in their pristine purity.”⁹

4. Description of Unjust Behaviour of the West

A commendable quality of Dr. Schimmel is her description of unjust behaviour of the West and their prejudices about the personality of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings) despite the fact that she herself was also a Christian and Western. She points out the shortcomings which she finds in the Western literature about the biography of the last Messenger of God (upon whom be peace and greetings). Some examples of these are as below.

i. She describes in the following paragraph that the noble personality of Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings) was distorted in such a large scale in medieval and modern Western literature that this topic itself needs a huge work. “This is not the place to discuss in detail the deformation of the image of Muhammad as found in medieval and even rather modern European literature. There is scarcely any negative judgment that the Western world has not passed upon this man who had set in motion one of the most successful religious movements on earth; and the study of his image as reflected in history, drama, poetry, and last but not least scholarship would require a voluminous work of its own.”¹⁰

ii. She tells that especially in medieval and in pre-modern literature all sorts of allegations were put upon his personality. As it was dark ages and majority of Westerns had no access to the original and classical Islamic books about the biography of Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings). But as the light of knowledge came in Europe then gradually the Western world started reading classical Arabic sources and became aware of the true personality of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings). So they had access to the original books in modern period but even then their literature about the biography of the last Prophet of God (upon whom be peace and greetings) was not free from prejudices and unjust behaviour. She elaborates this point in the following words:

“In Europe, where Muhammad has at times been understood as an idol worshiper or transformed into Mahound, the Spirit of Darkness, his historical biography was studied from the eighteenth century onward, and although he was generally depicted as a kind of Antichrist or a Christian heretic and arch-schismatic, he also appeared to some philosophers of the Enlightenment period as representative of a rational religion, one devoid of speculations about Trinity and Redemption and, even more importantly, a religion without a powerful clergy. From the nineteenth century onward Western scholars began to study the classical Arabic sources, which henceforward slowly became available in Europe. However, even during that period biographies of the Prophet were often marred by prejudices and in no way did justice to the role of the Prophet as seen by pious Muslims.”¹¹

3. As Christianity was the major religion in the world and the followers of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings) conquered many countries which were formerly Christians. Therefore, this defeat also annoyed many Western Christians and they started a negative propaganda against Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings), created many confusions about his personality and misunderstood his role. Dr. Schimmel elaborates this behaviour as below:

“Misunderstanding the role of the Prophet has been, and still is, one of the obstacles to Christians’ appreciation of the Muslim interpretation of Islamic history and culture. For, more than any other historical figure, it was Muhammad who aroused fear, aversion, and hatred in the medieval Christian world. When Dante in his Divine Comedy sees him condemned to eternal pain in the deepest abyss of Hell, he expresses the feelings of innumerable Christians of his era who could not understand how after the rise of Christianity another religion could appear in the world, a religion that - even worse!—was active in this world, and politically so successful that its members occupied large parts of the formerly Christian Mediterranean areas.”¹²

4. Dr. Schimmel also points out the wrong ideas and concepts of Christianity which were usually prevailing in medieval periods in the West about confusing Islam and Prophet of Islam (upon whom be peace and greetings). She also gives the proof of their completely wrong concepts in the following way: “It is natural that in a religion that prohibits the representation of living beings, particularly of saintly persons, no picture of the Prophet could be legitimately produced. (One proof of the totally wrong ideas of medieval Christians is that, confusing Islam with the paganism of antiquity, they spoke in their poetry and chansons de geste of “the golden images, or statues, of Mahomet.”¹³

5. Beautiful Translation of Poetry by Famous Poets

Dr. Schimmel translated herself or gave translation of various important verses of world renowned Muslim poets like Imam al-Busiri, Sheikh Saadi Shirazi, Amir Khusrow and Allama Iqbal in Arabic, Persian, Turkish and many local languages into English. In this way an English reader who cannot read eastern poetry, can easily be aware of the verses of these languages. Some specimens of these translations are given below.

1. Dr. Schimmel translated into English the following popular Arabic verses of Qasida al- Burda of Imam al-Busiri (1211-1294) which is written in Arabic and read in all Muslim countries with love. In this popular Qasida, Imam al- Busiri describes the qualities and high rank of Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings), his intercession and his unique position among prophets of Allah. Here is the original Arabic text and its beautiful translation by Dr. Schimmel.

محمد سيد الكونين والثقلين
و الفريقين من عرب ومن عجم

“Muhammad, the lord of the two worlds and of men and djinn,
Of the two communities, the Arabs and the non-Arabs,”

نبينا الامر الناهي فلا احد
ابر في قول لا منه و لا نعم

“Our Prophet, who commands and prohibits - and not a single one
Is more truthful than he is saying No or Yes;

هو الحبيب الذي ترجى شفاعته
لكل هول من الالهوال مقتحم

And he is the beloved for whose intercession one hopes

In every horror and in hazardous undertaking”¹⁴

2. She also presents the translation of beautiful verses of Sheikh Saadi Shirazi’s (1210-1292) poem from his popular book Bustan (the garden) in which he beautifully praises beloved Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings) in the following way.

شفيح مطاع نبي كريم
قسيم جسيم نسيم وسيم

“Intercessor, one who is obeyed, a noble messenger

Well-shaped, graceful, elegant, of noble appearance “¹⁵

3. She translates the opening and ending verses of the popular Persian ghazal of Amir Khusrow (1253-1325 CE) which are frequently sung in qawwali as below:

نمی دانم چه منزل بود شب جائے کہ من بودم
محمد شمع محفل بود شب جائے کہ من بودم

“I do not know which place it was, the nightly place in which
was the candle there--the nightly place in which I was”¹⁶

Muhammad

4. She gives translation of the popular verses of Allama Iqbal’s Jawab-i Shikwa in the following impressive way:

قوت عشق سے ہر پست کو بالا کر دے
دہرمیں اسم محمد سے اجالا کر دے

“ Make high everything low with the strength of love,
Illuminate the world by Muhammad’s name! ”¹⁷

کی محمد سے وفا تو نے تو ہم تیرے ہیں
یہ جہاں چیز ہے کیا، لوح و قلم تیرے ہیں

Be faithful to Muhammad, then We too belong to you,
Not only this world but Tablet and Pen belong to you! ”¹⁸

6. Detailed Notes, Bibliography and Various Indexes

Another salient feature of this book is its elaborated and very useful set of notes accompanied by an extensive bibliography, an appendix of the noble names of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings) and four separate indexes at the end of the book. In Appendix of the Holy Prophet’s names ninety nine names of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings) are mentioned. These noble names were taken from the author’s copy of the Holy Quran. There are following four separate indexes:

- i. index of Quranic verses
- ii. index of Prophetic traditions
- iii. index of proper names
- iv. index of technical terms and concepts

The detailed bibliography of the book, notes and its four separate indexes are very beneficial for Islamist and common readers. All these useful items increase the value of the book. In the index of proper names there are numerous entries under the word "Muhammad" which itself make a handy motif index of different aspects and characteristics of his personality as his miracles, family, heavenly journey, dress, physical beauty, spiritual beauty, his love of children and animals and his prophet hood etc.¹⁹

Demerits

Besides numerous merits, this book has also various demerits. "To err is human" is an admitted fact, so being a human Dr. Schimmel made many mistakes. For example, she relied upon many fabricated and weak traditions, presented some wrong concepts, used unfamiliar foreign words, adopted Quranic verse numbering by Flugel and instead of relying on primary sources she relied on secondary English and German sources. The description of these demerits is given below.

1. Usage of Unfamiliar Foreign Words

As it is known that the book "And Muhammad is His Messenger" is in English but Dr. Schimmel uses many foreign words which become hurdles for a reader who is not familiar with foreign languages. She does not give their translation or meaning in English also. The examples of these unfamiliar foreign words are given below.

1. In chapter one, she describes the high rank of Hazrat Fatima (may Allah be pleased with her). After describing her qualities in the end she says:

"That she was called as well Umm abiha, "her father's mother," gave rise to high-soaring speculations about her cosmic role in God's Heilsgeschichte. "²⁰

Here the word "Heilsgeschichte" is unfamiliar for an English reader and it is very difficult for the reader to understand the complete sentence. The same word again comes on page twenty four and fifty three.

2. In chapter two, during discussion that the Prophet of Allah (upon whom be peace and greetings) had no image, she writes in the following way:

"One proof of the totally wrong ideas of medieval Christians is that, confusing Islam with the paganism of antiquity, they spoke in their poetry and chansons de geste of "the golden images, or statues, of Mahomet." (2)²¹ Here the chain of words "chansons de geste" are unfamiliar and look German which an English reader cannot understand.

3. In chapter nine while discussing Holy Prophet's (upon whom be peace and greetings) night journey and ascension she writes: "No other aspect of the Prophet's life has interested orientalist and historians of religion more than the heavenly journey. It appears to be a kind of

Berufungserlebnis, or initiatory experience”²²In these lines, the word “Berufungserlebnis” is not understandable and reader confuse here. So it is like an obstacle during study which stops reader for some time and makes problem for him.

2. Reliance upon Fabricated and Weak Traditions

One of the biggest demerits of this book which lowers its authenticity is its reliance upon fabricated and weak traditions. A reader finds various examples of such traditions. Some examples of such fabricated and weak traditions are as below.

1. In chapter one while discussing about the daughters of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings) she describes many fabricated and weak traditions about Hazrat Fatima (may Allah be pleased with her) in these words: “The legendary figure of this ailing woman was soon adorned with miracles, especially in the Shia tradition: her birth was surrounded by light. . . .”²³After quoting all these traditions she did not give any reference from Shia or Sunni books.

2. In chapter two where she discusses the hilya (beautiful description) of Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings) and during discussion she narrates a hadith as below: “Tirmidhi, in the late ninth century, quotes a hadith in which the Prophet promises: “For him who sees my hilya after my death it is as if he had seen me myself, and he who sees it, longing for me, for him God will make Hellfire prohibited, and he will not be resurrected naked at Doomsday.”²⁴She does not mention any detail reference of this hadith except the name of the book but such hadith is not found in Tirmidhi or any other authentic source of hadith, so it is a fabricated hadith.

3. In the same chapter she mentions another hadith in the following context “Remembering the Prophet’s fondness for cats, one hadith claims that “love of cats is part of faith”²⁵In its reference she does not mention any authentic source in spite she gives the reference from “Divine Word and Prophetic Word” by Graham.

4. In chapter nine where she describes different aspects of Holy Prophet’s (upon whom be peace and greetings) night journey and ascension, she discusses the seeing of Holy Prophet’s (upon whom be peace and greetings) his Lord. Meanwhile she quotes a fabricated tradition in these words: “According to one tradition, Muhammad claimed to have seen his Lord “in the most beautiful shape” or, in a later version, as a beautiful unbearded youth wearing his cap awry.”²⁶Above mentioned tradition is not found in any authentic source of Hadith therefore she did not give any authentic reference but in spite she gives the reference of Ritter’s *Das Meer der Seele*”, which has no authority in hadith.

3. Reliance upon Secondary Sources

Another big demerit of this book is its reliance upon secondary sources. For example writer usually does not take the traditions of Holy prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings) from the primary Arabic sources like al-Bukhari, al-Muslim and other four authentic books instead she takes the

tradition from secondary English sources like Padwick's Muslim Devotion etc. In her complete book she gives the reference of al- Bukhari only once in chapter nine where she describes the night journey of Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings). Likewise she also relied on Sahih al-Muslim only once in chapter two where she tells the tradition about behaviour with wives. Some examples of her reliance upon secondary sources are as below.

1. In chapter two, she describes that some important traditions about Holy Prophet's (upon whom be peace and greetings) private life are narrated by Hazrat Aisha (may Allah be pleased with him). She gives one tradition as below

“My eyes are asleep but my heart is awake”²⁷

After quoting this hadith she does not give its reference from primary sources instead she gives its reference from Furuzanfar's Ahadith-i Mathnawi.

2. In chapter six, she gives the comments of ad-Darimi and Jalaluddin as-Suyuti about the mystery of Holy Prophet's (upon whom be peace and greetings) name but she does not give direct references of their books instead she gives the reference of Padwick's Muslim Devotion.

3. In chapter ten under the title of the poet's longing for Medina she quotes Egyptian poet Ibn al-Farid (d. 1235) and gives his following verses:“When the anguish of pain settles on my soul, the aroma Of fresh herbs of the Hijaz is my balm. . . .”²⁸

In reference she does not mention Ibn al-Farid's book or his collection instead she gives the reference of Nicholson's “Studies in Islamic Mysticism”. In this way, she uses secondary source.

4. In the same chapter ten, she quotes Jalaludin al-Suyuti and writes his detail guidelines for the pilgrims when entering Prophet's mosque and offering greetings to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings) but in reference instead of quoting Imam al-Suyuti, she gives the reference of Padwick's Muslim Devotions.

4. Wrong Concepts and Statements

There are some wrong concepts and statements which are historically, logically and religiously baseless and have no authenticity. Some examples of these ideas and statements are given below.

1. In chapter one, she gives very wrong statement about Imam Hasan (may Allah be pleased with him) in these words:

“Hasan, Ali's elder son from Fatima, was bribed by the first Umayyad caliph, Muawiya, to abandon his claim and died somewhat later.”²⁹

In the above statement, she uses very wrong word “bribe” for Imam Hasan (may Allah be pleased with him) and it is an allegation on his pious personality. The word bribe has a very negative meaning as it becomes clear after consulting any dictionary. For example, in Oxford Advance Dictionary, its meaning is as below:

“A sum of money or sth valuable that you give or offer to sb to persuade them to help you, especially by doing sth dishonest.”³⁰

Its meaning in Chambers Dictionary is described in these words:

“Something offered to someone to influence their judgement unduly or to persuade them to behave in a certain way; spoil, booty.”³¹

In the light of above meaning, bribery is a negative and dishonest act. So, connecting Imam Hasan (may Allah be pleased with him) with bribery is totally wrong.

2. In chapter eleven, she presents another wrong idea but it is also an allegation on Sunnis and Sufi orders. She blames non-Shiite and anti-Shiite Sufi order for giving more importance to Imam Hasan (may Allah be pleased with him) instead of Imam Husain because Shiites give high respect to Imam Husain (may Allah be pleased with him). Her statement is as below:

“Probably Imam Hasan was chosen as a model by the non-Shiite and even anti-Shiite Sufi orders instead of Husain because the latter’s veneration among the Shia had assumed dimensions that the Sunnites, despite their high respect for the Prophet’s family, could not tolerate.”³²

This is totally wrong and baseless concept. In Sunnites and Sufi orders both the pious grandsons of Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings) are respected equally but due to tragedy of Karbala, Imam Husain is more remembered and there is no such partition that if Shiites love Imam Husain, then Sunnis will love Imam Hasan (may Allah be pleased with him). Instead, both are loved by the both sects. It can be proofed by the traditions of Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings) which are followed and narrated in Sunnities collections of Hadith.

3. In chapter ten, she gives wrong month of conquest of Makkah as she writes in the following way: “and the shab-i barat is the night of the full moon in the month of Shaban, in which Muhammad victoriously entered Mecca”³³ An ordinary student of Islamic history also knows that the Last Prophet of Almighty Allah (upon whom be peace and greetings) entered Mecca victoriously in the month of Ramazan and not in the month of Shaban. It is mentioned clearly that Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings) entered Makkah on the twentieth of Ramazan, Friday as quoted by Shaykh Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Sa`d³⁴, Shaykh Abi Jafar Muhammad bin Jareer Tabri³⁵ and by Hafiz Ibn-e-Kaseer³⁶

5. Quranic Verse Numbering Adopted by Flugel:

Flugel was born in 1802 at Bautzen, Germany. His complete name was Gustav Lebrecht Flugel. He was a German orientalist. He studied devotedly Eastern languages at the universities of Paris and Vienna. In 1855, he got a job in the court library in cataloguing the Persian, Arabic and Turkish manuscripts. He passed away in 1870.³⁷ Beside other important works, he translated Holy Quran and presented a Western numbering system for the verses of Holy Quran.³⁸ Dr. Schimmel adopted Flugel’s verse numbering system in her book, which is very confusing for a common reader who is not familiar with this. Following are few examples from her book.

1. In the beginning of chapter six, she describes the importance of a person's name. She tells that knowing anyone's name is knowing himself. For evidence, she quotes verse of sura al-Baqara and gives its translation and numbering in following way :

“Taught Adam the names” (Sura 2:30) ³⁹

In the Royal Egyptian Numbering System its number is thirty-one but she writes its number thirty. So, it becomes a problem for a common reader who is not familiar with less popular Flugel's numbering system.

2. In the same chapter, she discusses various beautiful names of Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings). Describing the name “Ahmad” she quotes verse of Holy Quran and gives its translation and numbering in this way: “Sura 61:5 states that God “will send a prophet by the name of Ahmad” or “of highly praiseworthy name.” ⁴⁰The number of above-mentioned verses is six according to the Royal Egyptian Numbering System but she gives its number five following Flugel's numbering system.

Conclusion:

Dr. Schimmel's English book “And Muhammad is His Messenger” is a unique contribution to the sirah literature written about the veneration of Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings). Like the works of other orientalists, it has merits and demerits but unlike other orientalists its merits are greater than demerits. In sum, with few exceptions, it is a beautiful, knowledgeable and impressive book which an ordinary Muslim can also read as it does not have harmful or false material as contrast to the majority of other orientalists' works. It creates love and veneration of Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greetings) in the hearts of its reader.

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