

Quotations on Islamic Civilization

(part 1 of 2)

Napolean Bonaparte

Quoted in Christian Cherfils,
'Bonaparte et Islam,' Pedone Ed.,
Paris, France, 1914, pp. 105, 125.

- Original References:

“Correspondance de Napoléon Ier Tome
V pièce n° 4287 du 17/07/1799...”

“Moses has revealed the existence of
God to his nation. Jesus Christ to the
Roman world, Muhammad to the old
continent...”



“Arabia was idolatrous when, six centuries after Jesus, Muhammad introduced the worship of the God of Abraham, of Ishmael, of Moses, and Jesus. The Ariyans and some other sects had disturbed the tranquility of the east by agitating the question of the nature of the Father, the son, and the Holy Ghost. Muhammad declared that there was none but one God who had no father, no son and that the trinity imported the idea of idolatry...”

“I hope the time is not far off when I shall be able to unite all the wise and educated men of all the countries and establish a uniform regime based on the principles of Quran which alone are true and which alone can lead men to happiness.”

Sir George Bernard Shaw

'The Genuine Islam,' Vol. 1, No. 8, 1936.

“If any religion had the chance of ruling over England, nay Europe within the next hundred years, it could be Islam.”

“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 far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the Savior of Humanity.”

“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.”

Bertrand Russel

History of Western Philosophy,' London, 1948, p. 419.

“Our use of phrase ‘The Dark ages’ to cover the period from 699 to 1,000 marks our undue concentration on Western Europe...

“From India to Spain, the brilliant civilization of Islam flourished. What was lost to Christendom at this time was not lost to civilization, but quite the contrary...

“To us it seems that West-European civilization is civilization, but this is a narrow view.”

H.G. Wells

“The Islamic teachings have left great traditions for equitable and gentle dealings and behavior, and inspire people with nobility and tolerance. These are human teachings of the highest order and at the same time practicable. These teachings brought into existence a society in which hard-heartedness and collective oppression and injustice were the least as compared with all other societies preceding it....Islam is replete with gentleness, courtesy, and fraternity.”

Dr. William Draper

‘History of Intellectual Development of Europe’

“During the period of the Caliphs the learned men of the Christians and the Jews were not only held in great esteem but were appointed to posts of great responsibility, and were promoted to the high ranking job in the government....He (Caliph Haroon Rasheed) never considered to which country a learned person belonged nor his faith and belief, but only his excellence in the field of learning.”

Thomas Carlyle

'Heroes, Hero Worship, and the Heroic in History,' Lecture 2, Friday, 8th May 1840.

“As there is no danger of our becoming, any of us, Mahometans (i.e. Muslim), I mean to say all the good of him I justly can...

“When Poccoke inquired of Grotius, where the proof was of that story of the pigeon, trained to pick peas from Mahomet's (Muhammad's) ear, and pass for an angel dictating to him? Grotius answered that there was no proof!...

“A poor, hard-toiling, ill-provided man; careless of what vulgar men toil for. Not a bad man, I should say; Something better in him than hunger of any sort, -- or these wild Arab men, fighting and jostling three-and-twenty years at his hand, in close contact with him always, would not revered him so! They were wild men bursting ever and anon into quarrel, into all kinds of fierce sincerity; without right worth and manhood, no man could have commanded them. They called him prophet you say? Why he stood there face to face with them; bare, not enshrined in any mystery; visibly clouting his own cloak, cobbling his own shoes; fighting, counselling, ordering in the midst of them: they must have seen what kind of man he was, let him be called what you like! No emperor with his tiaras was obeyed as this man in a cloak of his own clouting. During three-and-twenty years of rough actual trial. I find something of a veritable Hero necessary for that, of itself...

“These Arabs, the man Mahomet, and that one century, - is it not as if a spark had fallen, one spark, on a world of what proves explosive powder, blazes heaven-high from Delhi to Granada! I said, the Great man was always as lightning out of Heaven; the rest of men waited for him like fuel, and then they too would flame...”

(part 2 of 2)

Phillip Hitti

'Short History of the Arabs.'

“During all the first part of the Middle Ages, no other people made as important a contribution to human progress as did the Arabs, if we take this term to mean all those whose mother-tongue was Arabic, and not merely those living in the Arabian peninsula. For centuries, Arabic was the language of learning, culture and intellectual progress for the whole of the civilized world with the exception of the Far East. From the 9th to the 12th century there were more philosophical, medical, historical, religious, astronomical and geographical works written in Arabic than in any other human tongue.”

Carra de Vaux

'The Philosophers of Islam,' Paris, 1921.

“Finally how can one forget that at the same time the Mogul Empire of India (1526-1857 C.E.) was giving the world the Taj Mahal (completed in 1648 C.E.) the architectural beauty of which has never been surpassed, and the ‘Akbar Nameh’ of Abul Fazl:

‘That extraordinary work full of life ideas and learning where every aspect of life is examined listed and classified, and where progress continually dazzles the eye, is a document of which Oriental civilization may justly be proud. The men whose genius finds its expression in this book were far in advance of their age in the practical art of government, and they were perhaps in advance of it in their speculations about religious philosophy. Those poets those philosophers knew how to deal with the world or matter. They observe, classify, calculate and experiment. All the ideas that occur to them are tested against facts. They express them with eloquence but they also support them with statistics.’

...the principles of tolerance, justice and humanity which prevailed during the long reign of Akbar.”

Marcel Clerget

'La Turquie, Passe et Present,' Paris, 1938.

“Many proofs of high cultural level of the Ottoman Empire during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent are to be found in the development of science and law; in the flowering of literary works in Arabic, Persian and Turkish; in the contemporary monuments in Istanbul, Bursa, and Edirne; in the boom in luxury industries; in the sumptuous life of the court and high dignitaries, and last but not least in its religious tolerance. All the various influences - notably Turkish, Byzantine and Italian mingle together and help to make this the most brilliant epoch of the Ottomans.”

Michael the Elder (Great)

Quoted in 'Michael the Elder, Chronique de Michael Syrien, Patriarche Jacobite d' Antioche,' J.B. Chabot, Editor, Vol. II, Paris, 1901.

“This is why the God of vengeance, who alone is all-powerful, and changes the empire of mortals as He will, giving it to whomsoever He will, and uplifting the humble beholding the wickedness of the Romans who throughout their

dominions, cruelly plundered our churches and our monasteries and condemned us without pity, brought from the region of the south the sons of Ishmael, to deliver us through them from the hands of the Romans. And if in truth we have suffered some loss, because the Catholic churches, that had been taken away from us and given to the Chalcedonians, remained in their possession; for when the cities submitted to the Arabs, they assigned to each denomination the churches which they found it to be in possession of (and at that time the great churches of Emessa and that of Harran had been taken away from us); nevertheless it was no slight advantage for us to be delivered from the cruelty of the Romans, their wickedness, their wrath and cruel zeal against us, and to find ourselves at people. (Michael the Elder, Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch wrote this text in the latter part of the twelfth century, after five centuries of Muslim rule in that region. Click [here](#) for a relevant document sent to the monks of St. Catherine Monastery in Mt. Sinai, 628 C.E.)

Sir John Bagot Glubb

“Khalif (Caliph) Al-Ma'mun's period of rule (813 - 833 C.E.) may be considered the 'golden age' of science and learning. He had always been devoted to books and to learned pursuits. His brilliant mind was interested in every form of intellectual activity. Not only poetry but also philosophy, theology, astronomy, medicine and law all occupied his time.”

“By Mamun's time medical schools were extremely active in Baghdad. The first free public hospital was opened in Baghdad during the Caliphate of Haroon-ar-Rashid. As the system developed, physicians and surgeons were appointed who gave lectures to medical students and issued diplomas to those who were considered qualified to practice. The first hospital in Egypt was opened in 872 AD and thereafter public hospitals sprang up all over the empire from Spain and the Maghrib to Persia.”

On the Holocaust of Baghdad (1258 C.E.) Perpetrated by Hulagu

“The city was systematically looted, destroyed and burnt. Eight hundred thousand persons are said to have been killed. The Khalif Mustasim was sewn up in a sack and trampled to death under the feet of Mongol horses.

“For five hundred years, Baghdad had been a city of palaces, mosques, libraries and colleges. Its universities and hospitals were the most up-to-date in the world. Nothing now remained but heaps of rubble and a stench of decaying human flesh.”