INTERPRETING STORIES ASCRIBED TO PROPHET MUḤAMMAD FOR TEACHING MORALITY

by

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The intent of the study is to explore three stories narrated by Prophet Muḥammad which illustrate the Islamic outlook of humanity, society and life through teaching morality. The method of this study is a hermeneutic content analysis combined with logic of justification. Mainly, this method interprets texts by consolidating selected literature, while providing reasons to rationalize and justify the argument. However, this method of interpretation does not claim absolute infallibility.

The present study is important because it interprets the stories in the Prophetic literature not merely as historic narratives but perceives their texts as the expression of religious views on the nature of humanity, society, and life through teaching morality.

This study confirms that Prophetic stories are more than ancient texts and artistic stories that might be used only for intellectual, cultural, or research purposes. They are, per se, moral stories which reflect Qurʾānic values that were used by Prophet Muḥammad to inculcate morality in the early Muslim generation. They have been handed down carefully to posterity in order to elevate individuals, both male and female, reinforce social

ties, and define the meaning of life. Setting good examples and enhancing the meaning of Islamic creed were two important ways of inculcating virtue through Prophetic stories. According to this study the notions of humanity, society, and life are basically central to the general meaning of Islam, the comprehensive source of morality and the straight path of submission to the will of God. Islam is a way of life determined by well-organised morals which give firm direction and advice as to how humans should govern their lives. This is the most persistent and important educational message of Prophetic stories concerning teaching morality.

Muslim researchers in the field of education can present Prophetic stories in school curricula as effective means of inculcating morality. Such stories illustrate and represent the Qurʾānic and Prophetic view of humanity, society and life. Moreover, these Prophetic stories meet the spiritual needs of humans by providing them with hope, kindness and mercy.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my dear wife Latefah whose graceful encouragement has been always beside me while writing this dissertation.

Acknowledgment

I am very grateful to all those who shared their knowledge with me. In one way or another they shaped and contributed to this work. I would like to express my gratitude to my research advisor, Dr . Eugenie Potter, for her guidance and comments in the preparation of this study. She has been supportive throughout the whole process of writing this dissertation. I wish also to acknowledge the practical suggestions and keen criticism that were given to me by Dr . John Weidman, Dr . Noreen Garman and Dr . Fred Clothey.

Special thanks are reserved for my mother whose steadfast encouragement has been of immense help.

Finally, I have to acknowledge my family for their patience. To my beloved wife: This long journey was a great intellectual experience for both of us in gaining knowledge and sharing ideas while learning and attempting to explore different perspectives.

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION

Human beings are, by nature, storytellers. Whenever and wherever they are found, humans have a potential desire to hear or tell stories. It is hard to teach any moral values without using stories. A moral fable has a social function because, in many cases, it plays an important role in reinforcing the ties of the society, setting a good example, forming cultural identity, or providing the emotional experience of being alive.

Stories in Arabic literature, like that of the other cultures, contain many motifs and episodes that concern morality. Prophet Muḥammad (b. 570 -d. 632 A.D), like many other prophets before him, used various stories as techniques for teaching his followers at both the individual and collective levels. In particular, he used narratives and anecdotes for moral education.

This study analyzes the use of the Prophet Muḥammad's stories to inculcate moral principles that are the core of Islam. The Prophet of Islam expressed his foremost pedagogical purpose clearly, saying, "I have been sent only for the purpose of perfecting good morals" (al-Ḥākim, cited in Zarabozo, 1994, p. 46). Gibbon (1974) states that Muḥammad

"breathed among the faithful a spirit of charity and friendship, recommended the practice of the social virtues" (p. 421). By his noble precepts, the Prophet of Islam never ceased to confront "the thirst of revenge and the oppression of widows and the orphans" (Gibbon, 1974, p. 412). His efforts to raise the spiritual and moral level of people made him, as the Western historian Durant (1950) concludes, "one of the giants of history" (vol. 4, p. 172).

In one way or another, and at least in the theoretical level, morality as a substantial subject was illustrated in vast Islamic literature. Shawqī, one of the masters of Arabic poetry, formulated that idea in allegorical phraseology by saying, "Indeed, the morals are the people. All the time the moral exists, the people exist. However, if the morals cease to exist, the people will perish" (quoted in Busool, 1993, p. 4).

Prophet Muḥammad is the first and foremost teacher in Islamic education. The revival of Muḥammad's heritage, especially in the area of education, carries and motivates many researchers to diligently study this legacy in order to understand the foundation and philosophy of Islamic education. This study is part of that trend.

The context of the present study is based on interpreting three Prophetic stories from an educational and moral point of view. In addition, this study is aimed at interpreting these stories, not only by referring to what famous religious scholars said in the past but also by taking advantage of the product of contemporary writers in human sciences as much as possible because Islam is not the privileged domain only of traditional religious, historian, or linguistic scholars. The study will not overtake Western views on the Prophetic saying. The purpose of this systematic study is to contribute to the contemporary

studies of moral education which provides educators, whether parents, reformers or teachers, several ways of inculcating morality from old texts with present applications. This study is important because it interprets the stories in the Prophetic literature not merely as historic narratives, but perceives their texts as the expression of religious views on the nature of humanity, society, and life through teaching morality. At the same time, such an interpretation of Prophetic story will acknowledge and make use of some non-Muslim contributions as an intellectual interchange.

Muḥammad's guidance and his contributions to human thought are still perceptibly and imperceptibly influencing the thoughts and actions of millions of Muslims. It is the governing principle of their lives and the very spirit of the modern time (Maududi, 1992, p. 53). Because the Islamic contributions to Western education and civilization are still largely unappreciated (Sorty, 1985, p. 5; Watt, 1996, pp. 118-122), this study will present some of the Islamic contributions to education. Allen & Muessig (1962) said, "when we talk of the Islamic contribution, we specifically refer to the contributions of the Islamic civilization inspired by the Prophet Moḥammed" (p. 158).

Prophetic stories confirm that Prophet Muḥammad believed that learning is a long-term creative process, thus he used a great variety of stories as vessels for many essential social morals, spiritual values, pietistic teachings and educational instructions.

These, along with other considerations, make the Prophetic teaching a lively, prestigious and valuable subject. In 1990 and 1992, the author of this paper wrote two books that dealt with Prophetic stories from an educational point of view (Malek, 1990, 1992). Both Ṣiddīq (1990, p. 12), a professor of Islamic studies, and al-Mujtamaᶜa (1992), an

Islamic magazine (1992, p. 41) made honorable comments about the importance of such pioneer works that deal with Prophetic legacy from an educational point of view. These comments and others inspired the author to pursue more studies related to the academic realm and public life.

Today, the author of this paper even more interested in this productive area and he will continue to explore it and reinforce his attachment to stories which have decisive influences on him. Based on personal experience in this area, it can be said with confidence that the Prophetic story is a richly rewarding and profound resource for educators and reformers, but a great deal of effort needs to be made to reinforce and explore this heritage.

The focus of this present study is on exploring three stories narrated by Prophet Muḥammad as they illustrate the Islamic outlook of humanity, society, and life through teaching morality. Besides, the study will explain how the Prophet of Islam used direct and indirect means in his teaching in order to encourage a learner to follow virtuous deeds and distinguish between what is wrong and right. The three stories are found in the book, Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn (the Gardens of the Godly People), which has been compiled by al-Nawawī (1985, 1988), a great Syrian theologian among Muslim scholars of the 13th-century.

The method of this endeavor is a hermeneutic content analysis combined with logic of justification. Mainly, this method interprets texts by consolidating selected literature, while providing reasons to rationalize and justify the argument. This method of interpreting and analyzing text provides an alternative way of understanding texts.

However, it is not claimed that it gives the absolute or definitive interpretation.

Theoretically, it is important to point out that Prophetic teaching in general, and Islamic education in particular, form a complete way of life that deals with individual matters as well as community needs. There is no separation between ritual activities and wordly life. The foundations of the theoretical framework in this study are based on this critical point of view. Basically, this view looks to the state of morality in Islam as a harmonic connection which balances and stimulates personal virtue to social ties and religious life.

The first chapter of this dissertation explains the intent, purpose and methodology of the study. The second chapter deals with the use of stories in moral education and literature, and the third presents the opposing viewpoints of the Orientalists about Islam and Prophet Muḥammad. The fourth chapter presents three Prophetic stories along with an exegesis of some particular elements in each story. The fifth chapter deals with some central moral themes concerning humanity, society, and life. Finally, the sixth presents the conclusion.

The study concludes that Prophetic stories are more than ancient texts and artistic tales. They are, per se, moral stories which reflect Qurʾānic values and which were used by Prophet Muḥammad to inculcate morality, elevate individuals (both male and female), reinforce social ties, and define the meaning of life. Setting good examples and enhancing the meaning of Islamic creed were two important ways that these stories inculcated virtue. According to this study the notions of humanity, society, and life as expressed in the Prophetic stories are

central to the general meaning of Islam, the comprehensive source of morality and the straight path of submission to the will of God.

The Intent of the Study

Prophet Muḥammad, as have many other prophets before him, used various stories as a technique for teaching. He used stories as an approach to moral precepts. Educators can take advantage of these stories that have inspired and instructed hundreds of millions of Muslims in this spacious planet since the time of the Prophet . Unfortunately, there are few educational studies available in this field at present time, which makes a great demand for more elaborated inquiries in this area.

In brief, the research problem of this treatise is to explore three stories narrated by Prophet Muḥammad which illustrate the Islamic outlook of humanity, society and life through teaching morality.

Research questions

The research questions to be addressed are as follows:

1. How can the texts of three selected Prophetic stories be interpreted, from a moral perspective, as they illustrate the Islamic outlook on life, human and society?
2. How do the Prophetic narratives, as informative means and pedagogical tools, inculcate morality?

Answers to these two questions could contribute to an in-depth understanding of the Prophetic method on teaching moral virtues.

Concerning the reporting format, the findings of the study will be presented in narrative and descriptive forms.

Definition of Terms, Arabic Words Explained and Abbreviations Used

-Authentic story: A Prophetic story that is acceptable according to scholars who specialize in studying the Prophetic sayings. Basically, the method that they use depends on "the historical and subjective canons of criticism" (Nadwi, S., 1992, p. 106).

-Ḥadīth: A report that has been transmitted on the authority of Prophet Muḥammad, which includes his utterances, attribute or action. A Ḥadīth can be a report of early Muslims (plural, Aḥādīth). During and after the life of Prophet Muḥammad his companions collected reports about him in order to understand Islam and worship God as they had been commanded. "As preserved for subsequent generations these reports, or *ḥadīth*, take the form of usually short, unconnected pieces, each of which is preceded by a list of its authoritative transmitters. Although the reports were originally transmitted orally, some transmitters began early to record them in writing" (The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World, 1995, vol. 2, p. 85). It is important to state that Prophetic stories are part of the vast Ḥadīth literature (see appendix 1).

-Moral education: A methed which uses direct and indirect means in order to encourage a learner to do virtuous deeds and distinguish between wrong and right.

-Prophetic story: A story that Prophet Muḥammad narrated to his companions. Using words such "myth" and "parable" instead of the word "Prophetic stories" might have some problems in an Islamic study dealing with Qurʾānic and Prophetic stories. Parable is a term which often illustrates a morality story. The general use of a parable is to convey concise, spiritual meaning. Myth for instance for some Western scholars "is a story which is told but which is not literally true, or an idea or image which is applied to someone or something but which does not literally apply, but which invites a particular attitude in its hearers" (Wiles, 1977, p. 178)." Unfortunately, the terms parable and myth both sometimes convey the impression of reporting what is untrue, such as dreams and legends, a perception which the researcher of this study tries to avoid as much as possible. By re-examining Ḥadīth and Qurʾānic literature, the researcher finds that the Prophetic stories comprise the canon that Muslim researchers and translators use to attribute such stories. Prophetic stories function as myths and parables in the broadest sense. For example, a myth is related to the notion of God, the sacred, and religious legitimation. Mircea Eliade (1958) says "myth expresses in action and drama what metaphysics and theology define dialectically (p. 418). He (1987) notes "the supreme function of the myth is to "fix" the paradigmatic models for all rites and all significant human activities-eating, sexuality, work, education, and so on (p. 98)." Such elements are undoubtedly visible in Prophetic stories. Because most researchers and translators call stories ascribed to

Prophet Muḥammad as "Prophetic stories", the present study will stipulate to the same standard.

Arabic words and abbreviations explained:

-Allāh: The proper name of God in Islam. There is no corresponding word in English for the world Allāh. Pickthall (1990) says the word Allāh "has neither feminine nor plural, and has never been applied to anything other than the unimaginable Supreme Being" (p. 1).

-Qurʾān: Technically, this word can be defined as the words of Allāh that were sent down upon Prophet Muḥammad, "in its precise meaning and precise wording, transmitted to us by numerous persons. Inimitable and unique, protected by God from corruption" (Denffer, 1989, p. 17). Cragg (1985), an Anglican bishop, says: "The Qurʾān is the ultimate miracle of Islam. It is the final evidence of the divine origin of the Prophet's mission. Its Arabic eloquence is indicative of its source in God: its bearer [Prophet Muḥammad] was illiterate" (p. 87).

Generally, The Holy Qurʾān: English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary, published in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia by the Presidency of Islamic Researches, IFTA, Call and Guidance, will be the main reference of Qurʾānic citations in the present study. Thus, except where otherwise indicated, all Qurʾānic verses in this work are taken from this translation.

-A.: A part from a chapter of the Qurʾān.

-A.D.: Year of the Christian Calendar.

-A.H.: Year of the Arabic Calendar which begins in 622 A.D., "according to a lunar calendar of approximately 354 days, about eleven days less than a solar year" (Roded, 1994, p. x). For this study, the work of Freeman-Grenville (1963) is the main reference used to convert of Muslim dates into the corresponding Christian dates.

-S: A chapter of the Qurʾān.

Notes on System of Transliteration

The system which has been adopted in transliterating the letters of Arabic words and names in this work is the system followed by the Library of Congress and the American Library Association (see appendix 2) as outlined in ALA-LC Romanization Tables: Transliteration Schemes for non-Roman Scripts (1991). Transliteration is a system of writing Arabic words in the Latin script with extra symbols or marking. Unfortunately, "there are no universally accepted rules for transliteration or spelling" (Macquarrie, 1996, p. 154). It is true that no transliteration, as Ali (1990) says in his introduction of the system adopted in his work, "can exactly express the vocalic differences of two languages." For example, the name Muḥammad has been written in various ways, such as Maḥomet, Moḥammad, and Moḥammed. If an author cited in this work adopts another system of transliteration, it will not altered. If an author uses the name *kiṣṣah* (story), instead of *qiṣṣah* , the former will be approved and cited as is. Thus, the ALA and LC system of transliteration will be used except when quoting from an author who has adopted a different system.

Conceptual Framework

The human as a religious and a social creature, is in the spotlight when dealing with Prophetic stories in the present study, with regard to the moral paradigms scattered throughout the narratives. The principal theoretical perspective of this systematic study is based on the concept of morality in Islam, which centers around stable beliefs and certain principles. Abdulati (1990) wrote:

> The dimensions of morality in Islam are numerous, far-reaching, and comprehensive. The Islamic morals deal with the relationship between man and God, man and his fellow men, man and the other elements and creatures of the universe, man and his innermost self. The Muslim has to guard his external behavior and his manifest deeds, his words and his thoughts, his feeling and his intentions (p. 40).

Morality might parallel religion in many aspects; in some manner, both of them synthesize and shape the social order. "For Muslims, Islam is not merely a system of belief and worship, a compartment of life. . . It is rather the whole of life" (Lewis, 1993a, p. 4; see Irvan, Ahmad & Ahmad, 1996, p. 7). The main message of Islam is to teach and edify people to live a better life in which they adhere to virtuous obligations attached to religious tasks. Both religious activities and secular life spring and take the guidance from The Holy and Eternal Creator. This casts light on the notion of humble obedience and complete submission of people toward God in the home, market, or mosque, plainly and secretly which should govern the smallest as well as the largest levels of Muslims' conduct.

Busool (1993), in his introduction to his book Good Neighbors and Other Morals Stories points out some aspects of the Islamic morals

theory. He says, "the Islamic code of moral behavior is set down in detail in the Qurʿān. It covers social interaction, business, government, and social relations with others (Muslims, Jews, Christians, and non-believers)" (p. 2; see Nieuwenhuijze, 1985). To support this view, he mentions that Allāh says in the Qurʿān, "O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allāh, even against your selves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether he is rich or poor: For Allāh can best protect you distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily Allāh is well-acquainted with all that you do" (S. 4, A. 135).

The scope in which moral education is presented in Islam needs to be comprehended in regards to external and internal behavior. Both Abdulati (1990) and Busool (1993) put stress on the relationshp between man and himself, man and others and man and God, which form the Islamic comprehensive scope and philosophy of moral education. They both seem to confirm the full responsibility of man upon his actions that should contain the highest values. That is to say, religion could be practical as well as stable belief which lies in the heart. As Geertz (1968) says, "it is the conviction that the values one holds are grounded in the inherent structure of reality, that between the way one ought to live and the way things really are there is an unbreakable inner connection" (p. 97).

The purer Islam, as Geertz (1960) remarks insightfully, consists not only of a careful and regular execution of the basic rituals of Islam, such as prayers, pilgrimage and fasting, but also of a whole complex of social, charitable, and political Islamic organizations (pp. 5, 6). In his book, The Religion of Java, Geertz (1960) concludes that Islam is a religion of

"ethical prophecy" (p. 121). Although Muslims have tremendous interest in doctrine, they:

> never see their religion as a mere set of beliefs, as a kind of abstract philosophy, or even as a general system of values to which as individuals they are committed. Instead, they always conceive of it as institutionlized in some social groups (Geertz, 1960, p. 129).

Currently, some Western researchers who have a keen interest in the Prophet of Islam illustrate Muḥammad objectively, in such a way that reflects his religious and worldly merits. Muḥammad was "a brilliant religious teacher, a wise governor, and a successful military leader, he was one of the most influential men in history" (NSA Family Encyclopedia, 1992, vol. 9, p. M-457). It has been stated that Muḥammad "initiated religious, social, and cultural developments of monumental significance in the history of mankind" (The New Encyclopedia Britannica, 1994, vol. 8, p. 396).

In his book, The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History, the American scientist, Michael Hart (1992), explains that the Prophet made no separation between religion and everyday life. He says, "my choice of Moḥammed to lead the list of the world's influential persons may surprise some readers and be questioned by others, but he was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular levels" (p. 3).

The International Encyclopedia of Ethics (1995) defines morality as "learning that results in an advancement in thought and emotions from a self-centered orientation to socially responsible behavior (p. 562). This encyclopedia views Islamic ethics as a source of providing people guidance in the secular and religious life. Furthermore, "a distinctive

feature of Islam is its power to unify otherwise diverse facets of life. Submission to the will of God requires proper religious observance and behavior, as well as adherence to the moral strictures" (p. 455).

A distinctive feature of morality in Islam is the fact that it has stable divine standards, where neither the power of the society nor the material utility can go against Islamic fundamentals. For instance, if the unanimous decisions of parliament or any social or political power permit pornography or wine for reasons of freedom, tourism or modernism, this step will be rejected in Islam. Any norm that violates Islamic principles will be directly dismissed in such a coherent view.

Islam is a complete code of life for both males and females. About human partnership, Aḥmad and Abū Dāwūd reported that Prophet Muḥammad said, "Men and women are equal halves" (quoted in Omran, 1992, p. 44; see el-Sayed, 1993, p. 308). Some researchers, such as Sekine (1995), advocate that Islam provides equality between men and women in both ideological and structural levels (p. 162). Denny (1994) says,"It must be remembered that Islam is, at base, a profound religious belief and action system with great spiritual appeal to both women and men" (p. 354). For Esposito (1991), "Muḥammad's teachings and actions, as well as the Quranic message, improved the status of all women-wives, daughters, mothers, widows, and orphans" (p. 18). In her book, Muḥammad, a Biography of the Prophet, Karen Armstrong (1992) concludes, "the emancipation of women was dear to the Prophet's heart" (p. 191). Burtt (1957) confirms that "Moḥammed achieved a vast improvement in the accepted rights of women as compared with the situation which had earlier obtained-where the absolute power of father and husband was unquestioned" (p. 441). Pasquier (1994) also follows

those Western writers by focusing on the rights of women in Islamic doctrine (pp. 92, 93).

Halstead (1993) says that Islam as a way of life "provides a clearly defined framework of public values from which neither the individual nor the community at large may legitimately deviate" (p.161). He adds that unlike many Western views, "in Islam, no branch of knowledge can be divorced from religion; religion is at the very heart of the educational experience" (p. 162). Maududi (1991) confirms such a view by saying that Islam gives us comprehensive moral guidance, which, if "accepted as the basis of individual and collective conduct, can save human life from the chaos and anarchy that have overtaken it today" (p. 24).

This study adopts the preceding framework that focuses on the fact that the teachings of Prophet Muḥammad and his moral exhortations are a total system of faith and action for individuals and communities with considerable regard to both males and females. This system is based on pure monotheism and ethical responsibility. The Prophet's teachings provide clear and stable guidance of the meaning of life, human relation with the Creator, and proper conduct toward siblings, neighbors, and society. Prophetic teachings, in this sense, present religion as a group of rituals that connect mankind to God and His religion as a social conjunction.

Research Method

This endeavor is a hermeneutic textual interpretation combined with logical justification. Logic of justification, as a qualitative method, focuses on the elaboration of logical issues and concepts and, ultimately, on the justifications that inform the inquiry and practice (Garman, 1994).

As Smith and Heshusius (1986) point out, "A logic of justification that is epistemologically foundational leads to the position that certain sets of techniques are epistemologically privileged in that their correct application is necessary to achieve validity or to discover how things really are out there" (p. 9). In this regard, logic of justification as a method seeks the explanation of the nature of the social world in subjective experience and individual consciousness (Burrell and Morgan, 1977, p. 28). Undoubtedly, in the objective content of science such individual features are forgotten as Cassirer (1972), a twentieth century philosopher, mentions, "For one of the principal aims of scientific thought is the elimination of all personal and anthropomorphic elements" (p. 228).

Hermeneutic philosophy, as a philosophical foundation of knowledge, will be used as the methodological approach for this study. It is the study of interpretive understanding which ancient Greeks used in order to interpret legends. This philosophy was further developed for biblical interpretation by Martin Luther, then German philosophers, such as Schleiermacher, took advantage of this method and applied it to human science. In general, the hermeneutics approach is the art and method of text interpretation.

The word "hermeneutic" originally comes from a Greek word, which means "to interpret" (Kneller, 1984, p. 69; Bauman, 1992, p. 1). Some researchers, such as Ricoeur (1977), point out that "the primary sense of the word 'hermeneutics' concerns the rules required for the interpretation of the written documents of our culture" (p. 316). As Rogers (1994) states, "It is a system for making things into words" (p. 21). Thus,

this system may be used to understand and explain scattered texts in order to present cohesive ideas.

The output of this procedure can not be obtained without understanding, explaining and applying the texts to ourselves and our world (Ouaknin, 1995, p. 59; Ricoeur, 1995, p. 304). As Madison (1994) explains "we can be said to have understood a text, grasped its meaning, only when we are able to relate (apply) what it says to our own situation, our own historical horizon" (p. 317). However, the hermeneutic method might help to "provide answers to questions that other [quantitative] approaches cannot", as Little (1991) says. He also adds that "there is a strong and deliberate parallel between interpreting human action and interpreting a literary text. The investigator is presented with an ensemble of meaningful elements and attempts to discover the significant connections among them" (p. 71).

From the fifth through the tenth centuries, the *Midrash* (the ancient Hebrew scholars of interpretation) developed many techniques to explain the Torah, Judaism's sacred text. As the rabbis themselves put it, "Midrash works by linking up words of the Torah with one another . . . they used one verse as commentary upon another" (Bruns, 1992, pp. 104, 107, 109, 115). "The foreground of Midrash is the idea that interpretation is inseparable from application to a situation that calls for action" (Bruns, 1992, p. 118).

Historically, in the nineteenth century in Europe, some scholars viewed hermeneutics as a powerful tool of understanding texts. Wilhelm Dilthey and Friedrich Schleiermacher, German philosophers, wrote in depth about this sort of knowledge. Schleiermacher, for example, argues that understanding an author means more than understanding his words.

Hermeneutic "means understanding the spirit which initiated and controlled his writing, and for whose representation the writing exists" (Howard, 1982, p. 9).

Moreover, as Eichelberger (1989) points out, "Hermeneutic studies interpret the meaning of something from a certain standpoint or situation" (p. 7). With this tool one can understand a text in the light of his own situation (Kneller, 1984, p. 68). With the assistance of hermeneutics, many historical events, stories, and other texts can be studied in a systematic way (Silverman, 1994, p. 11). Hermeneutics, as a philosophical method of understanding and explaining texts, becomes a more visible movement in our modern academic researches, especially in the educational arena.

Written documents, films, paintings, poems and pictures all are vital materials that might be subject to interpretations by hermeneutics (Kneller, 1984, p. 82). This means to "let what seems to be far and alienated speak again" (Ricoeur, 1995, p. 314). The researcher, by this tool, can somehow reduce the historical distances between an old text and our daily language and argument. Furthermore, he/she can reveal the authors' main themes which may not have been clearly written. "A text always has meaning, but since the author is absent, or dead, or from another culture, that meaning has to be interpreted for the present time. For hermeneutics, then, interpretation is the heart of understanding (Kneller, 1984, p. 95)." In summary, the philosophy of textual interpretation, as an art, encourages researchers to open their minds to the text as if it were their own work (Kneller, 1984, p. 97).

The basic hermeneutic method consists of three steps (see figure 1) as Michrina and Richards (1996) mention: The investigator first

gathers data in a stepwise manner from sources such as written text, dialogues, and behaviors. Then he or she attributes some meaning to the data. This is called interpretation. In the third step, the hermeneut constructs an understanding of the whole group from interpreted pieces of data (p. 7)."

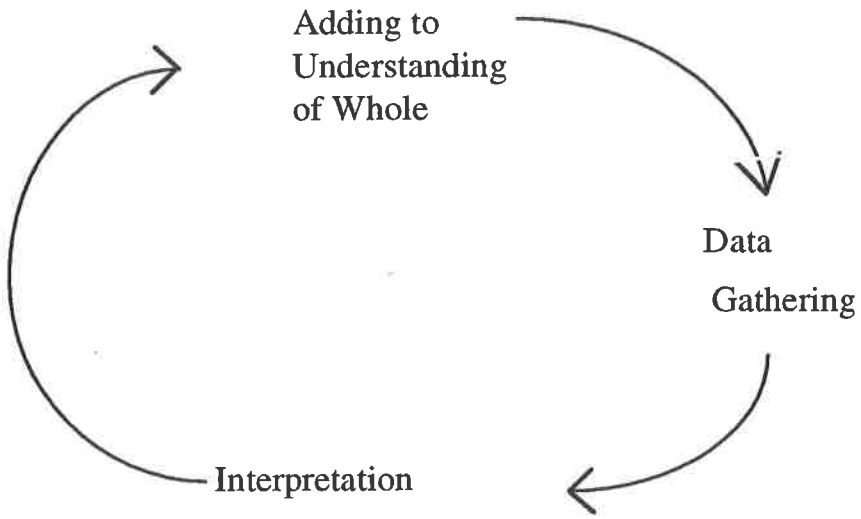

Figure: 1
Basic Hermeneutic Method (Michrina and Richards (1996, p. 9).

As with any method in the human and social sciences, there is no perfect philosophy, and every way has its own limitations. During an explanation, researchers might invent new themes that the text does not contain. Yet, because every human is unique in his thinking, evaluation, and understanding, the interpretation of one text might have several meanings.

Rumi (1978), a Muslim mystic poet, portrays the concept of the plurality of understanding perception in his philosophical metaphor, by saying "The lamps are different, but the light is the same: it comes from beyond" (p. 166). Martin Buber gives the same idea, saying, "Each person born into this world represents something new, something that did not exist before, something original and unique" (quoted in Ouaknin, 1995, p. 59). Thus, each person presents a new mode of understanding texts.

In Islamic literature, there are several principles of understanding sacred texts. The best way of Qurʾānic exegesis is through the Qurʾān itself. For what the Qurʾān alludes to at one place is explained at another place, and what it says in brief on one occasion or verse is elaborated upon in another verse as Ibn Taymiyyah (1993) mentioned (p. 53). Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328 A.D.) was one of the greatest scholars of Islam. The second step is to review Prophet Muḥammad's legacy. Then it is better to consult and refer to the opinions of the Prophet's companions and eminent scholars of Islam (Denffer, 1989, p.124).

Al- Qaraḍāwī (1990) proposes that in order to deal with Prophetic sayings and actions one needs to take into consideration three principles. First of all, he needs to go back and review what scholars said about the authenticity and origins of the Ḥadīth (Prophet saying or action). Then he needs to understand the Ḥadīth in the light of the Arabic language and the large context of the Ḥadīth which is derived from other Aḥādīth, Qurʾānic verses, and general principle of Islam. Third, he needs to be sure that the Ḥadīth does not contradict other Aḥādīth or Qurʾānic verses or any principles of Islam (pp. 33, 34).

In this present research, The Holy Qurʾān and Prophet Muḥammad's legacy will be the main principles of commentary while dealing with the selected Prophetic stories. In addition, the study will connect themes of Prophetic stories with some of what has been written currently from Muslim scholars and from non-Muslim writers which is related to current discourses.

To explain the scope of the interpretation, the methodology of this hermeneutic study is interpretation of Prophetic stories by viewing them as indirect preachings that have a divine comprehensive code of moral guidance to humanity of the past, present, and future. It is comprehensive in terms of providing both individuals and groups with their basic needs as believers in the religion of Islam. The core of such an interpretation is to contribute a better understanding of the meanings and functions of the moral connotations that the Prophetic tales hold. Each story of the three chosen Prophetic stories in this study will be interpreted in light of some Qurʾānic verses, authentic Prophetic teachings, and reflections of both Muslim and non Muslim researchers. My personal thoughts and reflections will be interwoven within the text.

To ensure some level of credibility, at least for this study, the interpretation will succeed the following milestones:

(1) The Holy Qurʾān and authentic Prophetic teachings are the primary sources of understanding in Islam, which include the Prophetic stories. Both of them "provide eternal principles and norms on which Muslim life, both individual and collective, is to be patterned (Esposito, 1991, p. 33)."

(2) Morality from Islamic vantage point, is a comprehensive way of life enabling man to live harmoniously with himself, others, and his Lord. The Islamic foundation of morality can meet the spiritual and social needs of Muslims. Submission to Allāh is the center concept of all moral connotations in such a monotheistic religion. Even though Prophetic stories might be a good tool for education and social entertainment, the heart of these edifying tales is conveyence and promotion of religious values and inculcation of moral teachings.

(3) Individual rational interpretations can provide a rich speculative commentary on Prophetic stories, as long as such exegeses by Muslims or non Muslims do not go directly against the very spirit of Islamic teachings. Reviewing the works of others is substantial method of sound research. Newton the famous English physicist and mathematician formulates such notion by illustrating his own experience. He says "if I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants" (quoted in Moore & Persaud, 1993, p. 7).

As a method of hermeneutics, this study is concerned with understanding the teachings of the Islamic message that will enable those who have faith in it and want to live by its moral "guidance-in both their individual and collective lives-to do so coherently and meaningfully. In this purely cognitive effort both Muslims and, in certain areas, non Muslims can share" (Rahman, 1982, p. 4).

(4) For this study, consulting the thoughts of non Muslims is part of the trend of seeking wisdom and enlarging our knowledge concerning moral education and Prophetic teachings. It has been said in some

Islamic sources that a word which contains wisdom is something to be sought by the believer "wherever he find it he is the most entitled to it" (Robson, 1981, vol, 1, p. 54).

5) The interpretation in this study will not focus on every statement in the texts but on their key words and social themes with regard to moral education and the Islamic view of humanity, society, and life. In addition, as a hermeneutic study it is interested in how such discussions can be connected to contemporary discourses, especially those of Orientalists.

These philosophical elements of interpreting Prophetic stories can not be regarded as a comprehensive hermeneutic method, but they can make up a beneficial method in this study.

There are many reasons that encourage researchers to be careful when they choose stories or reports from Islamic litereture. One of these resons is the fact that not all of the narratives in historical books are authentic. Al-Ṭabarī (d. 922) wrote one of the most voluminous and honroble books in Islamic history. He (1989) warns researchers by saying:

> This book of mine may (be found to) contain some information, mentioned by us on the authority of certain men of the past, which the reader may disapprove of and the listener may find detestable, because he can find nothing sound and no real meaning in it. In such case, he should know that it is not our fault that such information comes to him, but the fault of someone who transmitted it to us. We have merely reported it as it was reported to us (p p. 170-171).

Thus, the method of this study is choosing historical reports of Prophet Muḥammad that have been accepted by the scholars of the

science of Ḥadīth. Generally, al-Nawawī's book, Riyāḍ al-Ṣālihīn, is a good book of authentic Prophetic reports. He (1985) says in his introduction, "I have taken every possible care to select and compile in the form of this book only such *Aḥādīth* which are authentic and agreed upon." This particular book is the main source of the present study, not because it contains reliable reports, but it is such a distinguished pedagogical book from its time. It continues to be a highly honored book by Muslims all over the world.

Three Prophetic stories to be interpreted in this present study have educational significance. All of them are authentic Prophetic reports that convey the highest moralities of Islam. Each story contains many events that relate to each other, making the story more spectacular. Al-Nawawī (1985) puts these Prophetic stories in his first chapters and introduces each chapter with Qur'ānic verses, as if he wants to say that these Prophetic stories represent major Qur'ānic themes with regard to the Islamic philosophy of moral teachings. The three chosen Prophetic stories contain the fundamental beliefs and ethics of Islam in the simplist narratives. Individual and social aspects of human life can be traced within such stories in order to understand some elements of Islamic philosophy concerning human, life, and society through teaching morality. These particular stories are vital educational tools helping Muslims get over the calamities of life and establish a peaceful society fulfills the concept of the ultimate submission to the Creator, by acting morally in public, as well as in private.

It is important to end this section by mentioning the golden principle in the interpretation of texts which states that "there is no final

system for the interpretation of myths, and there will never be any such thing" (Campbell, 1973, p. 381).

Text Sources and Collection

There are more than one hundred anecdotes and stories that Prophet Muḥammad narrated (Azzeer, 1985, p.71), so it becomes necessary to make a selection of these stories to serve the purpose of this study. These stories are not all collected in one single book. As mentioned earlier al-Nawawī (1988), was one of the outstanding scholars in Islam who compiled many Prophetic stories in his book, Riyāḍ al-Ṣaliḥīn (The Gardens of the Godly People), which is a well-known compendium of Prophetic teachings. The book will serve as one of the primary sources to study and analyze Prophetic narratives. Such a masterpiece is a unique educational work for the general, public as well as scholars. It is safe to say that Riyāṣ al-Ṣāliḥīn is one of the rare texts that still operate in formal and nonformal education institutions, and strongly shapes Muslims' culture intellectually, socially and even politically.

Some Western researchers, such as Woodward (1993), observed the important role of the book, Riyāṣ al-Ṣāliḥīn. in Muslim societies. In his hermeneutic and ethnographic study, Woodward mentions that he selected al-Nawawī's book because it is a popular work and commonly quoted texts. It can be purchased throughout Indonesia, (p. 566) the world's largest Islamic population. Metcalf (1993) points out that the book, Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn (The Gardens of the Godly People) stresses personal virtues and offers detailed guidance for every aspect of daily life (p. 600).

Al-Nawawī (1233-1278) was born in Syria and devoted his life to studying and teaching Islamic jurisprudence and history. In addition, he was a distinguished scholar who gave especial care to Prophet Muḥammad's legacy. His famous publication Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn is a compilation of about 1,900 reports that include Prophet Muḥammad's sayings and actions, as well as approvals of his companions' actions. He began each chapter with some verses from the Holy Qurʾān that are related to the topic presented.

The first chapter of Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn is "Sincerity and the Significance of Intentions in all Actions" and the last chapter is "Bounties of Paradise." Such an arrangement of topics implies al-Nawawī's intention to say indirectly that the first step to the path of paradise is sincerity. Although the author did not collect all the Prophetic stories, his book contains in its many chapters some of the most popular authoritative collections of Islamic literature. Regarding the delimitation of this treatise, it will focus only on the three Prophetic stories found in this book (see appendix 3).

Al-Nawawī's purpose and framework is centered on providing Islamic models of righteous conduct in worldly and sacred matters. He wrote in his introduction:

> I versified an idea to compile a comprehensive book comprising such Aḥādīth [reports of Prophet Muḥammad's teachings] which should serve as a means of purifying the souls of people and elevating them to the highest pinnacle of morality and God-consciousness. This book aims at reforming the conduct of the people and creating in their hearts an apprehension of the torments of Hell.

Each of these Prophetic stories talks about three people in the of ancient Jewish or christian eras. With regard to their length, each one of

the three stories may occupy about two typed pages of double space. Some authors put these three particular stories in one category to be approached (Jarrār, 1992; Salīmah & Salīmah, 1988). In addition, al-Nawawī (1991) in his interpretation of Saḥīh Muslim made comments on these three stories, which help us gain a profound understanding of this collection.

Text Analysis

Each story will be interpreted in the light of the Qur'ān, the Prophetic teachings, and comments of the past and present scholars. The focus will be on the morals which the stories contain, and also on how Prophet Muḥammad used them to inculcate morality.

Zaydān (1992) provides several means of moral rectification which might be helpful to gain more understanding of how Prophet Muḥammad used stories for moral didactic teaching, in which there is no separation between religion and everyday life. Zaydān mentions several ways of supporting moral rectitude. In brief, he focuses on the following:

1. Knowing what sort of virtues Islam commands and requires, and on the other hand, knowing immoral deeds, in order to steer clear of them.
2. Knowing the consequences of both good and bad behavior.
3. Reminding oneself of what are good deeds and bad deeds in order to follow the right path.
4. Giving full attention to enhance the meanings of Islamic doctrine, because strong doctrine usually leads a Muslim to be virtuous.

5. Practicing what one knows of integrity.
6. Worshipping God should lead to good morals.
7. Choosing good friends.
8. Setting a good example.
9. Accepting advice.

These elements that implant and enhance values and morality can be applicable by both parents and teachers. Such elements will be the major guideline used in the analysis to enable a better and deeper understanding of how the Prophetic narratives, as informative means and pedagogical tools, are related to moral education. After interpreting particular elements of each story the focus will be on the concept of morality, humanity, society, and life according to the three narratives within this treatise. In terms of the philosophy of moral education, the study will deal with some aspects of what it is to be an ethical Muslim, socially and individually.

The Significance of the Study

The present study is important because it interprets the stories in the Prophetic literature not merely as historic narratives but perceives their texts as the expression of religious views on the nature of humanity, society, and life through teaching morality. At the same time, such an interpretation of Ḥadīth will acknowledge and make use of some non-Muslim contributions as an intellectual interchange.

Many reasons might encourage researchers to study Prophetic stories as a valuable means of teaching morality. Some of these reasons relate to the nature of the Prophetic saying and others relate to the

important role of stories as a powerful tool for moral education and as a way of implanting cultural identity. They promote spiritual values of humanity, family, and society in our extremely materialistic and secular world. The most important reason of the study is to assign a just value to Prophetic stories as a way of moral education.

The religious narratives are always inspiring and attractive sources to many people, especially reformers and educators who work to promote moral perfection across the globe and throughout history. Today, stories and novels play a great role in the mass media, language development, psychological therapy, and history teaching. Additionally, these can be used as tools in qualitative research. Returning to old methods, such as these stories, is one of the contemporary attributes of our educational sphere in which this study falls.

Generally, moral education through narratives is a vital issue because, as Pinkerton (1996) mentions, "Through our stories, we tell each other: who we are, where we came from, and what we believe to be worth knowing. It is through storytelling that we pass on the wisdom of life" (p. 38). Katter (1996) says that "stories are our way of remaining connected with our past, our cultural histories, our beliefs, our values, our expanding communities and with one another" (p. 6). Cooperation, caring, and other benificial results of understanding are among the moral lessons to be learned we can learn from stories.

Many writers and famous thinkers in the Islamic world believe that researchers must provide more effort to study the immutable sources of Islam, the Qurʾān and the Prophetic legacy, from a contemporary Islamic outlook (Abū-Sulyamān, 1992, pp. 189-196; al-ʿAlwanī 1991, p. 37;

Nadawi, A., 1992, pp. 196-197). It is important to study the Islamic legacy with a contemporary, intellectual outlook and a disciplined manner.

More specifically, the Prophetic stories have not been studied enough as a distinguished phenomenon (al-Salmān, 1991, p. 8; Azzeer, 1985, pp. 22-63; Jarrār, 1988, p. 168). There is a strong demand and an eagerness to probe Prophet Muḥammad's legacy because it explains and elucidates the Qurʾān and provides some supreme features and foundations of Islamic education. The Qurʾān and Prophet Muḥammad's teachings complement and support each other.

Even in the West, lovers of Prophet Muḥammad reports call to explore this particular part of knowledge. As Graham (1994) puts it, "let us 'seek knowledge', even though it takes us not only 'to China', but well beyond into even more unfamiliar territory of new academic ventures in Ḥadīth studies" (p. 31).

In the past, researchers studied Prophetic legacy from religious, historical, linguistic and educational points of view. Today, that sort of comprehensive interpretation seems to be very wide spread. As a hermeneutic study, this study tries to understand an ancient text in the light of our present situation by connecting such a story as with contemporary studies. Unlike the traditional way of explaining Islamic texts by focusing on what Muslims wrote, the present study will not dismiss perspectives of non-Muslims. Inside and outside points of view are welcomed as long as they clear up the text because, as Mahatma Gandhi (1938) says, the sayings of Prophet Muḥammad "are among the treasures of mankind, not merely Muslims" (p. 7).

One of the philosophical elements for Islamic education in our contemporary era is illustrated by Jamali, who says:

> The Muslim educator should think again and evaluate his actual position. On the one hand, he should uphold his Islamic identity; on the other, he should adapt from the West elements of human welfare, power, science, industry and organization. He should beware of distortion of his national and religious identity, and of the mistakes and ills with which the West is now afflicted (quoted in Waddy, 1990, p. 140).

The Islamic legacy has many outstanding moral achievements which in the contemporary world, there is a crying need for. The propagation of Islamic virtues brings about the extinction of race consciousness between Muslims (Toynbee, 1957, p. 205). God tells us in the Holy Qur'ān, "And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and your colours, Verily in that are signs for those who know" (S. 30, A. 22). In Islam all races and nations are all one but the best of people, as Allāh says, "is the most righteous of you" (S. 49, A. 13). Being male or female also make no difference, for Allāh wants to unite humanity in solidarity and mutual respect. The Qur'ān sums up this vital concept in one beautiful verse by saying:

> O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allāh is the most righteous of you. And Allāh has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things) (S. 49. A. 13).

Pope John Paul II says that today Christians and Muslims have entered a new period of history and they might develop the spiritual bond that unites all humans. For him, spiritual heritage promotes social justice and moral values (Waddy, 1990, p. 1990). Pope John Paul II

(1996) in his recent remarkable book Agenda for Third Millennium gives especial consideration to morals in Islam and he expects that these morals will contribute to the unity of humans. About this hope, he says:

> I am convinced that the great traditions of Islam, such as hospitality to strangers, loyalty in friendship, patience in adversity, the importance given to faith in God, are so many principles which should allow us to overcome inadmissible sectarian attitudes (p. 222).

For the Pope, Islam as a religion of monotheism can give humanity divine mercy. He asserts that Islam and Christianity can provide modern societies with a contemporary outlook, in terms of nature and circumstances of this life. He (1996) writes:

> To the Islamic community: I share your belief that humanity owes its existence to the One and Merciful God who made heaven and earth. In a world where God is denied or disobeyed, in a world which is experiencing so much suffering and which is so much in need of divine mercy, together let us try to be brave bearers of hope (p. 217).

Muslims believe that Islam and Prophet Muḥammad are together divine mercy not just for Muslims but to all humanity. The Holy Qurʾān says about Prophet Muḥammad "We sent thee not, but as a mercy for all creatures" (S. 21. A. 107). Karen Armstrong (1992) says that she believes that Muḥammad "made a distinctive and valuable contribution to spiritual experience of humanity. If we are to do justice to our Muslim neighbor, we must appreciate this essential fact " (p. 14).

Furthermore, Pasquier (1994), the Swiss writer, says about the mission of Islam in our modern time:

> Islam is not of the West; yet it cannot be seen as exclusively oriental. Although a stranger to the specifically modern world, it is none the less, of all the sacred traditions, the best

> adapted to the conditions of the cosmic cycle in its present stage of decline. It is simple and obvious, and yet at the same time holds treasures of mystical and metaphysical wisdom which have provided the nourishment for long generations of contemplatives and saints.
>
> Through its horizontal and vertical dimensions, Islam is capable of reconciling man both with the universe which surrounds him, and with the Creator of all things. In the fullest sense of the term, it is universal (p. 5).

For him:

> Islam, Whether in the wealthy but demoralised West or in the material poverty of the so-called "Third World", represents the clearest, most basic and most explicit response to the modern challenge. To those individuals and societies which accept it, and put it into practice, it offers the most precious and active remedy for the sickness of our time (p. 15)

Charles says that "Islam can teach us today a way of understanding and living in the world" (quoted in Dimbleby, 1994, p. 542; see The Time, 1996, p. 18). Thus, studying morality, life, humanity, or society, whether in Prophetic sayings or any Islamic source seems to be a vital issue not just for Islamic world, but also for non-Muslims who recognize the spiritual and moral richness of the Islamic heritage. Such a heritage can provide mankind with clear understanding of the meaning of moral experiences in order to improve their capacity for moral integrity.

Today, the concept of morality in Islam affects many people from different socioeconomic statuses. According to his case study, consisting of formal interviews with 70 converts, Köse (1995) confirms that British converts turn to Islam for many reasons. One of the most important factors behind their conversion is related to the teachings of Islam in regard to moral matters (p. 355). Some British converts had been

affected by the Islamic concept of brotherhood as the study shows (p. 354). Most Native American women who became Muslims, as the survey of Anway (1996) shows, have found fulfillment and happiness in their decision to choose a Muslim lifestyle (p. 8). About the Muslim lifestyle, Carol Anway mentions that "Islam addresses all aspects of life including personal morality, politics, and commerce; Islam is a way of life" (p. 73).

The rapid and complex technical advancement of modern life with its astonishing scientific development should not make anyone forget the rich experience of ancient wisdom. History is an important tool for reformers to understand the foundations of a society and take advantage of its lessons. Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. says, "When I want to understand what is happeninig today or try to decide what will happen tomorrow, I look back" (quoted in Peter, 1992, p. 248).

CHAPTER II.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teaching by Using Stories

This part of the study will focus on the story as an educational tool from a Western perspective. There are two primary aims for this section. The first is to present a general idea about using stories in modern education and the philosophy behind this. The second is to provide some educational materials for using, analyzing and studying the Prophetic stories from a broad perspective.

The story in itself has a tremendous power to influence both youths and adults. Therefore, many thinkers, philosophers, professors, and teachers have given much attention to the story and its use in the field of education. A narrative provides a wise way of coherently linking these events in time. This aspect of the story makes it interesting and genial. The power of the narrative to organize and explain has recently been praised by historians, psychiatrists, and moral philosophers. It is no surprise that psychology, too, is witnessing an increasing appreciation for the role of the narrative in human affairs, and the use of narrative methods for the analysis of interviews and other textual materials (Packer, 1991, p. 64; see Encyclopedia of Psychology, 1994, vol. 1, p. 224).

Storytelling is one of the oldest art forms known in human culture. From a very early age, before man learned how to write and before books were printed, there were stories (Nesbitt, 1992, vol.17, p. 434). The parent told stories to her child, the hunter to his peers, the survivor to his rescuers, the priestess to her followers, the seer to his petitioners, and the teacher to his student (Barton & Booth, 1990, p. 41). Through telling stories, each society protects its values and keeps alive its heritage, culture, and sense of identity.

> The three terms of the pedagogical relationship are teacher, text and student, just as the three terms of the story-telling relationship are teller, story, audience. Teacher and story-teller identify with their stories. They invite the students and audience to identify both with the teller and with the story. The invitation will be declined unless teacher and story-teller can also identify with students and audience. The imagination is the site of identification and the place that allows us to relate to each other (Pagano, 1991, pp. 263-264).

A significant idea in education is the raising of the awareness of people or some times altering it. Both formal and informal education are types of a direct or indirect change of the student's knowledge and experiences. At the same time, we can see that the climax and resolution are the cornerstones of any story. Thus, we cannot imagine stories or teachings without a resulting change. From such a view, the teacher, reformer, and hero in the story form, or in the educational realm, always play a critical role.

Beginning from the age of five, the child must have plenty of amusing physical activity. Care should be taken as to what tales and stories they hear in order to contribute to their intellectual development, as Fredrick Froebel, the father of kindergarten mentioned (al-Shaybānī,

1982, p. 275). According to Aristotle and Plato, all of these physical activities and stories should prepare the child for its future (Eby & Arrowood, 1964, p. 445). Clearly, many scholars recommend stories especially for children because they have strong imaginations and they have the desire to learn and imitate. Lipman (1995) confirms that stories as games are creative activities for many skills such as language, communication, and composition.

Today, in the US, as Greene (1996) says, "most public libraries offer storytimes for toddlers. Many offer literature-sharing programs for infants as young as six months" (p. 115). Pictures, songs and hand claps are ways the toddler is involved in a storytime program. Baker and Greene (1987) say:

> Storytelling to children under age 3 was neglected until fairly recently. Library storytelling programs for preschoolers were designed for the 4 and 5-year-olds who were ready to participate in a group activity without the presence of parents/caregivers. As the theories of Jean Piaget became better known through translations of his writings, and as professionals became aware of the research of Burton White and others that demonstrated the importance of these early years in language development and interest in books and reading, library programs followed (p. 88).

Stories are not limited to children and youth. Adults also can learn from the lessons of many stories. In the U.S., there are more than one hundred annual storytelling festivals and many full-time tellers nationwide as Moore (1991) mentions (pp. 8, 9). The National Storytelling Association is one of the biggest associations in the U.S. and the National Story League is one of the oldest organizations in the world. Universities also have some interest in stories. For example, Emerson

College in England has a school of storytelling (Storytelling Magazine, 1996, p. 43). However, the past 20 years have produced something of an explosion of interest in storytelling in the United States (Denman, 1991, p. 4). Moreover, in recent years a number of prominent psychologists and educators in many places around the world have turned their attention to the story (Kilpatric, 1993, p. 27; Nicolai, 1992, p. 132). For instance, a survey was conducted in the fall of 1984 among 235 colleges and universities to find some indication as to the status of storytelling in American higher education. Two of the questions in the survey were:

1) Are storytelling courses being taught?

2) If so, where are they taught?

The respondents were from Library Science (15), Instructional Media (1), Education (17), Expressive Therapy (1), Behavioral Science (1), Speech (4), Theater (2), English (1), and Comparative Literature (1) (Livo & Rietz, 1986, p. 445-446). These respondents may confirm that storytelling as an art form still attracts many higher education institutions, where attention is given to stories, especially in the department of Education and in Library Sciences.

Campbell, Moyers (1991, p. 11) and Bennett (1993, p. 12) suggest that stories about the wisdom of life and virtue should be studied, since what is learned in school nowadays is not the wisdom of life. People merely learn technologies and commit information to memory.

In the United Kingdom, a new report commissioned by seven local education authorities shows that seven-year-olds should know the importance of belief in God and learn religious stories about the creation of the universe. The report is the result of a two year work involving

extensive consultations with many teachers (The Times Educational Supplement, 1991, p. 8). "All human beings have an innate need to tell and hear stories and to have a story to live by. Religion, whatever else it has done, has provided one of the main ways of meeting this abiding need" (see Eitzen & Zinn, 1993, p. 510).

In spite of cultural changes and the technological revolution, the story still has a huge influence on modern life. Unlike the old stories, many modern stories are written, designed and presented by a team of experts. One modern aspect of presenting narratives is teamwork which produces stories in diverse and creative forms. Videos, illustrated stories, coloring books, audio tapes, animation and cartoons are all admirable tools used to present attractive and magnificent stories.

Today, companies are the story-makers. For instance, Family Entertainment Network has presented a series of animated stories from the Bible. This company deems that the stories that they present are based on absolutely necessary values to build families and nations (Family Entertainment Network, 1993, p. 14). Trabasso (1994) says:

> The narrative is powerful because it is the dominant form of written discourse in the literary, historical, social, and personal texts we encounter through our formal schooling. The narrative is especially pervasive in the elementary school curriculum. It has been estimated, in fact, that as much as 90% of what is read by elementary schoolchildren is narrative in form (p. 187).

Why Do We Need Stories?

Stories are usually related to our daily life whether at home or work, and whether in our culture or in our conversation. Stories are a function of our imaginative lives and our need to express our experiences. There is no doubt that experiences have many sources.

Human beings take their experiences from critical life incidents, or what their family imprints on them through telling stories. It is definitely worthwhile to look at some examples of the role stories play in our lives, in order to see the insight that can make work in the classroom more productive (Jones & Buttery, 1970, p. 2).

Stories help one to "gain an understanding of the complexity of our emotional responses, demonstrated by the expressive voices of characters speaking eloquently and powerfully of their feelings. We can not teach children emotions, we can only help them reveal them and understand them" (Barton & Booth, 1990, p. 13). Stories and thoughts are the windows of the house in which people live (Beisser, 1991, p. 43).

The story is an internal and external mirror that shows something about the individual and other people. When one looks into this metaphoric mirror, one can see daily routines and mundane circumstances transformed into something profound. Inside the story one can accept pain, understand conflicts, find justice, and experience exaltation. Inside the story one can recognize and understand his/her own motivations, because he/she the subject of the stories. When one enters into the realm of story, one can find the story inside oneself (Livo & Rietz, 1986, p. 4).

The story as a universal mirror could illustrate many concepts which are difficult to explain. For example, it is hard for the child to understand the concept of compassion or loyalty without illustrating such terms for them. The story can bring this term closer to their understanding.

"Hearing or seeing stories provides young children with models of how experience can be shaped and organized into meaningful patterns.

It is a rare preschooler who does not imitate the models that are available to her by creating stories of her own" (Grago, 1985, p. 133).

Nancy King is a professor of symbolic learning in the Honor's program at the University of Delaware where she teaches courses in story making. In her book, Story Making and Drama (1993), she confirms that teachers may use stories in their classes in several ways. The old narrative forms such as myths, legends, fairy tales, fables, and folk tales are short and useful in the classroom, in that when told to a class, they provide a communal experience through which students respond uniquely to shared tasks. Moreover, based on her experience of using stories for educational purposes Professor King makes a strong statement. She says:

> Without telling and sharing stories through storymaking and drama, our communities die. Many of us already feel a sense of isolation, a lack of real community. We live very separate lives, often at great distance from family and childhood homes. We learn to keep our thoughts and feeling to ourselves (p. 4).

Educators can use stories to help solve many educational and social problems. Teachers and parents can use stories to encourage children and students to read, write, think, and discuss an endless range of concepts and issues. The creative use of stories and the making of drama can help teachers at all levels to overcome many deficiencies in schools. Stories are needed because the story can provide the audience with a clear vision, and through this vision the audience can make sense of their lives. The story also creates a desire to follow the right path and imitate the good behavior of its characters.

Plato, who believes that the tales which children hear should be about moral virtues, recommends that children be brought up in such a way that they fall in love with virtue. He thought that stories and histories were the key to sparking the love of virtue. No amount of discussion or dialogue could compensate if that spark is missing (Kilpatrick, 1993, p. 24). With stories, people go through life and have new experiences. "By arranging the flux and welter of experience around a narrative line, we make sense of our pasts, plan for our futures, and comprehend the live of others" (Narayan, 1991, p. 114).

Kilpatrick (1993, p. 24), Smith, and Habenicht (1993, p. 541) agree that stories have been used from the earliest times in all cultures as a method of instilling the society's values into children. Stories have always been a traditional way of transmitting values, principles, and common sense (Kilpatrick, 1993, p. 24). For instance, in the U.S.A., school teachers have transmitted American values and developed virtues in children through tales of American heroes and folklore (Buchholz, 1992, p. 397).

> Stories give a much broader background than is usually afforded in either moral dilemmas or real life situations. The story is able to present both sides of the conflict. The interplay of needs and values of both sides which is present in the real life situation is not usually known to all the participants, but in stories these conflicting needs are often shown (Smith & Habenicht, 1993, p. 541).

In other words, stories provide a picture of people while they are struggling and suffering (Noddings & Witherell, 1991, p. 280). Hearing and reading stories has many advantages. One of these advantages is that it points out which things are common among the people, as well as those things which make individuals unique. Also, reading together

would involve people in a group and create different relationships (Pagano, 1991, p. 266). Educators can use stories to "give examples of conflicts similar to ones arising in school or home, which may encourage discussion of things otherwise hard to talk about calmly" (Schimmel, N. 1992, p. 39).

When the U.S. Department of Education (1991) published America 2000: An Education Strategy, parents were encouraged in this report to read stories to their children to be instrumental in their children's education, since one parent in the home is worth a thousand teachers in the school (Rich, 1987, p. 53). The U.S. Department of Education stated that parents "are the keys to their childrens' education, and there is no part of the America 2000 strategy in which they do not have an important role. As for what they can do today-they could read a story to their children" (p. 34). This report shows us how substantial the story is in training the new generation in modern countries such as the U.S.

Finally, we need stories because they have effective emotional, educational, and social appeal. As children listen to a well-told story, they are inspired to model and imitate the virtuous behavior of the hero because they partake in the good feelings of doing good. Moreover, in the same way the children learn about good deeds from stories, they may also learn the reverse, by knowing the opposite of good deeds. Thus, the children grieve over the effects of the mistakes the hero and others in the story make, and emotionally experience the ill effects of the bad behavior without doing it themselves (Smith & Habenicht, 1993, p. 543).

Stories for Developing Language

One of the more important aspects of storytelling is improving and developing the children's language by their gaining new words. Moreover, children may become more fluent in their language through storytelling. Every writer has a unique style in his writing, so we learn a new source for developing our writing when we read or listen to interactive stories.

Taylor and Strickland (1986) stress the importance of reading stories in family life. They say that educators have known that children who share storybooks with their parents are more likely to read before they are given formal instruction (p. 15). In addition to that, they mention that sharing storybooks between parents and children "is one part of a broad socialization process. It provides an important occasion through which children learn language, play with ideas, and build trust and understanding as they learn about life within the family" (p. 31).

Hearing and reading narratives in school and at home gives children many different ideas which may be good topics for writing. That writing, in turn, can be used for sharing their insights into the stories they have known and experienced (Barton & Booth, 1990, p. 148).

"It is clear from more than a decade of research that interactive story reading is a powerful social avenue for developing language and literacy, and that it can be used as influential literacy tool both in the home and in the school" (Kerr & Mason, 1994, p. 145).

> Hearing stories during the course of their school life can strengthen childrens' creative impulses, particularly in the area of writing. Through stories, children become aware of how figurative language is used, by "role-playing" as writers they can try out this literary language... Story telling and reading aloud expand and enhance the young child's

> exposure to literature. Through stories, students claim a bit of their literary heritage (Denman, 1991, p. 7).

The short story booklet is an instructional activity used with exceptional students in grades 7 through 12 who have trouble putting their thoughts on paper. In order to be successful with this activity, students must be able to write sentences and paragraphs during this project. The students write stories using the processes of prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. The stories are then gathered in booklet form. The main purpose of this successful experiment, as Rapp (1991) says, is that the "short story booklet provides encouragement and motivation for exceptional secondary school students to write stories. It also can be used to build confidence in writing" (p. 58). The result of this project was a positive one since several students wanted to write more than one story. It indicates that the stories motivated the students because every one of the students participated, and no one received a grade lower than a "C".

By and large, for many psychological, educational, and linguistic reasons, listening to and reading stories are essential to a child's development. Stories teach a child to read and write (May, 1982, pp. 346-348). Moreover, well-told stories and interactive story reading provide new vocabulary words and ideas. Stories help a child to make sense of their inner and outer world. Finally, stories convince us that reading is worth doing (Sloan, 1991, p.107; The International Encyclopedia of Education, 1994, vol. 4, pp.1961-1962).

Stories as an Approach to Moral Education

Using moral stories in education is a meaningful way of socialization that enables us to learn more about values without using ethical abstractions. It is true that abstract concepts, as Trelease (1995) says, "are all too quickly lost in the dust of yesterday (p. 57)." Many times the indirect ways of preaching are more effective than the direct ways.

John Dewey has written, "The sum total of the effect of all reflective treatises on morals is insignificant in comparison with the influence of architecture, novel, drama, on life" (quoted in Jarrett, 1991, p. 163). Kirschenbaum (1995) suggests that storytelling is one of the effective tools for inculcating morality, especially for the youth (p. 68). For him, "Stories contain powerful images and symbols and operate on both conscious and unconscious levels, conveying intellectual and emotional meaning" (p. 68). "Early children's stories were written with a moral purpose; this was particularly true in the 19th century" (Webester's New World Encyclopedia, 1992, p. 235).

A narrative, as an approach to moral education, ingrains children with virtue. The story provides the students with the opportunity to tell their own moral stories, and thus to express and enhance their own responsibility through the process of authoring (Tappand & Brown, 1991, p. 184). Martin Luther says "I would not for any quantity of gold part with the wonderful tales I have retained since my childhood" (quoted in Colwell, 1980, p. 1).

It is hard to teach values without using stories. If educators share real events from their own stories and experiences, they will capture children's minds and lead them to believe in certain moral virtues from the story, no matter how short the event or the story is. Educators should

not be ashamed or hesitant to talk and tell stories about their own experiences so long as they relate them with modesty and the main purpose is to educate not boast. Everywhere audiences are interested in what life has taught us (The Dale Carnegie Course, 1974, p. 42).

Today, we need stories as a vehicle for moral education. It is not a secret to say that we have moral problems in our schools, such as student suicide, violence, drug abuse, pregnancy, and many other moral problems.

> There have been dramatic increases in the rates of adolescent death by homicide and suicide. The number of out-of-wedlock births has soared to about a million a year ... In view of these as well as other serious moral problems, such as pornography and a high level of sexually transmitted disease. It is clear that we need to recover and implement a much more effective way of teaching morality (Vitz, 1990, p. 709).
>
> For too many of our children, the family that should be their protector, advocate and moral anchor is itself in a state of deterioration...And other modern plagues touch our children: drug use and alcohol abuse, random violence, adolescent pregnancy, AIDS and the rest (U.S. Department of Education, 1991, pp. 6-7).

One of America's education goals by the year 2000 is that "every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning" (U.S. Department of Education, 1991, p. 9).

Stories can make the audience think seriously about the consequences of their behavior. Concerning the use of stories in moral development, Vitz (1990) argues that on the basis of several recent major psychological contributions, narrative materials are an essential component of effective moral education. This can include oral, written, or cinematic narration. In schools, written narratives are the most common,

although cinematic or video forms are now growing in influence (p. 709). Special attention should be given to TV stories because, as experts say, "The TV set is the most powerful storyteller ever invented" (Hamilton, 1994, p. 82). Unfortunately, the weakness and danger of television and video forms is that the medium can neutralize it own material, satiate the viewer with wrong images that are drained of any true and real value (Jones & Buttery, 1970, p. 10). Schrag (1991) says that the fable-makers of children's television must turn their considerable talents to create worthy children's television; they need to accept the fact that the best fable is not always the most profitable one (p. 319).

The media, after all, needs to recognize that their products are responsible to protect children and provide moral virtues. As long as schools are doing otherwise, children will live in real conflict because they will see that what is wrong in the school becomes all right on the T.V. One should recognize the need for moral educators to develop the field of teaching morality (Downey & Kelly, 1978, p. 49). Utilizing stories can support educators in developing such good character.

Generally, from ages four to seven, children respond to stories about right and wrong and they can distinguish between good and bad behavior (Lord 1987, p. 81). There are two main methods for using stories in moral education. The first method assumes that stories just need to be told or read, with no explanation or commentary needed. The second method assumes that some form of extracting the moral lesson is helpful (see Smith & Habenicht 1993, pp. 543, 544). Finally as Vitz (1990) says:

> After all, the use of stories is one of the few universal aspects of moral education. From such unanimity it seems reasonable to conclude that stories have substantial

> educational utility. Clear policy implication and testable hypothesis is that stories should be more effective at teaching morality than the present non narrative approaches (p. 717).

Narrative in Arab Life

It is impossible for researchers to find any community without social communication. Stories have been one of the traditional methods of social communication from very early on in human history, especially among peoples who are illiterate. There are many words which can refer to a story such as "legend", "anecdote" and "myth" (Schimpf, 1972, pp. 17-20), which means that humans use stories in different forms and for different purposes. Humans use true stories or fictional stories, short or long stories. Like many nations, Arabs have used the story as a form of social communication.

Arabs before the time of Prophet Muḥammad had their own heritage of stories. Some non Muslim scholars mentioned that storytelling has always been a favorite past-time in Arabic history and it provided both a job for the narrator and relaxation for the listener (Goldziher, 1966, p. 88). There are many stories and poems that present strong evidence that Arabs had their own heritage of stories before and after Islam. Since the earliest times of Islam, the story has played an important role in Arabian life (Studies on the First Century of Islamic Society, 1982, p.165).

More than a quarter of the Holy Qurʾān deals with stories related to historical events (al-Sayyid, 1993, p. 57), which means that Muslims live with stories and learn from them. The Qur'ān emphasizes stories in such sentences as:

"Relate the story; perchance they may reflect" (S.7 A.176).

"We do relate unto thee the most beautiful of stories" (S.12 A.3).

"Indeed in their stories, there is a lesson for men of understanding" (S.12 A.111, al-Hilālī & khān, 1993, p. 358).

The story of Joseph is one of the longest narratives in Qurʾān. With regard to that Qurʾānic story Pickthall (1990) notes:

> The differences from the Bible narrative are striking. Jacob is here a Prophet, who is not deceived by the story of his son's death, but is distressed because, through a suspension of his clairvoyance, he cannot see what has become of Joseph. The real importance of the narrative, its psychic burden, is emphasised throughout, and the manner of narration, though astonishing to Western readers, is vivid (p. 243).

For Muslims, Qurʾānic stories about prophets are historical events narrated by Allāh to provide moral lessons and build the Muslim community. Unlike Bennabi (1983), Bucaille (1979), and Muhajr (1992) there are few Muslim researchers who assert that Qurʾānic narratives do not provide historical facts and documents. For example Khalafallah, the Egyptian rationalist scholar, says Qurʾānic stories were cast by God in affective language and in dramatic style (Stowasser, 1994, p. 19; The Oxford encyclopedia of the modern Islamic world, 1995, vol. 2, p. 412). In such view the divine purpose in such Qurʾānic stories "was not to provide historical fact but principles of direction and guidance to mankind in general and, most especially, the Prophet Muḥammad and his first community" (Stowasser, 1994, p. 19).

In the context of Islam, stories have been one of the significant elements to edify people. Moreover, "stories of the pious and goodly are a part of Allāh's army, they strengthen the hearts of those who strive in

his path" (Hulbadist, n.d., p. 6). The mosques, with rare exceptions, are open day and night for people to pray, study, or listen to stories. The narrators of the story would spend a night standing at the base of a pillar in the mosque (see Mez, 1975, pp. 332, 333). "Religious storytelling on the popular level has its roots in formal preaching in the mosque" (The Encyclopaedia of Religion, 1987, vol. 4, p. 45). The great Islamic hospitals of the Middle Ages, as Durant (1950) says, were provided for the sleepless "with soft music, professional storytellers, and perhaps books of history" (vol 4, pp . 330-331).

The Arabs call the storyteller "al-qaṣṣāṣ," and in the past some might have called him "qāriʾ al-kursī," which means chairman (Al-Subkī, 1987, p. 89). Al-Ṣabbāgh (1988) believes that the West adopted "chairman" as a term from the early Arabs (p. 66). Some writers believe that as early as the year 661 A.D. the Islamic government employed storytellers. Muʿāwiyah Ibn Abī Sufyān, the president, "*al- khalīfah*", in that time gave the storytellers a salary and instructed them to relate stories in mosques (Ismāʿīl, 1972, p.135). However, there were many storytellers who did not take a salary from the government, such as al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī.

Some Muslim scholars of the past despised storytelling for many reasons as Ibn al-Jawzī mentioned in his manuscript dating to approximately 1200 (Pellowski, 1977, p. 73). Ibn al-Jawzī (1971) says one of these reasons "is that the majority of *quṣṣāṣ* [storytellers] did not search out what was true, nor were they on their guard against error by reason of the meagerness of their knowledge and their lack of fear for God" (p. 97). Ibn al-Jawzī is convinced that "when the learned man gave exhortation, and those who knew the difference between what was

authentic and what was corrupt narrated stories, there was no loathing" (p. 97). Renard (1996) says:

> In *The Book of Professional Story tellers*, Ibn al-Jawzī describes the important role storytellers have played in Muslim societies. Any group that exercises such influence can, he admits, fall prey to various problems. Ibn al-Jawzī deals with those difficulties head-on in an attempt to make it clear that, for all their human failings, storytellers perform an essential service (p. 96).

One of the major vocations of Muslims storyteller, Renard (1996) concludes, is "to keep alive in the mind and hearts of a broad public the words and deeds of Islam's religious heroes, for the power of example in ethical formation is enormous (p. 97).

The stories from the Arabs and Muslims had a deep impact on European fiction. Sibaʿi (1984) states

> So much so that several critics of Europe are of the opinion that the travelogue by Swift and Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, are both indebted to the Arabian Nights and "*Hai bin-e-Nafeezan*" by the Arab philosopher Ibn-e-Tufail. Nobody can entertain any doubt about the fact that the repeated publication of "*The Arabian Nights*" reveals that the Europeans have made it the center of their attention and have been very much impressed by it (p. 22).

Exploring the landscape of tales in Arabic literature, one can reject the view of some Westerners that Arabs never invented their own stories and they are just translators. Furthermore, exploring Arabic stories might prove that the West in some cases took Islamic and Arabic stories "while often removing from them all their specifically Islamic features" (Irwin, 1994, p. 77). It is definitely true that many tales in The Arabian Nights originally came from India or Iran, but still "a number of stories of varying length [were] composed in Baghdad" (Gerhardt, 1963, p. 9), or in other

Arabic cities to present stories of Arabic life, as in the "Tale of the Lover Who Feigned Himself a Thief" in The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night (1943. vol. IV, p. 155-157). This example and many more examples confirm and support the idea that "the Arabs originated and exported at least as much story lore as they imported" (Irwin, 1994, p. 77).

On the social level storytelling is still an everyday activity in many parts of the Arabic world as Webber (1991) mentions (p.311). One of her observations is that women used to tell fantasy stories and men used to tell true narratives about their past experiences (p. 33). On the basis of her personal observations of some Arabic countries, Pellowski (1977) says that some Qurʾānic schools use stories to teach social and religious morals (p. 74).

In many cases modern Arabic life the story is a tool for human rights faiding people who are exploited and treated unjustly by dictators. Generally, in Arabic countries today, as in the third world, people do not have the right to make a president accountable for his actions. Unfortunately many scholars, thinkers, and reformers are living behind bars in less than basic human conditions. In these circumstances, stories are one way for writers to explain and express their feelings toward dictators in many Arabic countries.

However, many Islamic writers are still unfamiliar with the story medium and they do not use this powerful means as much as they use poems (al-Kaylānī, 1987, p. 11; Yaḥyá 1994, p. 52; al-Rāshid, 1989, p. 32). In order to increase awareness and change or develop social and political situations, Islamic writers might contribute using the world of the story as a powerful means to deliver their message. This study will give

some examples of using Prophetic stories for reformation, especially at the social level.

What Does Myth Mean?

Fried (1970) wrote that the word mythology comes from two Greek words, mythos, which means story, and logos, which means word or talk. It means, therefore, story-telling (vol. 12, p. 557; see MacGregor, 1973, p. 479).

Mircea Eliade (1987) likes to view myth by saying, "It is the cosmogenic myth that tells how the cosmos came into existence" (p. 77). For him, "every myth shows how a reality came into existence, whether it be the total reality, the cosmos, or only a fragment--an island, a species of plant, a human institution" (p. 97). In terms of the function of myths, Eliade wrote, "the supreme function of the myth is to 'fix' the paradigmatic models for all rites and all significant human activities... eating, sexuality, work, education and so on" (p. 98).

It seems that Eliade insists on generalizing his idea by using such all-encompassing words as, for example, "all" and "every" myth. It is hard to believe that such a strong impression can be appropriate to each myth. However, he brings out the educational function of the myth which is centered around that idea of setting good examples. Humans, in his view, imitate the culture's heroes and mythical ancestors. Their examples and models are preserved in myth (pp. 99-100). "Myth expresses in action and drama what metaphysics and theology define dialectically" (Eliade, 1958, p. 418).

It is clear that Eliade uses the term myth to mean events that relate strongly to divine experience and theological discourse. Myth in the

traditional view is associated with false, ridiculous, illusory anecdotes and events. Today, the general use of myth is related to imaginary events about gods, why the world exists, and how everything in this world began.

> Because of the widespread popularity of evolutionistic and rationalistic thinking in our culture, the term "myth" usually refers to the fanciful imagination of the human mind. As such it is the opposite of the world of reality. In a similar vein, one can see that those peoples and cultures who live in terms of an explicit myth have been treated politically by the West as if they were not real, e.g., the American Indians, Africans, Indians, etc, Certain contemporary theologians in the West abhor the use of myth precisely because they think that it refers to the fanciful and unreal, and therefore is not a proper vehicle for the profound and serious "Word of God." But for any person who has studied the cultures of peoples who live in terms of an explicit myth, an opposite judgment must be made. The myth is a true story, the myth is a story about reality (Long, 1983, p. 11).

Clothey (1996) suggests a tentative definition of myth, by saying that myth is:

> a symbol system expressed in story form, generally modeled from the given factors of the human situation and expressing an individual's or a people's view of reality by chronicling past events perceived to be definitive and authenticating and ascribing to them an aura of ultimate significance so that the story serves a paradigm for human activity (p. 1).

This view is the opposite of the conventional view of myth. Here, myth could be a perception of an event, not an imaginary one, at least for the who people believe in it. It seems also that the last definition does not focus on gods or religious experience, as Eliade did. The last sentence of the previous definition focuses on the function of myth more than its definition.

Bill Moyers concludes that myths, in Campbell's view,

> are stories of our search through the ages for truth, for meaning, for significance. We all need to tell our story and to understand our story. We all need to understand death and to cope with death, and we all need help in our passages from birth to life and then to death. We need for life to signify, to touch the eternal, to understand the mysterious, to find out who we are (Cambell & Moyers, 1991, p. 5).

All this might lead to a conclusion that "there is no one definition of myth" (Kirk, 1975, p. 7).

The Meaning of Myth in Arabic Literature

Myth in Arabic is "usṭūrah" or "khurāfah." The Arabic encyclopedia al-Mawsūᶜh al-ᶜArabiyyah al-Muyassarah (1965) defines "khurāfah" as a short story that has moral purposes. Yet the linguistic meaning of "usṭūrah" is strange or false news and stories (al-Muᶜjam al-Waṣīd, 1972).

Qumyḥah (1996), an Arabic linguist, writes that "usṭūrah" as an Arabic word is used to characterize what is null or not true. He claims that all linguistic books in Arabic will agree that "usṭūrah" is untrue news. Today, he says, most people, newspapers, and magazines use "usṭūrah" as something glorious, but they are making a mistake from a linguistic point of view (p. 5).

Qumyḥah (1996) mentions that the word myth, "uisṭūrah," has been used as a word in many places in the Holy Qurᵓān. In all these verses "myth" is used as false news (p. 5).

Graham (1977) found the difficulty of using the word "myth" in studying Islamic subjects. He says:

> The use of the terms "legend" and "myth" here is fraught with difficulties primarily because of the unfortunate connotations that have accrued in Western usage to both and have given them the negative implication of untrue traditional accounts. This problem is compounded by the fact that for most Muslims the words are particularly foreign and even repugnant usages in Islamic context (p. 4).

This leads us to the idea that using myth in any context needs to be clarified, because, in Arabic or English, it might express either the perception of historical truths in some contexts or unreal events in most other contexts.

About Ḥadīth

It is true that all Prophetic stories are part of the vast Ḥadīth literature. The lexical meaning of the word "Ḥadīth" is story, report, or news (Ibn Manẓur, 1955). In an idiomatic sense, Ḥadīth (plural, Aḥādīth) stands for "what was transmitted on the authority of the Prophet, his deeds, sayings, tacit approval, or description of his ṣifāt (features) meaning his physical appearance" (Azami, 1992b, p. 3).

Basically, each Ḥadīth consists of two parts. The first part is the names of the transmitters who reported the ḥadīth, which is called *isnād* or the chain of narrators. The second part of any ḥadīth is called "matn", which is the actual text, subject or report. To clarify a bit more, the following example shows one full ḥadīth. Imam Muslim, the distinguished collector of Aḥādīth, reported that ᶜUbyd Bin Muᶜādh told me that his father told him that ᶜĀṣim said that his father told him that Abdullāh (son of ᶜUmar) said that the Prophet said: "The superstructrure of al-Islam is raised on five (pillars), testifing (the fact) that there is no God but Allāh and that Muḥammad is his bondsman and messenger, the

establishent of prayer, the payment of Zakāt, Pilgrimage to the house (Kaʿbah) and the fast of Ramaḍān (see Muslim, 1971, vol. 1, p. 10 ; 1991, vol. 1, p. 45). Each transmitter, or narrator of Ḥadīth, had to be a reliable person (Haque, 1995, p. 4).

"The *isnād* system began in the lifetime of the Prophet and was used by [his] Companions in transmitting the traditions of the Prophet" (Azami,1992a, p. 246). The idea of a chain of transmitters has been systematically developed to become "ʿIlm al-Rijāl", which means the "science of men." This science has been endowed with, and has recorded systematically, thousands of immortal biographies. Each man or woman who has reported a Ḥadīth in the chain of authorities needs to be known in terms of his or her piety, knowledge, education, where and when he or she was born, and his or her nicknames. The science of men was a careful way of sifting and evaluating Ḥadīth.

Scholars of Ḥadīth used to look at the text of the report and determine whether its grammatical style was correct or not. The sound Ḥadīth will not oppose Qurʾānical, historical, logical, or even Prophetical standards. If it does, that means the report is not authentic, because Prophet Muḥammad and his companions were always consistant. Thus, both the chain of transmitters and the real texts must be precisely checked before the Ḥadīth, as a whole, can be considered sound and authentic.

The Prophetic sayings have been the second source of Muslim legislation since the time of the Prophet, because the Qurʾān clearly says, "take what the Messenger gives you, and refrain from what he prohibits you" (S. 59.A 7). The Prophet said, "You must keep to my Sunnah [Muḥammad's behavior] and to the Sunnah of the rightly-guided

Rashidite Caliphs [successors of Prophet Muḥammad]. Cling to them stubbornly" (al-Nawawī, 1993, p. 86; see al-Albanī, 1995, pp. 19-27).

The term *Sunnah* "refers to the mode of the life of the Prophet Muḥammad (s), and is closely related to the word "ḥadīth" (plural, "aḥādīth") (kolocotronis, 1990, p. xvii)." There is a slight difference between Ḥadīth and Sunnah. As Ṣiddiqī in his introduction (1971) says, "The word Sunnah means precedent and custom. In the technical sense it implies the doings and practices of Muḥammad (may peace be upon him) only. Sunnah is thus a concrete implementation, a tangible form and the actual embodiment of the Will of Allāh in the form of Muḥammad's deeds." Consequently, "Whatever the Prophet said or did in daily matters of life or as a habit, that are not revealed by Allāh, are not included in the meaning of Sunnah, according to Islamic terminology" (al-ᶜAbbasī, 1995, p. 4). In this sense, the Aḥādīth are just a vessel of Prophet Muḥammad's acts or words.

Sunnī and Shiᶜī Point of View on Ḥadīth

It must be stated that the Sunnī, not Shiᶜī, point of view is the backbone of this study. The Sunnī sect constitutes the majority of Muslims. Sunnīs make up 83 to 90 percent of the Muslim population (Fluehr-Lobban, 1994, p. 20; Phipps, 1996, p. 11) whereas the Shiᶜī make up about 10% of the Muslim population (Momen, 1985, p. 282; Ramazani, 1986, p. 30).

Clearly there are many differences between these groups with regard to Ḥadīth methodology and literature. For example, in the Sunnī view

> no distinction is made between male and female narrators, judgment is made solely on the basis of individual trustworthiness and technical ability in relating traditions, and every narrator's history is recorded. No tradition is accepted from a known liar, or from one whose morals or scholarly ability were not corroborated. . . . (al-Khateeb, 1986, p. 30).

"Holy men have greater authority in the Shiite sect than in the Sunni sect" (Webester's New World Encyclopedia, 1992, p. 1010). Thus, "the Shiᶜi traditions usually rely on the words or actions of one of the Imāms and even those that go back to the Prophet are usually transmitted through one of the Imāms" (Momen, 1985, pp. 173-174). An Imām is one of the twelve legitimate successors of the Prophet in Shiᶜī literature. The Shiᶜī "do not attend to the authenticity and soundness of the chain of narrators, nor do they approach the study of the Prophetic traditions with a scientific, critical attitude" (al-Khateeb, 1986, p. 30; see al-Mubārakfūrī, 1987, pp. 329-333). Nasr (1994) says "the content of most of the ḥadīths in the two collections, Sunni and Shiᶜite, are basically the same. It is the chain of transmission which differs in many cases, but the content of the ḥadīths is nearly the same" (p. 19).

Prophetic Stories

Although very little work has been done in analyzing the Prophetic narrative and its functions in moral education, there are considerable materials which touch on issues related to the educational use of the Prophetic narrative in educational settings. The following is a general classification of different studies involving some analysis of the materials.

Several old books mention the Prophetic stories without considering these stories as a special area in Prophetic education. The

Prophet Muḥammad encouraged some of his companions to write some of his sayings (Azami, 1992b, p. 25; Nadwi, S., 1992, p. 81) but the main concern of the Prophet and his companions was in writing and compiling the Qurʾān. The work of collecting the Prophetic sayings increased during the time of the Tābiʿūn, the Muslims who came after the Prophet. By the time of the next generation, Malik bin Anas (93-179 A.H., 711-795 A.D.) wrote his book, al-Muwaṭaʾ, which is a collection of Prophetic sayings, however, Anas (n.d.) did not mention the Prophetic stories. The most important book for Muslims after the Qurʾān is Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, which is a compilation of Prophetic sayings by a Bukharian scholar. Even though al-Bukhāri (194-256 A.H., 809-869 A.D.) collected many Prophetic stories, he did not put them all into a single work or chapter. By observing the original books of the Prophetic heritage, such as the writings of Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal, Muslim, and al-Tirmidhī, many of these scholars collected some Prophetic stories but again, not together in a single chapter. Most of these collections have been interpreted. The most famous commentary that has been widely accepted in the Islamic world is the commentary of al-ʿAsqalānī (1987) on Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and the work of al-Nawawī (1991) on Ṣarḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim. Both of them focused on explaining strange words and connecting the stories with Prophetic teachings and Qurʾānic themes. Because both of them were pioneer jurists, they concentrated on this area whenever it appeared in the texts.

There are some recent studies that discuss Muḥammad's pedagogy and Islamic education without mentioning the narrations from Muḥammad (Maḥjūb, 1987; Quṭb, n.d, Ṣubḥ, 1993). Generally, however,

when these books, as well as others, deal with the stories as an educational method, they focus on the Qurʾānic stories only.

Al-Thaʿlabī (d. 427 AH., 1035 A.D.) collected many stories in his book Qiṣaṣ al-ʾAnbiyāʾ, which means "The Stories of Prophets". Many researchers agree that al-Thaʿlabī was not regarded as a very accurate traditionalist in his writing (First Encyclopaedia of Islam, 1987, vol. IV, p. 1043; Salmān, 1991, p. 8). Al-Thaʿlabī (n.d.) mentioned many stories that were from the Prophet, but he transmitted them as stories narrated by the Prophet's companions. For instance, he mentioned a story concerning a boy and a magician (p. 393). This story is originally a Prophetic story, but al-Thaʿlabī instead attributed it to Ibn Abbās, one of the Companions of the Prophet. In contrast, Najātī (1989) related as a Prophetic story one which was narrated by ʿUthmān, who was also one of the Prophet's companions (p. 174).

Thus, many writers were somewhat confused when they dealt with Prophetic narrations. They mixed these stories with the Prophet's biography or the stories that his companions told. This means that they may not have had a clear view or definition of what a Prophetic narration is.

Shiḥātah and Taqī al-Dīn (n.d.) also transmitted Prophetic stories, but as Azzeer (1985) mentioned, they made a serious mistake in that they mixed Prophetic stories with Prophetic biography (p. 35). Kayani (1981) does the same thing, but he confirms in his introduction that his book is a collection of eight stories from the life and teachings of the Prophet. It is possible to see part of the Prophetic biography as Prophetic stories such as the journey to heaven that the Prophet himself narrated. To consider a story as part of the Prophetic stories, at least in the present

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study, the text must indicate a sign that this event was narrated by the Prophet Muḥammad. Usually, in the beginning of the story the Companion of the Prophet declares that he heard the Prophet tell of the events narrated in the story.

In 1993, Tawfīq and Abdulfattāḥ published a series of works containing 18 stories for children. All of them are Prophetic stories except the first which is called "al-Jamal al-Shākī," which means "The Complaining Camel." This story is not narrated by the Prophet, but it is about the life of the Prophet. It is not a Prophetic story as the authors believed, because there is no indication that any Companion attested that the Prophet told this story. The authors were successful in their effort because they used illustration and ornamentation in their book. Similar to this is the work of Maḥfūẓ and Maḥfūẓ (1983). Moreover, Tawfīq and Abdulfattāḥ designed their series of books to be aimed at children ages eight to twelve. Al-ʾUbaydī (1969), Jarrār (1992), and most of the other writers in this category, took the ideas and themes of the Prophet's stories and rewrote them in a new and elaborate style.

Some studies mention several of Muḥammad's narrations, but they do not explain or analyze them sufficiently. For example, al-Atharī (1991) collected 50 authentic Prophetic stories and provides a commentary on lesser known words. In his introduction, al-Atharī mentions that he intends to publish another book which will be a comprehensive study on the subject. Suwayyid (1988, p. 330), Balīq (1978, pp. 847, 865) and al-Mawlawī (1988, p. 111-116) mention many Prophetic stories, though they do not give any analysis or commentary on them.

There is one elaborate academic study concerning Prophet Muḥammad's stories which focuses on their religious and Arabic literary aspects. Azzeer (1985) wrote a pioneering research study in order to obtain his Master of Arts in Arabic Literature and claimed to collect nearly 139 Prophetic stories (p. 71). Jarrār (1988) does not agree with this number and he thinks that some of stories that Azzeer accounts are not stories. He claims that some of them are just reports (pp, 114-117). Even though Azzeer's thesis was on Arabic literature, the sixth chapter contains a presentation and good analysis of some Prophetic stories from an educational point of view.

> In the sixth chapter the researcher sets forth the objectives of the story. He makes clear the fact that the Prophetic story is, in the first place, a religious one. That is why it is, in all its types, fully bound by the religious aim. But this commitment did not keep it from being in lines with the technical order in exposition and constitution... These are manifested by:
>
> 1- Persistence in exposing the narrative matter in [various] places-in more than one story.
> 2- Content, in the presentation of the story, with just what achieves the religious purpose.
> 3- Diffusing the religious instructions in the course of the story in more than one [form].
>
> The researcher then moves on to explain the main objectives. He states that they are not separate one from the other, that is, a story may serve more than one purpose at a time because these purposes are intermingled. He then speaks at length of the purposes of the story, which he concentrates in:
>
> 1- Preaching the gospel.
> 2- Instruction.
> 3- Education.
> 4- Banishing care from the Moslems and alleviating the emotional pressure they were undergoing (Azzeer, 1985, pp. 5, 6).

Similar to this study is the work of Rajab (1995), but his focus is on just one Prophetic story. In the beginning he gave a brief synopsis of information about the Companion who transmitted the story. In his discussion of educational content, he points out that the Prophetic story connects us with Qurʾānic instructions, books of interpretation, and also drives the learner to good deeds and warns him about immoral conduct (pp. 99, 102, 103).

Some researchers have dealt with the Prophetic stories from an educational point of view, but they have not given enough attention to the Prophetic stories as a separate area of investigation for educational aims. In contrast, al-Naḥlāwī (1993, pp. 217-221) write about the Islamic foundations of education and pointes out some aspects, types, and examples of Prophetic stories, and their importance. He concludes that Prophetic stories are clear, attractive and easy, and can be of use for both children and adults (p. 243). Moreover, Prophetic stories, as al-Naḥlāwī argues, aim to clarify the importance of sincerity and gratitude to God, as well as encourage listeners to give charity generously (pp.242-245). He found that the Prophet used to repeat some sentences in the story in order to focus on the importance of the idea (p. 244).

Zīnū (1994) and Malek (1992) collecte some Prophetic stories and present each as a dialogue. From each story they derived some educational as well as Islamic lessons. Salmān (1991) and Shuʿīb (1994) also use the same method and derive some educational as well as Islamic lessons, but Shuʿīb goes further to relate the educational lesson to contemporary issues. Both Zīnū and Shuʿīb mix Prophetic

stories with stories that a Companion of the Prophet had narrated, such as the story of Kaᶜb Ibn Mālik.

In the West, Graham (1977) studied several sayings of Prophet Muḥammad, which include some Prophetic stories (p. 92). He found that "it cannot be overemphasized that these sayings are almost without exception material that is primarily relevant within the sphere of personal devotion, morality, and piety, and very little concerned with questions of theological or juristic import" (p. 95).

Fireston (1988) analyzes the story of Abraham and Ishmael in Mecca (pp. 114-115). After his comparative examination, he finds:

> In fact, these [Abraham-Ishmael] legends do represent authentic Islamic material. They can no longer be correctly considered Jewish or Christian legends, despite the fact that the parallels and the ties remain. They now represent true Islamic legends. Perhaps, if we were in the business of coining terms, we could accurately call these unique legends Islāmiyyāt (p. 322).

In terms of *isnad* (the chain of narrators of a report) Firestone finds "As a rule, traditions with authoritative *isnads* were significantly more consistent than those without *isnads*. Traditions without *isnads* tended to be more imaginative and fantastic" (p. 314).

Cara (1992) retells two Prophetic stories in a simple style, rich vocabulary, and unsophisticated syntax. Ahsan (1992) mentioned that the aim of these stories is to provide moral education in the form of stories, not sermons or ethical preaching. In addition, the work of Cara as Ahsan mentioned, aims to:

> Help a child anchor his development on the rock of divine guidance, and to understand himself and relate to himself and others in just and meaningful ways. They relate directly to his soul and intellect, to his emotions and imagination, to

> his motives and desire, to his anxieties and hopes - indeed, to every aspect of his fragile, but potentially rich personality (p. 3).

Very recently, the story of the faithful boy and the magician has been adapted as a cartoon. No doubt this avenue is a new and modern tool for communicating Prophetic stories. The name of this work is Riḥlat al-Khulūd (n.d). Colors, songs, pictures of animals and many cinematic mechanisms are used to attract the viewers' minds. The moral and religious themes are clearly expressed throughout the work especially in the conduct of the old man Ṭlḥah, who encourages the brave boy to reject the injustice that the oppressive king engages in. The story provides role models for faithful Muslims. In this dramatic story "the apprentice of an evil sorcerer learns about the oneness of God from a pious monk. The boy struggles to teach the truth to others, but his wicked king tries desperately to kill him. The story is taken from an authentic narration of Prophet Muḥammad" (Astrolabe Pictures, 1997, p. 4). The message of monotheism, obeying God and sacrificing for the truth (al-Khāldī, 1989, pp. 291-326; al-Khūlī, 1980, p. 73) are the most visible themes in the story.

It is clear that all the literature on Prophetic stories, as in the cases of many of the vast collection of Islamic stories, aims to reach and convey moral objectives related to Islamic self-identity and interpersonal relations with family, friends or environment. That Muslims love to learn, obey their parents, worship God, love and serve people all could be noted in such Islamic stories (Douglass, 1995, p. 2).

By and large, the number of publications and studies concerning Prophetic stories has clearly increased in the past few years. Many of

these authors did not study Prophetic stories as an independent and elaborate subject in itself. Very little has been done to analyze the Prophetic stories and their function in education and many of these existing analyses are not concerned explicitly enough with moral education. According to the literature that has been reviewed in this section, there is no academic research or dissertations in education which study the Prophetic stories.

CHAPTER III.

ISLAM AND THE WEST

This chapter presents and discusses some of the views of Orientalist studies towards Islam, Prophet Muḥammad, and the authenticity of Ḥadīth literature. In this way, one can understand the origins of Prophetic stories, where these tales are located within the legacy of Islam and how they survived from the Orientalists' standpoint.

Orientalists and Islam

Tens of thousands of books and articles have been written on Islam in this century as part of the Orientalist interest in the East. This burgeoning intellectual movement is involved in a continuing contemporary argument, namely controversy about whether Orientalism is a negative or positive phenomenon.

There are two major views: the opinion that Orientalism is a pure intellectual and scholarly field, and the opinion that the West studies the East, and especially Islam, in order to take political control of Islamic countries.

No doubt, it will be impossible for any researcher to cover all materials and works that Orientalists have published to date. Yet the rapid speed of publications can give an indication of some aspects of the present intellectual conflict between the East and the West. It is hard to say that there is a possible end to this clash, but it might be fair to say that many arguments result from cultural differences and the differing perceptions that each researcher might bring to his evaluation.

What does Orientalism mean?

The word "Orientalism" has been used "since the early nineteenth century to describe a genre of painting, pioneered by the French but developed by artists from Britain and several other countries, with predominantly Middle Eastern and North African subjects" (Mackenzie, 1995, p. xiii). Fluehr-Lobban (1994) says, "Orientalism as a scholarly body of literature dates from the time of Napoleon in Egypt; he brought teams of scholars with his military expedition, and it enjoyed its heyday during the decades of European colonial rule" (p. 3).

By reviewing the work of the Orientalists, one can conclude that they worked in various branches of the human sciences, such as art, theology, rhetoric and history. During the previous two centuries, most Western studies on the East were either concerned primarily with scriptures and literature or the Turkish Empire (Lewis, 1993a, p. 11), which means that religious and political approaches played an important role in forming the early efforts of Orientalism.

Today, most Arab and Muslim researchers prefer to use the term "Orientalism" for works by Westerners or non-Muslims who study Eastern culture. The term "Orientalism" has already lost its value for many

Orientalists and has been replaced by "Human Sciences in Asia and North Africa" or "Arabist" or "Islamicist." Abolishing the term "Orientalist" after using it for many years made the Orientalists in Paris in the Summer of 1973 suggest a new label. They changed the title of their organization from "International Congress of Orientalists" to "International Congress of Human Sciences in Asia and North Africa." "The words 'Orientalist' and 'Orientalism', discarded as useless by scholars, were retrieved and reconditioned for a different purpose, as terms of polemical abuse" (Lewis, 1993a, p. 104).

It is really hard to find many books dealing with Orientalism and Islam either in Arabic or in English that do not refer to Goldziher. Some Arabs believe that he is the greatest and the most outstanding Orientalist who understands Islam (al-Mawsūᶜah al-ᶜArabiyyh al-Muyassarah, vol. 1, p. 668). Muslim scholars might reject this, but this statement holds some truth for Orientalists. "Probably the greatest [Orientalist] of all was Ignaz Goldziher (1850-1921), a pious Hungarian Jew whose magnificent series of studies on Muslim theology, law, and culture rank him, by common consent, as one of the founders and masters of modern Islamic studies" (Lewis, 1993b, p. 144). Yet some Orientalists suggest that Goldziher, in some of his studies, was too skeptical and he generalized too quickly from single observations (Motzki, 1991, p. 2).

One might suggest that Muslim educational institutions in Spain were among the important centers through which European scholars began their movement to study the East and its culture. During the Renaissance, Europeans intensively studied the East as either an enemy or a neighbor. In that period, one can imagine them looking with fresh

interest at those who lived in neighboring areas, either to control them or to understand them.

For many centuries, the traditional Western view saw Easterners as savage and barbaric people. The traditional Western view of the Prophet Muḥammad is an impostor, fraud, and anti-Christ (Goldberg, 1993, p. xli). The sharp offensive work of Dante (1987), the Italian poet, and Voltaire (1964), the Enlightenment philosopher, illustrate negative Christian views about the Prophet and how European literature has been some times so immoderate. Phipp (1996) writes, "Lack of concern to understand and anxiety over a potential threat are common threads found in most of the judgments by those who have found Muḥammad repulsive" (p. 8). Did Orientalism as an intellectual movement change this negative perception? Does the West still view the East as a dark and backward part of the world? The Western opinion of Africans or Muslims has always negative. Now some of these opinions and images seem wholly ridiculous (Daniel, 1962, p. 109).

The Orientalist movement represents a new wave of imperialism and missionary activity or a scholarly effort to serve humanity through the power of knowledge. Does the East still represent a threat and challenge to the West? The most important question that faces Orientalism is whether it is considered part of a welcomed contribution to knowledge or one more justification for political and intellectual domination. How can Orientalism be a way to maintain an intellectual interchange?

The Contribution of Orientalism

In 1934 Zakī Mubārak wrote that Orientalism is a real and rich field of study and most that Orientalists are a group of serious scholars, with the whom Islamic world has to work and cooperate. He clearly writes that the advantages of Orientalist studies outweigh their mistakes and dangers. One of his examples of the usefulness of Orientalists' work is the fact that they have published many books that support the survival of the Islamic legacy.

Lewis (1993a), who uses many functionalist arguments, agrees with this idea. He believes that Orientalists, especially the Jewish scholars, have made very important contributions to Islamic studies (pp. 142-144). There are many examples of scholarly products of Orientalism. Some documents clearly confirm that Orientists from the last century began serious translation projects, in order to understand Ḥadīth (Denffer, 1981; Salisbury, 1859). The Encyclopaedia of Islam (1960), is a major project of Orientalism in the field of Islamic studies. Yet the grandest project of the Orientalists is the work of al-Muᶜjam al-Mufahras Li-Alfāẓ al-Ḥadīth al Nabawī. This giant book (see Wensinck,1988, vol. 8), began as an idea in 1916 and was finished in 1987. It is one of the best preparations of indices on the Ḥadīth.

Ṣiddiqī (1993) wrote that Western scholars have taken an interest in the Prophet Muḥammad's sayings "for almost two centuries, making a welcome contribution by editing and sometimes translating many of the original Arabic works, and by the diligent preparation of concordances and indices" (p. 124). Lang (1994) says, "I have learned much about the science of traditions [Ḥadīth] from western writings that I could not find in

Muslim sources. Moreover, western scholars have made significant contributions to its study " (pp. 111, 112).

Muḥammad Siddiqī (1993, p. 135) agrees with Akbar Ahmed (1992, p. 184) about the importance of the work of American scholars in the studies of Islam. Both confirm that Americans scholars of Islam are somewhat more sympathetic than the Europeans. Siddiqī (1993) believes that the fact that the government of the United States has had no direct colonial involvement in Muslim countries in the past has allowed American scholars to understand Islamic culture better than their European colleagues (p. 135).

The studies of Abbott (1967) and Motzki (1991) set a good example for the study of Islam without a general bias. Their critical thinking leads them to understand the origins of the Prophetic sayings and they, directly or indirectly, refute Schacht (1950), Goldziher (1971), Margoliouth, (1914), Rubin, (1995), Guillaume (1963; 1966) and many theories of Orientalist scholars who believe that the Prophet Muḥammad's teachings are not authentic and the vast reports narrated about his teachings are fabricated.

Today's, scholars attempt to build bridges that manifest a growing climate of openness and mutual respect in order to understand religions. Furthermore, there is a strong tendency among some Orientalists to study Islam, not to distort and recastit but to understand it and find a common ground where they can usefully agree with Muslims. Daniel (1962) says of the Islamic legacy:

> these works of theology, if we continue seriously to examine them as friends of Islam, may sometimes give us actual light upon our own problem; more probably, may edify us, and

> most probably of all, may help us to find common ground where we can usefully agree with Muslims (p. 307).

A Christian scholar says, "the spiritual heritage of Islam offers a profound set of resources for all those who wish to make use of them, whether they be Muslim, Jewish, Christian, or whatever.... All of us should ponder the true meaning of Islam, submission to God" (Ernst, 1989, p. 99).

In the field of history, Montgomery Watt (1972) presents Prophet Muḥammad as a great figure of history (p. 52). Watt, as Akbar Ahamed (1992) says, "is one of the last living and best-known traditional orientalist" (p. 181). Watt (1988) says "I consider that Muḥammad was truly a Prophet, and think that we Christians should admit this on the basis of the Christian principle that 'by their fruits you will know them', since though the centuries Islam has produced many upright and saintly people" (p. 1).

In the past, Muslims have not produced many books on Islam and Ḥadīth in the English language (Guillaume, 1966, preface). To fill the gap, many important books on Islam have been translated by Orientalists. Robson (1953, 1981), Swartz (1971), and other translators have provided the West with many original works from Islamic literature. Brosse (1991) claims that "thanks to the recent work of the Western Orientalist, Djalāl ad-Dīn Rumī is now recognized as one of the greatest mystics of all time" (p. 48).

Gobb (1963) in his book Islamic Contribution to Civilization, studied Islamic history in depth in an appreciative and cordial manner. About significant contributions made by Muslims he says; "For more than five centuries that civilization not only led the world in science, but was

the only portion of mankind actively engaged in the systematic pursuit of knowledge" (p. 5). He also points out many factors that advanced civilization in the Arabic-Islamic period. One of the factors was:

> The devotion of religion of the people. Islam was simple enough in its theology to by understood by all and demanding enough in its daily ritual of prayer and month-long fasts to enforce a discipline that engendered piety in the daily life. Islam lifted its adherents above consciousness of race or color, establishing an effective brotherhood in the name of Allāh (p. 82).

Regarding educational studies, Allen and Muessig (1962), for example, scrutinize the development of Islamic culture, and they state that "American education has a rich debt to Islam and other Eastern sources" (p.133). Their elaborate article, "Islamic contributions to American education," expresses a somewhat more sympathetic attitude towards Islamic culture in a scholarly forum. About Islamic gifts to the Western World, they wrote :

> Perhaps the most profound and vital contribution of the Moslems to educational theory lies in their movement toward universal, free education. Taking the long point of view and looking especially for one of the most direct threads which extends from the Moslems to American education, we should note the efforts of Moslems: to encourage capable boys and girls of all stations of life, to accept teachers of different races and persuasions, to make library materials more accessible to more people, and to spread general enlightenment. Long before Western Europeans like Vives, Luther, Comenius, and Pestalozzi championed the idea of open educational opportunity, the Moslems were putting this idea into action in a variety of ways. American[s] Jefferson and Manns owed more to their Islamic predecessors than they realized or accorded recognition for a knowledge of such Islamic ideals that had been directly introduced into the mainstream of the Western intellectual tradition (p. 149).

Geertz (1995), an American anthropologist, observed two Islamic countries for four decades. In his book, The Religion of Java (1960), and other works (1968), he tries to characterize and describe Islamic culture and tradition. Furthermore, he tried to understand Islam, per se, as a religion that has a clear system of belief and behavior.

More importantly in the field of law Islam still as a dynamic system which is capable of providing people legal guidance in daily life, based on the command of God, as some studies of Orientalists advocate. God, as the Qur'ān says, is the protector of the believers. He leads them forth from the darkness into the light (S. 2, A. 257). Coulson (1964) states that:

> Generally speaking, the Qur'ānic precepts are in the nature of ethical norms- broad enough to support modern legal structures and capable of varying interpretations to meet the particular needs of time and place. And on this basis it would seem that Islamic Jurisprudence could implement, in practical and modernist terms, its fundamental and unique ideal of a way of life based on the command of God (p. 225).

John Esposito is one of contemporary America's leading academic figures on Islam. He (1982) says, "Islamic law could generally meets the needs of the times. This is especially evident in the field of family law which remained operative until contemporary times" (p. 130). Esposito (1991) confirms:

> Islamic law embodies a number of Qur'ānic reforms that significantly enhanced the status of women. Contrary to pre-Islamic Arab customs, the Qur'ān recognized a woman's right to contract her own marriage. In addition, she, not her father or other male relatives as has been the custom, was to receive the dower from her husband (4:4). She became a party to the contract rather than simply an object of sale. The right to keep and maintain her own dowry was a source of self-esteem and wealth in an otherwise male-dominated society. Women's right to own

> and manage their own property was further enhanced and acknowledged by the Qurʾānic verses of inheritance (4:7, 11-12, 176), which granted inheritance rights to wives, daughters, sisters, and grandmothers of the deceased in a patriarchal society where all rights were traditionally vested solely in male heirs. Similar legal rights would not occur in the West until the nineteenth century (p. 95).

Esposito's studies (1982; 1985; 1991; 1992) could serve as an example of a Western scholar who works to understand Islam and engender some empathy. He uses Islamic sources, not to attack them but generally to understand the landscape of Islamic revivalism and to point out ways of reformation especially in family laws and social milieu.

Serious contributions of Orientalists might exist in other scientific fields. Moore (1990), a professor and chairman of the Department of Anatomy, University of Toronto, Canada, found, with other Muslim scholars, that the Qurʿān and Prophet Muḥammad's sayings conveyed many scientific facts in the field of embryology (p. 48). The conclusion of their treatise is:

> These facts about human development could not have been known by Muḥammad (peace be abound him) in the 7th century, because most of them were not discovered until the 20th century. Muslims and others are justified in concluding that these facts could only have been revealed to Muḥammad (peace be upon him) by God, Who knows all about us-not only about how we develop but how we live and function (p. 48).

For some researchers, all this, and much more, suggests that Orientalism is a branch of scholarly work that tries to contribute to Islamic studies not to attack Islam.

> Arab Scholars working in the various fields with which the Orientalists have been concerned-history, literature, language, philosophy, and others-have made normal use of

> Orientalist publication. They have contributed extensively to Orientalist journals and have participated generally in Orientalist symposia, colloquia, and other international activities. Arab scholars have often differed from Orientalists in their findings and judgments, just as Arab scholars and Orientalist scholars have differed among themselves. These have, for the most part, been scholarly differences, not clashes of ethnic or ideological allegiances, and they have been discussed within the norms and courtesies of scholarly debate (Lewis, 1993a, p. 116).

Voll (1996), from Georgetown University, writes about Islam and West with regard to the postmodern world. He states that the relationship between Islam and the West is no longer that of two clashing civilizations, but "they are now interactive partners, sometimes fighting and sometimes cooperating, involved in the co-constructed reality of the contemporary world" (p. 11).

In conclusion, for some researchers, it will be rewarding to survey Western work on Islamic studies. Orientalists share their knowledge and contribute to many human sciences in many Islamic fields. Many of their works could be rich sources, not only for the West but also for Muslims to take advantage of.

Orientalism as a Confrontation

In 1934, al-Harāwī concluded that the benefits from Orientalists are less than their damage (p. 566). Many other scholars in the Islamic world believe that Orientalism, in general, is a modern intellectual movement which serves Western imperialism, in order to dominate and govern the East politically. Ghorab (1991) defines Orientalism as an academic field of non-Islamic scholars who study Islam in order to deface

and deform it; to dominate the Muslim world in the name of human science (p. 7).

For Ghorab, most contributions of the West--such as translating Arabic books and preparing concordances and indices--are methods to help Westerners destroy Islam. Although Muslims might learn from Orientalist works, this is not their aim. His example is that the imperialist British government developed railroads in India in order to exhaust the Indians' wealth (p. 86). He means that colonial countries did not spend their effort and money to serve the development of Muslim countries, but they made translations and indices as a means to help them undermine the Islamic religion.

In his recent book, Subverting Islam: The Role of Orientalist Center, Ghorab (1995) states, "The history of Orientalism shows that it was closely connected with the needs and purposes of colonialism and with Christian missionary ambitions. That connection remains. It has now become a part of the geo-political strategies of Western governments and their intelligence services" (p. 11).

In his postmodernist view, Said, in many of his critical and genuinely intellectual works (1978; 1981; 1993; 1995), focuses on the idea that Orientalism in most cases supports racism, cultural stereotypes, and the dehumanization of Arabs in general, Palestinians in particular (1978, p. 27). As one example, he notes how the West mocked the Palestinian revolution and viewed it as "a camel about to raise itself from the ground" (1978, p. 315).

Much of the literature on Orientalism refers to Said's theory. Said is a prolific writer, who has authored many books and articles on politics and Islam. His own position can be known from his statements, such as:

> For the many reasons I have enumerated earlier in this book and in *Orientalism*, knowledge of Islam and of Islamic peoples has generally proceeded not only from dominance and confrontation but also from cultural antipathy. Today, Islam is defined negatively as that with which the West is radically at odds, and this tension establishes a framework radically limiting knowledge of Islam (1981, p. 155).

After his conversion to Islam, Asad (1987), the European writer, wrote "with very few exceptions, even the most eminent of European Orientalists are guilty of unscientific partiality in their writings on Islam" (p.63). From his point of view, the Occidental prejudice can be understood in the light of two considerations. First of all, Westerners believe that they are racially superior to Easterners. They also look back to the historical clash between themselves and Islam (pp. 62-65): the Christian Crusades of the Middle Ages.

In many cases, Orientalists study Islamic subjects from a purely secular viewpoint in which they interpret every historical event in a materialistic form. There are many studies by Orientalists that insult Muslims and blackguard them in the name of freedom of knowledge and research. Bloom (1988) misrepresents some anthropological studies and concludes that Arabs do not hug and kiss their children, hence they are bloodthirsty (p. 116; Abu-Lughod, 1991, p. 162). He wrote in a demeaning and denigrating way:

> In much of Arab Society the cold and even brutal approach to children has still not stopped. Public warmth between men and women is considered a sin. An Arab adult stripped of intimacy and thrust into a life of cold isolation, has become a walking time bomb. An entire people have turned barbaric for the simple lack of a hug (p. 116).

Simply, this was Bloom's explanation or exploration in response to a complex question that he shared as "why are some cultures bloodier than others?" Academic experts, field notes, and survey findings all were distorted to vindicate this oppressive judgment.

It is evident, at least for Muslims, that the Western media has associated Islam with violence. Hofmann (1996b), a Muslim German writer, points out that "we never read that the monumental crimes in the Soviet Union were committed by Stalin the Orthodox Christian, and those in Nazi Germany by Adolf Hitler the Catholic" (p. 34). The media often calls a crimial "a fanatic Muslim", but they do not call militants of the IRA fanatic Catholics" (p. 33). The Western media often focuses on many stereotypical images about Arabs. Shaheen (1984) states:

> Television tends to perpetuate four basic myths about Arabs: they are all fabulously wealthy; they are barbaric and uncultured; they are sex maniacs with a penchant for white slavery; and they revel in acts of terrorism. Yet, just a little surface probing reveals that these notions are as false as the assertions that blacks are lazy, Hispanics are dirty, Jews are greedy and Italians are criminals (p. 4)

It seems to be true that history repeats itself. For a long time people in Europe considered Arabs to be stupid, for example, as Phipp (1996) explains, "Muḥammad had faked divine inspiration by training a white dove to pick grains from his ear while sitting on his shoulder" (p. 6). This medieval story (Daniel, 1962, p. 104) was the source of lines by William Shakespeare (1922) such as:

"Was Maḥomet inspired with a dove?
Thou with an eagle art inspired then" (p. 16).

As Phipps (1996) says, "However, a dove is not a Muslim symbol for the Spirit of God, so the story must have originated with someone aware of the story of Jesus' baptism" (p. 6). Today, Wright (1994) still provides his readers with a collection of some unique quotations from both ancient and present times. One of these is from the English philosopher Francis Bacon (see p. 69). In that comment, Bacon confirms his view that the Prophet "was a bungling miraclemonger " (Phipps, 1996, p. 6). Mass Western literature tells us that the West was willing to believe and widely accept any demeaning or ridiculous story about Islam. About Western views of Muḥammad in the Middle Ages Southern (1962) says before the first Crusade

> I have found only one mention of the name of Maḥomet in medieval literature outside Spain and Southern Italy. But from about the year 1120 everyone in the West had some picture of what Islam meant, and who Maḥomet was. The picture was brilliantly clear, but it was not knowledge, and its details were only accidentally true. Its authors luxuriated in the ignorance of triumphant imagination (p. 28).

This ignorance, as Esposito (1992) notes, reflected not only lack of knowledge but also the common human tendency to denigrate and dehumanize the enemy (p. 45). Daniel (1962) says:

> A mass of literature gave Muḥammad a very much worse, and highly melodramatic death, one that now seems wholly ridiculous. A reader of mediaeval writings comes incidentally across reference to the Prophet's shameful death. These take it for granted that he knows what this means - that Muḥammad was eaten by dogs, or that he was eaten, or suffocated, by pigs (Daniel, 1962, p. 104).

Based on some of their publications from the past to the present day, one can conclude that many Orientalists seem to think they are the

only civilized people who have the "Truth" and authority to speak about Islam in a scientific way. They present their opinions as experts to say or even to discover that Islam itself, not some Muslims, exports terror (Benesh, 1995, p. 15).

From their point of view, it seems that Orientalists not Muslims, who studied the Ḥadīth in scientific methods (Schimmel, A. 1992, p. 53) are the only people who can understand historical facts in a scientific way. Some of their ideas on Ḥadīth are presented as brilliant discoveries and superb contributions that became the cornerstone of all serious investigations (Schacht, 1950, p. 4), as if such ideas "were the final authorities on the subject whose verdict could never be questioned" (Jameelah, 1990, p. 102). However, some of these great contributions and brilliant theories of Orientalists were rejected totally, not only by Muslim scholars, but even by other Orientalists (see Powers, 1986, pp. 5, 6). This leads to a problematic issue about text analysis, ways of gaining knowledge, and methods. Sometimes scholars claim that they use a correct or even concrete analysis, yet in the social field there is no one complete theory that owns the "Truth". Using the term "scientific method" sometimes misleads the reader as well as researchers, especially when the Western-trained scholars use such terms while studying what they call the Third World. In this post-modern time, most philosophers of science and researchers today, as Eichelberger (1989) says, "are well aware that you can never prove a particular theory or model is true. All you can do is obtain information that supports, or fails to support, the applicability of a specific theory or model in a particular situation" (p. xx).

The Orientalists focus on minor or odd events and then present them as being important subjects to the study of Islam. They like to make

elaborate studies about Muᶜtazilite rationalists, Jihad (holy war) as a sixth pillar of Islam, Sufi symbolism, al-Ḥallāj and the unIslamic thoughts of Ibn ᶜArabī. They presented these subjects as important issues and as an introduction to Islam (see Denny, 1994).

It is only in the West that one can find al-Ḥallāj, who was killed for his blasphemy, to be a great martyr (Brosse, 1991, p. 76) and great mystic (Campbell, 1993, p. 149). Again it is in the West where one finds a man attacking and discrediting the Qurᵓān or the Prophet's life, and he is considered a distinguished Muslim scholar (Morey, 1992, p. 108) or even a great reformer. It is common in the Occidental literature to recognize the phenomenon of focusing on heresy as they present Islam.

Many Western writers deal with Islam, as Charles says, "by taking the extremes to be the norm" (quoted in The Times, 1993, p. 19). Maududi (1986) says whenever there is a scope for two interpretations of anything about Islam, the usual course for Orientalists is "to try their level best to give the worst meaning to it and to adopt the darkest possible view" (p. vii). Some of the Western writers like to choose what they want, not what really exists. Artists in the West "visited the Middle East and North Africa and depicted what they saw or imagined, sometimes in a rather romantic and extravagant manner, sometimes even pornographic" (Lewis, 1993a, p. 101).

Reviewing the work of Morey (1992), one can find how the West continues to study the Prophet of Islam in a denigrated manner. Dr. Morey is the executive director of Research and Education Foundation In Newport, PA. Morey is an internationally recognized scholar in the field of theology. He scornfully dismisses Islam as Arab racism (p. 22). Morey claims that Western scholars apply "scientific standards to search for truth

(p. 8). Thus, as a Western scholar, he supports his findings by the following words: Careful scientific scrutiny (p. 11), according to Middle East scholars (p. 72), historical facts (p. 74) and solid overwhelming archeological evidence (p. 218). For him part of Islamic law is barbaric (p. 32), the woman's veil is cultural imperialism (p. 28), Islam has an oppressive nature (p. 28) and "violence is still an attribute of Islamic societies (p. 38)." Islam for Morey "is nothing more than a revival of the ancient moon god cult (p. 218)." These ideas have been presented as if they are absolute facts by a contemporary American scholar in the field of theology. Muslims "must" believe such facts as Morey claims (pp.45, 104).

In his biography of Muḥammad, he writes about Muḥammad's mother by saying she was of an excitable nature and "often claimed that she was visited by spirits, or jinns" (p. 71). He mentioned that some scholars suggest "that perhaps Muḥammad's early visions were the result of the combination of epileptic seizures and an overactive imagination" (p. 71). About Muḥammad's major weaknesses, he says "the first was greed" (p. 84) and his greatest weakness, as Morey claims, was women. Muḥammad, as Morey advocates was "involved in many acts which must be deemed as immoral and unjust" (p. 98). This insulting study confirms the ideas of Montgomery Watt (1972) who notes:

> None of the great figures of history is so poorly appreciated in the West as Muḥammad. Western writers have mostly been prone to believe the worst of Muḥammad, and, wherever an objectionable interpretation of an act seemed plausible, have tended to accept it as fact (p. 52).

Some recent non-Muslim writers reject the Western idea that accuses the Prophet of sensuality and they mention that most of

Muḥammad's marriages had political and social motives (Esposito, 1991, p. 18; Parrinder, 1987, pp. 86, 87). Parrinder (1976a), a British author argues that:

> No great religious figure has been so maligned as Muḥammad. Attacked in the past as a heretic, an impostor, or a sensualist, it is still possible to find him referred to in otherwise academic writings as "the false prophet." A modern German writer accuses Muḥammad of sensuality, surrounding himself with young women. This man was not married until he was twenty-five years of age, then he and his wife lived in happiness and fidelity for twenty-four years, until her death when he was forty-nine. Only between the age of fifty and his death at sixty-two did Muḥammad take other wives, only one of whom was a virgin, and most of them were taken for dynastic and political reasons (p. 121).

It was Carlyle (1993), the British historian and essayist, who struggled in the last century to correct these historical errors by saying that it is time to dismiss such an untenable hypothesis about Muḥammad. Furthermore, he says "the lies, which well-meaning zeal has heaped round this man, are disgraceful to ourselves only" (p. 38).

The West also stereotyped Islam as a religion spread by the sword. On the contrary, some Western writers seem to reject this old Western myth. Zeep says, "the historical reality is that the expansion of Islam was usually by persuasion and not by military power" (quoted in Ally, 1995, p.7). Today, Islam is one of fastest growing religions worldwide, which makes Ally (1995), a Muslim writer, say "What explains this phenomenon? Who is forcing anyone today to become Muslims? Muslims are not engaged in active preaching in any noticeable degree" (p. 6). He means that the nature of Islam is not military power. It is one important reason for expansion of Islam both in the past and today. People, as Ally says, "are voluntarily coming into Islam because they find

that Islam makes sense" (p. 6). In his introduction, Esposito (1991), from Georgetown University, states that "Islam developed a spiritual path whose law, ethics, theology, and mysticism have made it one of the fastest growing religions both in the past and today."

Some Western writers admit openly that the West "has never really known Islam. Ever since they watched it appear on the world stage, Christians never ceased to insult and slander it in order to find justifications for waging war on it" (Pasquier, 1994, pp. 5, 6). In the past, as Esposito (1991) says, "Christian fears were fully realized as Islam became a world power and civilization while Christianity staggered and stagnated in its Dark Ages" (p.59). Today, many Western writers might swallow "the old medieval prejudice" (Armstrong, 1992; see Ahmad, 1986, p. 18). In the end of her book Muhammad, A Biography of the Prophet, Karen Armstrong (1992) says, "If Muslims need to understand our Western traditions and institutions more thoroughly today, we in the West need to divest ourselves of some of our old prejudice" (p. 266).

Orientalism could be for many Eastern thinkers a form of corruption. The West translates the Qurʾān not to understand its message, but to attack it. As Sale clearly writes about the vision and mission of studying Islamic texts in the West, "The Protestants alone are able to attack the Qurʾān with success; and for them, I trust, Providence has reserved the glory of its overthrow" (A Comprehensive Commentary on the Quran, 1975, Sale's Preface; see Arberry, 1955, pp. 10-11).

Orientalism, as Hourani (1991) points out, has become suspected in the last few years (p.62). The work of Orientalists misunderstood the Muslim Orient out of prejudice, as Hourani mentions. The Western work "has been too closely linked with the political interests of their countries"

(Hourani, 1991, p. 63; see al-jundī, 1983, p. 142; al-Ṭuryḥī, 1996, p. 231; Weld, 1993, p. 35).

Generally, Orientalism failed to present Islam in its complete reality. The myth of the Islamic threat, ignorance, systematic denigration, and other factors all played a major role in the negative misre-presentation. Said (1995) believes that both scholars and journalists in the West are responsible for this confusion (p. 52).

Not surprisingly, many Americans tend to stereotype Muslims as "uncivilized, unwashed, barbaric and irrational people. . . ." (Nixon, 1992, p. 184) It is worthwhile here to confirm the fact that Americans' perceptions of Islam and the Arab world would be better if they succeeded to understand their own minorities better (Siam, 1995, p. 142).

As a result of all this corruption and misrepresentation, Islamic contributions to human civilization are still unknown to most people.

> The rise and decline of Islamic civilization is one of the major phenomena of history. For five centuries, from 700 to 1200, Islam led the world in power, order, and extent of government, in refinement of manners, in standards of living, in humane legislation and religious toleration, in literature, scholarship, science, medicine, and philosophy (Durant, 1950, p. 341, see Braudel, 1993, p. 73).

Constantly, in the literature of the history of education, it is hard to find the contribution of Muslim educators being noted. As the great philosopher John Dewey (1993) illustrates, "(We) usually overlook (the) indebtedness of Christian civilization to Moḥammedan civilization, (which was) greatly in advance" (p. 105). The Orientalists cannot be fruitful if the West thinks that the war with communism is to be replaced by a war between the West and the Muslims (Esposito, 1992, p. 3). Orientalists'

works can be fruitful if their approaches are not biased and prejudiced as Abbott (1967, vol. 2, p. 83) and Ahmad (1986, p. 61) mentioned.

Al-Jaralla (1996a) explains the problem of the method of many Western studies, to say:

> The problem of many Western scholars in dealing with Islam and its heritage is not (merely) their lack of reliance upon sources considered authentic by the Muslims, or their lack of adherence to standards of scholarship identified by their own scholars. Rather, you find them arriving at "incontrovertible" conclusions which become established realities in their studies, based upon baseless or weak reports or sources which cannot be relied upon to prove their contentions. At the same time, reports from the likes of Ṣaḥiḥ Al-Bukhari are rejected, and sources which are trustworthy are avoided (p. 3).

Al-Jaralla (1996 b) attended the twenty-ninth annual conference of the Middle East Studies Association. As a Muslim observer, he found that many of their programs are devoted to instilling doubts about Islam. The conference, as al-Jaralla argues, was not a medium for understanding Islam according to accepted Muslim standards of scholarship (p. p3).

Thus, according to all these critics, Orientalism might be viewed as a way of domination, not sharing knowledge. It is a form of intellectual confrontation, not a contributive effort.

Orientalists and the authenticity of Ḥadīth

Swartz (1995) says, "Serious questions, however, have been raised regarding the historical authenticity of the Ḥadīth" (p. 479). Even though most Orientalists are very doubtful about early Ḥadīth, there is no one clear theory with which all or even most of them agree. Still in the

West, much dispute, controversy and even conflicting views continue to be presented in this debate. Patricia Crone (1987) says " for practical purposes it is impossible to prove a certain tradition authentic (with a very few exceptions), and it is often impossible to prove it inauthentic too" (p. 31).

Indeed, many studies have been done on both the "matn" of Ḥadīth, which is the text, and the "isnād", which is the chain of transmitters. Yet for many Orientalists, "The isnād is always a design to make the tradition look authentic, and going into the question of whether or not the isnād is really authentic seems futile" (Rubin, 1995, p. 234). Thus, some Muslims believe that this Western view on the Ḥadīth is the most insidious attack on Islam (see al-Sibai, 1993, pp. 10-11; Nadwi, S. 1992, p.76). This is not to say that all of the Islamic researchers reject the views of the Orientalists. However, there are a few Muslim writers who do not have confidence in the authenticity of much of Prophetic Ḥadīth such as Bucaille (1979, p. 244) and Haykal (1995, p. lxxxii). Considerable work has been done by Western scholars on early Ḥadīth taking the opposite side. They have provided us with many scholarly treatises refuting and rejecting the traditional doubts about early Ḥadīth that have been held in the West. This trend in the West seems to be stronger with the work of Abbott (1967) and, very recently, with the studies of Motzki (1991). Some Orientalists are in the middle because they believe that at least part of Ḥadīth possibly comes from the age of the Prophet. Power (1986) put the monograph of Juynboll (1969, 1982) in this category and he calls it a "middle position" (p. 6), but Lang (1994) does not agree with this conclusion and he sees Juynboll's position as belonging to the Goldziher-Schacht school (pp.100, 111). These three

scholars, in the end have no belief in terms of the authenticity of Prophetic Aḥādīth. For Juynboll, (1982) "Even if an isnād seems sound by the most severe standards, it is still possible that is was forged in its entirety" (p. 174). This statement more likely indicates that he belongs to the school that discredits the authenticity of Aḥādīth.

In order to understand and present both theories, those who accept and reject the authenticity of Ḥadīth, the forth coming discussion will explore this debate. Four Western scholars have been chosen to be presented in order to understand the various views of Orientalists on Ḥadīth literature.

(1) Ignaz Goldziher (1850-1921)

"The first comprehensive and systematic Western study of ḥadīth was prepared by Ignaz Goldziher" (The Encyclopedia of Religion, 1987, vol. 6, p. 147). It is very hard to find Western scholarly studies on Islam and early Ḥadīth without referring to or presenting Goldziher's views. Many believe that he is the founder and the father of modern Orientalism (Pryce-Jones, 1991, p. 150), as a branch of the study of Ḥadīth (Lewis, 1993a, p.144; Murad, 1981, p. 5). His theories on Islam have affected most Western thinkers and researchers. Some Eastern writers have also adopted his views on different aspects of Islamic studies. Al-Mawsūᶜah al-Arabiyyah al-Muyassarah (1965), Badawī (1984) and Ṣafwat (1996) confirm that Goldziher is the best of the Orientalists who understands Islam.

According to Goldziher's diary, he visited many Islamic countries and attended many lectures, especially in al-Azhar University in Cairo

(Patai, 1987, p. 153). His theory about Ḥadīth can be summarized in the following paragraph:

> It is not at all rare in the literature of traditions that sayings are ascribed to the Prophet which for a long time circulated in Islam under the authority of another name, so-called aḥadīth mawqūfa, i.e., sayings traced back to companions or even successors, were very easily transformed into a ḥadīth marfūᶜa, i.e., sayings traced back to the Prophet by simply adding without much scruple a few names at random which were necessary to complete the chain (Goldziher, 1971, vol. 2, p. 148).

Goldziher (1971) believed that some Companions might have written a few Aḥadīth, yet one cannot check or find strong evidence for this (vol. 2, p. 182). The Ḥadīth, from Goldziher's perspective, began to be made up and spread during al-Zuhri's lifetime (b. 670). He felt that political influences, always with other factors, shaped many Aḥadīth (vol. 2, p. 44).

Goldziher spoke about Ḥadīth as a means of edification and entertainment and he found that "many theologians were less strict with Ḥadīths which did not belong to the category of the law but offered pious tales, edifying maxims and ethical teachings in the name of the Prophet" (vol. 2, p. 153). His proof for this argument was what al-Nawawī said about passing weak Ḥadīth for moral purposes (vol. 2, p. 146).

<u>General comments on Goldziher's views:</u>

It seems that Goldziher took many facts that Muslim scholars wrote on particular issues and adopted them for general framework. Another point, one might observe while reading Goldziher's argument, is that he built his theory, sometimes, from a single sentence taken from a scholar, without reviewing the original work of the scholar.

He mentioned that most Aḥādīth were forged simply by putting the name of the Prophet at the end of the Ḥadīth's chain, which may be true in cases of weak Aḥādīth. However Muslim scholars already discovered and explained these weak Aḥādīth in most of their writings.

Goldziher accepts from history and Muslim sources things that support his views and rejects those things that do not. He accepts that al-Zuhrī was the first and the official person who began to write or collect Ḥadīth in written form, but he rejects all historical evidence about how accurate and pious this man was. In general, he painted a picture that is too dark of early Muslim scholars and used questionable procedures to paint those pictures. For instance, Goldziher accepted some reports on the Damascus dynasty that were circulated by their political enemies without questioning (Burton, 1994, p. 148). With regard to Ḥadīth and stories or Ḥadīth and entertainment, he relied on what al-Nawawī said about passing weak Ḥadīth for moral purposes. He cited this opinion without checking al-Nawawī's works to understand his statement.

Al-Nawawī, and many scholars, when they speak about weak Ḥadīth, are careful to set many conditions. One of these is to make a clear distinction between authentic Ḥadīth and weak ones (al-Nawawī, n.d., p. 63). This method allows them to take advantage of the best from some of the weak Ḥadīth but with the condition that it is not recorded or reported as the real word of the Prophet. One needs to mention the status of the Ḥadīth before delivering it. By reviewing al-Nawawī's books one can find that, in reality, he used authentic Prophetic stories and he eschewed and avoided weak stories that are famous in Ḥadith literature.

Goldziher mentioned the fact that there are many ways in which a Ḥadīth can be fabricated, as Muslim scholars have been saying for a

long time. What he did not mention in depth was the complementary fact that Muslim scholars developed a systematic method of sifting Ḥadīth literature. He did not give credit to the many historical proofs of the procedures that have been developed in order to protect and preserve authentic Aḥādīth from the early times of Islamic history.

Finally, many Orientalists believe that Goldziher was too skeptical and he generalized too quickly from a single observation (Motzki, 1991, p. 1).

(2) Joseph Schacht (1902-1969)

Another important figure in Islamic Oriental literature is the German scholar, Joseph Schacht. In his book, The Origins of Muḥammadan Jurisprudence (1950), he concludes that traditions from companions and successors are earlier than those from the Prophet (p. 3). Unquestionably, Schacht was the best of the Orientalists who elaborated on Goldziher's theory on Ḥadīth. He then expanded on Goldziher's work to say:

> A great many traditions in the classical and other collection were put into circulation only after Shafiʿi's time [d. 819] ; the first considerable body of legal traditions from the Prophet originated towards the middle of the second century, in opposition to slightly earlier traditions from companions and other authorities, and to the living tradition of the ancient schools of law. Traditions from Companions and other authorities underwent the same process of growth, and are to be considered in the same light, as traditions from the Prophet; the study of *isnāds* often enables us to date traditions; the *isnāds* show a tendency to grow backwards and to claim higher and higher authority until they arrive at the Prophet; the evidence of legal traditions carries us back to about the year 100 A.H. only; at that time Islamic legal thought started from late Umaiyad administrative and

> popular practice, which is still reflected in a number of traditions (Schacht, 1950, pp. 4-5).

For Schacht (1950), and many of his students, "It is common knowledge that *isnād* started from rudimentary beginnings and reached perfection in the classical collections of traditions in the second half of the third century A.H." (p. 163). He provides much evidence for his argument. Basically, he compares many chains of Aḥādīth and he finds these chains of transmitters were not completed in the second Islamic century but they were completed in the third Islamic period, as books showed.

> Although Schacht spoke mainly of legal ḥadīth, he was convinced that his findings held good for traditions "relating to history" as well. The hypothesis of the backwards growth of *isnad* has been taken up without much hesitation by more recent Islamicists (including myself), who have elaborated on Schacht's theories. Even scholars who do not consider themselves members of the Schachtian school have adopted it (Rubin, 1995, p. 235).

Thus, many modern researchers agree that

> Goldziher, Schacht, and others have convincingly shown that most-and perhaps all-of the traditions (ḥadīth) were forgeries put into circulation in the first few Muslim centuries. If this fact is allowed, then the entire foundation of Islamic law is seen to be very shaky indeed. The whole of Islamic law is but a fantastic creation found on forgeries and pious fictions (Ibn Warraq, 1995, p. 170).

General comments on Schacht's views

What has been said about Goldziher can, in general, also serve here, even though the radical skepticisim of Schacht carries Goldziher's perceptions to an extreme (Graham, 1993, p. 509). In addition, one needs to be aware that Schacht focuses on the idea that al-Shafiʿī was

the first Muslim scholar to define Sunnah (Prophetic teaching) as the model behavior of the Prophet. But although al-Shafiʿī might be the first scholar who wrote about Sunnah in a systematic and comprehensive way, this does not mean that people and scholars before him did not focus on this concept. What al-Shafiʿī did was to put things straight in one book, and to elaborate and support the idea of imitating the Prophet as a model by providing many Qurʾānic evidences. Esposito (1982) says "Prophetic *Sunnah* served as the point of reference for the Companions, and through their example, for the Successors who followed. The admissibility of an action was judged in the light of the Prophetic" found in the *Sunnah* values (p. 115).

One of the major weaknesses detectable in the work of Schacht is the failure to take an adequate account of the Qurʾān and its explanations in the early Islamic period (Burton, 1994, p. 149). Moreover, the later fabrication of Ḥadīth is not at all a sign or evidence of the late appearance of emphasis on the Sunnah (Graham, 1977, p. 12) as Schacht suggests by the "misperception of the basis of Muslim traditionalism, which is the conviction of the sacred nature of the Prophetic revelatory event" (Graham, 1977, p. 12).

Clearly, Schacht's focus was on studying the work of schools of law, especially in the second half century of Islam. The problem of Orientalists, in studying Islam, is related to their method. They "have not chosen the right field for the study of isnād. The writing of Abū Yusuf and Shafiʿī clearly shows the inadequacy of law books for the study of isnāds" (Azami, 1992a, p. 247).

Schacht found that some Aḥadīth that Al-Shafiʿī presented were not originally written as they later appear in Ḥadīth books. He found that

the Ḥadīth in the second century of Islam have had additional transmitters added to them, which means that these Aḥādīth are fabricated.

It seems quite clear that Schacht has not paid any attention to the differing nature of books of Ḥadīth and books of law. Books of Ḥadīth are concerned with presenting the full and complete status of each Ḥadīth as a document, whereas the law books use parts of the Ḥadīth, where appropriate, just to support their points. "The researches of the orientalists are based on the investigation of the wrong materials, consequently producing wrong results" (Azami, 1994, p. 51; see al-Azami, 1985, p. 183).

Schacht's excessive theory, that all Prophetic reports are fake, goes back prior to 722 A.D., as a theory, completely dismisses the Muslim science of Ḥadīth criticism and verification as Esposito (1991) argues (p. 82). He (1987) says, "The wholesale inaccuracy that Schacht and those who follow him in this matter attribute to this Muslim science is unjustified" (p. 113). Esposito (1982) maintains:

> To state that no tradition goes back prior to 722 creates an unwarranted vacuum in Islamic history. To consider all *ḥadīth* apocryphal until they are proven otherwise is to reverse the burden of proof. Rather, a *ḥadīth* accepted for over ten centuries should stand until proven otherwise. This sifting process, while more laborious than Schacht's approach, seems sounder (p. 113).

Moreover, Esposito mentions that such a theory "does violence to the deep ingrained sense of tradition [attributed to the Prophet] in Arab culture, which all scholars, Muslim and non-Muslim, have acknowledged" (p. 82).

> The Arabs, who memorized and handed down the poetry of their poets, sayings of their soothsayers and statements of their judges and tribal leaders, cannot be expected to fail to notice and narrate the deeds and sayings of one whom they acknowledged as the Prophet of God (Rahman, 1962, p. 4).

With regard to the science of the Ḥadīth some Muslim researchers such as al-Fārūqī and al-Fārūqī (1986) conclude "there is no doubt that the methodological sciences of Islam were among their greatest achievements. Nor can there be any doubt that the religion of Islam, because of these sciences, achieved for itself the most authentic status among the religions of the world (p. 263)." In his epilogue, Burton (1994) likewise concludes his treatment of Ḥadīth with this rigorous comment:

> They [Muslims] denounce the studies of Goldziher and Schacht as alien and dismiss them as "unscientific in method" and based on nothing more than mere spite and jealousy of Islam which, alone of all the major religions, has been blessed with the institution of the *isnād*. Some Western scholars, too, have expressed reservations about the hypotheses of Goldziher and Schacht (p. 181).

"Burton continues the Western tradition of critical analysis but argues that the conclusions of Goldziher and Schacht, though still of value, are open to serious criticism and require modification" (Swartz, 1995, p. 479).

(3) Nabia Abbott (1897-1981)

The American scholar and the distinguished papyrologist (Directory of American Scholars, 1978, vol. 1, p. 1; Irwin, 1994, p. 51), Nabia Abbott, as well as many researchers in the West and East, believes that the approach used by Orientalists in studying the Islamic tradition has been prejudiced and biased (vol. 2, p. 83). She collected

some Arabic papyrus documents concerning Ḥadīth in the early period of Islam. "Abbott set herself the laborious task of identifying, transcribing and translating" (Siddiqi, 1993, p. 131). She and other scholars "have opened new perspectives by their investigation of recently discovered material" (The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World, vol. 2, p. 85).

Unlike her many Western fellows, Abbott (1967) found that the Prophetic sayings are unquestionably from early Islam. She wrote in her findings:

> Analysis of the content and the chains of transmission of the traditions of the documents and of their available parallels in the standard collections, supplemented by the results of an extensive study of the sources on the Sciences of Tradition, *ulūm al-ḥadīth*, lead me to conclude that oral and written transmission went hand in hand almost from the start, that the traditions of Muḥammad as transmitted by his Companions and their successors were, as a rule, scrupulously scrutinized at each step of the transmission, and that the so-called phenomenal growth of Tradition in the second and third centuries of Islām was not primarily growth of content, so far as the ḥadīth of Muḥammad and the *ḥadīth* of the Companions are concerned, but represent largely the progressive increase of parallel and multiple chains of transmission (vol. 2, p. 2).

It is clear that she rejected Goldziher's theory, especially by focusing on documents of early Islam papyrus, which she found very substantial (Siddiqi, 1993, 132). It seems that Abbott, in the next to the last sentence, is responding to Schacht's theory and rejecting it based on her study.

Powers (1986) says in 1967, Fuat Sezgin published his study on Prophetic Ḥadīth. Like Abbott, in both her method and findings, he concluded that Ḥadīth are well documented. Powers (1986) says:

> On the basis of examination of extant manuscripts, together with an analysis of the formulas used by the transmitters of ḥadith, he [Sezgin] argues that the process of recording ḥadīth began during the lifetime of Muḥammad and continued in an uninterrupted fashion until the emergence of the great ḥadīth collections of the third/ninth century (p. 5).

(4) Harold Motzki

Most recently, "attempts at refuting Schacht and at proving the authenticity of traditions from Companions, and even from the Prophet himself, have been made in various studies of Harold Motzki" (Rubin, 1995, p. 237). The important work of Motzki came to seek proofs "that authentic ḥadīth can be found that date to earlier than 100 A.H., which Schacht had laid down as the earliest limit" (Bonner, 1994, p. 343).

In his study of the *Muṣannaf of ᶜAbd al-Razzāq al-Ṣanᶜānī,* Motzki (1991; see Schneider, 1994, p. 684) finds that there are several formal features of ᶜAbd al-Razzāq's presentation of transmissions that indicate that they are authentic. "One of those is the fact that he [ᶜAbd al-Razzāq] is sometimes uncertain about the precise origin of a tradition and that he admits this openly" (1991, p. 4). He views this particular book of Ḥadīth as a source of authentic Aḥādīth of the first century of Islam.

Based upon his studies on Ḥadīth, Motzki (1991) concludes that the Muslims' method of preserving Ḥadīth is generally accurate. He concludes his study by this finding on the historical value of Prophetic texts by stating:

> While studying the *Musannaf* of ᶜAbd al-Razzāq, I came to the conclusion that the theory championed by Goldziher, Schach, and, in footsteps, many others- myself included- which in general, rejects Ḥadīth literature as a historically reliable source for the first century A.H, deprives the historical study of early Islam of an important and useful

> type of source. It goes without saying that this material cannot be regarded as completely truthful. This even the Muslims themselves did not claim. Their method of sifting through the material by means of the critical study of the transmitters was a quite workable method of examination that may be of some use even for the modern historian, but it was not entirely satisfactory and could not avoid misinterpretation (p. 21).

It is an understandable fact that Muslim scholars do not claim that all Aḥādīth are authentic or that their method is totally perfect. However, the main point is centered around the fact that collecting Aḥādīth began in a systematic way very early, both orally and in writing. This great care in dealing with Ḥadīth literature enables scholars in the past and even today to check errors and discrepancies.

Conclusion about Orientalism and Islam

Orientalism is the study of Eastern religions and cultures by non Muslims, generally from a Western perspective. This growing movement can be viewed, in general, either as part of a cultural clash between civilizations or as a way to maintain an intellectual interchange.

This section was limited to the relationship between Islam and Orientalism. The study shows that researchers view Orientalism from two different perspectives. The first is based on the idea of order, function, appreciation, respect and contribution where Orientalists are seen, in general, as true researchers with pure motives for seeking knowledge in order to share it with others and contribute to it in the name of human science.

The second perspective from which one can view Orientalism is related to conflict, domination, imperialism, fanaticism, intolerance and

taking control over others. This study labels this view as one of confrontation, where Orientalism became a way to humiliate other cultures in the name of human science in an academic setting. It seems that both Orientalists and Muslim scholars need to build new approaches of openness and trust between each other.

There are some Western scholars who share the views of Muslims on the origin of early Ḥadīth. While many Orientalists have made contributions to the field of Islam and Ḥadīth literature, there are still many who are restrictively skeptical--have prejudged or even are biased toward the secular or Western views. It is impossible to understand another culture with a biased approach. The field needs researchers who can study areas of agreement. Moreover, for non-Muslims a better understanding, not more judgment, seems to be vital in order to study Islamic legacy in depth.

CHAPTER IV.

THREE PROPHETIC STORIES

Introduction

This chapter presents three Prophetic stories from the book, Riyāḍ al-Ṣālihīn (the Gardens of the Godly People), along with an exegesis of some particular elements in each story. These three authentic stories are highly recommended by Muslim scholars because they reflect central concepts of moral education. The subsequent chapter will focus on some central moral themes concerning humanity, society, and life, especially the most prominent concept in Islam: submission to the will of God in full trust. From an Islamic perspective, to be morally good means to know and follow God's dicta as revealed to Prophet Muḥammad.

Pure monotheism and complete obedience are two striking features of moral education in the Islamic view. The inward and outward actions of humans should be governed by the concept of submission. This central element of Islamic teaching forms humans' actions, organizes the social milieu, and gives meaning to life. According to such understanding, the Islamic message aims to create a harmonious relationship between a human and his Creator on the one hand, and humans and creation on the other. In teleological terms, Islam is a total way of life whose moral system provides guidance and precepts to

enable humans to understand the purpose of their creation and their moral function. Complete submission to the will of God is the way of fulfilling our humanity and the gateway to peace with ourselves, our community, the universe, and our Lord. The concept of submission is related strongly to humans' responsibility for their actions. The purpose of all Qurʾānic and Prophetic stories is to reinforce moral responsibility and encourage humans to engage with righteousness. All that, in one way or another, helps humans intellectually to locate themselves in this cosmos in terms of their mission in this life. Complete submission to the will of God in Islam goes beyond the simple message of worship and ritual. It instructs humans to live individually and collectively on one straight path of one eternal God.

This study will look at three Prophetic stories from this perspective. The intent of the study is to explore three stories narrated by Prophet Muḥammad which illustrate the Islamic outlook of humanity, society and life through teaching morality. The method of this study is a hermeneutic content analysis combined with logic of justification. Mainly, this method interprets texts by consolidating selected literature, while providing reasons to rationalize and justify the argument. However, this method of interpretation does not claim absolute infallibility.

"The Story of Sincerity"

> It is reported on the authority of ʻAbdullāh Bin al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allāh be pleased with him), that he heard the Messenger of Allāh (may the peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) as saying: When three persons of a people before you were on a journey, they were overtaken by a rain-storm and they took refuge in a cave. A rock slithered and blocked the exit from the cave.

One of the three persons said: "Recall to your mind the virtuous actions which were done by you sincerely for Allāh. Beseech Allāh for deliverance (from the calamity) by virtue of some righteous act (He may remove it)." Thereupon one of them said: "My parents were very old and I used to offer them milk before my children and the other members of my family. One day I went far away in quest of green trees and could not come back in time till my parents had gone to sleep. When I milked as usual and brought milk to them, they had fallen asleep. I hated to disturb them and also disliked to give milk to my children to drink before them (my parents). My children were crying out of hunger at my feet but I awaited their [my parents'] wakening till it dawned (This state of affairs lasted till morning). When they got up they drank milk. O' Lord! You know that if I had done so to seek your pleasure then deliver out us of the distress imposed upon us by this stone (rock)." Thereupon the stone moved a little but not sufficient enough to serve the purpose of their passage.

The other said: "O' Lord! I had a cousin whom I loved with the utmost love of men for women. I tried to seduce her but she refused. Consequently in a year of famine, she approached me. I gave her one hundred and twenty dinars on the condition that she would yield herself to me. She agreed and when we got together (for sexual intercourse) she said : 'O' servant of Allāh! Fear Allāh and do not open the seal unlawfully.' Thereafter I drew away from her in spite of the fact that I loved her most passionately; and I let her keep the money I had given her. O' Allāh! You know if I had done so to seek Your pleasure, then remove the distress in which we are suffering." Again the stone moved aside a bit but they were unable to get out.

The third said: "Lord! I hired the service of some laborers and paid them wages but one of them departed without taking what was due to him. I invested it in business and the business prospered greatly. After a long time, he came to me and said: 'O' servant of Allah! Pay me my dues.' I said: 'All that you see is yours, camels, cattle, goats and slaves.' He said: 'O' servant of Allāh! Do not cut jokes with me.' I assured him that I was not joking. So he took all things and went away. He spared nothing. Lord! If I did so seeking Your pleasure, then relieve us of our distress." The stone slipped aside and they got out walking freely. (Agreed upon [recorded by al-Bukhārī & Muslim]). (Al-Nawawī, 1985, vol. 1, pp. 7-8).

Particular Elements of the Story

(1) The Narrator

"The Story of Sincerity" begins with the following paragraph: "It is reported on the authority of 'Abdullāh Bin ᶜUmar Bin al-Khattāb that he heard the Prophet saying: When three persons of a people before you were on a journey. . . ."'Abdullāh Bin (son of) ᶜUmar Bin (son of) al-Khaṭṭāb (b. 612-d. 692) is the oldest son of ᶜUmar who was the second Caliph in Islamic history. Michael Hart (1992) classifies ᶜUmar as a veteran leader in a list of influential persons in world history. 'Abdullāh "led a humble and a pious life, and he was disinterested in leadership, as well as he was indifferent to earthly ranks" (al-Aṣfahānī, 1995, p. 315). ᶜAbdulāh is the narrator of almost 2630 Aḥādīth. By that he becomes one of the remarkable narrators of Prophetic Ḥadīth and one of the most erudite personalities of Islam. ᵓAbd Allāh bin ᵓUmar was personally known as a person of immaculate purity and devotion because he used to imitate the Prophet and apply his teaching as much he could.

He is esteemed as one of the most trustworthy authorities on the earliest history of Islam because "through his intimate intercourse with Muḥammed and many other influential men of that period he had acquired an exact knowledge of all the important factors of that period" (First Encyclopaedia of Islam, 1987, vol. 1, p. 29). As a transmitter of Prophetic legacy, he "has been regarded as the most scrupulous in neither adding to nor omitting anything from the *ḥadīths* narrated by him" (The Encyclopaedia of Islam, 1960, vol. 1, p. 54).

(2) The Three Persons

According to other Aḥādīth, some scholars confirm that the three persons in "The Story of Sincerity" are from Banī Isrāʾīl (al-ʿAynī, n.d., vol. 16, p. 51). Banī Isrāʾīl, or the children of Israel, is an Arabic term "used in the Qurʾān and in Islamic literature for the Jewish people" (Donzel, 1994, p. 177). There are many stories in Islamic literature originally borrowed from Jewish sources. The Muslim position with regard to such narratives has been explained by Ibn Taymiyyah (1993) who says:

> Israelite *ḥadeeth*, however, are not to be believed; they can only be used as supporting evidence. For, there are three kinds of them: One which we can regard as true: if they are supported by our *aḥādeeth*; the second which we can regard as false: if they are contradicted by our *aḥādeeth*; and the third which fall neither in this category nor in that, because our sources are silent about them. We shall neither believe them nor disbelieve them. They may be quoted as the *ḥadeeth* permits (p. 56; see Ibn Kathīr, 1994, vol. 1. p. 20).

(3) The Story Title

Reviewing the literature related to Prophetic stories, one finds that there are no specific standard titles for each story because the Prophet himself did not give them titles. Even today, storytellers have been advised that "it is not always necessary to give title for a story" (Breneman & Breneman, 1985, p. 88). Nevertheless, the majority of Ḥadīth commentators who interpret or rewrite "The Story of Sincerity" do give the tale a title but there is no unanimous title. Some examples are: "The Companion of the Cave" (Malek, 1990, p. 33), "The Cave and the Rock" (Azzeer, 1985, p. 532), and "The Story of the Three Persons Who Went into the Cave" (Salmān, 1991, p. 139). Unlike others, Jarrār (1992) chooses a unique title in his work, not by selecting some words from the

text but by giving the story a title according to his perception of its central theme. He calls the story "New Born" (p. 35), that is to say, the story of three persons who were like newborns after they left the cave. However, the present study will refer to the story as "Sincerity" because this can be seen as its main spiritual moral point.

(4) Numerical Elements

At the opening of the story, the number of principal characters is given as three. Although in some literatures the number three has great symbolic significance, such significance is not attached to numbers in the Ḥadīth literature. Using numbers in the beginning of a tale many times helps the narrator capture the attention of listeners. Words such as journey, rain-storm and cave used in the story create an attractive foreward.

The story contains three flashbacks. A good flashback, as Rule and Wheeler (1993) say, "delivers only essential information that informs the present action of the story, that pushes the story ahead, and that adds to the main character's burden" (p. 162). For storytellers, "flashbacks can be as short as a sentence or they can include dramatic scenes with dialogue, time stretches, or summaries. They can include commentary on characters and events, or offer a straightforward account of what happened" (Rule & Wheeler, 1993, p. 163).

(5) Historical Elements

What are the men's names? Where did the event take place? Many such historical questions can be asked while attempting to interpret this Prophetic story and others. Even reviewing the hermeneutic work of

Ḥadīth literature, the researchers do not have any hints of answers to such questions. This phenomenon of dismissing names, locations, and specific times can be observed in many Qurʿānic narratives. The implication is that moral lessons and not historical details are the major concern of Qurʾānic and Prophetic preaching. Here, the audience needs to concentrate unconsciously on moral connotations and righteous lessons, rather than observing physical attributes of figures and heroes. In this atmosphere heroes become tools and the wisdom of the story is the paramount goal.

Here the Prophetic tale definitely speaks about people who lived in the past and the main purpose is to learn from their experiences. The Qurʾān emphasizes that in such sentences as: "Relate the story; perchance they may reflect" (S.7 A.176).
"Indeed in their stories, there is a lesson for men of understanding" (S.12 A.111; see al-Hilālī & Khān, 1993, p. 358). Consulting previous human experiences is a productive avenue for human learning, regardless of the boundaries of time, barriers of place, or cultural differences.

(6) The Intention

"The stone slipped aside and they got out walking freely"; the Prophet ends his narrative with this statement. "The ending resolves the conflict, releases the tension, and leaves the listener feeling satisfied" (Baker & Greene, 1987, p. 30).

According to the "Story of Sincerity", it is clear that Prophet Muḥammad does not point out the moral lessons. He would rather let every listener conclude what are supposed to be both worthy and reprehensible behaviors. The Carnegie Library in Pittsburgh

recommends storytellers to "avoid moralizing, for if a story is good enough to tell it will do its own teaching" (quoted in St. John, 1915, p. 38). However, some researchers in moral education might assert the opposite. It might be helpful for narrators to draw out moral lessons and remind the audiences of their importance (Smith & Habenicht, 1986, pp. 543, 544).

"The Story of the Leprous, Bald, and Blind"

> It is reported on the authority of Abū Huraira (Allāh be pleased with him) that he heard the Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allāh be upon him) saying: "There were three men among the Banī Isrā'īl, one leprous, one bald and one blind, whom Allāh wished to test. He therefore, sent to them an angel who came to the leper and asked him what he would like best and he replied: 'A good colour, a good skin and to be rid of what makes me loathsome to people.' Thereupon he touched him and his loathsomeness vanished and he was given a good colour and a good skin. He, then, asked what property he would like best and he replied that he would like camels-or perhaps he said cattle, for Ishaq (one of the transmitters of the tradition) was uncertain, but either the leper or the bald man said: Camels and the other said: Cattle. He was given a she-camel ten months young. The angel expressed the wish that Allāh's blessing might accompany it.
>
> He then went to the bald man and asked him what he would like best and he replied: "Good hair and to be rid of what makes me loathsome to people." Thereupon he touched him and it departed from him and he was given good hair. He then asked: What property he would like best? He replied that he would like cattle, so he was given a pregnant cow. The angel expressed the wish that Allāh's blessing might accompany it. He then went to the blind man and asked him what he would like best, and he replied: "Allāh should restore my sight to me so that I may see people." Thereupon he touched him and Allāh restored his sight to him. He then asked what property he would like best and replied that he would like sheep, so he was given a pregnant ewe. Flocks and herds were produced for the

three men, the one having a wadi with camels, the second one with sheep.

Then the angel came to the one who had been a leper in the form and appearance of a leper and said: "I am a poor man whose resources are exhausted in my journey, and my only means of arriving at my destination are dependent on Allāh and then on you, so I ask you, by Him, Who gave you the good colour, the good skin and the property, for a camel by which I may get to the end of my journey," but he replied: "I have many dues to pay." He then said: "I seem to recognize you. Were you not a leper whom people found loathsome and a poor man to whom Allāh gave property?" He replied: "I became heir to this property as one great in dignity from one great in dignity." Then he said: "If you are telling a lie, may Allāh return you to your former condition."

He went to the one who had been bald in the form of a bald man and said the same as he had said to the other and received a similar reply. So he said: "If you are telling a lie, may Allāh return you to your former condition."

He then went to the one who had been a blind man and said: "I am a poor man and a traveller whose resources are exhausted in my journey, and my only means of arriving at my destination are dependent on Allāh and then on you, so I ask you, by Him, Who restored your eye-sight, for a sheep by which I may get to the end of my journey." He replied: "In fact I was blind. Allāh restored my eye-sight, so take what you wish and leave what you wish. I swear by Allah that I shall not importune you today for anything you take, as I give it for Allāh's sake." He said: "Keep your property, for you have all simply been put to a test, and Allāh is pleased with you and displeased with both of the Companions." (Agreed upon [recorded by al-Bukhārī & Muslim]). (Al-Nawawī, 1985, vol. 1, pp. 57-59).

Particular Elements of the Story

(1) The Narrator

"The Story of the Leprous, Bald and, Blind" begins with this short but captivating introduction: "It is reported on the authority of Abū Huraira (Allāh be pleased with him) that he heard the Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allāh be upon him) saying: 'There were three men among

the Banī Isrā'īl, one leprous, one bald and one blind, whom Allāh wished to test.'"

Abū Huraira (d. 678) is a renown pious companion of the Prophet and a prolific narrator of Ḥadīth. His students who narrated or even wrote his Aḥādīth (Abdulḥmīd, 1987, p. 9) number around 750 honorable narrators according to the estimation of al-ᶜIzzī (1991, p. 174). In contrast to Muslim views, many Orientalists discredit this poineer Companion (see Ali, 1990, p. 61; Guillaume, 1966, p. 78). In this Western view point, Abū Huraira could be seen as a false creater of news not an honest narrator of reports. As mentioned in the First Encyclopaedia of Islam (1987), "Sprenger calls Abū Huraira the Extreme of pious humbug. At the same time we must take into account the fact that most of the sayings of which tradition makes him the originator were probably foisted on him at a later date" (vol. 1, p. 94). However, such encyclopedias of Islam, in general, present only Orientalist views and Islamic quotations that support their "facts" about Abū Huraira. The arguments of Muslim scholars of Ḥadīth are rarely presented in such European sources.

In the story we find this interrupted statement: "He replied that he would like camels-or perhaps he said cattle, for Ishaq (one of the transmitters of the tradition) was uncertain." The narrator, Isḥāq Bin ᶜAbdullāh (d. 132A.H./749 A.D.), is a reliable narrator of Ḥadīth literature as scholars in that field mention (al-Mizzī, 1988, vol. 2, p. 444). For Harold Motzki (1991), that hesitation of the narrator might be a sign that the story is authentic Ḥadīth as a source from the first century of Islam. His arguments for such phenomena rely on the fact that the narrator is uncertain about the precise origin of specific words in the text, as in the present story ("camels-or perhaps he said cattle") and that the narrator

admits this openly (p. 4). Unlike many of their Western fellows such as Goldziher (1971) and Schacht (1950), Harold Motzki (1991) and the American scholar Nabia Abbott (1967) found that the Prophetic sayings are definitely from early Islam.

About the Muslim method of sifting through the material by means of the critical study of the transmitters, Motzki (1991) says it "was a quite workable method of examination that may be of some use even for the modern historian, but it was not entirely satisfactory and could not avoid misinterpretation" (p. 21).

(2) The Story Title

The title, "The Story of the Leprous, Bald, and, Blind," takes its name from a few words of the beginning of the story. As noted earlier, the Prophet did not give titles to his stories, therefore most writers have suggested titles of their own. Some commenters of Ḥadīth, such as al-Khin, al-Bughā, Mistū, al-Shrbajī, and Luḍfī (1988), interpret the text of Prophetic stories without even suggesting a title.

(3) Numerical Elements

Back to the story. God wished to test the three persons among the children of Israel. As in the first story a number is mentioned at the beginning, in this case, three. Using numbers sometimes makes it easy for both the listener and narrator to follow the events in the story. Moreover, numbers in the introduction to tales give the impression that the storytellers have confidence to present their story in an organized manner. Whenever a person wants to give a speech, numbering the points or events he mentions in his introduction gives his audience a

sense of organization with ideas clearly presented in sequence from beginning through the conclusion. Speight (1970) calls Aḥādīth that begin with numbers "numerical sayings." A Prophetic example he gave is that the Prophet said "a Muslim's claim from his brother is fivefold: returning the salutation, visiting the sick, following the bier, saying amīn to the imām (prayer leader) and blessing (tashmīt) the one who sneezes" (p. 54). However, numerical sayings in the Prophetic stories seem to be used several times, especially the number three, as in the case of the three Prophetic stories in the present study.

(4) Historical Elements

The actual text of "The Story of the Leprous, Bald, and Blind" begins with these words: "There were three men among the Banī Isrā'īl, one leprous, one bald and one blind, whom Allāh wished to test." As mentioned ealier in connection with the story of "Sincerity", Banī Isrā'īl or the Children of Israel is an Arabic term "used in the Qur'ān and in Islamic literture for the Jewish people" (Donzel, 1994, p. 177). Al-Salmān (1991), a contemporary researcher, says that all Prophetic stories about the past have three main indications. First, the Prophetic stories confirm Prophet Muḥammad's prophecy that Allāh provides him such anecdotes in addition to what already have been revealed to him by Allāh in the Qur'ān. Secondly, stories of the past in Ḥadīth literature associate Muslim generations sympathetically with previous Abrahamic faithtful generations because all of them represent the nation of Islam. Thirdly, such Prophetic stories make it clear that it is permissible to narrate anecdotes of past societies because they contain many powerful moral lessons (p. 12).

In 1996 John Renard notes the relation between edification and ethics in the religious life of Muslims. He says

> Islam's vitality as a spiritual tradition depends much on the example of those who have walked the road before, individuals whose courage, conviction, and dedication have raised them to the status of models. These embodiments of the tradition's core values live on in the stories and visual images that have appealed to broad masses of Muslims across the globe for many centuries. Some figures deemed worthy of religiously heroic status--prophets, Friends of God, imams, and martyrs--have been enshrined in their final resting place and endure in classics of literature and art (p. 75).

It is true that every faithful Muslim recites *al-Fātiḥah* at least 17 times in his five daily prayers. In that short chapter of Qurʾān the Muslim asks Allāh by saying: "Show us the straight way; The way of those on whom Thou has bestowed Thy Grace" (S. 1, AA. 6-7). William Phipps (1996) says "this prayer of prayers emphasizes the benevolence of God, even though His wrath is acknowledged. The nature of God is associated with the 'path' along which believers walk, showing the relevance of theology to moral conduct" (p. 112).

The straight way of Godly people does not begin with Islamic history in the seventh century but actually goes back to Adam and Eve. From the Islamic point of view, Islam is the religion of all prophets and Muḥammad is the final Prophet who confirmed their monotheistic message. Therefore, Muslim educators look at the history of all prophets and their pious followers as part of, not separate from, Islam's rich inheritance. John Esposito (1991) clarifies this fundamental concept by saying that Prophet Muḥammad "was not the founder of Islam; he did not start a new religion. Like his prophetic predecessor, he came as a

religious reformer. Muḥammad maintained that he did not bring a new message from a new God but called people back to the one, true God" (p. 14).

The Story of "None Spoke in the Cradle but only Three"

> It has been narrated on the authority of Abū Huraira (Allāh be pleased with him) that he heard Allāh's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) as saying: None spoke in the cradle but only three persons, Jesus Christ son of Mary, the second one was a child in the story of Juraij. Juraij was a pious man. He had got constructed a temple and confined himself in that. One day his mother came to him as he was busy in prayer and she called him. He said: "my Lord, my mother is calling me while I am engaged in my Prayer (enlighten me as to which should I prefer)." He continued with the Prayer and his mother went away. She returned and she came on the next day and he was busy in prayer, and she said: "O' Juraij." And he said: "My Lord, my mother is calling me while I am engaged in Prayer," and he continued with the Prayer and she went back, and then on the third day she again came and her son was busy in Prayer and she said: "O' Juraij." And he said: "My Lord, my mother is calling me while I am engaged in my Prayer," and he continued with the Prayer. Thus, she said: "My Lord, don't give him death unless he has seen hardship and the face of the prostitutes."
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> The story of Juraij and that of his meditation and Prayer gained currency amongst Banū Isrā'īl. There was a prostitute who had been a beauty incarnate. She said to the people: "If you like I can allure him to evil and involve him in scandal. Thereafter she presented herself to him but he paid no heed to her. Then she came to a shepherd who lived near the temple and she offered herself to him and he had sexual intercourse with her and so she became pregnant and when she gave birth to a child she declared: This is from Juraij. So people came to Juraij and asked him to get down from his temple. They demolished the temple and began to beat him. Juraij said "what is the matter?" They said: "You have committed fornication with this prostitute and she has given birth to your child." He said: "Where is the child?" They brought the child and Juraij said: "Just leave me alone so that I may observe Prayer."

Then he observed Prayer and when he finished, he came to the child. He struck his stomach and asked the child: "O' boy, who is your father?" The child replied: "My father is such and such the shepherd." So the people turned towards Juraij, kissed him and touched him for seeking his blessing and said: "We shall construct your temple with gold." He said: "No, just rebuild it with mud as it had been," so they built it.

The third case is that of an infant who was being suckled by his mother. At this time a man passed by riding a fast and handsome horse and the rider was wearing fine clothes. The baby's mother said: "Allāh make my son like this man." The infant left his mother's breast and moving his face glanced at the man and said: "O Allāh, do not make me like this man." Then he turned to his mother's breast and resumed the suckling. Here the Holy Prophet demonstrated the suckling of the child by putting his forefinger into his mouth and sucking. Then Prophet Muḥammad continued: Then some people and a maid servant passed by and they were beating the maid servant, charging her for having committed adultery and theft; and in reply she was saying: "Sufficient for me is Allāh and an Excellent Guardian is He." The mother prayed: "O' Allāh, do not make my son like this maid servant." Thereupon the baby left suckling, looked upon the young woman and said: "Allāh, do make me like her."

Now a dialogue began between the mother and the child. She said: "A handsome person passed and I supplicated: 'Allāh, make my son like him,' but you said: 'O' Allāh do not make me like him.' Then some persons passed with a maid servant, whom they were beating accusing her of adultery and theft. I supplicated: 'O' Allāh, do not make my son like this maid servant,' but you said: 'O' Allāh, do make me like her.'" The boy replied "that man was a cruel person, so I contradicted you and said: 'Allāh, do not make me like him.' As to the girl, they said: 'you committed adultery'; but actually she had not. They charged her, 'you stole'; but she had not stole. I therefore, said: 'O' Allāh, make me like her.' (Recorded by al-Bukhārī & Muslim)." (Al-Nawawī, 1985, vol. 1, pp. 187-190; al-Nawawī, 1983, pp. 170-171).

Particular Elements of the Story

(1) Muslim Attitude towards Jesus Christ

Scholars such as al-ᶜAsqalānī (1987), the preeminent Muslim theologian, assert that there are more than three children who spoke in the cradle, as mentioned in other Aḥādīth (vol. 6, p. 3447). He suggests that the Prophet mentions three persons before God tells him more about the others. Al-ᶜAsqalānī does not agree with al-Nawawī (1991) who says all who spoke in their early childhood were young but not infants, except the three persons in this story. For al-ᶜAsqalānī, there are several more persons who spoke in the cradle as other Prophetic tales show. However, all agree that Prophet Jesus Christ son of Mary is one of them and it is a miracle. "The pious Muslim always adds to the name of Jesus the phrase, 'on whom be peace' and normally the same to the name of Mary as well" (Parrinder, 1976b, p. 187). Prophet Muḥammad says "Maryam (Mary), the daughter of ᶜImrān, was the best among the women" (of the world of her time)" (Al-Bukhārī, 1994, p. 676).

The concept of divine retribution in Islam builds on the idea that no one can bear another's burden, thus "the rejection of Jesus' crucifixion in the Quran would seem to come from a moral as well as a theological presupposition" (Phipps, 1996, p. 221). Muslims believe that Jesus is a servant of Allāh and has been given the revelation; without this lucid and firm dogma, one can not be a Muslim.

One position on christology in our own day is that Jesus was "a man approved by God' for a special role within the divine purpose, and that the later conception of him as a God incarnate, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity living a human life, is a mythological or poetic way of expressing his significance for us" (Cupitt, Goulder, Hick, Houlden,

Nineham, Wiles & Young, 1977, Preface; see also Hick, 1989, p. 202). This view has been received very well by many Muslim scholars who are concerned about Muslim-Christian dialogue (Hofmann, 1993, pp. 51-64, 1996b, pp. 15,16; Sharafuddin, 1978, p. 45; Ṣiddiqī, 1989, p. 213). John Hick (1993), as a Christan theologian, affirms:

> Historically, the recent intensive study of Christian origins by a multitude of scholars has made it clear that, so far as historical evidence can tell, Jesus himself never claimed to be God, or the unique Son of God, or God the Son, or the Second Person of a divine Trinity, incarnate. It is much more credible, in the light of modern New Testament scholarship, that he saw himself as the eschatological prophet within Israel, proclaiming the imminent coming of God's kingdom (p. viii).

Morey (1992) claims that Muḥammad was a false prophet and to support his argument, he focuses on a very serious error of Muḥammad's report about Mary (p. 142). Muḥammad, as Morey says, confused Mary, the mother of Jesus, with Mary, the sister of Moses. He states "Muḥammad confused the mother of Jesus with the Mary who was the sister of Moses and Aaron" (p. 142). Simply, the only rational conclusion for Morey is that "the Muslim must give up his belief in the heavenly origin of the Qurʾān" (p. 45). However, Morey mentioned his understanding of the Qurʿānic verse as if it is the ultimate interpretation and he did not mention any other views.

Mary is addressed in Qurʾān as "O sister of Aaron" (S. 19, A. 28). This verse could mean that Mary had a brother named Aaron or Aaron might refer to "the ancestral sense" as Pichthall (1990) suggests (p. 56). "In ancient Semitic usage, a person's name was often linked with that of a renowned ancestor or founder of the tribal line. . . Since Mary belonged to the priestly cast, and hence descended from Aaron, the brother of

Moses, she was called a 'sister of Aaron'" (Asad, 1993, p. 460). In the Arabic languge, the brother of apostasy means the person who accompanies apostasy (ᶜĀbdīn, 1989, p. 24). Therefore, one probable meaning for that verse is that the word sister has allegorical meaning that Mary is a sister of piety and she is like Aaron with regard to his worshipping.

What did Jesus Christ son of Mary say when he was in the cradle and why? The story, "None Spoke in the Cradle but only Three," does not give the answer. The Qurᵓān tells that Mary the virgin woman brought Jesus as a babe to her people, they told her that her parents were good and pious people. "How can you have a babe without marriage?" Here Mary pointed to the babe but the people immediately said: "How can we talk to one who is a child in the cradle?" He said: "I am indeed a servant of Allāh: He hath given me revelation and made me a prophet" (see S. 19, AA. 27- 30).

(2) Use Nonverbal Gestures

The Prophet demonstrated the suckling of the child by putting his forefinger into his mouth and sucking. Such a statement shows how the companions of the Prophet Muḥammad were so concerned to narrate Ḥadīth accurately, even in its nonverbal form. On the other hand, as a storyteller the Prophet used his hand as a gesture to give the impression of the action of the babe and to confirm that in reality this child is an infant. Storytellers and speakers might use gestures when they wish to call attention to something important. In their book, Once upon a time: a storytelling handbook, Breneman and Breneman (1985) say about nonverablal behavior that it "can be used to repeat what is said verbally.

For example, if a storyteller says, 'Go to the right!' and points in that direction, he would be repeating nonverabally the verbal message" (pp. 73-75). Storytelling is the art of verbally and physically "revealing a story to an audience" (Doyle, 1997, p. 37). Generally speaking, gesture as another method of presentation might enable the listeners to follow the events of the story better, and help to make it more interesting, attractive, and creative.

Some studies assert that nonverbal actions transcend the spoken or written word as physical characteristics can convey meaning. Even though a human might use speech for 75% of his communication (Fletcher, 1985, p. 1), yet "Ray Birdwhistell, an expert on nonverbal behavior, estimates that the verbal components of an orally presented message carry less than 35 percent of the meaning; more than 65 percent is carried on the nonverbal level" (Breneman & Breneman, 1985, p. 73). Thus, whether or not storytellers and educators in general know it, they constantly communicate or interact with the audience in a nonverbal way (Breneman & Breneman, 1985, p. 73).

Finally, this chapter demonstrated that Prophetic stories have particular elements as do many stories. At the beginning of each one, the narrator affirms that Prophet Muḥammad himself told the story. At the same time, in each story the name of a pious Companion of the Prophet is mentioned. There is no indication that the Prophet gave these stories any titles. At the opening of each story, the number of principal characters is given as three. Historically, all three stories took place in the period of the "children of Israel," namely the Jewish people. The intent of the coming chapter is to focus on interpreting central themes, moral values and lessons. The concept of complete submission to the

will of God as a steppingstone of Islamic education provides a comprehensive framework of morality. Submission in Islamic education is at the very heart of the moral experience not only for the individual but also for the community.

CHAPTER V.

INTERPRETING CENTRAL THEMES AND MORAL LESSONS

Introduction

This chapter deals with some central moral themes and lessons of three Prophetic stories and how such stories illustrate the Islamic out look on life, humanity and society at the same time it focuses on various ways of transmitting morality. The most persistent and important central themes in the three Prophetic stories are as follows:

1. Belief in God.
2. Forms of worship.
3. Test of faith.
4. The psychological benefits of belief.
5. Sincerity.

Concerning moral lessons of the three Prophetic stories, they mainly deal with the following subjects:

1. Obligations to family.
2. Obligations to others.
3. Norms of sexual conduct.
4. The role of women.

All Prophetic stories, in this study, illustrate hows the Prophet shows the precepts of Islam as constituting an entire way of life by giving

examples from ordinary life. However, the moral teaching in each story is part of the concept of entire submission to divine will. Many of these stories present the moral framework of Muslims through historical predecessors such as Jews and Christians. According to Ashraf (1989), morality in Islam

> is based on Absolute values. They are immutable. Social change therefore does not affect values. It only forces people to lay more emphasis on certain values and less emphasis on others because circumstances demand such treatment. From the point of view of history therefore social changes lead to occasional shifting of emphasis and not rejection of values or a reinterpretation of them (pp. 14-15).

The Prophetic stories introduce the cast of important moralities that enhance the meaning of Islamic doctrine. They also set a good example of the consequences of both good and bad behavior. To understand some aspects of the concepts of humanity, society, and life in Islam, one needs to look at these elements as positive and interactive. A relationship of harmony and correlation, not contradiction, is what moral education in Islam tries to establish between a human and his community. The result of that relationship is to purify souls, reinforce social ties, and define the meaning of life (see figure 2). Islam, in fact, looks at social life and individual life as complementary parts.

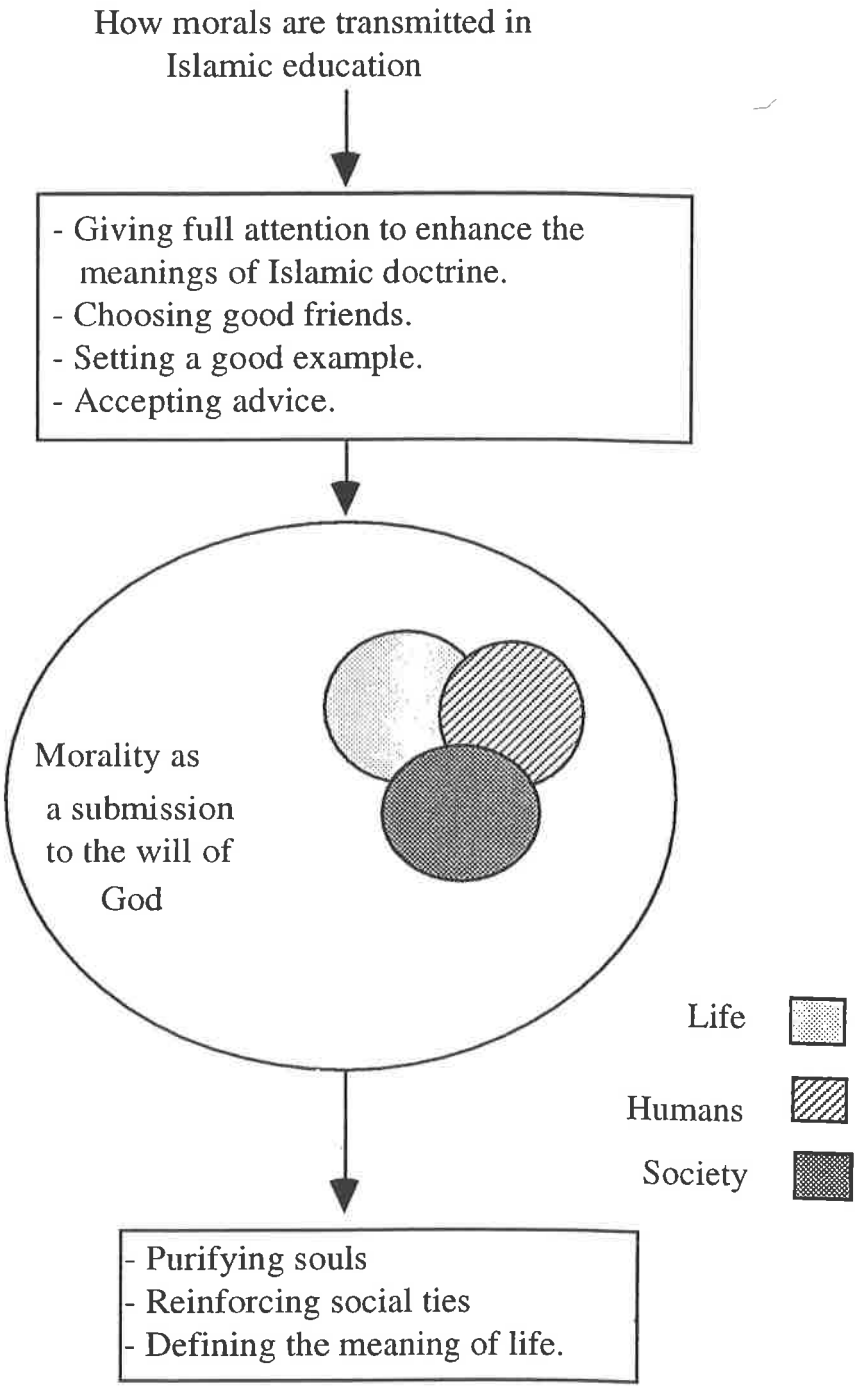

Figure 2. Relations between humans, life, and society.

Neither worshiping God nor serving the community can be isolated from each other for serving the community is a Muslim obligation. From a moral point of view the Prophet asserts, "by his good behavior a believer will attain the rank of one who prays during the night and observes fast during the day" (al-Nawawī, 1985, p. 396). Bennett (1993) asserts "faith can contribute important elements to the social stability and moral development of individuals and groups" (p. 742). Islamic teaching of eschatology is strongly attached to the social milieu in order to develop intimacy among people and construct Islamic civilization. The Prophet says that he who believes in God and the Last Day should be kind to his guest (al-Nawawī, 1985, vol. 1, p. 444). Submission to the will of Allāh is the moral atmosphere through which a Muslim views his mission and vision of life, his attitude toward people, community, and God.

Eaton (1985) says in his book Islam and the Destiny of Man,

> among the orientalists some have described Islam as "individualistic", while others have seen it as "collectivist". It is both. Standing shoulder to shoulder in straight lines in the communal prayer, the Muslims form a single block, an indivisible army of God in which the individual is merged into the sacred community; and yet one man praying alone in the desert, isolated from all others, represents in himself the fullness of the community and exercises the divine authority on earth; the rest might have died, yet Islam is present where he is present. The same may be said of those who follow the example of the Prophet in rising to pray in the still hours of the night; the world sleeps, but the *Ummah* [Muslim community] is awake and stands before its Lord. Even in the community, the individual recognizes no ultimate authority, spiritual or temporal, but that of God, which is one reason why the Qurʾān tells us that if we kill a single man unjustly it is as though we had "killed all mankind" (S. 5. A. 32) (pp. 50-51).

By reviewing the Prophetic dicta, one finds that the Prophet illustrates the ideal society by saying "the similitude of believers in regard to mutual love, affection, fellow-feeling is that of a body; when any limb of it aches, the whole body aches due to fever and sleeplessness" (recorded by Muslim, quoted by Zarabozo, 1994, p. 110). In his book, Educational Philoshophy of the Holy Quran, Abdul Haq (1991) deems Islam is more than mere intellectual dogma. He views it as a religion of life because Islam "is a way of life determined by a well-organised philosophy of life and education which teaches all men that life is worth living and which gives a practical training for it" (p. 256). Social morality in Islam welds the individual and the society "in which neither is separate from the other one" (Abdul Haq, 1991, p. 171).

(1) Central Themes

(A) Belief in God

How did the three persons in the story of "Sincerity" react when a rock slithered and blocked the exit of the cave? It seems that they were absolutely sure that even though there were three of them, they could not move the rock. They were in danger of darkness and total incapability which made them recognize their feebleness. So, they fell back upon God and asked Him for help with utmost sincerity. No doubt, believers' supplication to God is a clear sign of human weakness and limitations. Prayer, as Pope John Paul II (1996) says, "is the recognition of our limitations and of our dependence; from God we come, to God we belong, to God we shall return! Hence the least we can do is surrender ourselves to him, our Creator and Lord, in full and total trust" (p. 71).

Because the three persons in the story of "Sincerity" were believers, they knew that only God can see, hear, and assist them in the cave. Nietzsche, Durkheim and many scholars may have declared that "God is dead", but believers, wherever they are found, disagree and consider this an illusionary conclusion. Usually believers are asked to present their evidence to prove the existence of God while atheists, who claim that they are objective in their argument, do not provide solid proofs to support their position. However, at least for believers, believing in God is "horse sense" and a logical fact that they feel in themselves and see in evidence in every natural phenomenon in this spacious universe. Before the dramatic collapse of the Soviet Union, Kluckhohn (1979) wrote "until the emergence of Communist societies we know of no human groups without religion. Even the Communists, as has often been said, have their 'secular religion'" (p. vi).

One fundamental distinction between believers and atheists is that the former believe in the unseen. Prophetic stories are religious tales for they teach elements of religious belief. In the light of these two statements, one can interpret this part of the story: "Thereupon the stone moved a little but insufficient to serve the purpose of their passage." This supernatural or mysterious phenomenon might be called a most elementery *hierophany*, that is, a manifestation of something sacred in some ordinary object such as a stone (Eliade, 1987, p. 11). Eliade notes: "It could be said that the history of religions--from the most primitive to the most highly developed--is constituted by a great number of hierophanies, by manifestation of sacred realities" (p. 11).

From a theological point of view, the Orientalist Goldziher (1971) observes that Muslims are very particular about not using the word

miracle to describe godly people because it is reserved exclusively for the miracles performed by the prophets sent "by God, in order to prove the truth of their mission" (p. 336). He continues by describing the distinctions. Saints' miracles are called karāmāt an Arabic term meaning mercies or gifts from God to His saints. According to Goldziher, "this expression shows some Christian influence" (p. 336). For Muslims every miraculous sign that has been shown by a prophet is a miracle and if it has been shown by a pious person it is a gift from God. But if a miraculous sign has been shown by a non-believer this is part of his delusion.

For many reasons, al-ʾAsqalānī (1987), in his honorable encyclopedia Fatḥ al-bārī, advocates that the lover man in "The Story of Sincerity" is the best among the three men (vol. 6, p. 590). One of these reasons has to do with the character of piety. The Qurʾān says "and for such as had entertained the fear of standing before their Lord's (tribunal) and had restrained (their) soul from lower desires. Their abode will be the Garden" (S. 79, AA. 40-41). If we know that God is watching us wherever we are and He is always there, then we should act morally whether in public or secretly in private. This is the highest level of righteousness and Allāh promised those who fear Him the garden in the hereafter.

It is clear that the Qurʾānic verse mentioned previously connects fear with hope. Both of them represent substantial concepts of Islamic education. In the here and the hereafter, hope reflects the concept of reward and fear reflects the concept of punishment. Fear and love of God comprise a position of consciousness that is supposed to help a Muslim to govern all his behaviors according to what the Creator wants.

Doing good deeds out of the love of God is a sign of faith. The Qurʾān says "there are men who take (for worship) others beside Allāh, they love them as they should love Allāh. But those of Faith are overflowing in their love for Allāh" (S. 2, A. 165). The true love for God and His Prophet "means that we submit to the commands of Allāh and His Messenger and obey Allāh and His Messenger" (Zarabozo, 1994, p. 43).

Unlike atheists, believers believe in unseen beings such as angels and love them because they glorify Him. God creates them of light and they are totally obedient to Him. They are alert to do whatever God commands them and In the story of "the Leprous, Bald, and Blind" one of them is charged with testing the three persons. The word "send" in the story as well as in the many Qurʾānic verses confirms the idea that one duty of angels is to carry out what God assigns and do all that they are commanded. However, some humans, because they have been endowed with free will, believe in angels and others do not. Thus, they have different views of life and its ultimate meaning.

In the story of "the Leprous, Bald, and Blind", the story says that the angel expressed the wish that Allāh's blessing might accompany it. Many people have money, children, or knowledge but without the blessing of God such grace could be trouble. The Prophet used to entreat God every day in these words: O' Allāh bless whatever you gave me (al-Albānī, 1983, p. 161; al-Essa, 1993, p. 28). Alghazali (1992) says Islam shows that like all other good things in this life, wealth, spouses, and children are trials for humans. If humans are entangled in their love and forget their duties and do not offer the expected sacrifices, then these

good blessings and gifts of God become a trouble and destructive to them (p. 227).

The story goes on to say: "He then went to the bald man and asked him what he would like best and he replied. . ." Thus, each one of them began a new, rich and healthy life and the leper and the bald man got rid of what made them loathsome to people. Unhealthy people are very sensitive to their situation and they frequently have a desire to be with ordinary people. In return for this desire, their feelings are hurt by people who do not care about them or understand the hardships and challenges they face. The story shows some aspects of the psychological dilemma of unhealthy people to make us learn and to be kind to them.

Unlike the bald man and the leper, the blind man was very careful in choosing his words. He says "Allāh should restore my sight to me." This indicates that the blind man was quite sure that only Allāh - not the angel or anybody else - can cure him. On the other hand, the name Allāh has been repeated frequently in this story, as well as in the two other Prophetic stories in the present study. Esposito (1991) says the following about the major teachings of Qurʿān: "at the center and foundation of Islam is Allāh, the God, whose name appears more than 2,500 times in the Qurʾān" (p. 23). He adds that the concept of unity is extended to all aspects of life. "The absolute monotheism of Islam is preserved in the doctrine of the unity and sovereignty of God which dominates Islamic belief and practice. Allāh is the one, true God" (p. 24).

Many non-Muslims observe that Allāh is the center of Muslims' heart, thought and behavior and this fundamental concept is supposed to motivate them toward becoming virtuous. By way of illustration, "when

Christians reflect on the Muslim experience with prayer, probably the first thing they ought to consider is the profound appreciation of the oneness of God that Muslim prayer celebrates" (Carmody & Carmody, 1990, p. 50). "Timothy, a Nestorian Christian and an eighth-century patriarch of the Assyrian Church" (Phipps, 1996, p. 8), underscores that the core of Muḥammad's mission is to confirm the oneness of God and teach the way of good deeds. Timothy says:

> Muḥammad is "worthy of all praise" and "walked in the paths of prophets," because (1) he taught the Unity of God; (2) he taught the way of Good Works; (3) he opposed idolatry and polytheism; (4) he taught about God, His Word and Spirit; (5) he showed his zeal by fighting against idolatry with the sword; (6) like Abraham, he left his kindred rather than worship idols (Young, 1974, p. 203).

The moral mission of Islamic teaching is to give full attention to enhance the meanings of Islamic doctrine and creed as a way of transmittng morality. Strong doctrine of theism usually leads a Muslim to be a ritualistic human, and therefore the notion of God and remembering Him occupies the heart of Islamic teachings. "Islam's imperative morality, which could be qualified as eschatological, is characteristic: the thought of the Day of Judgment urges the Muslim to respect the law, to abandon the way of evil, and to preach virtuousness" (Boisard, 1988, p. 40).

Remembrance and glorifying God pervade Muslim life and keep humans in communication with the center of all things. As Pasquier (1994) says, "whereas forgetfulness transforms him into a peripheral being subjugated by the external, quantitative aspect of the world and to the cosmic acceleration which is so clearly visible in these last years of the twentieth century" (pp. 9-10). In one authentic report the Prophet says that the "similitude of one that mentions His Lord in remembrance

and the one that does not mention His Lord in remembrance, is like that of a living creature compared to a dead one" (al-Essa, 1993, p. 5; see al-Bukhārī, 1994, p. 979).

To those who believe, religious and moral stories are exhortative messages that affirm intangible elements of faith. Prophetic stories are an illustration in point. Allāh says to Prophet Muḥammad, "all that we related to thee of the stories of the messengers,--with it We make firm thy heart: in them there cometh to thee the truth, as well as an exhortation and a message of remembrance to those who believe" (S. 11, A. 120). In his scholarly notes and commentaries on Qurʾān, Ali (1995) comments on the previous Qurʾānic verse:

> The stories of the Prophets in the Qurʾān are not mere narratives or histories: they involve three things: (1) they teach the highest spiritual Truth; (2) they give advice, direction, and warning, as to how we should govern our lives, and (3) they awaken our conscience and recall to us the working of Allāh's Law in human affairs (p. 543).

Through the happy end of Juraij's story, in "the Story None Spoke in the Cradle but only Three", one learns that although there are many difficult matters in this life, God can make such hardships easy if a human has sincere faith and trusts in the Lord. The Qurʾān confirms such understanding in these two particular verses: "So, verily, with every difficulty, there is relief: verily, with every difficulty there is relief" (S. 94, AA. 5-6). Thus, Prophetic stories provide believers with hope and an optimistic view of life which enable them to face troubles with confidence that a happy end is for the righteous. Psychologists tell us "with hope, depression fades and enthusiasm for life reappears" (James & James, 1991, p. 70). Religious moral stories have been used since the dawn of

human history as essential tools to convey messages about meaningful life. For many educators tales of virtue are an effective method for encouraging moral development because they can affect us in three ways, as Wilson (1994) notes: "by conveying a message, awakening a sentiment, or enlarging the universe. The most common message is one of consequence: good things happen to people who are good, bad things to people who are bad. This is the earliest form of learning and the most persistent and important one" (pp. 4-5; see al-ᶜAsalī, 1995, p. 116).

(B) Forms of Worship

Reviewing Prophetic statements, one concludes that God considers as charity, every action of a believer if it has a good intention, it is a form of worship and God will reward him. In this view worship as a concept in Islam is not just ritual prayers or certain religious actions. Worship, as Ibn Taymiyyah (1978) defines it, is a comprehensive term for every internal and external action God loves (p. 38). Thus, helping others, being good to the orphans, fasting, remembering God, saying good words to our spouse, and visiting sick people are examples of worshipping if one does them for the sake of Allāh. God creates humans so that they obey and worship Him in that broad sense. This is the purpose of life. As God says in Qurᵓān, "I have only created jinn and men, that they may serve Me" (S. 51, A. 56).

Submission to Allāh is following his straight path and it is the source of peace. Submission is the true religion of Abraham as Muslims believe. "Is this submission that of a slave before a powerful and fearsome master?" John Esposito (1991) asks. His response is that

many non-Muslim commentators portray Allāh in this way. However, his own position is that "a careful reading of the Qurʾān and a look at Muslim practice indicate otherwise. While the Qurʾān, like the Bible, underscores the awesome power and majesty of God and the Day of Judgment, the verses of the Qurʾān reveal a merciful and just judge" (p. 25).

In the world-view of submission, humans fear only one power, the power of Allāh, and revolt "against all lying powers, all the humiliating fetters of fear and of greed" (Shariʿati, 1979, p. 87). Unfortunately a great deal of misunderstanding and misrepresentation has surrounded the concept of submission. Gai Eaton (1985) says "the West has often pictured the Muslim as cringing before a tyrant Lord and submitting as a beast submits to its incomprehensible fate" (p. 60). His explanation for that missunderstanding is that it comes "partly from prejudice, but partly also from the genuine difficulty that one culture has in grasping the deepest motivations of another" (p. 60).

Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban (1994) confirms that Orientalists have served to introduce Islam to the West but they also introduced a number of misconceptions about Islam. She gives a clear example: "One of the most fundamental errors made was the reference to the religion of Islam as Moḥammedanism; by doing so they elevated the Prophet Muḥammad to the state of deity" (p. 6). Islam has not been named after the name of its founder, place or country, as in all religions, according to Maududi (1992, p. 1). He confirms "it is a universal religion and its objective is to create and cultivate in man the quality and attitude of *Islam* " (p. 1).

"O' servant of Allāh! Fear Allāh" are key words to understand the deep roots of Islamic ethics not only in the story of "Sincerity" but in Islam as a whole. Islam is a monotheistic religion of lasting struggle with low

desires as well as steadfastness in the straight way of the prophets. The engaging with high morals is in fact a long-term journey to surrender, because Islam in simple terms is self-surrender to the will of Allāh in full trust. Eaton (1985) says surrender has nothing in common with stoicism as this term is understood in the Western tradition, because its motivation is different (p. 61). According to al-Rāzī, one of the great commentators upon the Qur'ān (al-Rūmī, 1992, p. 154), every part of our body can worship God in one way or another. However, all of them should submit to the will of God. The worship of the tongue, as al-Rāzī says "is praise, the worship of the hands is giving, the worship of the body is effort, the worship of the heart is fear and hope, and the worship of the spirit is surrender and satisfaction in Allāh" (quoted in Eaton, 1985, p. 61).

"O' servant of Allāh! Fear Allāh" are important words to understand the psychology of Muslims who fear the displeasure and judgment of their God. Muslim educators need to help learners to grasp the concep that fearing the Lord is part of the love and submission to God. True fear of God, as Ali (1995) says, is the fear of offending against His Law. A true fear of God "is therefore akin to the love of Allāh. It proceeds from the realisation that all true peace and tranquillity comes from attuning our will to the Universal Will, and that sin causes discord, disharmony, and displeasure--another name for the Wrath of Allāh" (p. 1528). "Fear is the start of morality, just as fear of God is the start of love for God" (Izetbegavic, 1991, p. 228). In short, the fear of God "is akin to love, for it means that we are afraid to displease Him" (Ali, 1995, p. 1183). From the moral perspective, loving and fearing God complement each other in the Islamic educational method that focuses on the concept of submission to the divine will. Both of them, from a teleological point of view, should

motivate Muslims to do good deeds in order to achieve psychological and social peace.

The third and final flashback in "The Story of Sincerity" is the image of a sincere businessman who successfully invests the money of his absent employee and kindly returns to him his wage plus net profit. The story presents a great model of a faithful honest trader who was kind and fair to his workers.

Islam joins faith to morals and to be a faithful Muslim, one should act morally even in business transactions. It is not acceptable at all to be a pious person in the mosque and a greedy trader in the market. Prophetic teachings give much attention to morals in economic settings. The rights of employees are the subject of a large number of Prophet Muḥammad's precepts. Concerning paying workers after they finish their work, the Prophet says "give the hireling his wages before his sweat dries" (quoted in Alkhuli, 1990, p. 57).

"O' servant of Allāh": this strong statement is repeated more then one time in the story of "Sincerity", but each time in a different situation. The words servant or the slave of Allāh (bondservant) are used too much in Qurʾān and Aḥādīth. Prophets are portrayed to be servants of Allāh in both sources. The word servant appears frequently to remind believers that humans were created for the sole purpose of worshiping Allāh and submitting to His orders. Qurʾān says, "I have only created jinns and humankind to serve Me" (S. 51, A. 56). Both hope and fear of Allāh are obligatory to become a true servant as believers in the Qurʾān illustrateed (S. 32, A. 16). Linguistically *Al-tatayyum* is an Arabic word meaning the highest level of love and Abdullāh is *taym* of Allāh which means the person who obeys or submits himself with humility to his beloved God

(al-Qaraḍāwī, 1981, p. 31; Ibn Taymiyyah,1978, p. 44). The word "worship", as Sharafuddin (1978) says, "is used to denote man's highest love and regard, as well as his extreme humility and submission, and his boundless obedience towards" Allāh (p. 8).

Roger Du Pasquier (1994) notes "In the imagination of most Europeans, *Allāh* refers to the divinity of the Muslims, not the God of the Christians and the Jews; they are all surprised to hear, when one takes the trouble to explain things to them, that '*Allāh*' means 'God'" (p. 6). With regard to the concept of Islam and submission, Pasquier (1994) views it as a system of discipline. He says:

> To the modern mind, the Muslim who submits to the divine order and binds himself to a series of religious obligations and rules of life may appear less free than a wholly secularized man who lives in accordance with his inclinations and instincts. Yet in reality the Muslim discipline is not deprivation of freedom, but a simple re-establishment, in the individual and collective life, of an order of values and a rhythm which accord with the total nature of man and with his deepest aspirations, as well as with the harmony of the cosmos (pp. 26-27).

The whole story of "Sincerity" confirms the idea of sincerity in all human activities. Also, to help us to walk in the right way, the story shows the excellence of supplication. Allāh says "and your Lord says: 'Call on Me; I will answer your (prayer)'" (S. 40. A. 61). Another verse says "when My servants ask thee concerning Me, I am indeed close (to them): I respond to the prayer of every suppliant when he calleth on Me" (S. 2, A. 186). In his turn, the Prophet says the best form of worship is supplication (al-Albānī, 1986, vol. 1, p. 251) and in another Ḥadīth, he confirms "whenever a Muslim supplicates Allāh, He accepts his supplication or averts any similar kind of trouble from him..."(al-Nawawī,

1985, vol. 2, pp. 287-288). All these phrases and many more about supplication are illustrated throughout "The Story of Sincerity." The spiritual and moral lessons here are clear: the Muslim by himself is weak but with Allāh's help, he should be able to deal with the calamities of this life.

Some interpreters of this Ḥadīth, the story of "Sincerity", point out that one of its greatest moral lessons is the importance of choosing good friends, especially on a journey (Malek, 1990, p. 38). Generally "The Story of Sincerity" illustrates the positive consequences of being with godly people. The following short parable from the time of Jesus gives the negative consequences of joining with bad friends which can serve as interpretating one story with another.

> Three men once went out questing treasure and came upon a nugget of gold, weighing fifty maunds. When they saw it, they took it up on their shoulders and carried it till they drew near a certain city, when one of them said, "Let us sit in the cathedral-mosque, whilst one of us shall go and buy us what we may eat." So they sat down in the mosque and one of them arose and entered the city. When he came therein, his soul promted him to be false to his two fellows and get the gold for himself alone. Accordingly, he bought food and poisoned it: but, when he returned to his comrades, they sprang upon him and slew him, in order that they might enjoy the gold without him. Then they ate of the poisoned food and died, and the gold lay down over against them (The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night, 1943, vol. I, p. 250).

The second one that spoke in the cradle, according to the story of "Non Spoke in the Cradle but only Three", was a child in the story of Juraij. Juraij was a pious man but, as one Ḥadīth mentions, he was not a scholar because as the Prophet says, had he been knowledgeable he would definitely know that responding to his mother is better than his

worship (al-ᶜAsqalānī, 1987, vol. 6, p. 554). One knows that Satan can mislead a worshiper without much work but it not easy for him to mislead scholars who know that obeying God does not mean leaving the society or ignoring relatives. The Prophet says "one *faqīh* [scholar] has more power over the devil than a thousand devout men" (reported by Tirmidī & Ibn Mājah; Quoted in Robson, 1981, p. 54). In Islam there is no monasticism. The Prophet asserts moderation in worship by saying "I keep fast and break it, and keep up prayer and keep awake at night and take wives. So whoever turns away from my way is not of me" (al-Nawawī, 1985, vol. 1, p. 106).

The Prophetic stories clearly focus on the importance of supplications and praying to God. The nature of such worship assume a direct relationship between a servant with his Lord. Simplicity not complicity is the soul of Islam; its foundations are all based on entire submission to one God - praying to God any time, any where and without the intervention of a saint or mediation of a religious man. Islamic supplication "reflects and reinforces the concept of oneness of Allāh, having no partners and the one who does not need an intermediary" (Kazi, 1996, p. viii). The Muslim, as al-Suhrawardy (1995) says, "offers his prayers wherever he happens to be at the appointed hour--he can pray standing, sitting or lying down; alone, or in company" (p. 40).

When a Muslim devoutly prostrates himself, and bows down in his praying, every part in his body is submitting to God and after praying also every part should submit to Allāh's will by doing good deeds. In Qurᵓān, Prophet Abraham speaks in such a verse: "truly, my prayer and my service of sacrifice, my life and my death, are (all) for Allāh" (S. 6, A. 162). Morally speaking, praying is a motivation to righteous deeds. The Qurᵓān

says "prayer restrains from shameful and evil deeds" (S. 29, A. 45). Thus, Qurʾān "forms the primary ground for an understanding of the Muslim view of life" (Rasjidi, 1965, p. 110).

(C) Test of Faith

The introduction of the story of "the Leprous, Bald, and Blind" provides us with an important key word. The word "test" is the main focus of the strange events in the story. To explain this notion and look at its framework of Islamic teachings, the word "test" reflects Muslims' view of life. Muslims see this life as a temporary place in which God tests his servants. Qurʾān makes that view clear in such verses as "He Who created death and life, that He may try which of you is best in deed; and He is the Exalted in Might, Oft-Forgiving" (S. 67, A. 2). Without much philosophical discussion of the issue of fatalism, Islamic teachings, on the whole, rely on "what we do find," as MacGregor (1973) points out (p. 266). The Hereafter is not an allegorical notion but for Muslims it represents uncompromising fact.

Because humans never can be perfect, faith and good deeds must elicit God's mercy in order to enable believers to enter the Garden. Prophet Muḥammad said that one must follow the right path of faith strictly and be steadfast, and keep in mind that no person can achieve salvation solely through his good actions. Here one Companion questioned: "'Not even you, Messenger of Allāh?' He said: Not I, except that Allāh should bestow His mercy and grace upon me'" (al-Nawawī, 1985, vol. 1, p. 73).

To be frank, Islam as a religion is misunderstood and therefore misrepresented by some Muslims, as well as non-Muslims. Today, some

people present Islam as a negative, mystic movement that is concerned with superstition. According to this view, the believer is a man who enters Islam by birth and practices few regular rituals. In contrast, a Muslim should grasp the idea of moral responsibility that requires sincere faith followed by good conduct because this life is a place of test, as the Qurʾān and Aḥādīth tell us. This leads us to confirm a hermeneutic element of understanding Islam; to get to the bottom of Islam and fathom its reality, one must review carefully the bedrock of Islam, the Holy Qurʾān and Prophetic teaching.

A Prophetic story, as this study emphasizes, provides the believer with a clear view of why humans exist in this world. Worshipping is the purpose of creation and life is viewed as a temporary place where God tests humans by exposing them to both evil and good. Those who will believe and do good deeds, they will be rewarded and those who disbelieve and reject God will be judged with just accountability. The Qurʾān says, "We created not the heavens, the earth, and all between them, merely in (idle) sport: We created them not except for just ends: but most of them do not know" (S. 44, AA. 38-39). "We test you by evil and by good by way of trial to Us must ye return (S. 21, A. 35)." "He Who created death and life, that He may try which of you is best in deed" (S. 67, A. 2). Ali (1995) interprets the latter Qurʾānic verse by saying creation "is not in mere sport, or without a purpose with reference to man. The state before our present Life, or the state after, we can scarcely understand. But our present Life is clearly given to enable us to strive by good deeds to reach a nobler state" (p. 1497).

Prophet Muḥammad sometimes taught his disciples through symbolic representation or, as Speight (1970) calls it, "symbolic acts" (p.

55). Mouat IV (1996) says "Cartography, the making of maps, probably originated when an early homo sapiens scratched the ground with a sharp stick in an effort to communicate a hunting strategy or the location of a needed thing" (p. 82). Drawing a visual figure to represent the Islamic outlook on the nature of the human being with regard to this life was part of the Prophetic techniques of teaching abstract ideas. It has been narrated that Prophet Muḥammad

> drew a square and then drew a line in the middle of it and let it extend outside the square and then drew several small lines attached to that central line, and said, "this is the human being, and this (the square) is his lease of life (his or her day of death) encircles him from all sides (or has encircled him), and this line which is outside (the square) is his hope, and these small lines are the calamities and troubles which may befall him, and if one misses him, another will snap (i.e., overtake) him, and if the other misses him, a third will snap (i.e., overtake) him" (al-Bukhārī, 1994, p. 988; see also the same report in al-Nawawī, 1985, vol. 1, pp. 372-373).

In another report, expressing the same idea of humans being between hope and troubles and death which restrain individual wishes, Prophet Muḥammad illustrates such an abstract concept by drawing "a few lines and said, `this is a (man's) hope, and this is the instant of his death, and while he is in this state (of hope), the nearer line [death] comes to him'" (al-Bukhārī, p. 982).

The drawing would look something like this (see Figure 3).

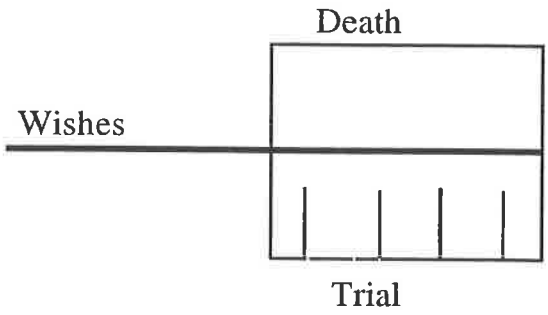

Figure 3. A Human and Life

This figure represents the human that is in the encircling rectangle, death which is covering him; the middle line represents his desires and the short vertical lines are the troubles or ups and downs of life (see al-Nawawī, 1983, vol. 1, p. 334).

It is hard to understand why the people, in the story of "None Spoke in the Cradle but only Three," beat Juraij the devout man. They have no adequate evidence or witnesses to launch a charge of fornication against Juraij the chaste worshipper. Neither the present Prophetic story nor the commentators of Ḥadīth show us definite reasons why people thought that Juraij had committed fornication with that prostitute. The woman has given birth to a child and she claims that the babe came from Juraij; thus, the people believed her. This is what the story says and leaves out sufficient answers to many questions.

At any rate what happened was a real catastrophe that Juraij could not avoid. God is the only power that can help him, so Juraij told the people to leave him alone so that he could observe Prayer. The story in one way or another views life as a place of testing and hardship; whereas prayer becomes a shelter for believers. The Prophet himself,

whenever he had distresses, would immediately go to pray steadfastly and ask God for relief (recorded by Aḥmad & Abū Dāwūd, quoted in al-Albānī, 1986, vol. 2, p. 858) because God can drive away all distresses. Unlike an atheist, a believer does not lose hope even if there is no logical or visible solution for his distress.

(D) The Psychological Benefits of Belief

The story of "the Leprous, Bald, Blind" mentions that the blind man said "Allāh restored my eye-sight." One way to cultivate a mental attitude that will bring us happiness, as Dale Carnegie (1985) says, is to "count your blessings--not your troubles! (p. 186)." This famous American author (b. 1888-d. 1955) gives credence to the idea that we should "fill our mind with thoughts of peace, courage, health, and hope, 'for our life is what our thoughts make it'" (1985, p. 186). The well-known contemporary Orientalist, Montgomery Watt (1990), mentions the social and psychological benefits to a person who proclaims God's grace on him. Muḥammad, as Watt says, was instructed in Qurʾān to be constantly aware of God's favour to himself and to talk about it to others. Allāh tells him "but the bounty of thy Lord rehearse and proclaim" (S. 93, A. 11). For Watt "there is clearly a very great gain in directing our attention chiefly to this aspect of our lives, so that quite naturally, we often speak about it" (p. 65). He explains that by speaking "in this way we are helping our fellow-men to overcome their bitterness and resentment and to advance to a mature attitude which sees, behind all the deprivation and pain of the world, the mercy of God" (p. 65).

Many commentaries on this Prophetic story assert that the core righteous lesson here is the importance of thanking Allāh for his

blessings and avoiding ingratitude (Abū Shaykhah, 1996, p. 27; Malek, 1990, p. 52; Malek & Abū Ṭālib, 1989, p. 373; Nāṣif, 1986, vol. 5, p. 288). With regard to both reward and punishment, Allāh says "and remember your Lord caused to be declared (publicly): 'if ye are grateful, I will add more (favours) unto you; but if ye show ingratitude, truly My punishment is terrible indeed'" (S. 14, A. 7).

In general, Prophetic stories have clear moral ideas which focus on a strong relationship between faith, talk and behavior. On the one hand, they contain many models of good manners, kindness to all creatures, honesty, charity, integrity, and generosity as well as many virtuous characters. On the other, they also display manners which are models of bad behavior, in order to demonstrate that the characteristics of iniquity, such as selfishness, aggression, and arrogance, are undesirable. Moral tales usually covey their massage in this very observable way.

(E) Sincerity

Al-Nawawī (1985) mentions the tale of "Sincerity" in the first chapter of his book, Riyāḍ Al-Ṣāliḥīn. According to the title of that chapter, the story concludes that sincerity and rightness of intention are the most important inward cause of all good outward actions. In the same way today many Muslim revivalists assert that "the Prophet did not start a community in Madina. It began in the hearts of men and women. The essential lesson to learn from this historical experience is that it is not possible to create an Islamic community by external engineering" (Nasser, 1989, p. 34). Huḍaybī puts it in this short phrase: "Establish the Islamic government in your hearts. It will be established on your land

too" (quoted in al-Qaradawī, 1984, p. 51). At any rate, some social historians might suggest that a deep and genuine sincerity is the first characteristic of all great people throughout human history (Carlyle, 1993, p. 39).

The Prophet of Islam says "actions are but by intention and every man shall have but that which he intended" (quoted in al-Nawawī, 1993, p. 18). Like the pedagogy of the Qurʾān, Prophet Muḥammad passed on the concept of the righteousness of sincerity in many eschatological reports. Using narrative was one technique for ingraining this notion in the hearts of his disciples in order to motivate them to be sincere in everything they did. Seeking reward from none but Allāh must be a departure point toward doing good deeds, whether in serving people or worshipping God.

(2) Moral Lessons

(A) Obligations to Family

According to the story of "Sincerity," the first man beseeches God by narrating, in the form of flashback, his personal altruism to serve his elderly parents for nothing but the sake of God. In looking at the Holy Qurʿān, one can find that one of the gracious deeds and supreme moral duties is being kind to parents, even if they were non-believers or harmed us. Qurʾān says "and We have enjoined on man (to be good) to his parents: in travail upon travail did his mother bear him. And in years twain was his weaning: (hear the command), 'show gratitude to Me and to thy parents: to Me is (thy final) Goal'" (S. 31. A. 14). This and a similar verse says "thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none but Him, and that ye be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in thy

life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them but address them in terms of honour" (S.17. A. 23).

The Muslim, as al-Jazaᵓiri (1994) says, "believes in the right of the parents on him and the obligation in the filial piety and their obedience and the benefaction for them" (p. 120). "After polytheism, the gravest sin is the disobedience to parents. This is an evil which a true Muslim cannot even imagine without repulsion" (Husain, 1992, p. 24). Certainly, "one of the most important duties of the parents and the tutors is to acquaint the child first of all with the rights of the parents" (Aijaz, 1991, vol. 1, pp. 314, 315). As long as children respect their parents, society remains coherent because the family is the nucleus of civilization, as Will and Ariel Durant say, and also because family is the true mirror of community. It is hard to find members in the society who protect the rights of neighbors, friends, and needy people who do not also set good examples by their relations to their own siblings and parents. If the society can be portrayed as a body, then families must be its soul and the activities of the members are truly the heartbeats of the society.

Charis Waddy (1990) notes "of all the questions that exercise the minds of Muslims, those connected with family life are the most sensitive. Muslims are proud of their traditions, and wish to maintain them" (p. 57). Then she says about Western culture that its permissive standards have "an impact on their sons and daughters which they see as a threat to their whole way of life. Advance in technology is regarded as essential: but there is widespread fear of the retrogression in character that often seems to accompany it" (p. 57).

"My children were crying out of hunger at my feet but I awaited their [my parents'] wakening till dawn. This state of affairs lasted till

morning)." This statement from the story of "Sincerity" confused some scholars as has been mentioned by some researchers (al-ᶜAsqalānī, 1987, vol. 6, p. 589; Ibn ᶜAllān, n.d, vol. 1, p. 82). The interpretation that al-ᶜAsqalānī (1987) chooses is that these children were crying because they want to drink more than their basic need. However, as John Burton (1994) says, the Prophet Muḥammad "was especially fond of children. He was often seen carrying them - even in the ritual prayer. He could be led around Madīna by the hand by a little girl wherever she chose to go, and was frequently to be seen kissing his grandchildren" (p. 101). One example Burton mentions is of a man who had ten children and said to the Prophet once, "'I've never kissed any of them'. Taken aback, the Prophet said, 'He who does not treat others gently cannot expect to be treated gently himself, when the time comes'" (p. 101). In spite of the Prophet's love for children, he believed care and attention to parents, in general, come first.

"The Story of Sincerity" shows the positive image of a male who works hard to support his family; the man shows that he also willingly shares in the housework. About his indoor work, the man in the story says that he used to offer his family members milk. Today, social studies show that sharing household chores is an important factor for a successful marriage (Collins, 1990, p. 299). Nowadays, people in both the East and the West claim liberation but at the same time modern life reveals the dilemma of women's exploitation and violence toward women. In many cases the home itself is in a state of deterioration. Passing laws and preaching equality without practicing integral morality, kindness, and mutual respect cannot reduce the random violence at home. About domestic violence, Marone (1992) says in the US "every

eighteen seconds a woman is physically brutalized by a man. Every year four thousand of them die at the hands of men who are supposed to love them" (p. 42). If this degradation of women exists to such an extent in a democratic country, the situations in other countries, where women can not speak up, could be desperate.

Many Muslim researchers say "we need to wake up to the reality of giving women what Islam has actually given them" (Bugaje, 1996, p. 39); or, as Hofmann (1996a) says, "many women, in most Muslim countries, are still treated like second-class human beings, administered, marginalized, mummified in clear violation of their Qurʾānic rights and status. Such women, victims of macho men, are still waiting to be liberated" (p. 41; see Abū Shuqqah, 1995, vol. 1, p. 30). Illiteracy, economic instability, un-Islamic customs, and ignorance of women's right granted by Islam are major problems for Muslim women in modern-day society as Iqbal (1989) mentions (p. 303; see al-Farūqi, 1994, p. 16).

It is important to know that reform by calling for an Islamic model is the rallying flag for many women in the Islamic world, but unfortunately the West in most cases dismisses them and focuses instead on the agenda of women in the Islamic world who demand westernization. Many Islamic women's organizations believe that Islamic values (not Western values) are the solution to their problems in the East. However, little has been written on modern Muslim women's activism and reformation (Talhami, 1996, p. ix). John Esposito (1991) confirms that there is an Islamic revolution occurring in many parts of the Muslim world. He says "the most significant and pervasive revolution is not that of bombs and hostages, but of clinics and schools. It is dominated by social

activists (teachers, doctors, lawyers, dentists) and preachers rather than warriors" (p. 218).

As a way of transmitting and inculcating morality, the Prophetic story here sets a good example of a hardworking man who lives with his family in harmony and sharing rather than in continuous conflict. Prophet Muḥammad says: "The best of you are those who are best to their wives" (al-Nawawī, 1985, vol. 1, p. 200). In her book, Muḥammad: A Biography of the Prophet, Karen Armstrong (1992) writes in a reasonably sympathetic manner that ʾĀishah, Muḥammad's wife, "tells us that Muḥammad always helped them with the household chores and he did everything for himself: he mended and patched his clothes, cobbled his own shoes and looked after the goats" (p. 239). She concludes that the Prophet was trying, in such work, "to educate his Muslims to adopt a more respectful attitude to women, and the fact that these traditions were preserved at a time when most people in most religions would think it shocking that a great Prophet should bother with the housework shows that his message was received" (p. 240).

From such passages Karen Armstrong (1992) concludes "the emancipation of women was dear to the Prophet's heart" (p. 191). In additon, she says that she believes that Prophet Muḥammad "made a distinctive and valuable contribution to spiritual experience of humanity. If we are to do justice to our Muslim neighbor, we must appreciate this essential fact" (p. 14). As has been stated in the framework of this study, Isam is a complete code of life for both men and women. About human partnership, Prophet Muḥammad says "men and women are equal halves" (Aḥmad & Abū Dāwūd, quoted in Omran, 1992, p. 44). Some researchers in the West might ask if the Islamic family and society can be

described as patriarchal. Kausar (1996) says "to call the Islamic family and society patriarchal is misleading. Patriarchy is not mere male leadership but male domination and female subjugation . . . all of this goes directly against the very spirit of Islam" (p. 495).

In the story of "Non Spoke in the Cradle but only three" Juraij was ignorant about the right of his mother thinking that his worshipping is better than showing honor and respect to his mother. In Islam, kindness to mothers is a gateway to the Garden. The Prophet enjoins on believers kindness to mothers for "the Garden is underneath her feet" (recorded by Aḥmad & al-Nasāʾī, quoted by al-Albānī, 1986, vol. 1, p. 269). The misunderstanding of the religious concept of worshipping made his mother angry and thus she prays to God to punish her son who dishonors her. This means that even the mother in some cases might make supplication against her beloved child. The Prophet says "do not invoke curses on yourselves or on your children or on your possessions lest you should happen to do it at a moment of the acceptance of prayer and your prayer might be granted" (al-Nawawī, 1988, vol. 2, 286).

(B) Obligations to Others

Giving charity to a needy old man was the actual test for the three persons in the story of "the Leprous, Bald, and Blind" and it is a test for many believers today. These two persons in the story were believers but false selfishness made them greedy. They chose to live for their own desires and not to share God's graces with others. Ali (1990) says that the Prophet wants to make humans realize that to be charitable is to be a human (p. 575). About the psychology of wealth, Phipps (1996) says: "while Muḥammad did not presume that being rich was in itself bad, he

criticized forgetting the needy and the haughtiness that often accompanies having wealth" (p. 128). He concludes that Muḥammad and Jesus Christ both "were keenly aware that devotion to God is a sham if it does not result in the decent treatment of those who are the most vulnerable members of society. Both prophets believed that sharing one's wealth with the needy is the sine qua non of true religion" (p. 134).

This insightful analysis of Phipps leads him to come up with important elements for measuring the quality of community. A society's concern about its needy people can be an indication that the community has strong solidity in its social milieu. "A community can be successful in this field of life only when the relationship among its individuals is strong and firm" (Alghzali, 1992, p. 212). Phipps (1996) notes "both Jesus and Muḥammad presumed that the quality of a community can be measured by how it treats its most vulnerable, the orphans and widows" (p. 130).

Humans have been bestowed with free-will, thus they can choose to be righteous of conduct or greedy and miserly. Clearly the blind man was a perfect example of a true believer who applyies concepts of kindness to members of his community. Al-Nawawī (1991) asserts that this Prophetic story impels us to be kind to weak people, respect them, and serve them as much we can (vol. 18, p. 132). The blind man by his generous and charitable character, illustrates the following Prophetic precept: "When you see a person seeking an object earnestly, assist him to get his need." And never ask for a reward except from God (al Mubarakpuri, 1995, p. 502). In theistic traditions of Islam good morality is being kind to others not for the sake of interest, but for the sake of God. Prophet Muḥammad says, "None of you (truly) believes until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself" (al-Nawawi, 1993, p. 48). The

Bible says, "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise" (Holy Bible, St. Luke, 6:31). Socially, the relation between poor and rich in communities should be bound by philanthropy and benevolence, as this Prophetic story suggests.

Thomas Carlyle (d. 1881) said that Islam's emphasis on the idea of charity is "further evidence of the soundness of Islamic teaching. He further noted, a lesson Gandhi [d. 1948] might have attended to, that the Islamic religion was not easy in its requirement, and that true religion never succeeds by being easy" (McDonough, 1994, p. 105). The famous reformer, Mahatma Gandhi (1938) said that the sayings of Prophet Muḥammad "are among the treasures of mankind, not merely Muslims" (p. 7). The Western writer, Geoffrey Parrinder (1987), remarks that "this Prophet was undoubtedly one of the most influential teachers of mankind, the religion of Islam has formed great civilizations" (p. 84).

It is true, as one Orientalist notes, that "a long section of ḥadīth literature is full of sayings inculcating the necessity of kindliness and love of which the following may serve as examples: "God will not have compassion on him who hath not compassion on mankind..." (Gullaume, 1966, p. 104). Contrary to such a view is the opinion of the American syndicated columnist Paul Harvey, who denigrated the Prophet and "asserted that Muḥammad became personally wealthy by exploiting his enemies and that there is no mention of love anywhere in the Qurʾān" (Phipps, 1996, p. 8). One might ask Harvey who is exploiting whom?

When the Prophet died there was nothing that could even be considered as food in his house for eating (al-Nawawī, 1985, vol. 1, p. 316). Orientalists like Esposito (1991, p. 26) and Phipps (1996, p. 168) note the Qurʾān is full of indications of God's mercy, beneficence, and

compassion. Phipps (1996) asserts "love is an attribute of God as well as of humans. 'My Lord is compassionate and loving,' the Qurʾān affirms" (p. 168). Of 114 chapters, *surah,* in the Qurʾān, 113 begin with "In the name of Allāh, most Merciful and most Compassionate." It is Prophet Muḥammad who says God is more kind to his servants than a woman to her child (al-Nawawī, 1985, vol. 1, p, 286).

Karen Armstrong (1992) says "the cultivation of kindness and compassion had been central to the Islamic message from the beginning" (p. 231). She adds, "over the centuries in the West, we have tended to think of Muḥammad as a grim figure, a cruel warrior and a callous politician. But he was a man of great kindness and sensibility" (p. 231). Kindness to any creature is a rewardable deeds in Islam. As Schimmel (1985) says, the Prophet "was known for his love of animals. He once promised Paradise to a sinful, evil woman who had saved a dog from death by fetching water for it" (p. 49). Karen Armstrong (1992) also mentions other stories narrated by Prophet Muḥammad to clarify how Islam motivates Muslims to be kind. She says one Ḥadīth "has him telling a story in which a man who gave water to a dog on a thirsty day was sent to Paradise and a woman who starved her cat to death was sent to hell" (p. 231). For this writer, the preservation of these Aḥādīth "shows how important the values had become in the Muslim world and how quickly the community had advanced towards a more humane and compassionate vision" (p. 231).

In reviewing Islamic history, one can see just how much the teaching of the Prophet influenced laws and how much it affected Muslim scholars in the field of Islamic law. The Prophet Muḥammad laid the foundations for the rights of all creatures great and small. Muslim

scholars of jurisprudence of ages past stated that, "If a blind cat enters someone's house and is unable to move about on its own to seek its food, then it becomes incumbent on the householders to feed it. The legists have also prohibited people from putting greater burden on the beasts than they can easily bear" (Siba^{c}i , 1984, p. 137).

In "The Story of Sincerity," God tested three persons by adversity in the cave but in the of story" the Leprous, Bald, and, Blind," the opposite is true. The three heroes will be tested by prosperity. Giving charity to a needy old man was the actual test for them. One of the central elements of Prophetic stories concerning life is that it is a place of test and doing goods deed is the way to salvation.

In Islam charity is a great form of worshipping God and reaching out to the community. Alms is "obligatory not only because the recipients need help, but also because it improves the character of the giver. This latter quality is displayed in *zakat*, the Arabic word that refers to almsgiving, which means purification" (Phipps,1996, p. 129). Prophetic stories show some means by which rich people can contribute to serve the community. "Islam has recognized the right of the needy to assistance" (Mawdudi, 1980, p. 31). The main message of Islamic teaching concerning helping the needy is that rich people should be encouraged to become accessible--to reach out to the community through its problems, and relieve them. Paying charity, being flexible with poor people when they are repaying their debts, and respecting the right of workers are all ways that rich people could be linked with their societies socially and economically in order to create a healthy social environment. For example, the blind man in the story of "the Leprous, Bald, and Blind" did not repulse the poor strange man, as had the other

two heroes in the story, by treating the poor man with harshness. Moreover, the blind man proclaims Allāh's bounty to him by saying that Allāh had restored his eye-sight.

According to the story of the "Non Spoke in the Cradle but only Three," Ibn-ᶜAllān (n.d., vol., 3, p. 91) and Malek (1992, p. 91) agree with al-ᶜAsqalānī (1987, vol. 6, p. 558) that people of wisdom do not credit people based on their fabulous wealth or physical appearance. The mother in the story thought that the man was a happy person due to his glittering worldly appearance and that moved her to ask God to give her son what that handsome person had. The mother also miss-estimated the guileless woman and she built her opinion on what the people said abut the woman. The people claimed that she had committed adultery but in reality she was a chaste and virtuous lady. God made the child speak to correct the misunderstanding even though he as a babe in the cradle.

One report in Ḥadīth literature says that the woman that people were beating in this Prophetic story, the story of "Non Spoke in the Cradle but only Three," was an African women (al-ᶜAsqalānī, vol. 6, 1987, p. 344). Today, equality and freedom are important issues for many people who live as second class citizens in their own land where they were born. The equality of human beings has been violated throughout history in many parts of the globe. Racism, for example, is still one of the tremendous obstacles that many societies face.

This issue demonstrates an essential moral law: that although our figures and bodies were created in different shapes by God, they should not be the basis of judgment. The Qurᵓān says: "Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allāh is (he who is) the most righteous of

you. And Allāh has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things)" (S. 49. A. 13). Prophet Muḥammad declares that "no Arab has any superiority over a non-Arab, nor does a non-Arab have any superiority over a black man, or the black man any superiority over the white man. You are all the children of Adam, and Adam was created from clay" (Bayhaqī & Bazzāz, quoted in Mawdudi, 1980, p. 22). Mawdudi (1980) says, "In this manner Islam established the principle of equality of the entire human race and struck at the very root of all distinctions based on colour, race, language or nationality" (p. 22).

This is the essential truth that God made for His people in both the here and Hereafter. In spite of this, The Truth Seeker (December, 1996), a US bimonthly newsletter published by the Research and Education Foundation, states that "historic Islamic dogma has always held blacks in low esteem. Those with black faces, the Qurʾān says, will go to hell" (p. 7). It is hard to understand such an outrageous conclusion, or why some scholars and researchers in the West try to convince the public that this is the truth. For Abū Khalīl (1995), such misrepresentation by Orientalists and missionaries may be a projection. Projection as a psychological term is the condition of blaming "some one else for any conflicts in which he engages" (Carlson, 1988, p. 457). In his pilgrimage to Mecca, Malcolm X (1925-1965) remarks:

> There were tens of thousands of pilgrims, from all over the world. They were of all colors, from blue-eyed blonds to black-skinned Africans. But we were all participating in the same ritual, displaying a spirit of unity and brotherhood that my experiences in America had led me to believe never could exist between the white and the non-white.
>
> "America needs to understand Islam, because this is the one religion that erases from its society the race problem. Throughout my travels in the Muslim world, I have met, talked to, and even eaten with people who in America

> would have been considered 'white' but the 'white' attitude was removed from their minds by the religion of Islam. I have never before seen *sincere* and *true* brotherhood practiced by all colors together, irrespective of their color (X, 1992, p. 340).

In all stories narrated by Prophet Muḥammad, religion "would seem to encompass truth, just behavior, and truthful attitude. In its broad meaning, it represents the union of faith, surrender to God, and virtue" (Boisard, 1988, p. 30). In considering these three Prophetic stories, it is important to confirm that the interpretation in this study is concerned with general moral themes and key words with regard to the notion of humanity, society, and life. Some educators believe that "our second reading of a story is never the same as the first. We have changed and so have our expectations of the story. A Chinese proverb says that you can never step in the same river twice" (Barton & Booth, 1990, p. 15). However, some substantial themes can be recognized in each story when a researcher reviews the work of commentators and looks at general elements.

(C) Norms of Sexual Conduct

The woman in the story of "Sincerity" said to her cousin: "O' servant of Allāh! Fear Allāh and do not open the seal unlawfully." She reminds the man who wants to abuse her sexually that God the almighty forbids committing adultery and humans, as His slaves, must submit to His laws. In many reports Prophet Muḥammad "brought out the evils of fornication from different angels so that people may become well-acquainted with those evils and they may refrain from this abominable act" (Nadvi, 1987, p. 39). Islam as a total way of life does not condemn or

deny human sexual needs "but insists that expressions of human sexuality be limited to a particular use under specified conditions: that is, only in the married state as part of a total relationship of mutual commitment and responsibility" (Haneef, 1995, p. 90). In short, "Allāh does not ask man to suppress his desires, because He knows that it is not possible for him to do so. He simply asks man to control his desires and not to let them control him" (Quṭb, 1981, p, 33). Thus, a human in the Islamic perspective should struggle against his low desires in order to purify himself. As Quṭb (1981) says, "self-control and elevation help man fulfill his humanity. Such fulfillment cannot be achieved by giving way to all desires, and following caprice wherever it leads, on the pretext that desire and caprice are a part of human nature" (p. 33). When one considers the ethical aspects of Islam which appear to be bonds and obstacles, one finds them in reality to be aspects of movement, and liberation from slavery to low desires (Quṭb, 1991, p. 30).

Islam, as a comprehensive system of life where there is no separation between sacred and secular, prohibits sexual activity out-of-wedlock but encourages lawful marriage as a normal alternative. One of the Islamic principles pertaining to right and wrong is that Islam "has prohibited only such things as are unnecessary and dispensable, while providing alternatives which are better and which give greater ease and comfort to human beings" (al-Qaradawi, 1992, p. 27). In his book, Muḥammad and Jesus: A Comparison of the Prophets and their Teachings, Phipp (1996) views Prophet Muḥammad as a guard against fornication and illicit sex (p. 127). Phipp says "in sharp opposition to the monks, Muḥammad had a positive view of sexual and other pleasurable

passions. He regarded marital sex as a gift from God for both pleasurable and procreative purposes" (p. 127).

Muḥammad, the Apostle of Allāh, was reported to have said that in man's sexual intercourse with his wife there is charity. The Companions said: O' Messenger of God "is there reward for him who satisfies his sexual passion among us? He said: Tell me, if he were to devote it to something forbidden, would it not be a sin on his part? Similarly, if he were to devote it to something lawful, he should have a reward" (al-Nawawī, 1985, vol. 1, p. 96).

The story of "Sincerity" says that the man was a lover and, as he says, "I had a cousin whom I loved with the utmost love of men for women." How does Islam look at such human feelings? First of all, in Islam there is no monasticism. Marriage is the gateway of both love and lust in the Islamic view. God, in Holy Qurʾān, says "It is He who created you from a single person, and made his mate of like nature, in order that he might dwell with her (in love)" (S.7, A.188). God says also "and among His signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that you may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): Verily in that are signs for those who reflect" (S. 30, A. 20).

On the other hand, Prophet Muḥammad says there is nothing that seems to be food for lovers like marriage (al-Albānī, 1986, vol. 2, p. 923; see also al-ʾIstānbūlī, 1985, p. 66; Al-Jawziyyah, 1993, p. 318). The Prophet says also that "the most perfect man of the believers in their faith is he whose behaviour is the most excellent and the best of you are those who are the best to their wives" (al-Nawawī, 1985, vol. 1, p. 396). The Prophet saw a man going behind a female and weeping with his tears

following the female. The Prophet was astonished at such love and asked the female why she did not marry this man. The woman said: "I do not love him" (al-Bukhārī, 1994, p. 61).

(D) Role of Women

Although some forms of western feminism are appearing in predominantly Muslim countries, most Islamic moral teaching regarding women focuses on traditional roles and attitudes. An important aspect of Islamic culture is the idea that women are moral beacons. For example, the woman in the story of "Sincerity" advised the man to avoid adultery even though she was in need of money. Ibn ʿUthaymīn (1995), a contemporary scholar, comments that she told the man to fear God and because these words came from her heart, they reached his heart (vol. 1, p. 70). Another moral lesson related to that is that one needs to forbid what is wrong as a way of inviting good behavior and enjoining the right. In this story, the man in his turn accepts the good advice and practices what the woman reminds him about integrity. This is considered an excellent method of transmitting and inculcating morality in Islamic education. God succinctly affirms "let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong" (S. 3, A. 104). The story confirms that righteousness is sincerity, giving good advice and well wishing.

Male and female are alike in the matter of giving good advice which has a decisive influence on a society. In looking at this story, the woman appears to give a short sincere, but indispensable, exhortation. In the West, "Eve was the instrument of Adam's transgression, and woman as 'temptress' is central to the occidental imagination. This

element plays no part in the Qurʾānic account of the Fall" (Eaton, 1985, p. 49). In his studies, Esposito understands Islam does not agree with the doctrine of original sin. Eve is not the reason for human suffering. The story of the Fall in the Qurʾān, Esposito (1991) says, "differs from that in the Bible in its teaching regarding personal responsibility. . . Woman is not portrayed as the cause of the Fall, as in Judeo-Christian traditions. Moreover, the sin of Adam and Eve is just their own personal sin" (pp. 28-29).

According to "The Story of Sincerity," it was in a year of famine when the woman approached her cousin and yielded herself to him. Today, feminist studies confirm that poverty and economic status are primary causes of women's prostitution (Lee, 1991, p. 83). Thus, many social behaviors are related to economic factors and in their efforts to understand such phenomena researchers should not omit them. In his remarkable novel, Les Miserables, the French poet and novelist Victor Hugo (1802-1885) touches this human dilemma. Jean Valjean, the hero, stole a loaf of bread for which crime he was imprisoned. He was attempting to support his sister and her children. Hugo (1992) presents an immortal philosophical question when Valjean says "could I wait when I was hungry?" (p. 60).

(3) Interpreting Prophetic Stories to Teach Islamic Moral Concepts

There are many primary and secondary morals that Prophetic stories consistently contain. Some of them are clearly observable in particular stories and others can be observed in all Prophetic stories. The concept of total submission to the will of God, amiability, caring and sharing are certain traits of the Islamic character. The essential

philosophical fact that emerges from interpreting such literature revolves around the idea that morals can actually be taught through storytelling. Even though Islam teaches its followers through sermons, preaching and ethical abstraction, stories as indirect tools of instruction play an important role in the same educational purpose. Ancient tales carry many moral lessons and make humans transmitters of the legacy of their historical predecessors to their posterity. Prophetic stories give serious attention to the fulfillment of spiritual needs as well as social values.

In all Prophetic stories, researchers find that one major moral purpose of such tales is to confirm the idea that humans are responsible for their actions and there is divine retribution whether in this life or in the hereafter. Doing good brings reverence for life and binds humans to each other. The Prophetic stories, as an invaluable educational resource, provide reasons and logical justifications that guide the learner to do right, not only because it has been said that such conduct is right, but becauce he is convinced that such deeds bring both individual and social satisfaction. In the end of each Prophetic story there is clear evidence that the consequence is just the normal fruit of human conduct, whether negative or positive. As much as one gives and exerts himself he should be rewarded, if not in this life then on the Last Day. Such discourse gives the learner insight into moral accountability for his actions in order to master and control them.

Correct education goes beyond blind obedience and accepting precepts without evidence. Learners need to know the necessity of adhering to propriety and virtues because they are worthwhile. Careful reviewing of Qurʾān and Prophetic dicta show that both of them emphasize teaching morality by presenting intellectual proofs to support

moral precepts. Islam, for instance, considers fornication wrong and, when forbidding such behavior, the Islamic teaching gives or opens the door for reasons and reflection. Islamic teaching combines God's orders with justifications. Moral orders need to be explained to create understandable structures in such fine rational justification. Islamic literature tells the story of a young man who came to the Prophet and requested permission to commit adultery. The Prophetic reply asked the young man: "Would you like your own mother to be in such illicit sexual relation?" The young man said: "No, O Prophet of God." The Prophet persuasively said: "Others too do not like their mothers and sisters associated with fornication" (see Nadvi, 1987, pp. 30-31). Dewey (1859-1952) says

> It is not enough to praise and blame, reward and punish, enjoin and prohibit. The essence of morals, it is implied, is to know the reason for these customary instructions; to ascertain the criterion which insures their being just. And in other dialogues, it is frequently asserted that even if the mass must follow custom and law without insight, those who make laws and fix customs should have sure insight into enduring principles, or else the blind will be leading the blind (1996, p. 4).

It is clear that Prophetic stories focus on morals that deal with the social milieu because a human is a social creature living as a member in groups of relatives and friends. In the Islamic view, one should interact with others, whether Muslims or non-Muslims, and should be righteous. Islamic teachings encourage Muslims to have positive and productive relationships with others through caring and sharing. Dewey (1947) succinctly affirmed: "As a matter of fact, morals are as broad as acts which concern our relationships with others" (p. 414). In his opinion

> All education which develops power to share effectively in social life is moral. It forms a character which not only does the particular deed socially necessary but one which is interested in that continuous readjustment which is essential to growth. Interest in learning from all the contacts of life is the essential moral interest (p. 418).

Expressing kindness toward people, whether Muslims or non-Muslims, is an essential quality that Islam is concerned about. Mutual respect and sincere gratitude to people who care are important morals. As Prophet Muḥammad says "He who does not thank people does not thank Allāh" (al-Albanī, 1986, vol. 2, p. 1122). From a theological point of view, Prophetic teachings motivate Muslims to behave decently towards others and, more than that, kindness to others is a form of worship that will be rewarded generously by God no matter how small that deed is. In the Islamic perspective, serving orphans and the needy in the community should come out of love for God and for the sake of none but Allāh. All Prophetic stories bind moral to this crucial and firm notion. In some respects, it is hard to distinguish totally between spirit and morality because the latter is a consequence of the former.

The moral lessons of the Prophetic stories, even though referring to ancient events in the context of a simple or agrarian way of life, such as herding sheep, can be applied to modern, complex, urban living. The reason for that is related to the general moral traits that the Prophetic tales focus on. Faith, compassion, amiability, kindness to parents, chastity, perseverance, self-discipline, self-control and truthfulness are vital values which need to be taught and inculcated regardless of places or times. Those values might be more important today because civilization means not only great advances in materialistic fields but also

a parallel need to apply values of equality, honesty and justice universally; that is to act righteously to all people, even those one dislikes or disapproves of, and not solely to friends. However, it is the collective duty of families, schools, and society to support moral rectitude.

Storytelling can be a powerful medium that stimulates the creative imagination and encourages humans to do virtuous deeds and live by the distinction between wrong and right. Prophetic stories are pedagogical tools that provide people with general guidance to act morally in both religious and secular life. A distinctive feature of Islamic education is that it embraces life in all its phases because Islam, per se, is a total way of life. Stories narrated by Prophet Muḥammad are pedagogical tools conveying one exclusive straightforward message; the message of total surrender and submission to the will of God. All morals emerge from this concept of submission which for Muslims is the center of the concept of humanity, society, and life. Unlike many novelists (El-Saadawi, 1985; Mahfouz, 1990; Rushdie, 1988), Islamic stories ingrain the notion of monotheism and following the precepts of God's prophets. In this view, moral education starts from establishing faith in God and that requires proper religious observance as well as good social conduct.

The Prophetic stories, as moral tales, are dedicated to enhancing the meaning of Islamic *ʿAqīdah* (creed). That is to say, firm creed, proper knowledge and remembering God should lead believers to straight conduct. Integrity is the straight path of prophets and those who have spiritual insight. Therefore, moral teaching in each Prophetic story is part of the concept of total submission to one God. The word *ʿAbdullāh*, meaning bondservant, has been repeated in some Prophetic stories to confirm that the highest moral level in Islam is achievement of complete

submission in all action to one Creator. Thus, morality is not just in the social milieu but it includes all human actions. Prophetic stories are a vast storehouse of information concerning the manners of godly people who applied the message of submission. Imitating their path does not mean that human beings can be perfect, but they should try to purify and edify themselves as much as possible. The Prophet confirms that good conduct is nothing but a product of theological conviction: "Fear Allāh wherever you are, and follow up a bad deed with a good one and it will wipe it out, and behave well towards people" (al-Nawawī, 1993, p. 58). This long-term process of purifying is part of the test that human beings need to go through. Because God is most merciful and most gracious, He provides his servants with guidance through prophets to help them pass the tests in this life.

As tools of moral rectification, Prophetic stories alert the learner to immoral deeds in order to steer clear of them. Arabic literature is rich with stories of that sort that aim to teach a reader "to detect deception and to protect himself from it, as well as delight and divert him whenever he is burdened with the cares of life and the ills of this world" (The Arabian Nights, 1990, see foreword). In this way moral stories can illustrate or bring negative characters closer, such as conflicts and selfishness that exist in real life. Thus, the wisdom of ancient experiences can be the heart of moral stories whether their purpose is education or entertainment.

In terms of interpreting Prophetic stories to teach Islamic moral concepts, some of them reflect the fallibility of human judgment. In Islam deeds, not gender or race, are the basis and criteria of human judgment. In the story, "None Spoke in the Cradle but only Three", the story

indirectly criticizes the people who judge others without evidence. The essential ethical law shown in the story is that wise people do not credit others based on their physical apperance or fabulous wealth. The dignity and equality of human beings cause Prophet Muḥammad to say "Were people to be given in accordance with their claim, men would claim the fortune and lives of (other) people, but the onus of proof is on the claimant and the taking of an oath is incumbent upon him who denies" (al-Nawawī, 1993, p. 100).

All Prophetic stories show that the ethical precept of Islam constitutes an entire way of life for both men and women. Both of them have moral responsibility and are subject to divine retribution. The Qurʾān says "Whoever works righteousness, man or woman, and has Faith, verily, to him will We give a life that is good and pure, and We will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their actions" (S. 16. A. 97). Thus, it is a matter of both faith and actions that reflect human submission to the will of God. Men and women cooperate together for doing good. They both enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong in order to fulfill the concept of submission to the will of God. They have a harmonious relationship as the siblings and friends as shown in Prophetic stories. The dignity of woman is an important principle that Islamic education preaches and Prophetic stories teach. Islamic precepts aim to protect women from all sort of tyranny.

> The famous British dramatist, George Bernard Shaw, in his letter to Mr. Najimi Saqib of Cyprus acknowledges that Prophet Muḥammad's teachings on the status of woman, exposure of female children, and kindness to animals were "far ahead of western Christian thought, even of modern thought."
>
> The British orientalist, H. R. R. Gibb, in his *Mohammadanism* observes: "that his (Muhammad's)

> reforms enhanced the status of women in general is universally admitted" (quoted in Ahmed, 1978, p. 53).

Mental openness toward the history and literature of other humans and cultures is an important aspect of moral education, in seeking wisdom wherever it can be found. Prophetic stories take moral lessons from the past to confirm the positive relations the historical predecessors, whether Jews or Christians. The scope of history in the Islamic perspective is not limited to the Arabic or Islamic legacy. It uses historical events to support moral education by taking excellent lessons from edifying souls of the past and insight from patterns of previous human behavior. Dewey (1947), the pioneer educator, says "Knowledge of the past is the key to understanding the present. History deals with the past, but this past is the history of the present" (p. 251). Ibn Khaldūn (1332-1406), the outstanding Muslim historian, points out some of the inner meanings of history. He (1981) says:

> History makes us acquainted with the conditions of past nations as they are reflected in their national character. It makes us acquainted with the biographies of the prophets and with the dynasties and policies of rulers. Whoever so desires may thus achieve the useful result of being able to imitate historical examples in religious and worldly matters (p. 11).

The essential moral concept of Islam is important in a moral life because it meets human needs spiritually, both as individuals and as social beings. Through a comprehensive submission to the will of God humans learn their purpose in this life and their relations with the Creator as well as with His creatures.

From a comparative viewpoint, the Prophetic stories reflect Qurʾānic moralities that awaken a love for learning virus and enrich

humans spirituality. For Muslim educators, the Holy Qurʾān is the best source of sublime moral characterization and the legacy of the Prophet Muḥammad is its authentic application that facilitates understanding in depth the Islamic philosophy of moral education. The Qurʾān clearly states, "Allāh commands justice, the doing of good, and giving to kith and kin, and He forbids all indecent deeds, and evil and rebellion: He instructs you, that ye may receive admonition" (S. 16. A. 19). Such divine morals pointed out by God, the Subtle the Aware, are not limited by time or place. They are to be followed by faithful Muslims who want to apply Islamic teachings in order to be rewarded in both this world and the world hereafter.

CHAPTER VI.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary and Conclusion

In brief, the research problem of this treatise is to explore three stories ascribed to Prophet Muḥammad which illustrate the Islamic outlook on humanity, society and life through teaching morality. In interpreting these three stories in the Prophetic literature, the researcher argues that stories narrated by Prophet Muḥammad are not merely historical narratives or moral exhortation but they can be perceived as expressing religious views on aspects of the nature of humanity, society, and life through teaching morality. Complete submission to the will of God, which is the lexical meaning of the word "Islam", is the center of the moral teachings which govern Muslims' view concerning humanity, society, and life as the present attempt argues.

Humans as individuals and the society together should represent in their moral actions, the notion of submission to the Lord who makes life meaningful. Fearing and loving Allāh together constitute the basic foundation of submission and subservience to the will of God, which is the highest status of morality. By that vision of submission a human fulfills his or her own mission as a servant; his or her joy is in following the divine guideline that disciplines and touches all aspects of human

life. The nature of the cosmos, as al-Fārūqī (1994) says, "is teleological, that is, purposive, serving a purpose of its Creator, and doing so out of design" (p. vi). Loving moral virtue is a characteristic of human nature that God implanted in humans (Mohamed, 1995, p. 5). The Qur'ān says God "has endeared the Faith to you, and has made it beautiful in your hearts, and He has made hateful to you Unbelief, wrongdoing, and rebellion: such indeed are those who walk in righteousness" (S. 49, A. 7). Prophetic stories illustrate many aspects of the Islamic view of life. Islam

> embraces life in all its aspects. It does not stand as a barrier between man and his legitimate desire to live. It does not regard man's earthly existence as a gloomy dale of sorrows or a punishment for some original or inherited sin. At the same time, it does not look upon this life as a fleeting opportunity for material satisfaction or a place for sensuous delight. Islam proclaims life to be a Divine gift so that man may attain nearness unto God and attain perfection by making full use of the possibilities of his body and spirit (Nadawi, 1992, pp. 81-82).

According to the interpretation of this study, there are many educational methods that might be used to transmit and inculcate morals. The Prophet in his narratives identified several unacceptable deeds in order to help believers steer clear of them. The tales focus on the consequences of both good and bad deeds and give full attention to enhancing and encouraging individual integrity. Accepting good advice and choosing good friends were observable in the first story, "The Story of Sincerity." However, all three of the stories set good examples of righteous people from whom one can learn and whose straight path one can imitate.

Life as a transitory stage is a place for testing, where God examines His servants whether by the ease of prosperity or through the hardship of adversity. The most important dimension in this moral system is the fact that humans, both male and female, earnestly bear moral and spritual responsibility and accountability. Even though humans might choose moral deeds, they are endowed with free will to engage in either virtuous or immoral behaviors.

Either individually or in a group one should apply Islamic manners because morality as a concept in such a monotheistic religion covers all aspects of action. Society, in metaphorical form, is a whole body that works and moves by its collective limbs, namely its members. Each one of them, the individual and the group, should work to serve the needs of the other. The pietistic teaching of the Prophet provides several fundamental values that spiritually purify the soul as well as reinforce the social ties.

As is clear in the three Prophetic stories reviewed in this study, moral wisdom and religious discourse are the prime components upon which these stories rely, and which serve as their point of departure. These stories, as precepts, play an important role, in building, structuring and affirming Muslim identity as knowledgeable believers who have a clear view about life and the human message. Divine retribution, whether in this life or in the hereafter, is one of the motivations that impel Muslims to be sincere, pious, and kind, with hope of attaining divine rewards.

The stories emphasize the major idea of the consequence of every human speech or behavior in relation to submission to the will of Allāh and reinforce the central idea in Islam, the fact that it is a way of life that

determines and governs actions and human life. It is not a mere collection of dogma, cults and rituals. In this notion, all human activities can be the subject of religious reward, for Islam puts forth the general standards that one needs in order to live. Prophet Abraham illustrates the idea that religion is a way of life by saying, "truly, my prayer and my service of sacrifice, My life and my death, are [all] for Allah, the Cherisher of the worlds" (S. 6, A. 162). Thus, the purpose of this life, as Yakun (1993) says, "is to know, serve and worship Allāh" (p. 6). Islam's major interest "is in man and his relation to the Creator and also to His creation" (Irvan, Ahmad, & Ahsan, 1996, p. 6).

These Prophetic narrations demonstrate that the system of belief that the believer holds has an unbreakable connection with how he lives. Thus, Islam is a whole construction of moral, social, and religious order built on complete submission and entire surrender to the will of Allāh. Males and females are alike in their moral responsibility and accountability. Aware of the mutual interrelation between male and female, the Prophet Muḥammad succinctly affirms "women and men are equal halves" (reported by Aḥmad & Abū Dāwūd, quoted in al-Albānī, 1986, vol. 1, p. 399).

The Prophet of Islam used stories as an informative means and pedagogical tool to edify his followers doctrinally, ritually, emotionally, intellectually, and socially. His stories serve as models and good examples that Muslims, both men and women, should imitate at home and in the workplace.

One important aspect of the use of narratives as pedagogical stories is that Prophet Muḥammad, by means of the love and fear of God, motivates his listeners and audiences to be virtuous in their daily lives.

This is one distinctive feature of moral education as ordered in Islam. "Through belief in God and the Day of Judgment, it furnishes a motive force which enables a person to adopt the moral conduct with earnestness and sincerity, with all the devotion of heart and soul" (Maududi, n.d., p. 33).

According to this viewpoint, morality is parallel to religion in that the one rationally leads to the other. Overall, the Prophetic stories use narratives as a pedagogical tool to build both a homogeneous society of good citizens who know their duties and do them, and who understand their moral rights and practice them.

These narratives of the Prophet of Islam are valuable, rich, and profound because they convey Prophet Muḥammad's outlook on life, humanity, and society which are helpful for understanding moral education in Islam. Such views meet the Muslim's need to make his life meaningful. Life is a place where God examines his servants, whether they obey their Lord by doing good deeds or they repudiate Him through bad behavior. Both will be rewarded either in this life or on the Last Day. "Basically, Islam teaches that life on earth is a period of testing and preparation for the life to come" (Lambert, 1992, p. 75).

From these stories, one can understand some aspects of the secrets of human existence and the nature of the human mission in this life. Humanity and society, for Prophet Muḥammad, are two sides of one coin. Islam, as an Abrahamic religion, views morality as "an extension of God's will that shows itself in individual behavior and in the way rulers govern society" (Streng, 1985, p. 138). The Prophetic stories emphasize man worshipping God through social actions as we find in "The Story of

Sincerity," where the three men received God's satisfaction by helping others.

The finding that emerges from this study confirms that the Islamic concept of morality is a comprehensive one. It includes stable standards that provide Muslims with a way of life to overcome the problematic state of existence and establishes guided moral structures for how one deals, harmoniously, with others in terms of rights and obligations with respect to each human being and his innermost self. In contemplating the Prophetic stories, one can understand the concept of morality in its broadest form. This includes correcting our behavior in all aspects of our lives. The deep meaning of morality as a notion in the Prophetic stories and sayings is in living with others in peace. This is one of the lower levels of morality. Among the highest is, in addition, helping them in times of adversity as well as prosperity. Alghazali (1992) stated an excellent principle that represents the relation between faith and morals; "weakness of morals is proof of a lack of faith" (p. 7). From the Prophetic stories, one learns that faith and good manners are, as they say, two sides of one coin.

Indeed, good manners are the ultimate fruit of all worship activities and also of the educational movement. Al-Qaradawi (1984) has said that, "Islam adjudges virtuous morality as a branch of faith or its indispensable fruit" (p. 51). The Holy Qurᶜān and the Prophetic sayings both focus on the perfection of morals. Establishing a human society whose basis is love, mercy, equality, brotherhood, and justice is the goal of the message of Islam (Sabiq, 1989, vol. 1, p. ix). To make it clear and concise, faith, prayer, charity and all other types of worship are a means of purification. Allāh, for example, has made prayer compulsory because

as the Qurʾān mentions, "prayer restrains [people] from shameful and evil deeds" (S. 29, A. 45). Giving charity from our wealth and property is to purify and sanctify, as the Qurʾān reveals to us (S. 9, A. 103). Truly, moral purpose is the spirit and core of Islam. The Prophet Muḥammad himself has said that, "I have been sent only for the purpose of perfecting good morals" (al-Ḥākim; al-Albānī, 1986, vol. 1, p. 464; cited in Zarabozo, 1994, p. 49).

From a general analysis of the Prophetic stories, one may conclude that the Messenger of Allāh illustrated the characteristics of virtuous behavior so that they would be imitated and practiced to the benefit of the practitioner. The Prophetic stories show many fine characteristics which are still the unchanging standards for values and behaviors in Muslim life and also for human life in general, such as kindness to parents, sick people, workers, and travelers. Throughout the Prophetic stories, we find that well wishing and respect for all creatures and hatred for none is the main element. This precious principle is the cornerstone for peace in ourselves, families, and communities.

All manners in the Prophetic stories are based on piety and God-consciousness. In this fashion, virtues are turned into a habit for doing good deeds in open and in secret. Individuals taking responsibility for themselves and others is one of the positive character traits that educators everywhere are struggling to revitalize. Today, educators might need to guide people in the art of cooperation with others and to revive such precepts as community responsibility.

Along with the unchanging standards of values that the Prophetic stories present, observers will note that they do not neglect the dark side of manners as a way of inculcating morality. They illustrate ill-mannered

behavior and bad habits as well as how to avoid them. In his stories, the Prophet Muḥammad warned the people of greediness and selfishness. This method of teaching--that illustrates both the good and bad aspects of manners-- provides a much broader background for what is right and what is wrong. The Prophet used to present and illustrate both good and bad behavior to help the learner comprehend the difference and understand real life. At the same time there are some bad characters which should be avoided. Thus, this educational principle stresses the wisdom of life through the stories.

In the first Prophetic story, "The Story of Sincerity," the Prophet has presented the rights of laborers and their compensations. As well as presenting the correct manner in which to deal with the worker, the Prophetic tradition teaches these values in a harmonious and balanced way. Ibn Mājah mentions that the Prophet Muḥammad said "give the hireling his wages before his sweat dries" (al-Khūlī, 1990. p. 57; al-Albānī, 1986, vol. 1, p. 240). Thus, the Prophetic stories present morals related to the cleanness of soul and purity of spirit without overlooking the virtues and manners that are related to social and economic behavior.

One aspect of the Prophetic method of relating stories is that the exposition often neglects times, names, and specific places. The Prophetic stories would rather begin with terms such as "While a man was walking. . .," "When three persons of a people before you were on a journey . . .," "A woman was . . .," "A man walking . . . ." Usually the characters in the stories that came down from the past "have no names and no identifying personal characteristics other than, for example, the third brother is a fool, the first sister is greedy, or the youngest daughter is

beautiful" (King, 1993, p. 119). This educational method concentrates on the moral purpose of the story more than on giving historical details or other facts and elaborations, thus allowing it to be universal. This confirms the conclusion of the present study, that for Prophet Muḥammad the main theme in a Prophetic story is teaching morality.

Today, people are looking for meaning in their lives and for their function as humans in the community. Islam, per se, is a religion that has simple answers for such questions for both lay persons and educated persons, which makes it one of the fastest growing religions in the world both in the past and today. One aspect of the Prophetic method of teaching is that it considers the reality of individual differences. Allen and Muessig (1962) wrote about Islamic contributions to American education and they point out a significant aspect of Prophet Muḥammad's method of teaching. They wrote "his teachings were clear enough to have meaning for the most ignorant as well as for the learned and sophisticated" (p. 136). The Prophetic method of relating stories is to present a few ideas or values in every story. It is not necessary for the storytellers to present many themes in one story, as al-Rāshid suggests (1989, p. 32).

Pedagogical Aspects of Prophetic Stories

Knowledge does not have boundaries. This is the clear element or principle of Prophetic stories. Jawad (1990) believes that Muḥammad's contribution in the field of education was immense for many reasons, one of which is that "the Prophet Moḥammad always emphasized the importance of knowledge to his followers and encouraged them to seek it" (p. 117). Stories were a powerful means

that he used to educate his followers to be open-minded. For example, as the Prophet himself says, "relate traditions from the Banī Israīl for there is no restriction" (al-Nawawī, 1988, vol. 2, p. 234). In his stories, the Prophet teaches his followers to draw out lessons and learn from everybody anywhere as long as that knowledge exists. In 1977, Chandras wrote that "the main aim of Islamic education was to spread knowledge to all men and women who followed Moslemism. According to the Prophet, salvation is impossible without the acquisition of knowledge" (p. 90). Prophet Muḥammad mentioned that "two greedy persons never attain satisfaction: He who is greedy for knowledge can never get enough of it, and he who is greedy for worldly goods can never get enough of them" (al-Khulī, 1990, p. 17; Al-Albānī, 1986, vol. 2, p. 1125). "Mohammed mobilized the missionary zeal of the Moslems that were fired with the desire to discover new learning" (Allen & Muessig, 1962, p. 139).

Self-control is one of the most important outcomes of education (Savage, 1991, p. 7). "In self-discipline one makes a 'disciple' of oneself. One is one's own teacher, trainer, coach and 'disciplinarian.' It is an odd sort of relationship, paradoxical in its own way, and many of us don't handle it very well" (Bennett, 1993, p. 21). The strongest educational message of the Prophetic stories is the fact that humans can control their own behavior. The Qurʾān makes it clear that "verily never will Allāh change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves" (S. 13, A. 11). "The Story of Sincerity" shows a man who plans to seduce his cousin but at the last critical moment decides not to touch her. A human can choose his way to virtue. This is the point of departure for Islamic education; otherwise there would be no meaning for

life, for the Day of Judgment, no meaning to education and, finally, no meaning for our humanity.

By and large, the educational idea that the Prophetic stories present stresses the principles and foundation upon which the philosophy of Islamic education should be built. All these stories show that Prophet Muḥammad specifically used stories because he believed that they can have a profound and vital effect on humans.

Every story clearly presents the consequences of human deeds. For educators, "the traditional power of storytelling to teach moral and social consequences for actions is badly needed in schools" (Smith, 1997, p. 15). The moral Prophetic stories, as many stories, "can teach that good deeds and good thoughts are rewarded. They can also teach students that there are still caring, compassion and good in the world. That in spite of our troubles we can still find joy" (Smith, 1997, p. 15). The good deed is rewarded in this life or on the Day of Judgment and at the same time the bad deed is punished in this life or on the Day of Judgment. Thus, deeds--not wealth, race, or high rank--are important to happiness and enable humans to achieve appropriate goals. These foundations clearly demonstrate that Islamic education emphasizes self-responsibility and the concept that as much as a human does, so much will he receive, sooner or later. Clearly all the stories of the Prophet Muḥammad show the importance of reward as well as punishment with a view to modifying human behavior.

This study confirms that Prophetic stories are more than ancient texts and artistic stories that might be used only for intellectual, cultural, or research purposes. They are, per se, moral stories which reflect Qurʾānic values that were used by Prophet Muḥammad to inculcate

morality in the early Muslim generation. They have been handed down carefully to posterity in order to elevate individuals, both male and female, reinforce social ties, and define the meaning of life. Setting good examples and enhancing the meaning of Islamic creed were two important ways of inculcating virtue through Prophetic stories. According to this study the notions of humanity, society, and life are basically central to the general meaning of Islam, the comprehensive source of morality and the straight path of submission to the will of God. Islam is a way of life determined by well-organised morals which give firm direction and advice as to how humans should govern their lives. This is the most persistent and important educational message of Prophetic stories concerning teaching morality.

Recommendations

This study provides a starting point to analyze and interpret more stories and sayings of Prophet Muḥammad that have authentic origins. The aim of further studies might be to explore more educational features of such stories to enable faithful Muslims to live by their ethical principles and apply their morals after they understand and grasp in depth their educational and social philosophy.

The present interpretations of Prophetic stories acknowledge and make use of some non-Muslim contributions as an intellectual interchange in the field of Islamic education. Despite this appreciation, many fundamental points of misunderstanding and denigration are revealed that some non-Muslim researchers still hold about Islamic teachings. More studies in areas of agreement, combined with removing historical stereotypes about Islamic teaching, can reduce the intellectual

tension and facilitate the process of academic interchange. At the same time, themes of disagreement need to be presented with mutual respect and in a scholarly manner, where opposing views can be displayed whenever necessary.

From a global perspective, researchers in the field of moral education, whether Muslims or non-Muslims, might reexamine the dicta of the Prophet to understand the concept of morality in the Islamic message. Muslim researchers face a vital test today because they need to present the foundation of Islamic teachings for non-Muslims. Many negative images in the West need to be addressed regarding Islamic teachings. The academic discipline could be one important tool for exchanging views and providing spiritual and intellectual enrichment. In our post-modernist age the world has become one small village which forces researchers, especially in educational domains, to build bridges of mutual understanding and respect.

Muslim researchers in the field of education can present Prophetic stories in school curricula as effective means of inculcating morality. Such stories illustrate and represent the Qurʾānic and Prophetic view of humanity, society and life. Moreover, these Prophetic stories meet the spiritual needs of humans by providing them with hope, kindness and mercy.

Reviewing Western literature about Islamic teaching reveals that many studies misrepresent the Islamic message. Yet there are some positive indications that might increase in the future and provide a good atmosphere for understanding Islamic teachings. Charles, the Prince of Wales, urges Westerners to foster ties and learn from Islam. He says, "Everywhere in the world people want to learn English. But in the West,

in turn, we need to be taught by Islamic teachers how to learn with our hearts, as well as our heads" (see The Time, 1996, p. 18). Boisard (1988), a Swiss university professor, says in this context that "a more fraternal dialogue seems to have opened up in recent times. The study of universal moral values provides a healthier basis for the debates serving as 'steppingstones' between Islam and the West" (p. 54).

Muslim researchers in the field of education have a rich literature full of spiritual and moral teachings. That literature needs to be presented academically and publicly to confront the threat of extreme materialism, systematic misrepresentation, and historical prejudice that still exists largely in the West regarding Islam.

Appendix 1

The Origins of Prophetic Stories: Introduction to Ḥadīth Literature

Prophetic stories are part of the vast Ḥadīth literature. A Ḥadīth is a narrative report of Prophet Muḥammad's utterances, attributes, actions and displays of approval of others' actions. It is a means of conveying his life and teachings. All the Aḥādīth narratives together are known as the "Sunnah," which has been preserved from the very earliest periods of Islamic history. Prophet Muḥammad's tales have been passed down from generation to generation with the special care of the *Muḥadithīn,* Ḥadīth specialists.

This section will discuss the early preservation of the traditions of Prophet Muḥammad, as a surviving, reliable and authentic legacy by the Apostle himself. The particular focus will be on some technical strategies that Prophet Muḥammad and his Companions used in order to preserve the Ḥadīth for following generations. As might be expected, the books of Ḥadīth are rich sources of historical evidence. During his time Prophet Muḥammad used a variety of educational techniques in order to preserve the Ḥadīth. Thus, the essential focus of this section is the first Islamic century, before the scholars in the second and third Islamic centuries wrote down these Aḥādīth in a systematic and intensive way.

Educational Ways of Preserving Early Ḥadīth in the Prophet's Time

The focus here will be on the methods that played a major role in the survival of early Prophetic sayings and conduct. There are many Prophetic methods that enabled the early Muslims to preserve the

Aḥādīth in their original form. It is due to Prophet Muḥammad's teachings that most of the Companions understood very early what the Prophet was saying. Simply, the Prophet spoke in short, clear sentences and he repeated his statements many times in order to be understood. The Prophet encouraged his followers to seek knowledge, give special care to learn Ḥadīth, memorize and write Ḥadīth, correct their mistakes while learning or transmitting Ḥadīth, and give attention to female literacy. He encouraged the entire Muslim community in his time to observe his teachings and convey to others whatever they learned about Islam, not just orally or in writing, but through the living example of their lives. The following are some of these educational methods that can be identified from reviewing Ḥadīth literature:

(1) The Messenger Muḥammad "mobilized the missionary zeal of the Moslems. They were fired with the desire to discover new learning" (Allen & Muessig, 1962, p. 139). Both the Qurʾān and the Ḥadīth focus on knowledge and encourage Muslims to be seekers of knowledge. Here are some examples of Prophetic Ḥadīth that demonstrate this:

"The world is accursed and what it contains is accursed, except remembrance of Allāh and what he loves, a learned man, or a learner" (al-Nawawī, 1985, vol. 1, p. 318).

"When Allāh wishes good for anyone, He instructs him in the understanding of religion" (al-Nawawī, 1988, vol. 2, p. 232).

"He who goes forth in search of knowledge is in Allāh's path till he returns" (al-Nawawī, 1988, vol. 2, p. 234).

"Allāh makes the way to Paradise easy for him who treads the path in search of knowledge" (al-Nawawī, 1988, vol. 2, p. 234).

"A believer is never satisfied with acquiring of knowledge till he reaches Paradise" (al-Nawawī, 1988, vol. 2, p. 235).

"Allāh, his angels, the dwellers of the heaven and the earth, even the ant in its hole and the fish (in water) invoke blessings on him who imparts good knowledge to the people" (al-Nawawī, 1988, vol. 2, pp. 235-236).

(2) The second step was clarifying the importance of the precepts of Prophet Muḥammad. The Prophet said: ". . . you shall then hold fast to my examples" (al-Nawawī, 1985, vol. 1, p. 119; see al-Albani, 1995, pp. 24-27). "May Allāh prosper the affairs of a person who hears something from you and communicates it to others as he has heard it, because many men to whom something is conveyed, retain it in their memory better than those who have heard it (originally)" (al-Nawawī, 1988, vol. 2, p. 236). "Preach on my behalf even if it is only a verse of the Qurʾān; and relate traditions of the Banī Isrāīl for there is no restriction; but he who deliberately attributes to me something false prepares his abode in Hell" (al-Nawawī, 1988, vol. 2, p. 234).

(3)The Prophet used to preach to teach people and after he finished he ordered his Companions to study or memorize his speech and convey it to others (see al-Tbrīzy, 1985, vol. 1, p. 13; al-Jawzyyah, 1993, p. 281). Therefore, it is not hard to find Companions such Abū Huraīrah, who "used to divide the night as it was in three portions, one third for sleeping, one third for prayer and one third for the recollection of the Ḥadīth of the Prophet" (Azami, 1992b, p. 14). Also the Companions used to memorize Prophetic sayings in groups (Azami, 1992b, p. 15).

(4) The Prophet encouraged his Companions to write down his sayings, while emphasizing that Qurʾānic verses must not be mixed with Muḥammad's words. Prophet Muḥammad ordered his Companions to write some of his teachings of Islamic laws, as is clear in the story of the man who came from Yemen (al-Bukhārī, 1994, p. 100). He sent a letter to the people of Yemen which stated, "no one is to touch the Qurʾān except one who is purified" (Sabiq, 1989, p. 40).

The Prophet encouraged one of the companions to write whatever came out of his lips because he did not speak anything that was not just and true (al-Albānī, 1986, p. 262). Abd Allāh B. ʿAmr wrote down the Prophet's words as he heard them from the Prophet (Nadwi, 1992, p. 84). The Prophet had more than 17 scribes, which indicates that he understood the importance of written knowledge. Al-Jawziyyah (1995) mentioned many names of scribes of the Prophet (p. 117). Because the Prophet said that one should write down knowledge (al-Albānī, 1986, vol. 2, p. 816), it is not surprising to find that many Companions collected Prophetic sayings in writing during Muḥammad's life and after, as recent investigations have confirmed (see Abdul ḥamīd, 1987, p. 8; al-Ṣāliḥ, 1986, p. 32). Writing Ḥadīth was onther fruitful output of Muḥammad's efforts to make his followers and disciples literate.

> Under his guidance, many Muslims who came under his influence at an early age (such as ʿAlī, ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAmr, and Ibn ʿAbbās), learnt to read and write. He requested ʿAbd Allāh ibn Saʿīd ibn al-ʿĀṣī of Mecca to teach the people of Medina to write. He was also concerned with female literacy, and he asked Shifāʾ bint Abd Allāh to teach reading and writing to his wife, Ḥafṣa. After the Battle of the Badr he declared that any prisoner of war who was too poor to pay the required ransom and who knew the art of writing could

> regain his liberty by teaching Muslim children to write (Ṣiddiqī, 1993, p. 26).

(5) It was not just a male task to preserve the Ḥadīth but also females were invited to participate in this great work. Historically, women lived on the margins of life, but Islamic woman, especially in the early days, were an exception to this. In her book Women in Islamic Biographical Collections: From Ibn Saᶜd to Who's Who, Ruth Roded (1994), from Hebrew University of Jerusalem, says, "If U.S. and European historians feel a need to reconstruct women's history because women are invisible in the traditional sources, Islamic scholars are faced with a plethora of sources, only begun to be studied" (p. viii).

ᶜĀishah is one of those great women who played an important role by transmitting Aḥādīth to Companions and to succeeding generations. Moreover, she narrated stories that she knew, which are uniquely and totally female contributions to Arabic literature and Islamic civilization. In such an atmosphere as existed at the time of the Prophet, ᶜĀishah's magnificence affected other women such as ᶜAmrah al- Najāriyyah, who was one of her students, to contribute to knowledge.

The science of Ḥadīth owes a rich debt to many Muslim women such as Ḥafsah, Umm Ḥabībah, Maymūnah, and Umm Salamah. These women were not just reporters of Ḥadīth but also were courted among the Prophet's most honorable expositors, as well as outstanding scholars of Islamic law and teaching.

Women's contributions to Ḥadīth literature are, without doubt, a result of Prophetic teachings. In Ṣaḥiḥ al-Bukhārī, there are some reports that the Prophet had given special attention to women's education. He preached to them and fixed a day especially for women,

in order to let them listen to the lessons of the Prophet (al-Bukhārī, 1994, pp. 96, 97).

Leila Ahmed (1992), a director of the Women's Studies Program at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, advocates that women in early Muslim communities "were important contributors to the verbal texts of Islam" (p. 47). As a feminist researcher, she notes:

> The habit of listening and giving weight to women's expressed opinions and ideas evident in Muḥammad's attitude was doubtless reflective of attitudes forming part of the society more broadly. That women's words had weight, even concerning matters of spiritual and social import, continued to be a feature of the Muslim community in the years immediately following Muḥammad's death, as is clearly demonstrated by the acceptance of women's contribution to the ḥadīth (p. 72).

(6) The Apostle himself was the direct teacher who made certain that the Companions got his teachings right. It was his pedagogical method to observe his disciples. One time, a Companion was reciting a Ḥadīth to Prophet Muḥammad and when the Companion made a mistake by replacing an original word of the text, the Prophet immediately corrected him (see al-Bukhārī, 1994, p. 135). This indicates to what extent the memorizing of Ḥadīth must be accurate, for the Prophet gave special care to conserve and protect a Ḥadīth in its real, original form as much as was possible.

One day, the Prophet heard a boy mock the call to prayer which is known as the *Adhān*. The boy laughed loudly so the Prophet punished him in front of his friend. The punishment was to repeat the *Adhān*. In the beginning, the boy hated it, but after he learned how to call for prayer from the mouth of the Prophet and finally the Prophet gave him a gift, the

adhān became a beloved action to him, as the boy himself says (Juzʾ Ibn Juryj Riwāyat Shādhān Rahimahu Allāh, 1992, pp. 66-68).

This short story shows that the Prophet, himself, was involved in inculcating and teaching his *sunnah.* The story also suggests that undesired behavior need not be suppressed; one possible solution might be by retribution. The Prophetic punishment, in psychological terms, is a kind of punishment by overcorrection: "the penalty for engaging in an undesirable behavior is performing some other behaviors in the situation" (Kazdin, 1994, p. 185). Overcorrection, as research has shown, often suppresses inappropriate behavior as well as develops positive behavior (Kazdin, 1994, p. 188).

Teaching by actions made the Companions recall whatever they learned from the Prophet without much trouble. He used to order his followers to get up or go back and correct their behavior by doing such and such. For example, a Companion reported that he visited the Prophet and entered without giving a salutation. The Prophet said: "Go back and say: "Peace be on you. May I enter" (al-Nawawī, 1985, vol. 1, p. 535).

(7) The process of safeguarding and defending the Ḥadīth was not the task of just one man or even a few men; it was a duty of men and women, old and young alike. In the Islamic perspective, knowledge must be shared and not hidden.

The Prophet was eager to convey his teachings by various means. One of these means was giving speeches in public, such as at the Friday sermon or on the pilgrimage ceremony. For example, in the last speech that he delivered, the "Farewell Pilgrimage," he focused on many

important discourses dealing with his legacy. He said, "I have left with you what, if you will hold fast to, you will never go astray: the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Prophet" (El-Sayed, 1993, p. 289).

(9) One type of Prophetic teaching method encourages the followers to raise questions, discuss and even correct the mistake of the teacher. On one occasion the Prophet prayed more or less than usual, and when one of the Companions asked him about this, he replied, "If I forget, remind me" (al-Bukhārī, 1994, p. 171). Many similar reports were taken "to indicate that Muḥammad had always been conscious of the importance of his example and his teaching role" (Burton, 1994, p. 21). and to indicate at the same time the climate of free interaction between the two essential parts of the educational process, namely the student and the teacher.

Learning is a two - way street. In such a healthy educational climate, all should have the opportunity to speak and ask, give and take, receive and deliver. The last part of the next story might explain how that mutual interaction can be fruitful and appropriate to keeping the material fresh in mind. The Prophet said:

> A person was walking on his way when he became awfully thirsty. He found a well, he got down into the well and came out after drinking water. He saw a dog which was panting out of thirst. His tongue was lolling out; he was eating mud. The man thought that the dog was extremely thirsty as he was. So he descended into the well. He filled up his socks with water and held them in his teeth. He climbed up and quenched the thirst of the dog. Allāh held his action in high esteem and forgave him. The Companions (Allāh be pleased with them) said: Shall we be rewarded for showing kindness to the animals also? He said: A reward is given in connection with every living creature (al-Nawawī, 1985, vol. 1, pp. 98, 99).

Here the Prophet permits his Companions to ask, to receive an answer bigger than the question. He could have answered by saying yes or no, but the Prophet preferred to provide the students with the idea of being kind not only to dogs or even animals but one should be kind to every living creature. Consequently, this short reply and short story helped the Companions to retain and grasp the larger meaning.

(10) The Companions mentioned that the Prophet used to speak in a very easy and understandable manner. Because of this, the Companions memorized many Aḥādīth. One of the Prophet's Companions illustrated this by saying, "Whenever the Prophet spoke a sentence (said a thing), he used to repeat it thrice so that the people could understand it properly from him" (al-Bukhārī, 1994, p. 95). ᶜĀishah, Muḥammad's wife, also said that "the Prophet used to talk so clearly that if somebody wanted to count the number of his words, he could do so." "Allāh's Messenger never talked so quickly and vaguely as you do" (al-Bukhārī, 1994, p. 701). "The Messenger of Allāh (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) spoke distinctly so that all those who listened to him, understood him" (al-Nawawī, 1985, vol. 1, p. 435). It is clearly evident that the teachings of the Prophet were "clear enough to have meaning for the ignorant as well as for the learned and sophisticated," as some Western educators note (Allen & Muessig, 1962, p. 136).

The Companions and Preserving Ḥadīth

During and after the life of the Prophet, his Companions took every possible care to record, compile, explain, and protect the Aḥādīth. Pious Companions were earnest disciples of the Messenger Muḥammad, the beloved and unforgettable teacher. In this light, one needs to keep in mind that "a disciple does not only 'learn' and 'write' from his master but tries to live, and so embody, the master's teaching" (Rahman, 1979, p. 58). The Companions stick to the teachings of their master because The Holy Qurʾān touched their heart by saying; "Say: If ye do love Allāh, Follow me: Allāh will love you and forgive you your sins" (S. 3. A. 31). Thus, following Muḥammad's teachings is a sign of love, as the Qurʾān shows. Iqbal, the great philosopher of Islam, illustrates the feeling of Muslims toward their Prophet in these short but strong words: "Love of the Prophet runs like blood in the veins of his community" (Schimmel, 1985, p. 256).

It is truly impossible to understand Islam and practice it without knowing Prophet Muḥammad's teachings. Thus, the Companions both practiced Islam and transferred this legacy to others in words and actions. One of the Companions said, "I offer the prayer in front of you and my aim is to show you the way in which the Prophet used to offer the prayer" (al-Bukhārī, 1994, p. 228).

Many Companions continued to write and teach Prophetic sayings, especially in the mosques, which were also school buildings at that time. Like the Jewish synagogues and Christian churches, mosques were places for worship, social gatherings, and centers of educational enlightenment. The Muslim leaders, "Caliphs," applied Islamic laws that

they learned from their Prophet. All this and much more, served the work of protecting Aḥādīth so they would not be lost.

If a Companion felt that his friend reported a Ḥadīth that might be strange, he made sure that there was another person who had heard the Ḥadīth directly from the Prophet, as in the case of rewarding the one who follows the funeral, as illustrated below:

> Abū Huraira reported Allāh's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: He who attends the funeral till the prayer is offered for (the dead), for him is the reward of one qirat, and he who attends (and stays) till he is buried, for him is the reward of two qirat. It was said: What are the qirats? He said: They are equivalent to two huge mountains. Two other narrators added: Ibn ᶜUmar used to pray and then depart (without waiting for the burial of the dead). (Muslim, 1971, vol. 2, p. 449).
>
> "Ibn 'Umar said: Abu Hurarira narrated it too often. So he sent (a messenger to ᶜĀisha to ascertain (the fact). She (ᶜĀisha) testified Abū Huraira. Ibn ᶜUmar said: We missed so many qirats" (Muslim, 1971, vol. 2, p. 449).

Moreover, the Companions used to criticize each other if they believed a Ḥadīth was narrated in the wrong way. For instance, al-Bukhārī (1994) reported that ᶜUmar reported that the Messenger said, "The dead person is tortured by the crying of his relatives." After the death of ᶜUmar, ᶜĀisha, the Prophet's wife, said: "May Allāh be Merciful to ᶜUmar. By Allāh, Allāh's Messenger did not say that a believer is punished by the weeping (crying aloud) of his relatives. But he said, Allāh increases the punishment of a disbeliever because of weeping (crying aloud) of his relatives'." She further added, "The Qurᵓān is sufficient for you (to clear up this point) as Allāh has stated: "No bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another" (p. 326).

Al-Dimynī (1984) studied at length how the Companions preserved the Prophetic sayings. They had three criteria to critique the text of Aḥādīth: First, they used to judge the Ḥadīth by the Qurʾān, because it is impossible for a Prophetic Ḥadīth, if it is true, to infringe or go against any principle in the Qurʿān. The second criterion is reviewing the Ḥadīth in light of other Aḥādīth, for the accurate Aḥādīth will not oppose each other. Finally, al-Dimynī mentioned the third criterion, which is related to logical thinking. He means by that, the Companions, in several cases, used to criticize a Ḥadīth if it seemed to them that it was not logical.

By the time of the next generation, the Ḥadīth, in general had been in existence and when the science of the Ḥadīth was established, the oral and written Aḥādīth were precise and accurate. They were then absorbed into the work of later authors who collected authoritative teachings of the Prophet extensively.

Azami (1992a & 1992b) provides much evidence that many booklets were in circulation in the first century with regard to Ḥadīth. These booklets "were not destroyed nor did they perish, but were absorbed into the works of later authors. When the encyclopedia-type books were produced, scholars did not feel the necessity to keep the early books or booklets, and so, slowly, they disappeared" (Azami, 1992b, p. 75).

Conclusion about the authenticity of Ḥadīth literature

The Ḥadīth literature was flourishing and existed from the early times of Islamic history in both oral and sometimes written forms. The Prophet himself laid the foundation to enable Muslims to preserve the Aḥādīth in their original form. He used every possible means to make his Companions memorize a Ḥadīth, use them in daily life, and write them down, with the purpose of distinguishing the Ḥadīth from the Qur°anic verses. The Apostle confirmed the Qur°ānic fact that obeying him as a Messenger is part of obeying God. Thus, The Prophet's legacy is sacred, in terms of following whatever he said, and the true Muslim, of course, will follow his orders. The Prophet clearly stated that God revealed to him the Qur°ān and also something similar to it (al-Albānī, 1986, vol. 1, p. 517) and he means by this that God sent to him both the Qur°ān and the Sunnah: or the Prophet's teachings.

Appendix 2

The System of Transliteration

Consonants

Arabic Letters	Romanization	Arabic letters	Romanization
ا	ʾ	م	m
ب	b	ن	n
ت	t	ه ، ة	h
ث	th	و	w
ج	j	ي	y
ح	ḥ		
خ	kh		
د	d		
ذ	dh		
ر	r		
ز	z		
س	s		
ش	sh		
ص	ṣ		
ض	ḍ		
ط	ṭ		
ظ	ẓ		
ع	ʿ		
غ	gh		
ف	f		
ق	q		
ك	k		
ل	l		

Vowels

Short vowels:

Fatḥah, a

Kasrah, i

Ḍammah, u

Final ى (*alif maqṣūrah*), á

Long vowels:

Long *fatḥah*, ā

Long *kasrah*, ī

Long *ḍammah*, ū

Appendix 3 Prophetic Stories

The Story of Sincerity

It is reported on the authority of 'Abdullāh Bin al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allāh be pleased with him), that he heard the Messenger of Allāh (may the peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) as saying: When three persons of a people before you were on a journey, they were overtaken by a rain-storm and they took refuge in a cave. A rock slithered and blocked the exit from the cave.

One of the three persons said: "Recall to your mind the virtuous actions which were done by you sincerely for Allāh. Beseech Allāh for deliverance (from the calamity) by virtue of some righteous act (He may remove it)." Thereupon one of them said: "My parents were very old and I used to offer them milk before my children and the other members of my family. One day I went far away in quest of green trees and could not come back in time till my parents had gone to sleep. When I milked as usual and brought milk to them, they had fallen asleep. I hated to disturb them and also disliked to give milk to my children to drink before them (my parents). My children were crying out of hunger at my feet but I awaited their [my parents'] wakening till it dawned (This state of affairs lasted till morning). When they got up they drank milk. O' Lord! You know that if I had done so to seek your pleasure then deliver out us of the distress imposed upon us by this stone (rock)." Thereupon the stone moved a little but not sufficient enough to serve the purpose of their passage.

The other said: "O' Lord! I had a cousin whom I loved with the utmost love of men for women. I tried to seduce her but she refused. Consequently in a year of famine, she approached me. I gave her one hundred and twenty dinars on the condition that she would yield herself to me. She agreed and when we got together (for sexual intercourse) she said : 'O' servant of Allāh! Fear Allāh and do not open the seal unlawfully.' Thereafter I drew away from her in spite of the fact that I loved her most passionately; and I let her keep the money I had given her. O' Allāh! You know if I had done so to seek Your pleasure, then remove the distress in which we are suffering." Again the stone moved aside a bit but they were unable to get out.

The third said: "Lord! I hired the service of some laborers and paid them wages but one of them departed without taking what was due to him. I invested it in business and the business prospered greatly. After a long time, he came to me and said: 'O' servant of Allah! Pay me my dues.' I said: 'All that you see is yours, camels, cattle, goats and slaves.' He said: 'O' servant of Allāh! Do not cut jokes with me.' I assured him that I was not joking. So he took all things and went away. He spared nothing. Lord! If I did so seeking Your pleasure, then relieve us of our distress." The stone slipped aside and they got out walking freely. (Agreed upon [recorded by al-Bukhārī & Muslim]). (Al-Nawawī, 1985, vol. 1, pp. 7-8).

The Story of the Leprous, Bald and Blind

It is reported on the authority of Abū Huraira (Allāh be pleased with him) that he heard the Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allāh be upon him) saying: "There were three men among the Bani Isrā'īl, one leprous, one bald and one blind, whom Allāh wished to test. He therefore, sent to them an angel who came to the leper and asked him what he would like best and he replied: 'A good colour, a good skin and to be rid of what makes me loathsome to people.' Thereupon he touched him and his loathsomeness vanished and he was given a good colour and a good skin. He, then, asked what property he would like best and he replied that he would like camels-or perhaps he said cattle, for Ishaq (one of the transmitters of the tradition) was uncertain, but either the leper or the bald man said: Camels and the other said: Cattle. He was given a she-camel ten months young. The angel expressed the wish that Allāh's blessing might accompany it.

He then went to the bald man and asked him what he would like best and he replied: "Good hair and to be rid of what makes me loathsome to people." Thereupon he touched him and it departed from him and he was given good hair. He then asked: What property he would like best? He replied that he would like cattle, so he was given a pregnant cow. The angel expressed the wish that Allāh's blessing might accompany it. He then went to the blind man and asked him what he would like best, and he replied: "Allāh should restore my sight to me so that I may see people." Thereupon he touched him and Allāh restored

his sight to him. He then asked what property he would like best and replied that he would like sheep, so he was given a pregnant ewe. Flocks and herds were produced for the three men, the one having a wadi with camels, the second one with sheep.

Then the angel came to the one who had been a leper in the form and appearance of a leper and said: "I am a poor man whose resources are exhausted in my journey, and my only means of arriving at my destination are dependent on Allāh and then on you, so I ask you, by Him, Who gave you the good colour, the good skin and the property, for a camel by which I may get to the end of my journey," but he replied: "I have many dues to pay." He then said: "I seem to recognize you. Were you not a leper whom people found loathsome and a poor man to whom Allāh gave property?" He replied: "I became heir to this property as one great in dignity from one great in dignity." Then he said: "If you are telling a lie, may Allāh return you to your former condition."

He went to the one who had been bald in the form of a bald man and said the same as he had said to the other and received a similar reply. So he said: "If you are telling a lie, may Allāh return you to your former condition."

He then went to the one who had been a blind man and said: "I am a poor man and a traveller whose resources are exhausted in my journey, and my only means of arriving at my destination are dependent on Allāh and then on you, so I ask you, by Him, Who restored your eye-sight, for a sheep by which I may get to the end of my journey." He replied: "In fact I was blind. Allāh restored my eye-sight, so take what you wish and leave what you wish. I swear by Allah that I shall not importune you today for anything you take, as I give it for Allāh's sake." He said: "Keep your property, for you have all simply been put to a test, and Allāh is pleased with you and displeased with both of the Companions." (Agreed upon [recorded by al-Bukhārī & Muslim]). (Al-Nawawī, 1985, vol. 1, pp. 57-59).

The Story of None Spoke in the Cradle but only Three

It has been narrated on the authority of Abū Huraira (Allāh be pleased with him) that he heard Allāh's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) as saying: None spoke in the cradle but only three persons, Jesus Christ son of Mary, the second one was a child in the

story of Juraij. Juraij was a pious man. He had got constructed a temple and confined himself in that. One day his mother came to him as he was busy in prayer and she called him. He said: "my Lord, my mother is calling me while I am engaged in my Prayer (enlighten me as to which should I prefer)." He continued with the Prayer and his mother went away. She returned and she came on the next day and he was busy in prayer, and she said: "O' Juraij." And he said: "My Lord, my mother is calling me while I am engaged in Prayer," and he continued with the Prayer and she went back, and then on the third day she again came and her son was busy in Prayer and she said: "O' Juraij." And he said: "My Lord, my mother is calling me while I am engaged in my Prayer," and he continued with the Prayer. Thus, she said: "My Lord, don't give him death unless he has seen hardship and the face of the prostitutes."

The story of Juraij and that of his meditation and Prayer gained currency amongst Banū Isrā°īl. There was a prostitute who had been a beauty incarnate. She said to the people: "If you like I can allure him to evil and involve him in scandal. Thereafter she presented herself to him but he paid no heed to her. Then she came to a shepherd who lived near the temple and she offered herself to him and he had sexual intercourse with her and so she became pregnant and when she gave birth to a child she declared: This is from Juraij. So people came to Juraij and asked him to get down from his temple. They demolished the temple and began to beat him. Juraij said "what is the matter?" They said: "You have committed fornication with this prostitute and she has given birth to your child." He said: "Where is the child?" They brought the child and Juraij said: "Just leave me alone so that I may observe Prayer." Then he observed Prayer and when he finished, he came to the child. He struck his stomach and asked the child: "O' boy, who is your father?" The child replied: "My father is such and such the shepherd." So the people turned towards Juraij, kissed him and touched him for seeking his blessing and said: "We shall construct your temple with gold." He said: "No, just rebuild it with mud as it had been," so they built it.

The third case is that of an infant who was being suckled by his mother. At this time a man passed by riding a fast and handsome horse and the rider was wearing fine clothes. The baby's mother said: "Allāh make my son like this man." The infant left his mother's breast and moving his face glanced at the man and said: "O Allāh, do not make

me like this man." Then he turned to his mother's breast and resumed the suckling. Here the Holy Prophet demonstrated the suckling of the child by putting his forefinger into his mouth and sucking. Then Prophet Muḥammad continued: Then some people and a maid servant passed by and they were beating the maid servant, charging her for having committed adultery and theft; and in reply she was saying: "Sufficient for me is Allāh and an Excellent Guardian is He." The mother prayed: "O' Allāh, do not make my son like this maid servant." Thereupon the baby left suckling, looked upon the young woman and said: "Allāh, do make me like her."

Now a dialogue began between the mother and the child. She said: "A handsome person passed and I supplicated: 'Allāh, make my son like him,' but you said: 'O' Allāh do not make me like him.' Then some persons passed with a maid servant, whom they were beating accusing her of adultery and theft. I supplicated: 'O' Allāh, do not make my son like this maid servant,' but you said: 'O' Allāh, do make me like her.'" The boy replied "that man was a cruel person, so I contradicted you and said: 'Allāh, do not make me like him.' As to the girl, they said: 'you committed adultery'; but actually she had not. They charged her, 'you stole'; but she had not stole. I therefore, said: 'O' Allāh, make me like her.' (Recorded by al-Bukhārī & Muslim)." (Al-Nawawī, 1985, vol. 1, pp. 187-190; al-Nawawī, 1983, pp. 170-171).

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