

# The evident explanation about Prophet Mohammad's illiteracy

Assist. Dr. Nizar Amer Hussain

Anbar University  
College Of Islamic Sciences  
Department Of Belief, Propagation And Thought  
[nizar.amer@uoanbar.edu.iq](mailto:nizar.amer@uoanbar.edu.iq)

## ABSTRACT:

Researches and studies that deal with the biography of Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) are innumerable and significant in the upbringing of generations on the right approach. The Prophet's biography is a rich science, which draws scholars to study and explore the biography of their prophet and teach generations after them. Many Muslim exegetes and theologians linked the wondrous nature of the Quran and the illiteracy of the Prophet Mohammad making his incapability to write as evidence that the Quran is an astonishing miracle of the prophet.

**Keywords:** prophet, illiteracy, explanation

## INTRODUCTION

Praise be to Allah Alone and peace and blessings be upon the Last Prophet, family, and companions, now to the topic:

Researches and studies that deal with the biography of Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) are innumerable and significant in the upbringing of generations on the right approach. The Prophet's biography is a rich science, which draws scholars to study and explore the biography of their prophet and teach generations after them. Many Muslim exegetes and theologians linked the wondrous nature of the Quran and the illiteracy of the Prophet Mohammad making his incapability to write as evidence that the Quran is an astonishing miracle of the prophet. A literate, well-educated person is incapable of producing such a thing with wondrous nature. For all human beings, Illiteracy is an attribute of deficiency but it is a sign of perfection for the Prophet Mohammad.

Hence, this miracle confirms that Allah has revealed the Noble Quran. It is so difficult, for some scholars, to accept the prophet is being illiterate because he was writing and reading from his childhood to his demise. As a result, there was a noticeable disorder in their comments and opinions. Some authors have stated openly or implicitly that the prophet was able to read and write. This disorder brought some compromises as if this matter is negotiable. Therefore, it is essential to tackle an important aspect of the character of the Prophet Mohammad, his illiteracy. Allah describes this trait in the prophet in multitudinous verses in the Holy Quran. Sunnah affirms this characteristic too **[And you did not**

**recite before it any scripture, nor did you inscribe one with your right hand. Otherwise, the falsifiers would have had [cause for] doubt.]**[Al-Ankaboot, 48]<sup>1</sup>.

The Holy Quran also indicated that this illiteracy is a miraculous sign of the Prophet Mohammad. How can a man, who does read and write to, come up with a detailed wondrous book of revelation? A book that includes everything about life, describes Heaven and Hell, and the horrors of the Day of Judgment. It also describes exactly human souls, explores, in detail, matters such as inheritance and the problems of societies, and come up with the most appropriate solutions.

These suspicions will remain contiguously raised for all the time that the heavens and the earth endure because the enemies of Islam, past and present, will not stop those attempts to undermine Islam and its honorable Prophet. Muslims must be highly proud of the Prophet's illiteracy that has educated all humanity and led people to the light of faith. With power Allah, with pride and meticulousness, the preset paper goes in-depth of the prophet's literacy. Eventually, the researcher asks Allah to let this knowledge be of benefit to everyone.

<sup>1</sup> Sura al'enkbwt / 48.

## Section one: the concept and definition of illiteracy

### Point one: the lexical and contextual definitions

#### The Lexical definition

Illiteracy comes from being illiterate, a person who does not know how to read and write, It is said to be attributed to the mother, it is more like to the mother than to the father. Women did not know how to read and write in the pre-Islamic era but they did in Islam (2). Another view is that the illiterate (ommi) refers to the Arab nation. Most Arabs were illiterate at that time; illiterate is an adjective describing an uneducated person (3).

A third reference states that the known annexation, Hamzah (the vowel point of u) (4), is related to the mother. A mother nurtures her children according to the level of her education and surrounding environment. Thus, the child can acquire the skills of reading and writing.

#### The contextual definition

The word meaning did not differ so much from **contextual** significance nor did not appear in other words. Illiterate is an adjective that describes the one who cannot read or write (5). Illiteracy is a description that Allah has assigned for the Prophet Mohammad among other prophets to complete the wondrous miracle. Allah has given illiteracy a self-descriptive

<sup>2</sup> See: althryr waltnwyr alm'erwf btfsyr abn 'eashwr, mhmd altahr bn 'eashwr , m'essh altarykh , byrwt , lbnan edition I , 1420h - 2000m , chapter8 , p 314 .

<sup>3</sup> See: Isan al'erb , mhmd bn mkrm bn mnzwr alefryqy almsry , dar sadr . byrwt , chapter I pp 34-35 .

<sup>4</sup> See: altbyan fy e'erab alqran , abw albqa' mhb aldyn al'ekbry , thqyq 'ely albjawy , chapter I – p 286 .

<sup>5</sup> See: altwfyq 'ela mhmat alt'earyf , mhmd 'ebd alr'ewf almnawy , thqyq: mhmd rdwan aldayh , dar alfkr alm'easr , byrwt – lyanan 1410h , edition I p 95 .

function for the Prophet Mohammad to fulfill the prophet's psychological perfection. Such perfection is a divine perfection: is to complete the character of the Prophet Mohammad not to describe Godly traits. Therefore, illiteracy is a description of perfection only to the Prophet Mohammad. Whereas illiteracy is an undermining description to others.

Illiteracy comes to be a trait of integrity because the great Prophet Mohammad has attained knowledge and self-perfection without any possibility of making mistakes. He is assured of his knowledge and awareness of his understanding of what happened to the learners before and with him. His illiteracy has become an outstanding sign of the fact that what has happened to him was a divine revelation (6). The illiterate is the one who is/does the same as the Arabs **[We are an illiterate nation; we neither write nor know accounts]**. Most of them are uneducated, as Al-Zajaj said being illiterate is related to the mother (7). He followed that by referring to being illiterate the sign that indicates his prophethood. The prophet himself has produced miracles that are mentioned in the Quran. Allah has revealed the Quran, with its wondrous nature, includes all matters and sciences in a place devoid of scholars. He was unschooled and he did not leave Mecca seeking knowledge (8). The scholars have demonstrated the illiteracy of the Prophet as elucidated in the Holy Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet. This aspect is going to be covered in a subsequent section.

### Point two: illiteracy of Arabs before Islam

Everyone in the world knows that the Arabs were illiterate before Islam. The Arab nation was called the illiterate nation. Allah revealed in the Holy Quran **[It is He who has sent among the unlettered a Prophet from themselves] [Al-Jumu'a, 2]**. (9) The scholars did exegesis to this verse and it came for reasons, including:

Alzimkhcri explained this verse "an illiterate is attributed to the Arab nation because they were not writing nor reading. Reportedly, writing began in Taif and then in Al-herah and Anbar. This went along with the meaning of sending a Prophet to the illiterate.

<sup>6</sup> See: althryr waltnwyr , abn 'eashwr , p 314

<sup>7</sup> See: albhr almhyt . mhmd bn ywsf alshhyr baby hyan alandlsy , dar alfkr : byrwt , edition 2 ,2010m chapter4 , p 403.

<sup>8</sup> IBID: P 405.

<sup>9</sup> Sura aljm'eh : alayh 2

Ibn Mujahid interpreted this verse "the illiterate is the plural of an illiterate person, a person who cannot read".

Abu Al-Aliyah Abu Rabie, Qatada, and Ibrahim said "it is apparent in the verse **[ones who do not know the Scripture] [Al-Baqara, 78]**. It means they do not know what it is or what it means" <sup>(10)</sup>.

Al-Alusi, in his interpretation, stated **[It is He who has sent among the unlettered a Prophet from themselves] [Al-Jumu'a, 2]**, referring to the Arabs because most of them neither write nor read <sup>(11)</sup>. Sheikh Hassanein Muhammad Makhlouf mentioned that in sura Jumu'ah, "the illiterate stands for the prophet's contemporaries <sup>(12)</sup>, the Arab nation. Many other interpretations have dealt with this matter in detail and explanation. There is no possibility for stating all of them because some of them extend to the first century AH.

The illiterate had no revelations nor did they follow any of the former prophets. Ibn katheer, transmitting from Ibn Abbas, interpreted this verse **[ones who do not know the Scripture] [Al-Baqara, 78]**. "The word illiterate describes the people who did not believe in any Prophet sent by Allah or any scriptures sent down by Allah" <sup>(13)</sup>.

This is the reason behind the Jews previously calling the Arabs illiterate. **[There is no blame upon us concerning the unlearned.] [Aal-i-Imraan, 75]** <sup>(14)</sup>. In other words, it is not wrong, in our religion, to take the money of the illiterate, who are the Arabs <sup>(15)</sup>.

This was not deemed a defect in the Arab nation, but it was an honor given by Allah. The Arab nation

<sup>10</sup> See: tfsyr alqran al'ezym . aby alfda' esma'eyl bn kthyr alqrsy , dar aljyl byrwt – lbnan 1990 . EDition2 , chapter I , P 354.

<sup>11</sup> See: rwh alm'eany fy tfsyr alqran al'ezym walsb'e almthany. alalwysy : shhab aldyn mhmwd abn 'ebd allh alhsyny ,thqyq: mahr hbwsh , m'essh alrsalh ,

<sup>12</sup> See: tfsyr klm alqran alkrym . mzylaan basbab alnzwl llwahdy waltbyan fy hml alqran llnwyy : hsnyn mhmd mkhlwf , mtb'eh anwar djlh 1427h - 2006m , P 553 .

<sup>13</sup> See: tfsyr abn kthyr , chapter I , p111.

<sup>14</sup> Sura al 'emran : alayh 75.

<sup>15</sup> See: tfsyr abn kthyr : chapter I , p354.

became advanced and got out of the darkness of ignorance into the light of knowledge, **[It is He who has sent among the unlettered a Messenger from themselves reciting to them His verses and purifying them and teaching them the Book and wisdom - although they were before in clear error -][Al-Jumu'a, 2]**

### Point three: the concept of ignorance

For historians, the term "Jahiliyyah" stands for the period preceding the emergence of Islam. The term "Jahiliyya" can be found in the Noble Quran in four places. As for its other meanings, it was mentioned in many places. However, the important aspect is the Islamic concept of this term. The Islamic texts, in Quran and Sunnah, did not use this word to signify science or its opposite. It refers to all acts that contradict the teachings of Islam and beliefs. This term discriminates two different periods, the Arabs before and after Islam. The Quran mentioned the ideological side of the term **[thinking of Allah other than the truth - the thought of ignorance][ Aal-i-Imraan, 75]**. These ignorant people returned to polytheism and other matters of worship.

As for the legislative aspect, **[do not display yourselves as [was] the display of the former times of ignorance][Al-Ahzaab,33]**. The former times of ignorance refer to the old-time of ignorance when prophet Ibrahim was born. Women used to wear pearl veils while they were walking in the streets. They were displaying their charms to men. Other opinions stated that this era occurred Between Adam and Noah, between Idris and Noah, or it is the time of David and Solomon. The other period of ignorance (jahiliyyah) is between Jesus and Prophet Mohammad. The first jahiliyyah can be the period before Islam <sup>(16)</sup>. Islam never accepted ignorance **[When those who disbelieved had put into their hearts chauvinism - the chauvinism of the time of ignorance.][Alfath. 26]** <sup>(17)</sup>. The meaning of chauvinism is the exaggerated aggressive patriotism or prejudiced support for one's cause, group, or sex as put by Al-Zamakhshari <sup>(18)</sup>. chauvinism indicates the infidels' prejudice against Islam and the Prophet Mohammad. Abu Hurayrah narrated this **hadith ["People are like gold and silver; those who were best in Jahiliyyah (Pre-Islamic Period of Ignorance) are best in Islam if they have religious understanding, and the souls**

<sup>16</sup> See: alkshaf , alzmkhshry section 5 , p325.

<sup>17</sup> Sura alfth : alayh 26.

<sup>18</sup> IBID: section 6, p 357.

**are like recruited soldiers, they get mixed up with those similar with them in qualities and oppose and drift away from those who do not share their qualities".**<sup>(19)</sup>

The hadith proves that the people who behave in ignorance period differed from the one after Islam. Before Islam, there were many wrong habits like female infanticide, forcing females to immoral acts, slavery, wine drinking, human trafficking, etc.

The Prophet said **[you are a person who still has (the remnants) of Ignorance]** <sup>(20)</sup> to Abi Dhar when the latter insulted a man's mother. Islam forbids these aggressive acts.

## Section two

### Illiteracy evidence from the Quran Sunnah and scholars' views

#### Point one: evidence of illiteracy from the Quran

Many verses indicate that the Prophet was illiterate. Everyone knows that the Noble Quran was revealed in Arabic; the meanings of words and phrases are clear and they do not need any interpretation. Some of these verses are:

Allah, the Almighty said **[whom they find written in what they have of the Torah and the Gospel][Al-A'raaf, 157]** <sup>(21)</sup>

Imam Wahidi said **“[Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered prophet] [Al-A'raaf, 157],** who does not write or read. This trait confirms miracle in the Quran" <sup>(22)</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> msnd alemam ahmd bn hnbl , thqyq: alsyd abw alm'eaty alnwry , dar 'ealm alktb , byrwt 1998m section /p257 .

<sup>20</sup> shyh albkhary , mhmd bn esma'eyl albkhary alj'efy , thqyq:mhmd zhyr alnasr , dar twq alnjah 1422h , bab alm'easy mn amr aljahlyh , chapter I ,p15 .

<sup>21</sup> Sura ala'eraf : alayh 157.

<sup>22</sup> alwjyz fy tfsyr alktab al'ezyz , abw alhsn 'ely bn ahmd bn mhmd bn 'ely alwahdy, alnysabwry, alshaf'ey , thqyq: sfwan 'ednan dawwd , dar alqlm , dmshq edition I , 1415 h , chapter I /p416 .

m'eany alqran we'erabh llzaj , ebrahym bn alsry bn shl, abw eshaq alzaj (almtwfa: 311h)

thqyq: 'ebd aljlyl 'ebdh shlby , 'ealm alktb edition I , byrwt . 1988 section 2/ p381 .

Alzajjah said " illiterate: is the habitus of the nation. He /she could not learn to read and write, **[written in what they have of the Torah and the Gospel][Al-A'raaf, 157]**. This verse supports this view because the Prophet did not write nor read the Torah and the Bible. He did not mix up with Christians or jewfish scholars. Although the prophet was illiterate, he told Muslims and people of other religions about the bible and Torah. For an imposter, it is impossible to tell others, who converted to Islam or not, that the holy books contained his name <sup>(23)</sup>

Allah, the Almighty said **[So believe in Allah and His Messenger, the unlettered prophet, who believes in Allah and His words] [Al-A'raaf, 157]** <sup>(24)</sup>.

Al-Alousi said: " Allah, be Blessed and Exalted, described His Prophet Mohammad in this verse, so he (the illiterate Prophet) said to praise him and increase the grandeur of his rank <sup>(25)</sup>. Moreover **[And you did not recite before it any scripture, nor did you inscribe one with your right hand. Otherwise, the falsifiers would have had [cause for] doubt.][AlAnkaboot,48]** <sup>(26)</sup>

Al-Taher bin Ashour explained that "Meaning: What you (the prophet) were reciting from a given book. You could tell others that people recited this Quran before. You could never write such a revelation. The point here is to deny any case of learning by reading or writing. This achieves the description of illiteracy; if a person memorizes a piece of writing, yet he/she does not know how to write, he/she is not as illiterate as the blind scholars. On the other hand, if the same person can write what she hears/ listens to but he/she does not memorize that piece of writing, such a

<sup>23</sup> alwjyz fy tfsyr alktab al'ezyz , abw alhsn 'ely bn ahmd bn mhmd bn 'ely alwahdy, alnysabwry, alshaf'ey , thqyq: sfwan 'ednan dawwd , dar alqlm , dmshq edition I , 1415 h , chapter I /p416 .

m'eany alqran we'erabh llzaj , ebrahym bn alsry bn shl, abw eshaq alzaj (almtwfa: 311h)

thqyq: 'ebd aljlyl 'ebdh shlby , 'ealm alktb edition I , byrwt . 1988 m section 2/ p381 .

<sup>24</sup> Sura ala'eraf : alayh 158.

<sup>25</sup> rwh alm'eany fy tfsyr alqran al'ezym walsb'e almthany , shhab aldyn mhmd bn 'ebd allh alhsyn alalwysy , thqyq: 'ely 'ebd albary 'etyh , dar alktb al'elmyh edition I , byrwt 1415h section 5 / p67

<sup>26</sup> Sura al'enkbwt : alayh 48.

person is not illiterate like a copyist. The absence of the capability of recitation and writing achieved the description of illiteracy is " (27).

Allah, the Almighty said **[Say, "If Allah had willed, I would not have recited it to you, nor would He have made it known to you, for I had remained among you a lifetime before it"]**[yunus, 16] (28). Al-Saadi Said: " i.e., before reading, and before you knew the Quran, it did not come to my mind, will not you, people reason it? Do not you understand that I (the prophet) did not say such revelations? We lived together for a long time. I am as, you know, illiterate. I cannot read nor write. Notwithstanding, I possess a holy book that makes the most eloquent orators speechless. The wondrous nature of my book bewilders the skilled scholars. Is it possible that I have compiled it on my own? It is absolutely the revelation of

Allah, the perfectly wise, the Praised One (29). The previously mentioned Verses showed obviously that the Prophet Mohammad is explicitly in the lexical and contextual sense as elucidated in this research. This concept is not likely to deduce or change in the Quran, the revelation of Allah, which falsehood can never approach from before it or from behind it.

There are other verses related to the Arab nation to which the Prophet Mohammad is affiliated. These verses mention that it is the Prophet's nation: an illiterate nation.

Allah, the Almighty said **[It is He who has sent among the unlettered a Messenger from themselves]**[Al-Jumu'a, 2] (30)

Imam al - Tabari said, "What is known from the popular speech among the Arabs is that the" illiterate "is the one who does not write. Then he added, "I see that it is linked to the mother. This person does not write due to the mother-relation. The ability to write is in men rather than women. Thus, so the man who does not write is attributed to his mother, not to his father (31).

<sup>27</sup> althryr waltnwyr , mhmd altahr bn 'eashwr altwnsy , aldar altwnsyh , 1984m section 21/ p10 .

<sup>28</sup> Sura yunus : alayh 16.

<sup>29</sup> tysyr alkrym alrhmn fy tfsyr klam almnan , 'ebd alrhmn bn nasr bn 'ebd allh als'edy , thqyq: 'ebd alrhmn bn m'ela allwyhq , m'essh alrsalh edition I , 2000 m section 1/ p395 .

<sup>30</sup> Sura aljum'uah : alayh 2.

<sup>31</sup> jam'e albyan fy tawyl alqran , mhmd bn jryr bn zydyd bn kthyr bn ghalb alamy , abw j'efr altbry

Allah the Almighty said, **[That is because they say, "There is no blame upon us concerning the unlearned.]**[Aal-i-Imraan, 75] (32)

Sheikh of Al-Azhar, Muhammad Sayed Tantawi , in his interpretation, said, " the meaning of the illiterate is the Arabs, especially the believers. The Arabs are called the illiterate because of the relation-mother. Illiteracy prevails over them, as if they remained in the state in which they were born, they could not read and write." (33).

Allah, the Almighty said **[And say to those who were given the Scripture and [to] the unlearned, "Have you submitted yourselves?"]** [Aal-i-Imraan, 75] (34)

Ibn Abbas stated, "Illiterate refers to Arabs **[Have you submitted yourselves?]**. Allah said **[And if they submit [in Islam] as [you submit]. they [are rightly guided], [but if they turn away], [then upon you is only the [duty of] notification. And Allah is Seeing of [His] servants.]**(35). If one follows most of what the commentators wrote in the interpretation of "the illiterate", he will find many meanings from one meaning. Some scholars try to come up with strange interpretations of the word "illiterate", such as it is attributed to Mecca, Umm al-Qura, or it is attributed to the ummah, the nation. These scholars claim to grasp the true meaning of illiterate. Are they more skilled than the scholars with the unanimous agreement that the illiterate person is the one who cannot read or write? Has the true meaning been hidden from all these scholars all this time?

#### Point two: proofs of illiteracy from the Sunnah

A great number of hadiths prove the prophets Mohammad's illiteracy. This research will review the most prominent of them. In hadiths, the Prophet explicitly stated that he is the illiterate prophet. It

thqyq: ahmd mhmd shakr, m'essh alrsalh edition I , 2000m section 2 / p 259 .

<sup>32</sup> Sura aal i 'emran : alayh 75.

<sup>33</sup> altfsyr alwsyt , mhmd syd tntawy , mjm'e albhwth aleslamy , alqahrh , chapter I 0 / p173

<sup>34</sup> Sura aal i 'emran : alayh 20.

<sup>35</sup> tnwyr almqbas mn tfsyr abn 'ebas ynsb: 'ebd allh bn 'ebas - rdy allh 'enhma - (almtwfa: 68h) jm'eh : mjd aldyn abw tahr mhmd bn y'eqwb alfywzabada (almtwfa: 817h) dar alktb al'elmyh , lbnan , chapter I / p 44 .

excludes the hadiths with indirect reference to this matter.

On the authority of Abdullah bin Amru, **he narrated, "The Prophet of Allah went out near us, like the one who bids farewell, he said three times " I am Mohammad, the illiterate prophet" (36).**

Abu Masood, Oqbah bin Amr, said: a man came and in front of the Prophet. The man asked [Allah has commanded us to invoke blessings on you, O Messenger of Allah! But how should we bless you?" "How should we invoke blessings on you, whenever we invoke a blessing on you in our prayers?" Allah's Messenger kept quiet (a while) and then said, "Say: 'O Allah, bless Muhammad and the members of his family as You have blessed Ibrahim, and grant favours to Muhammad and the members of his family as You have granted favours to Ibrahim. In the worlds You are indeed Praiseworthy and Glorious.]"(37).

On the authority of Zir ibn Habish, on the authority of Ali, who said ["The Prophet made a covenant with me that none would love me but a believer, and none would hate me but a hypocrite." ] (38)

Ibn ' Umar said ["We are an unlettered Ummah; we do not use computation. The month is like this, and this, and this," and he held down his thumb the last time. "And the month is like this, and this, and this," completing thirty.]"(39)

Henceforth, the Prophet asserts that he belongs to an illiterate nation. The description of the nation applied to him too. He is a part of his nation. He said, "We are an illiterate nation". If the Prophet had been able to read and write, he would have said, "My nation is illiterate". The Prophet's assertion of his illiteracy of

<sup>36</sup> msnd alemam ahmd bn hnbl , thqyq: sh'eyb alarna'ewt w 'eadl mrshd , m'essh alrsalh . byrwt , 2001m chapter1 / p179

<sup>37</sup> msnd alemam ahmd section 8 /p 304 .

<sup>38</sup> snn abn majh , abn majh abw 'ebd allh mhmd bn yzyd alqzwyny, thqyq: mhmd f'ead 'ebd albaqy

dar ehya' alktb al'erbyh - fysl 'eysa albaby alhlby 1952m , chapter1 / p 42 .

<sup>39</sup> shyh mslm , mslm bn alhjaj abw alhsn alqshyry alnysabwry (almtwfa: 261h) thqyq: mhmd f'ead 'ebd albaqy dar ehya' alrath al'erby , byrwt , bab wjwb swm rmdan section 2/ p761 .

terminates any objection, denial, or opposing view whatsoever.

Urwah ibn al- Zubayr, on the authority of that A'isha, said [**the first (form) with which was started the revelation to the Messenger of Allah was the true vision in sleep. And he did not see any vision but it came like the bright gleam of dawn. Thenceforth solitude became dear to him and he used to seclude himself in the cave of Hira', where he would engage in tahannuth (and that is a worship for a number of nights) before returning to his family and getting provisions again for this purpose. He would then return to Khadija and take provisions for a like period, till Truth came upon him while he was in the cave of Hira'. There came to him the angel and said: Recite, to which he replied: I am not lettered. He took hold of me [the Apostle said] and pressed me, till I was hard pressed; thereafter he let me off and said: Recite. I said: I am not lettered. He then again took hold of me and pressed me for the second time till I was hard pressed and then let me off and said: Recite, to which I replied: I am not lettered. He took hold of me and pressed me for the third time, till I was hard pressed and then let me go and said: Recite in the name of your Lord Who created, created man from a clot of blood. Recite. And your most bountiful Lord is He Who taught the use of pen, taught man what he knew not.]**

Undoubtedly, this hadith explains that the Prophet was illiterate. To prove this, he said to Gabriel" I cannot recite"; he positively declares that he cannot read or write. The Prophet would have asked Gabriel" What should I read?" if he had been educated (40).

Anas bin Malik said: The Prophet of Allah said "In the day of judgment, every prophet ascends a pulpit of light. I ascend the brightest and the tallest one. A herald comes and announces" Where is illiterate Prophet? All prophets say, "We are illiterate. For what nation was he sent? The herald comes again and announces, "Where is the illiterate Arab prophet? Mohammed descends to the door of paradise and knocks on the door. The herald inquires" Who? The prophet replies "Muhammad or Ahmad". The caller asks the prophet" are you being summoned?" The prophet says "Yes." The herald opens the door and the prophet enters.

Allah unveils for the prophet before any of the other prophets. The prophet Mohamed bows down to Allah

<sup>40</sup> shyh albkhary , mhmd bn asma'eyl albkhary alj'efy , thqyq: mstfa dyb albgha , dar abn kthyr edition , byrwt , 1987m , chapter4/ p1894 , hdyth brqm 467 .

and praises Him with the most consummate and the most perfect speeches like others. Allah addresses the prophet "oh Mohammad, raise your head, speak your mind, you shall be heard. Mediate and you mediation shall be accepted. Ask and you shall be given." (41).

These correct hadiths and others, unmentioned in this research, showed the illiteracy of the Prophet. The senior companions and the prophet family narrated these hadiths. The narrators are the people who believed in his message and supported him. They also transmitted his hadiths. If someone had seen the Prophet writing or reading even once, he would not have called the prophet illiterate. The transmitted hadiths about his acts and sayings are numerous. Anything similar to this matter, if it happens, cannot be hidden or neglected from the Muslims. It is the will of Allah and His perfect wisdom that necessitated this trait and proved to the whole world the sincerity of this Prophet; the one who became a guide to all humanity, despite his illiteracy, to The Path of Truth and monotheism (Tawheed).

### Point three: The proofs of Mohammad's illiteracy

Many Quranic verses explicitly affirm his illiteracy as well as the illiteracy of the Arabs in general. The commentators interpreted these verses carefully, as shown in the previous part. Authentic hadiths narrated by his companions confirmed his being illiterate. This point will review some opinions of Muslim and non-Muslim thinkers and scholars. Allah the Almighty **[O Muhammad], do not hasten with [recitation of] the Qur'an before its revelation is completed to you, and say, "My Lord, increase me in knowledge."**[*taa haa, 144*] (42)

Allah, the Almighty said **[Move not your tongue with it, [O Muhammad], to hasten with recitation of the Qur'an. \* Indeed, upon Us is its collection [in your heart] and [to make possible] its recitation. \* So when We have recited it [through Gabriel], then follow its recitation.][ Al-Qiyaama 16-18]** (43).

The two verses marked that the Prophet was repeating after Jibril. as Jibril came down with

<sup>41</sup> shyh mslm , abw alhsyn mslm bn alhjj bn mslm alqshyry alnysabwry dar aljyl w dar alafaq aljdydh byrwt , chapter I / s123 , bab: adna ahl aljnh mnzlh fyha , hdyth brqm : 495 .

<sup>42</sup> Sura taa hasa . 114

<sup>43</sup> Sura Qiyaama 16. 16-18

revelation, The prophet repeated the recitation so as not to be forgotten. Allah forbade hasty recitation and assured the prophets about the divine aid to memorizing Quran. You, the prophet we will keep it in your heart so that you cannot forget to build up a proof, the Prophet could have written this revelation to review and memorize it, after Gabriel departs, instead of reciting. The repletion affirms his illiteracy. He relied on his ability to memorize not on his ability to read.

Another evidence is that he did not read or write and that he was reciting Quran without adding, decreasing, or changing. It was one of the miracles. Allah the Almighty said: **[We will make you recite, [O Muhammad], and you will not forget,] [AlAa'ala, 6]** (44).

The divine power will make you a reader by inspiring you to read, you will never forget what you read, and the sentence is resumed to explain his special guidance. The guidance will help you preserve the Quran (45).

Some atheists and skeptics disbelieve all of this transmission evidence stating that prophet Mohammad compiled it -Allah forbid that the Prophet did so-. They postulate that prophet Mohammad composed the Quran and described himself as an illiterate to mislead people. The answer to skeptical people and atheists is really easy. When the prophet Mohammad could read and write, people would mark him as a reader and writer, especially in an illiterate nation like the Arabs. Quite a few educated people are distinguished in such a nation.

In such an illiterate environment, educated people are known to the public and work in the trade like the one the prophet did. He worked in Khadija's trade for a long time. For him, it was not possible to claim that he was illiterate and to declare that Allah revealed the Quran to him. If he was not illiterate, he would be more interested in reading and seeking knowledge. Skeptics tried to prove that he was educated but failed. The Quranic description of being illiterate confirms the absolute truth the disbelievers attempted to refute in vain (46).

<sup>44</sup> Sura ala'ela . 6

<sup>45</sup> See: alftsyry alwsyt , pyd tntawy , chapter I / p 4488

<sup>46</sup> See : amyh alnby(sla allh 'elyh wslm) akbr aladlh 'ela sdq d'ewth , ans mhmd alghnam , mqal 'ela shbkh alantrnt mwq'e alalwkh <https://www.alukah.net/sharia/0/137> , 2019 m .

The Prophet had scribes to write and document the Revelation, the history did not mention that he has written revelation by himself even once. Al-Bara confirms this point by a hadith he narrated. said “When this verse [**Not equal are those believers remaining [at home] [AlNisaa, 95]** <sup>(47)</sup>, was revealed, the Prophet summoned Zaid to write it. Umm Maktoum complained. Henceforth, the Prophet should have written it down without calling upon Zaid since he was literate.

Al-Bara also narrated[ **“When the Prophet intended to perform the `Umra he sent a person to the people of Mecca asking their permission to enter Mecca. They stipulated that he would not stay for more than three days and would not enter it except with sheathed arms and would not preach (Islam) to any of them. So `Ali bin Abi- Talib started writing the treaty between them. He wrote, "This is what Muhammad, Apostle of Allah has agreed to." The (Meccans) said, "If we knew that you (Muhammad) are the Messenger of Allah, then we would not have prevented you and would have followed you. But write, 'This is what Muhammad bin `Abdullah has agreed to..' " On that Allah's Messenger said, "By Allah, I am Muhammad bin `Abdullah, and, by Allah, I am Apostle of 'Allah." Allah's Messenger used not to write; so he asked `Ali to erase the expression of Apostle of Allah. On that `Ali said, "By Allah I will never erase it." Allah's Apostle said (to `Ali), "Let me see the paper." When `Ali showed him the paper, the Prophet erased the expression with his own hand.]** <sup>(48)</sup>

It is worthy to quote some of the some of non-Muslims people who publicly said the truth, [**and a witness of her people bore witness][yusuf, 26]** <sup>(49)</sup>

Thomas Carlyle said under the title “no human being taught Muhammad”, “Then, let us not forget another thing, he never received any kind education. At that time, the making of calligraphy was very recent in the Arab countries. It appears to me that the truth is that Muhammad did not know how to write and read. All he learned is the existence and survival in the desert. He learned according to his knowledge and what he

could see with his own eyes and what perceived with his intentions from this endless universe <sup>(50)</sup>.

Count Henry stated “Because Muhammad did not read or write. Furthermore, he described himself repeatedly as an illiterate prophet. None of his contemporaries contradicted this description. Undoubtedly, eastern man cannot receive knowledge without people knowing because the lives of the All Easterners visible, reading and writing were non-existent in those countries at that time.” <sup>(51)</sup>

Nasri Salhab said “Muhammad was an illiterate man. He did not read or write. Then, with this illiterate man, he guides humanity to the fullest written effect that humanity has dreamed of, Noble Quran, the book that Allah revealed to His Prophet as guidance for the righteous.” <sup>(52)</sup>

It is the righteous testimony that non - Muslims uttered. They did justice to the prophet whom skeptics and disbelievers tried to defame. These views are proofs against all defamers because their people expressed their admiration and believed in the prophet Mohammad's message. The skeptics try to spread their doubts, deny the wondrous nature of the Quran, and attempted to offend the prophet. The atheists try their best to prove the claim that he transmitted this Quran from previous books intentionally. They claimed that he reads other holy books and copy it. Consequently, they began to interpret the explicit verses, which indicates his illiteracy, but they deny the correct Sunnah, the Sunna that confirms this illiteracy beyond any shred of doubt. Their only concern is to destroy the greatest evidence of his sincerity.

<sup>47</sup> Sura alinsa'a : 95 .

<sup>48</sup> shyh albkhary , mhmd bn esma'eyl albkhary alj'efy , dar alsh'eb , alqahrh 1987m , bab ktab bd' alwhy , chapter4 / p126 , hdyth brqm 3184 .

<sup>49</sup> Sura yusuf : 26 .

<sup>50</sup> See: mhmd almthl ala'ela : thommas karlyl , translated : mhmd alsba'ey , mktbh alnafdh , 2013m p63

<sup>51</sup> See : aleslam khwatr wswanh , hnry dy kstry , trjmh :ahmd fthy zghlwl , dar alfrjany , p15-16

<sup>52</sup> See : lqa' almsyhyh waleslam , nasri salhob , dar alkitab al'erby , byrwt 1970m , p94 .

## CONCLUSION

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and the best of prayers and peace be upon our prophet Mohammad, the illiterate Prophet, his pure family, and his good companions. The research sums up the following findings:

1. The ummah's scholars, exegetes, and linguists almost agree that the word "illiterate" refers to the person who neither reads nor writes, and the lexical meaning does not differ from the contextual meaning.
2. Historically, it has been proven through books, sources, and scientific references that the Arab nation is illiterate. Holy Quran has shown this attribute of the Prophet and the trait of his nation (The illiterate in more than one verse).
3. The concept of (jahiliyyah) ignorance, the Noble Quran, does not mean the opposite of science. It distinguishes two periods, before and after Islam.
4. The evidence for the illiteracy of the Prophet is clear and explicit in the Quran, Sunnah, and the sayings of scholars. It is highly clear with no disagreement among scholars except some odd opinions that adopted weak narrations.
5. The illiteracy of the Prophet is considered an endorsement of his miracle (the Holy Quran), as he was not taught by any one of the people of other religions, but his knowledge comes by one intense strength.
6. Belief in his illiteracy is one of the foundations of the Islamic faith. The Muslim must believe in it and defend it and the personality of the Prophet against all offenders.
7. Some of the skeptics like the Orientalists and Muslims who were influenced by them tried to prove that the Prophet had learned at the end of his life. Their arguments were fragile and weak, in addition to the testimony of many Westerners that refuted these opinions.

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