

## **A Thematic Reading of John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* with Introductory References to Islam in English Literature**

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### **Abstract**

The importance of this study lies in shedding the light on the impact of Islam and Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) on the western culture and English literature in particular. While some writers were looking at Islam as a dangerous element, others were completely taken by the oriental spirit of Arabic and Islamic culture and glorifying it. Writers from Chaucer to later ones mostly make references to this impact showing how vast was the gap of misunderstanding between the east and the West. Thus, this study aims at breaking the barrier between East and West in its three sections as it introduces the meaning of Islam and its common features with other religions in the first section. The second section briefly presents writers' reflection on Islam in English literature in some prominent historical phases. The third section dominantly focuses on the equivalent Qur'anic and Biblical images in John Bunyan's fiction *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

**Keywords:** John Bunyan, Pilgrim's Progress, Islam in English Literature

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## Introductory Remarks

One of the most rhetorical definitions of Islam said by an English Christian writer is that of Carlyle who said: "Islam," means "That we must submit to God. That our whole strength lies in resigned submission to Him, Whatsoever He does to us, for this world and for the other!"[1] And he continued to say: "Islam means in its way Denial of Self, Annihilation of Self"[2]confirming by that the divine convergence of Islam and Christianity; if "This is the soul of Islam; it is properly the soul of Christianity"[3].

According to the interpretations of Ibn Kuthair,[4] AlTabari[5] and Al-Qurtubi[6]Islam is the religion of all the prophets built on total resignation and submission to God; God asserted in Surah Al- Imran that "The religion before Allah is Islam (submission to His Will): nor did the people of the Book dissent there from except through envy of each other, after knowledge had come to them. But if any deny the Signs of Allah, Allah is swift in calling to account."(3:19)

The word Islam, then, or "submission" derived from the same word as "Salam", or "peace", in Arabic.[7]Reflecting to this meaning, IbnQaimAl\_Jawzia defined Muslim as the one who submits himself to God with no objection to His Will and not to be wrath with; peacefully with complete satisfaction[8]

All of the divine religions descended to lead people willingly into the submission to God (Allah).[9]That's why What came in the Holy Quran has with no doubt confirmed the significant areas of agreement shared by Islam and Christianity such as fundamentals of faith in the 'Oneness of God,[10]the Last Day, good deeds and paradise, hell and punishment as well as purification and penance. God has addressed all of the believers with no exception in Surah Al-Maida, "Believers, Jews, Sabaeans and Christians – whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and does what is right- shall have nothing to fear or to regret." (5:69)

Certain fundamentals of prohibitions are also shared such as sins of idolatry, adultery, murder, theft, and false witness. A list of commandments and prohibitions can be found in the Holy Qur'an ,Surah Al-Isra, " to worship non but Him," "to show kindness to your parents," " give to the near of kin," "Do not squander," "Say kind words," "Be neither miserly nor

prodigal,” “You shall not kill your children for fear of want,” “You shall not kill any man whom Allah forbidden,” “You shall not draw to adultery,” “Do not draw near the property of orphans,” “Keep your promise,” “Do not follow what you do not know,” “Do not walk proudly in the earth,”(17:22-39) and to the end of the list. Herbert Busse in *Islam in the World Today* confirms the corresponding of this list to the Ten Commandments stated in Exodus 20, which are holy to both Christians and Jews.[11]Islam shares with Christianity the same principles of social commitment, care for the needy, and the obligation to act ethically. They have the same practices of worship such as praying, fasting, charity and pilgrimage. Though the interpretations of these statements differ from one tradition to another; in Surah Al-Maida, God said: “We have ordained a law for each of you.”(5:48) Muslims consider Christians and Jews to be “People of the Book” or in Arabic (AhluElkitab) as came in Surah Al Imran (3:64).

The relationship between Christianity and Islam grew stronger when Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) firstly sent immigrant Muslims to the Christian king of Abyssinia who provided his complete protection for Muslims against the unbelievers of Quraish. Secondly, when Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) granted immunity and taxes exemption for Christians by the “Achtiname Testament[12]treaties of peace signed in Al- Medina 622. He established by that an Islamic nation built on respect, tolerance, brotherhood, unity, equity and freedom of man, mined and religions. His ethics and sayings (Hadith) side by side with the teachings of *the Holy Quran* and the Divine laws (Sharia) of Islam will be soon adopted by the French and English thinkers in setting their revolutionary theories in later ages.

However, the conflict between Christianity and Islam ,according to Huskin and Southern, became more serious in the Middle Ages as a result to the rapid expansion of Islam from Asia into North Africa and parts of Europe like Sicily and Spain. The influence of the Islamic culture on the West extended to include architecture, art, and literature as well as Arabic language emphasizing by that what Christopher Wren called it inspiration cross European continent during the Crusade (11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Century.)[13] References to the growth of European sciences associated with the Arabic translation of ancient Greek philosophical and scientific texts which were not available in Latin in Western Europe. The challenge of enlightenment brought by Arabic speaking scholars in Islamic European areas as Spain

and Sicily who translated many scientific and philosophical texts from Arabic into Latin including Qur'an[14] All these reasons together besides being the most competitive monotheist religion, as Haidarah referred, put Islam on top of threads to Christianity[15].

## **Reflection of Islam on English Literature**

The unconscious admiration for Islamic perspective and teachings seemed to echo in the main eras of English literature throughout history starting from the Medieval to the Elizabethan, Romantic, and Victorian up to the modern age. Writers like Chaucer, Shakespeare, Rousseau, Voltaire, Carlyle, Byron and others provided valuable insight into Western view of Islam.

In 1386, Geoffrey Chaucer made references to Islam and Islamic scholars in his prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*. He expressed through the Man of Law's Tale his knowledge of Islam, Alkoran, and Muhammad (Mahoun); the discussion between the Syrian Sultana and her converted son made a good reference. The Man of Law described Islam as a monotheistic religion with holy set of laws and beliefs revealed in the Qur'an; breaking these laws is forbidden. Islamic knowledge for him might be useful and should therefore be borrowed and incorporated into European thought but not before having removed from its cultural context, as Brenda Deen Schildgen put it[16].

The shadow of the medieval system of ethics clearly reflected on the Elizabethans and developed a mixture of Christian and Aristotelian ethics. Such set of ethics was indebted to the famous medieval religious authority Thomas Aquinas, who was himself influenced by the Muslim philosopher Averroes (Ibn Rushd)[17]. Dr. Muna Al-Alwan in her research 'Reading Shakespeare Cross-Culturally: An Islamic Approach' emphasized that "Shakespeare and his contemporaries were greatly influenced by the spiritual legacy of the Middle Ages[18] Tillyard added that, "though there were various new things in the Elizabethan age to make life exciting, the old struggle between the claims of two worlds persisted and that to look on this age as mainly secular is wrong[19]

The concept of the Chain of the Being, tackled by Tillyard, has parallelized the word "darajaat" in the Qur'an. Through one of his characters, Ulysses,

Shakespeare in *Troilus and Cressida* declared his perspective about this concept: "The heavens themselves, the planet, and this center observe degree, priority and place, insister, course, proportion, season, form, office and custom, all in line of order."(1.3.86-89)

It was the concept of giving priority that found its parallel in the Bible as well as in several verses in the Qur'an. In Surah Al-Zukhruf,: God said " It is We Who portion out between them their livelihood in the life of this world: and We raise some of them above others in ranks, so that some may command work from others But the Mercy of thy Lord is better than the (wealth) which they amass."(43:32) Also in Surah Al-An'am, the concept of degrees was asserted twice, firstly "We raise by degrees whom We will. Indeed your Lord is Wise and Knowing"(6:83); and secondly in His saying "He hath raised you in ranks, some above the others, that He may try you in the gifts He hath given you"(6:165)

The place of Man on this Universe according to the Elizabethan was the same as that in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Teen: "We have indeed created man" in the best of molds"(95:4). Tillyard declared that "man sums up in himself the total faculties of earthly phenomena", in the chain of being:

the position of man was of paramount interest. ...He was the nodal point, and his double nature, though the source of internal conflict, had the unique function of binding together all creation, of bridging the greatest cosmic chasm, that between matter and spirit[20].

Parallel to these were Shakespeare's Hamlet's great lines about Man describing him as "a piece of work," "an angel,"

What a piece of work is a man, how noble in reason how infinite in faculties, in form and moving how express and admirable, in action how like an angel,(2.2:296-301)

Dr. Al-Alwan highlighted the moral behavior of Shakespeare's characters and explained it with more direct Islamic terms. Similar points of view set a kind of bridge between Western and Islamic visions of life. Concerning Man's moral behavior, Shakespeare asserted the fact that" Man is

responsible for his actions as he is endowed with reason and understanding that he is destined to struggle, suffer and make choices[21].

An echo for this conception could be traced in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqara; "Allah does not charge a soul except with that within its capacity. It will have the consequence of what good it has gained, and it will bear the consequence of what evil it has earned"(2:286) Also in Surah Al-Insan, "Indeed we have guided him to the way, be he grateful or be he ungrateful"(76:13) And in Surah Al-Nazi'at, "So as for he who transgressed and preferred the life of the world, then indeed Hellfire will be his refuge. But as for he who feared his Lord and prevented the soul from unlawful inclination, then Paradise will be his refuge."(79:37-40) Finally, in Surah Al-Nisa, "So follow not your personal inclination lest you be unjust"(4:135)

Understanding the spirituality of Islam emphasized the relationship between the East and the West in Shakespeare's works as well as other Elizabethan Men of letters. They were so clever in pointing out the real danger that threatened the safety of their world; knowing Islam was their real dilemma. As they understood Islam properly they started to inject their writings with Islamic morality to establish solid ground for their work.

More wonder and Islamic inspiration can be traced in the Romantic age. As there was a revolt against the classical spirit of the Eighteenth century which had given rise to artificiality in all aspects of life. Romantic writers and poets showed interest in humanity, nature, mystery (giving inwardness and commonness to uncommon things, spiritualizing nature[22]). They were also interested in the past and its originality as an outlet of the false reality and routines; the East with its purity as it was untouched by the evilness of Man became a source of inspiration. They developed love for the elemental simplicities of life that resulted in idealizing childhood and returning to nature. Influenced by the revolutionary principles of Islam against slavery and ignorance, Rousseau's ideology inspired the romantics and inflamed their minds in terms of liberty, fraternity and equality. In his book *The Social Contract*, which he wrote in 1762, he asserted the free will of Man inquiring the quest of slavery 'Man is free, everywhere in chains!' He believed in the unity of the individuals in one solid structured society, "As soon as this multitude is so united in one body, it is impossible to offend against one of the members without attacking the body, and still more to offend against the

body without the members resenting it[23]. Rereading Rousseau's words with reference to Islam, one can recall the conception of one united Ummah. In his Hadith, Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon him) described the relationship among Muslims like a solid structure, 'One ties the other' and in another Hadith as one body; "when any limb of it aches, the whole body aches, because of sleeplessness and fever[24].

In his complete works *Œuvres complètes de Voltaire*, 1772) he showed more mature understanding of Prophet Muhammad's character describing his religion as:

... wise, strict, chaste, and human: wise, because it doesn't fall in the foolishness of associating any idea to God, and because it doesn't have any "mystery"; strict, because it forbids gambling, wine and alcohol, and commends to pray five times a day, chaste, because it limits to a maximum of four a number of wives that was previously numerous like it is so common in the bed of all princes of the Orient, human, because it commands charity even more strongly than the pilgrimage to Mecca itself. Add to this all the character of truth and tolerance[25].

He also praised the revolutionary role of Prophet Mohammad in changing the world:

He is admired for having raised himself from being a camel-driver to be a pontiff, a legislator, and a monarch; for having subdued Arabia, which had never before been subjugated; for having given the first shock to the Roman Empire in the East, and to that of the Persians; and /admire him still more for having kept peace in his house among his wives. He changed the face of part of Europe, one half of Asia, and nearly all Africa; nor was his religion unlikely, at one time, to subjugate the whole earth. On how trivial a circumstance will revolutions sometimes depend! A blow from a stone, a little harder than that which he received in his first battle, might have changed the destiny of the world![26].

Influenced by these revolutionary concepts, George Gordon, Lord Byron (1788-1824) rebelled against the conventions and hypocrisies of society developing an interest in the East. He had noticed the shallowness of his society. He had also noticed that religions have a common ethical core comparing Christianity in Britain to Islam in Turkey. He once said he had encountered as much, if not more, day-to-day decent neighborly conduct while in the Muslim East as he met with in Christian Britain, and maybe this is the key to the integration of Islamic communities into Western societies. Whatever genuine intellectual differences and attitudes might be existed, hopefully day-to-day practical humanity will, in the end, carry the day. In his childhood, as mentioned above, Byron's imaginative life was kindled by boyhood reading about the East, including a history of the Ottoman Empire. He recalled later: "it was the first book that gave me pleasure when a child; and I believe it had much influence on my subsequent wishes to visit the Levant, and gave, perhaps, the oriental coloring which is observed in my poetry[27]. His Eastern Tales - The Giaour, The Corsair, The Siege of Corinth, The Bride of Abydos - as well as parts of Childe Harold and Don Juan, displayed a familiarity and engagement with Islam that was probably unparalleled in English poetry. In 1812, when Childe Harold II, the first of Byron's oriental poems, was published, the western perspective on the East had altered; at least in so far as academic studies were concerned. The threat to Europe from the Ottomans had long receded. Romantic men of letters differed in their point of view concerning religion; "Byron, in his preface to *The Vision of Judgment* satirized it. Shelley, who loathed Christianity, could not be expected to admire Islam; Byron, who respected Christianity as long as it was divorced from English cant, was much more friendly to its fellow-monotheism[28].

Much alike was Coleridge's Kubla Khan, which had stood the test of time with more success than much of Byron's. It was an oriental narrative in quite the same way as his; but not Islamic. Coleridge had been as far as to Malta; but of all other writers in this interrelated sequence, only Byron had visited many oriental countries. The East existed only in the imagination of other romantics for they only read about it taking Southey as an example for that. Fulford at Pratt explained that as he "...developed Thalaba as an imitation of 'Oriental' tales that were already tales made in Europe. His poem ... grew from western fantasies about the East and had



at its root the desire to use the Orient as an exotic other – a stage on which the dilemmas produced in the west could be played out[29].

Byron produced the Byronic hero who personified his revolution against all stereo type conception in the society. The Byronic hero depicted as a hero of especial characteristics though such strange conceptions produce a new version of orientalism, yet it carried a heavy weight of oriental knowledge and Eastern morality. Mohammed Sharafuddin argued that even if Byron has exaggerated “ his precociousness, the range and depth of his [oriental] reading cannot be doubted[30]. Abdul Raheem Kidwai , also admired Byron’s” eye for detail, his meticulous accuracy, and his positive appreciation of the Orient[31] In his book *Orientalism in Lord Byron's Turkish Tales*” Naji B. Oueijan went further and said :

Among his contemporaries Lord Byron was the only Englishman who truly experienced the Orient by assimilating himself into the culture ... Unlike those who actually toured the East for merely political and/or religious propaganda and presented distorted images of the Eastern world and its peoples, or those who for purely academic reasons employed their time in recording their observations of its antiquities and archaeology, Byron spent his time in living ,enjoying, and studying Oriental life and culture for its own wealth as well as for its existing exoticism[32].

Shifting to the Victorian era, writers like Carlyle and Shaw provided the clearest and loudest opinion about Islamic concepts, Qur’an, and Prophet Mohammad (Peace be upon him.) Thomas Carlyle (1795 - 1881) was a Scottish satirical writer, essayist, historian and teacher during the Victorian era. In *Heroes and Hero Worship and the Heroic in History*, he believed that Mahomet possessed secrets which the West must try to "get at" in order to "understand what he meant with the world. "Carlyle clearly recognized Mahomet as a great man and has distinguished him as a hero. But this label became problematic when considering Carlyle's romantic and stereotypical depiction of Mahomet. Mahomet was not so much a hero that should inspire "us" (Carlyle's intended audience), but one that inspired Muslims and therefore demanded our analysis. Mahomet was a compelling example of a hero precisely because of what Carlyle saw as his lack of education, spontaneity and primitivism. He repeatedly drew the

attention to Mahomet's impressive influence and multitudes of belief in the superiority of a white Christian man like himself, who was educated, cautious and "cultured." Many of these issues could be considered in relation to Carlyle's description of what he saw as prevailing opinions of Mahomet:

Our current hypothesis about Mahomet, that he was a scheming Impostor, a Falsehood incarnate, that his religion is a mere mass of quackery and fatuity, begins really to be now untenable to anyone. The lies, which well-meaning zeal has heaped round this man, are disgraceful to ourselves only . . . The word this man spoke has been the life-guidance now of a hundred and eighty millions of men these twelve hundred years. These hundred and eighty millions were made by God as well as we . . . Are we to suppose that it was a miserable piece of spiritual legerdemain, this which so many creatures of the Almighty have lived by and died by? I, for my part, cannot form any such supposition.... One would be entirely at a loss what to think of this world at all, if quackery so grew and were sanctioned here . . . more godless theory, I think, was never promulgated in this Earth. A false man found a religion? Why, a false man cannot build a brick house! . . . it will fall straightway[33].

'Allah Akkbar God is Great,' by these words Carlyle initiated his defense of Islam affirming that resignation and submission to the "One God" is the soul of Islam as well as Christianity. In reference to Goethe, he quoted: "If this be Islam? Do we not all live in Islam?[34]. His description of the Holy Koran as a message sent out of Heaven to set law on Earth took his defense to more challenging area of revelation:

The Mahometans regard their Koran with a reverence which few Christians pay even to their Bible. It is admitted everywhere as the standard of all law and all practice; the thing to be gone-upon in speculation and life: the message sent direct out of Heaven, which this Earth has to conform to, and walk by; the thing to be read. Their judges decide by it; all Moslem are bound to study it; seek in it for the light of

their life. They have mosques where it is all read daily; thirty relays of priests take it up in succession, get through the whole each day. There, for twelve-hundred years, has the voice of this book, at all moments, kept sounding through the ears and the hearts of so many men[35].

Another famous, contemporary personality who read the biography of the Messenger of Allaah, sallallaahu 'alayhiwasallam, could not help but admit that he was a master with excellent manners and an honorable character, George Bernard Shaw, the British playwright said:

The world is in dire need of a man with the mind of Muhammad; religious people in the Middle Ages, due to their ignorance and prejudice, had pictured him in a very dark way as they used to consider him the enemy of Christianity. But after looking into the story of this man I found it to be an amazing and a miraculous one, and I came to the conclusion that he was never an enemy of Christianity, and must be called instead the savior of humanity. In my opinion, if he was to be given control over the world today, he would solve our problems and secure the peace and happiness which the world is longing for [36].

In 'The Genuine Islam,' Shaw highly appreciated Islam believing that "If any religion had the chance of ruling over England, nay Europe within the next hundred years, it could be Islam [37]. His estimation of this religion "the religion of Muhammad" "the Savior of Humanity," as he called him, derived from his belief in its validity and ability to appeal to every age:

I have always held the religion of Muhammad in high estimation because of its wonderful vitality. It is the only religion which appears to me to possess that assimilating capacity to the changing phase of existence which can make itself appeal to every age. I have studied him - the wonderful man and in my opinion for from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the Savior of Humanity [38].

He developed an admiration of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) out of his careful studying of Islam and the life of its Prophet (Peace be upon him). As a historian and as a critic, he concluded that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was indeed a great Man and a Messenger not only for Arab but also for the whole mankind prophesying the prevalence of Islam in the Europe of tomorrow:

I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much needed peace and happiness: I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today [39].

### **Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress with reference to Islam**

Seeking redemption of Man's everlasting burden is one of the most common shared both by Christians and Muslims. They go through the same process of self-purgation; all to attain an incredible sense of solidarity and a feeling of euphoria which is believed to bring them closer to God. Taking Adam as the father of humanity and the first sinner, then all humans have the same burden of sin which they want to get rid in their pursuing for salvation. In Surah Al-Ahzab, God said: "We offered the Trust to the Heavens, to the Earth and to the Mountains; but they refused to bear it, and were afraid of it. Man undertook to bear it, but he has proved unjust and foolish." (33:72), Man's burden and salvation is also the main topic of John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* 'from This World to That Which Is to Come'; the reference that have been implied in this study to show the convergence of Christianity and Islam in their heavenly visions .

*The Pilgrim's Progress* was a Christian allegory delivered 'In the Similitude of Dream' by John Bunyan, an English writer and a preacher in 1678 while in prison. It has represented the history of the struggle of human nature to overcome temptation and shake off the bondage of that allegorical sin of Christian; the main character in the story. Each step in Christian's journey had been first trodden and attacked by Bunyan himself; every spasm of fear and shame described, was but a reflection of personal experience.

Bunyan addressed the genuine emotion of a human soul thus it has entered the heart of all later generation of English men [40].

Critics considered Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* as the second most widely circulated piece of English literature after the English Bible "a classic among classics [41] that appealed to the learned and unlearned, to the young and to the old. The book depicted four biblical truths; first, the saving righteousness of Lord Jesus Christ and through faith alone; second, the progressive resurrection of the saved sinner; third, the pivotal signification of fellowship in an authentic local church under faithful pastoral leader ship; fourth, the impulse of reaching heaven. The book, therefore, was a standard of English literature and one of the most interesting works; in which characters, incidents, and scenes brought a live as things actually known to the common person [42].

An important aspect of Christian's pilgrimage was the implicit meaning of his journey which has turned to be an internal expedition. Christian wanted to travel from his hometown the "City of Destruction" to the "Celestial City"; an allegorical reference to "Heaven"; trying to find a savior from the punishment of God and get rid of his burden. This further established Bunyan's belief that salvation meant to be achieved on one's own will. The subtitle of the book "In the similitude of a Dream" emphasized Bunyan's deadly attempt, as a dreamer, as Christian, and as a man in getting rid of his secular burden and gained celestial salvation. His allegorical journey was heavily loaded with abstract entities recalling the journey of Jesus and his disciples with all of its sacrifices and hardships as well as its joys [43].

*The Pilgrim's Progress* has crossed most of those barriers of race and culture that usually serve to limit the communicative power of a classic. It has penetrated into the non- Christian world, as Heather - Ann wickers mentioned, and read by cultivated Moslems during the rise of religious individualism within Islam[44].Such conceptual reading with reference to Islam made of Bunyan's Pilgrim a Qur'anic allegory as well.

Abandoning the "City of destruction" in reference to the temporary joys of life that may destroy the human soul and seeking self-redeem in the hereafter was the central theme of Bunyan's allegorical pilgrimage. In Surah Ghafir, the man who believed said "O, My People! This life of the present is nothing, but (temporary) convenience; it is the hereafter, that is

the home. That will last.”(40:39)Faith made Christian see the contrast between trifles, even though they may glitter temporarily, and the eternal Good waited for man.

The burden carried by Christian on his journey was a recurring image throughout *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. This burden was depicted in both the narration and the illustration as an actual physical burden which Christian was forced to carry upon his back.

That is that which I seek for. Even to be rid of this heavy burden; but get it off myself cannot. Nor is there a man in our country that can take it off my shoulder; Therefore am I going this way As I told you, that I am Be rid of my burden[45].

Heather- Ann Wickers stated that the burden to which Bunyan alluded was the indescribable weight of Original sin which Christian was forced to endure. The only way to shed his burden was through salvation; the way of Jesus Christ [46] In his dream Bunyan saw “that just As Christian came up with the cross, His burden loosed from off his shoulders. And fell from off his back [47].

At the very beginning of the allegory, the narrator ‘Bunyan’ saw a man “clothed with rags, ...a book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back, [48] Bunyan’s man became a symbol of every man who lost the path of God; abandoned the teachings of the Holy Book; burdened with his sins; felt sorry for his deeds crying “What shall I do?[49] Bunyan, by that, related this directly to the reader, the burden that Christian carried was the burden that all of Bunyan's readers would have identified with. This was merely another instance in which the personal pilgrimage of Christian has become that of the reader.

In relevant sense, in surah Al –Anaam, God said: “They are lost indeed, those who deny that they will ever meet Allah. When the Hour of Doom overtakes them unawares, they will exclaim: ‘Alas, we have neglected much in our lifetime!’ And they shall bear their burdens on their backs. Evil are the burdens they shall bear.” (6:31)

Abdullah Yusuf Ali, in *The Meaning of the Holy Qur’an*, described this burden as the burden of sin which the wicked will bear on their backs

when they became conscious and aware of them. Sins have been personified as ugly demons riding on the back of men, while men's good deeds were described as a strong mountain of patience carried on their backs [50].

Metaphorically, Banyan divided people around Christian into two groups: those who reject faith and those who believe; represented by his neighbors obstinate and pliable. They tried to persuade Christian to return home and gave up his journey. While Obstinate was mocking Christian and calling him a "brain-sick fellow, [51] pliable decided to join him in his pilgrimage. In surah Al- Baqarah, God said: "The life out world is alluring to these who reject faith, and they scoff at those, who believe." ( 2:212)

The allegory of Paradise in *The Pilgrim's Progress* was similarly described both in *The Bible* and in *The Qur'an* as well. Christian has unfolded his vision of the wonders they will enjoy at the end of their pilgrimage if Pliable joined him:

There is an endless kingdom to be inhabited and everlasting life to be given us , and garments that will makes us shine like the sun in the firmament... there shall be no more crying nor sorrow... there we shall be with seraphim's and cherubim's. Creatures that will dazzle your eyes to look at them [52].

Here we have a reference that has a link with Islam, in surah Al-Kahf , God promised those who believe and work righteous deeds (Jennat) "gardens of paradise, where in they shall dwell (for age): no change will they wish for themselves." (18:107-108), The same wonders were promised to be in surah Al- Hadid; "Be ye foremost (in seeking), forgiveness from your lord and a garden (of Bliss) The width where of is as the width of heaven and earth, prepared for those who believe in Allah and his messengers that is the grace of Allah. Which he bestows on whom He please and Allah is the lord of grace abounding."(57:21)

When mockingly asked by the merchandises of the Fair what they might be interested in to buy; Christian and Faithful gravely reply:" we buy the truth [53]. This caused the great one of that place 'Beelzebub' to come down and see the cause of the confusion. His judge and jury (personified

as Mr. Hate-good, Mr. Blind man, Mr. No-good, Mr. Malice, Mr. Love-lust, Mr. Live-loose, Mr. Heady, Mr. High-mind, Mr. Enmity, Mr. Liar, Mr. Cruelty, Mr. Hate-light, and Mr. Implacable); ordered to put Faithful to the most cruel death that could be invented leaving Christian to watch and wait in his cage. "Thus came Faithful to his end [54]but this was only his earthly end as the Evangelist prophesized. Faithful's Martyrdom, as Bunyan and his readers concluded, was the higher price could be paid for Truth which in turn would pave the way to the Celestial City of God; "There stood behind the multitude a chariot and a couple of horses waiting for Faithful, who (so soon as his adversaries had dispatched him) was taken up into it, and straight way was carried up through the clouds with sound of trumpet, the nearest way to the celestial gate [55].

Martyrs in the cause of Truth were beautifully depicted in surah Al- Imran. They are not dead; they live in a higher, truer, and more transcendent life than the real earthly one. They feel the glory in the Presence and Nearness of Allah:

Think not of those who are slain in Allah's way as dead, Nay, they live finding their sustenance in the presence of their lord. They rejoice in the bounty provided by Allah. And with regard to those left behind who have not joined them (in their bliss). The (Martyrs) glory in the fact that on them in no fear, nor have they (cause to) grieve. Glory in the Grace and the bounty from Allah, and in the fact that Allah suffereth not the reward of the faithful to be lost (in the least).(3:169-171)

Metaphorically, by losing Faith Christian did not lose Hope in escaping from Vanity City and seeking the right path to reach the delighted Land of God; "thus one died to bear testimony to the truth, and another rises out of his ashes to be a companion with Christian in his pilgrimage [56].

At the end of their pilgrimage, Christian and Hopeful crossed the river of death. They passed their last test of faith and entered the Celestial City. Over the celestial gates was written in letters of gold; "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter in through the gate into the city [57].With bells ringing joyously, the pilgrims walked in with new golden clothes, harps and crowns. They



marched along the gold- paved streets with many of heavenly hosts, some of whom have wings. All were playing their harps and singing; “enter ye into the joy of your lord [58].

The same image has been portrayed in *The Holy Qur'an* to celebrate the pilgrims who will reach the final Heavenly residence. In surah Al- Ra'ad , Pilgrims who suffer in patience are welcomed into their eternal home, "peace unto you for that ye persevered in patience. Now how excellent is the final home!"(13:24) and for those who believe and work righteousness “blessedness, and beautiful place of (final) return.” (13:29), In surah Hud ,forgiveness and great rewards are waiting for “those who show patience and constancy, and work. Righteousness for them is forgiveness (of sins) and a great reward.” (11:11) All these pilgrims feel grateful for the rewards they are promised to have at the end of their journey of struggle against the vanity of life; in surah Al- Zumar ,“They will say: praise be to Allah, who has truly fulfilled his promise to us , and has given us (this) land in heritage we can dwell in the garden as we will: how excellent a reward for those who work (righteousness)!” (39:74) In surah Al- Baqarah,“But those who have faith and work righteousness. They are companions of the garden, there in shall they abide (forever).” (2:82)The image of the eternal home, gardens with flowing rivers and great rewards continued throughout the Qur'an in Surah Al- Maidah,“And for this their prayer , hath Allah rewarded them with gardens with rivers flowing underneath their eternal home.” (5:85)

The main idea of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* is having faith. This can be rhetorically explained through Surah Al- Nahl , “To those who leave their homes in the case of Allah, after suffering oppression, we will assuredly give a goodly home in this world : but truly the reward of the hereafter be greater if they only realized(this)!” (16:41) Having Faith in God's will, believe in his Book and words, suffer the pain of guilt, struggle to gain self-salvation, sacrifice your soul in martyrdom, leave your home in cause of Truth, and finally seeking rejoices in the hereafter, all these issues bring Muslims, Christians and all other believers in one path that is the path of One God.

## Conclusion

Admiration for the Messenger of Allah, Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him), his excellent manners and honorable character was shared among Western men of letters since Chaucer till Ondaatje. Such works paved the way for a new conception about Islam and the West. It was Islam and the Muslims who set the basics of every civilization and science. It was Islam and the Orient which were the sources of inspiration to many works of art of any type. It was the West who started to uncover the fakeness and shallowness of the Western civilization and emphasized the affective role of Islam and its revolutionary principles. Bunyan's *The Pilgrims Progress* was a standard of English literature in which convergence of Christianity and Islam was shown clearly concerning their heavenly visions. The equivalent images in the Qur'an and the Bible suggested a worldwide interpretation into the holy teachings whether the pilgrim or the reader was Christian, Muslim, or Jewish.

Finally, it could be concluded that Islamic teachings and its influence on the West asserted itself greatly. Although the misconception about Islam as a dangerous element which brought threat and violence had been a constant on, great amount of endeavors and trials were fruitful in overhauling the gap of misunderstandings between the East and the West and reformed the identity of Arab, Islam and Muslims. The continuous reference to the oriental spirit of Arabic and Islamic culture in English literature throughout the history up till now proved the greatness of the Islamic civilization as a source of inspiration for both the East and the West. The new non-Arabic Muslims culture flourishing all around the world has seized the attention and became overwhelming. Islamic architectures, Arabic translation concerning European sciences, Muslims scientific achievements in physics, natural sciences, and metaphysics, the indebtedness of modern sciences of medicine, surgery, and pharmacy in Europe to the many translations up to the 18<sup>th</sup> century of works of Arab scientists in addition to the highly religious refined ethics were the corner stones on which the west built their civilization.

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6. Mohammed bin Ahmed Al-Ansari Al-Qurtubi, *Al-Jami'a Le- Ahkam Al-Qur'anwa Al-Mubainlema Tathamaho min Al-SunawaAye Al-Furqan*vol.4(np: Dar Al-Fikir, nd), p. 42.
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- 9 . The word "*Allah*" is an Arabic word that refers to God in Islam as came in the Holy Quran .It is just as "*Elah*", or "*Elohim*" in Aramaic mentioned in the Old Testament. *Allah* is also His personal name in Islam, as "*YHWH*" is His personal name in Judaism. It also refers to the " Lord" as mentioned in the Bible/the New Testament. Muslims, Jews and Christians also refer to the Supreme Being as *Allah* (IslamReligion.com. 2006-2011.) Web 18 September 2013.
10. Moses testified his faith of God addressing his people: "Hear, O Israel The Lord our God is one Lord." [Deuteronomy 6:4] Jesus came 1500 years later to repeat the same message when he said: "The first of all the commandments is, "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord." [Mark 12:29] His solid words to Satan in the Valley of Death: "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only,"[Matthew 4:10] Six hundred years after Jesus, Prophet

Mohammed comes to confirm the faith in the oneness of God. He recalls the same message "Worship God! You have no other god but Him." (Quran 7:59, 7:73; 11:50, 11:84; 23:32)

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19. E. M. W. Tillyard, p.5.

20. Ibid., p.66.

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51.Ibid. , p:11.

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## قراءة موضوعية لرواية الكاتب الانكليزي جون بانيان "رحلة الحاج" معاشارة تمهيدية لمفهوم الاسلام في الادب الانكليزي

م. ايناس صبحي عامر\* م. ميادة زهير الخفاجي\*\*

### المستخلص

تاتي اهمية هذه الدراسة في تسليط الضوء على اثر الاسلام وشخصية النبي محمد (صلى الله عليه واله وسلم) في الحضارة الغربية عموما والادب الانكليزي بشكل خاص . فالكتاب منذ شوسر و حتى المعاصرين منهم اشاروا الى هذا الاثر في كتاباتهم وعبروا عن حجم الفجوة بين الشرق والغرب التي خلفها هذا الفهم الخاطئ للإسلام. لذا تهدف هذه الدراسة من خلال محاورها الثلاث الى كسر الحاجز بين الشرق و الغرب وتقريب وجهات النظر بهذا الخصوص، حيث تتناول في محورها الاول تمهيدا لمعنى الإسلام و الخصائص المشتركة التي تجمعها بباقي الاديان ؛ اما المحور الثاني فيستعرض اثر الاسلام في الأدب الانكليزي وكتابه خلال بعض المراحل التاريخية البارزة ؛ كما و تركز في محورها الثالث على الصور القرآنية والانجيلية المجازية المتشابهة التي تضمنها العمل الادبي "رحلة الحاج" للكاتب الانكليزي جون بانيان.

**الكلمات المفتاحية :** جون بانيان ، الاسلام في الادب الانكليزي ، رحلة الحاج

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