

**AN APOLOGY FOR
MOHAMMED
AND THE KORAN**

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An Apology for Mohammed and the Koran by John Davenport

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JOHN DAVENPORT

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FOR
MOHAMMED AND THE KORAN.

BY
JOHN DAVENPORT,
AUTHOR OF THE 'LIFE OF ALI PACHA OF JAMINA;' 'ODDE VINDICATED;' 'KOORG
AND ITS RAJAS;' 'AIDE MÉMOIRE TO THE HISTORY OF INDIA;' 'HISTORICAL
GRAM BOOK,' AND VARIOUS EDUCATIONAL WORKS.

Contents:

- I. MOHAMMED: A BIOGRAPHY.
- II. THE KORAN AND ITS MORALITY.
- III. CHARGES AGAINST MOHAMMED REFUTED.
- IV. BEAUTIES OF THE KORAN.

"I confess I can make nothing of the critics in these times, who would accuse Mohammed of deceit *propre*; of conscious deceit generally, or, perhaps, at all; still more, of living in a mere element of conscious deceit, and writing this Koran as a forger and a juggler would have done. Every candid eye, I think, will read the Koran far otherwise than so."—CARLYLE'S WORKS, Vol. VI., p. 214.

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J. DAVY AND SONS, 137, LONG ACRE.

1869.

PREFACE.

THE present work is an humble but earnest endeavour to free the history of Mohammed from false accusations and illiberal imputations, and to vindicate his just claim to be regarded as one of the greatest benefactors of mankind.

The writers who, misguided by a blind zeal, have thus assailed the fair fame of the Restorer of the Worship of the UNITY, have not only shown themselves to be wholly uninfluenced by the spirit of that charity so strongly and emphatically inculcated by the Saviour himself, but have also erred in judgment, for the least reflection would have convinced them that it is not from a Christian and modern stand-point that the Prophet and his doctrines ought to be examined and criticised, but from an Eastern one; in other words, Mohammed should be contemplated and judged as a religious reformer and legislator living in Arabia in the seventh century after Christ, and he must then, most undoubtedly, be acknowledged as the very greatest man whom Asia can claim as her son, if not,

one of the rarest and most transcendent geniuses the world itself ever produced.

If we consider what the Arabs were before Mohamed's appearance and what they became after it—if we reflect, moreover, upon the enthusiasm kindled and kept alive by his doctrine in the breasts of more than one hundred and sixty millions of the human race—we cannot but feel that to withhold our admiration from so extraordinary and so great a man would be the most flagrant injustice, and that to attribute his advent to mere blind chance would be to doubt the over-ruling power of Divine Providence.

In conclusion, the author would state that, in a few instances, when diffident of his own powers to do ample justice to so interesting and important a subject, he has availed himself of the ideas and language of other writers, an aid which he takes the present opportunity of candidly and gratefully acknowledging.

14, *Grove Terrace, St. John's Wood, London, N.W.*

August, 1869.

PART I.

LIFE OF MOHAMMED.

LIFE OF MOHAMMED.

CHAPTER I.

Authentic character of Mohammed's life—Condition of Arabia at his birth—Religion of the Arabs—Corruptions of the Jewish and Christian religions—Exact date of Mohammed's birth uncertain—That of Jesus Christ still more so—Mohammed's descent from Ishmael—The Kaaba and the Black Stone—Burckhardt quoted—Circumcision unnecessary in Mohammed's case; why—The twelve prepuces of Jesus Christ (note)—Death of Mohammed's mother—His filial piety—Mohammed's gratitude to his foster-nurse—He accompanies his uncle in his commercial expeditions—Adventure in the Desert—Marries Khadijah, the rich widow—Two descriptions of his personal appearance—Interval in his life similar to the one in that of Jesus Christ—Mohammed's melancholy and contemplative disposition—Apparition of the Angel Gabriel to him—Is declared God's apostle—Notice of celebrated visionaries (note)—Mohammed's first converts—Failure—A miracle demanded and refused—Grotius's pious falsehood—Ali, Mohammed's Vizier—Mohammed's public preaching—Omar's conversion—Mohammed and his disciples persecuted—The first Hegira or flight—Protection afforded by the Nejashee of Abyssinia.

It may be truly affirmed that of all known legislators and conquerors, not one can be named, the history of whose life has been written with greater authenticity and fuller detail, than that of Mohammed. In fact, strip his biography of the prodigies which Asiatic writers have ever affected, and what remains may confidently defy incredulity itself.

At the period of Mohammed's birth a great part of Arabia was under a foreign yoke; all the northern portion of Arabia Petrea, as well as Syria, Palestine, and Egypt, was under the sway of the Emperors of Constantinople.

The shores of the Persian Gulf, the countries watered by the Tigris and the Euphrates, and the southern provinces of the Peninsula, acknowledged the supremacy of the Choaroes of Persia. A portion of the coasts of the Red Sea to the south of Mecca was subject to the Christian kings of Abyssinia. Mecca and the all but inaccessible countries of the interior had preserved their independence. The political state of the country necessarily determined, to a great extent, the religious belief of the inhabitants. Thus, where the Greek and Abyssinian authority prevailed, there Christianity had the ascendancy; the doctrines of the Magi and that of the Manicheans, both of which recognised two antagonistic principles, were predominant in the Persian provinces, while everywhere else idolatry held unbounded sway. In the first ages the Arabs had adored one supreme God (Allah Taala) creator of the heavens and the earth, but subsequently, had abandoned that worship and raised temples for the adoration of demons, sons of God, who, residing in the planets and fixed stars, governed the earth. These Gods were not universally adored throughout the country; each tribe, each family had its particular divinities, its Lares, in fact, in honour of which even human victims were immolated. The Arabs believed neither in a future state nor in the creation of the world, but attributed the formation of the universe to nature, and its future destruction to time. Debauchery and robbery everywhere prevailed, and since death was regarded as the end, strictly so called, of existence, so was there neither recompense for virtue nor punishment for vice. A like moral and religious corruption was to be found among the Christians and the Jews who, for ages, had established themselves in the Arabian Peninsula, and had there formed very powerful parties. The Jews had come to seek in that land of liberty an asylum from the persecution of the Romans: the Christians had also fled thither in order to escape the massacres occasioned