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**Mohammed**

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W. J. Hodges. '78

## Mohammed.

One of the most successful religious impostures the world has ever seen is Mohammedanism, which owed its origin to the enthusiasm of a single individual about whom there has been a great diversity of opinions. Some, eminent for their ability and scholarship, holding that he was of a

truly noble character  
and one of the greatest  
benefactors of our race.  
These admit that he  
had his weak points,  
(and who they say has not)  
and that there are dark  
stains upon some por-  
tions of his history. Others  
of equal ability maintain  
that he was an impos-  
tor and his life one  
of conscious deception  
and guilt. Amidst  
these conflicting opin-  
ions based upon the  
investigation of the  
same historic data  
it might seem like  
presumption on our

part to attempt an estimate of his character, or an enumeration of the causes which ensured his success, and yet this is the task upon which we enter, not anticipating however that we shall exhaust the subject, or forever settle the controversy. Moham-med was born (A.D. 570) at a time most favorable for introducing a new system of religion and government. He also possessed to an eminent degree those mental qualifi

ications which enabled him to rightly apprehend and take advantage of these auspicious omens. On the one hand the religious state of the world was favorable for a change. Christianity soon after the conversion of Constantine began to wane. Besides the patronage of the government religion was popular and conversions by communities took place. Popularity took the place of persecution, worldliness took the place of spirituality and so

at the birth of Moham-  
med we find the church  
corrupted and shorn of  
its vitality and power.  
On the other hand the Roman  
and Persian monarch-  
ies through corruption  
and luxury had fallen  
into decay while Arabia  
was strong and vigorous  
only needing some com-  
mon bond of union  
to make her power felt  
among the nations.  
Mohammed possessed  
but few opportunities for  
education aside from  
those afforded by personal  
contact with his fellow  
men. These he seems

to have fully improved,  
His knowledge of Juda-  
ism was gained from  
Israelites residing in  
Arabia. Some say that  
for a time he studied the  
law under a Jewish  
rabbi. On his trading  
expeditions to Syria  
and other countries he  
came in contact with  
Christians and from  
them he gained an  
insight into the doc-  
trines of Christianity.

Thus comparatively un-  
known, Mohammed, en-  
gaged in the peaceful  
pursuits of trade and  
in the study of the

great themes of govern-  
ment and religion,  
passed his life until  
his fortieth year. Thus  
far in his history there  
have been no indications  
of his superiority or that  
he was in preparation  
for the prophetic office.  
From this point tracing  
his history as he has  
given it to us in the  
Koran a great change in  
his life begins. He is  
brought in direct com-  
munication with the  
spirit world. He is  
permitted to enter  
into the council cham-  
bers of The King The

Lord of Hosts. He receives  
a Divine call to the  
prophetic office. The  
angel Gabriel who  
had come to Mary  
telling her of the  
honor conferred on  
her comes to him  
informing him that  
he is called of God to  
fill the prophetic of-  
fice and that as he is  
to be the last so also  
he is to be the greatest  
of all his prophets. For  
twentythree years he stood  
before the world as one  
sent of God and speak-  
ing with Divine author-  
ity. Had he made no

claim to Divine author-  
ity and in addition  
to this could we blot  
out the last ten or  
eleven years of his  
life it would not be  
a difficult matter  
to form a just estimate  
of his character. Previous  
to his call he had  
acquired the name of  
the faithful and for  
thirteen years after  
that event we find  
him true to his mission  
of proclaiming the Divine  
existence and Unity.

He met with opposition  
and even persecution  
but in the midst of it

all he was firm and unyielding. Using no compulsory measures but declaring that it was his duty to proclaim the truth whether men accepted it or not. While there was much in his life, during this period, that was inconsistent and much in his teaching that was detestable and absurd, there are in both many things to commend. That he possessed some noble qualities no one can well deny. That there was much in his

system which, in it-  
self, would have tended  
to the elevation of his  
countrymen is also  
manifest. But after  
making due allowance  
for all the modifying  
influences of his envi-  
ronment, judging him  
and his system by the  
standard which he  
set (that is a true proph-  
et of God) we must brand  
him as an impostor  
and as consciously  
such going forth in  
the Divine name  
to deceive the people.  
The succeeding portion  
of his life has been so

black and infamous  
that even his best friends  
and greatest admirers  
have utterly failed to  
exculpate him. When  
once he had gained  
the power to compel  
obedience the true  
character of the man  
quickly appeared and  
became more and  
more manifest until  
the day of his death.

He was guilty of forg-  
ing the name of God  
This was manifested  
in his repeated affir-  
mations of the Divine  
authority and in the  
readiness with which

contradictory Divine Revelations were made to meet the ever changing necessities of his cause. At Mecca all his messages were of a peaceful and conciliatory character. at Medina all were in favor of war rapine and plunder. At Mecca God was just and merciful always ready to forgive. at Medina He was relentless and unforgiving He was guilty of murder having delivered up the innocent unprotected and unoffending

to the fury of his fanatical followers. He was guilty of polygamy and the grossest sensuality. That he pampered to the tastes and basest passions of his followers is also true. That there is abundant proof to sustain these charges, even in the Koran, no impartial reader of the same will deny.

His want of opportunities for culture; the influence of Yeticism together with that of a degenerated Judaism and Christianity upon his religious nature:

and finally the baneful effects of Yatatism, which occupied so prominent a place in his system, are all inadequate to shield him from these charges. He had his virtues but in the light of the evidence which he has furnished us we can but brand him as an impostor and his system one at war with the best interests of humanity.