

**AN ISLAMIC UNDERSTANDING OF JESUS:
A DIALOGICAL APPROACH**

THESIS

**SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
RELIGIONS**



**BY
RODDA NATHANIEL PETER
ID No.10PHTH103
ADVISOR
Dr. SAM P. MATHEW
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, NEW TESTAMENT**

2019

**FACULTY OF THEOLOGY
GOSPEL & PLOUGH INSTITUTE OF THEOLOGY
SAM HIGGINBOTTOM UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE,
TECHNOLOGY & SCIENCES
ALLAHABAD, UTTAR PRADESH, INDIA.**



Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, Technology And Sciences
सैम हिगिगनबॉटम कृषि, प्रौद्योगिकी एवं विज्ञान विश्वविद्यालय
(U.P. State Act No. 35 of 2016, as passed by the Uttar Pradesh Legislature)
Prayagraj (Allahabad) - 211 007, U.P., India

ISO 9001:2008 Certified

Office : 91-532-2684281, 2684781
Fax : 91-532-2684394
Website : www.shuats.edu.in
E-mail : info@shuats.edu.in

CERTIFICATION BY THE SUPERVISOR

This is to certify that the thesis titled “An Islamic Understanding of Jesus: A Dialogical Approach” submitted to the Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, Technology and Sciences, Allahabad in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Religion is a bonafide record of research carried out by R.N. Peter (ID:10PHTH103) under my supervision and guidance. No part of this work has been submitted for any other degree or diploma.

Dr. SAM P. MATHEW,
Advisor and Associate Professor, GPIT

Place:

Date:

SELF DECLARATION

This is to certify that this is my own work on the research entitled, **An Islamic Understanding of Jesus: A Dialogical Approach**. The data and information mentioned in the research report have been generated during the work, and are authentic. The information and data obtained from other agencies have been duly acknowledged. None of the findings/information pertaining to the work has been concealed. The results embodied in this research work have not been submitted to any academic affairs in any University or Institution for the award of any degree or diploma.

R.N. Peter
ID:10PHTH103

Date:
place






Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, Technology And Sciences
सैम हिगिगनबॉटम कृषि, प्रौद्योगिकी एवं विज्ञान विश्वविद्यालय
(U.P. State Act No. 35 of 2016, as passed by the Uttar Pradesh Legislature)
Prayagraj (Allahabad) - 211 007, U.P., India

ISO 9001:2008 Certified


Office : 91-532-2684281, 2684781
Fax : 91-532-2684394
Website : www.shuats.edu.in
E-mail : info@shuats.edu.in


CERTIFICATE OF RECOMMENDATION BY STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

This thesis entitled “An Islamic Understanding of Jesus: A Dialogical Approach” has been prepared and submitted by Mr. R.N. Peter ID. No. 10PHTH103 for the award of degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY **Theology in Religions** of the Faculty of Theology of Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, Technology & Sciences.

Name	Evaluation	Signature
Dr. Sam P. Mathew Professor of New Testament (Advisor)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory/ Not Satisfactory	
Bishop Dr. D.K. Sahu Dean, Faculty of Theology (Member)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory/ Not Satisfactory	
Rev. Dr. Binod Peter Senapati (Member)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory/ Not Satisfactory	

This thesis is recommended by the Student Advisory Committee for partial fulfillment of award of Ph.D degree.


Bishop Dr. Jagdhari Masih
Former Principal and Professor Emeritus
Religions and Philosophy, Allahabad Bible Seminary
External Examiner


Prof. John David
Dean, Warner College of Dairy Technology
SHUATS, Prayagraj
Chairman, Final Defense Examination Board

Date: 16/9/2019



Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, Technology And Sciences
सैम हिगिगनबॉटम कृषि, प्रौद्योगिकी एवं विज्ञान विश्वविद्यालय
(U.P. State Act No. 35 of 2016, as passed by the Uttar Pradesh Legislature)
Prayagraj (Allahabad) - 211 007, U.P., India

ISO 9001:2008 Certified

Office : 91-532-2684281, 2684781
Fax : 91-532-2684394
Website : www.shuats.edu.in
E-mail : info@shuats.edu.in

Ph.D. Final Defense Report

This is to certify that Mr. **R.N. Peter** ID. No. **10PHTH103** presented the oral defense for his Ph.D. Thesis entitled "**An Islamic Understanding of Jesus: A Dialogical Approach**" on **10th September 2019**, at **GPIT Seminar Room** in the **Faculty of Theology** SHUATS, Prayagraj. The results are genuine, have considerable scientific importance and performance of the candidate was found satisfactory.

We, the following members of the evaluation board agree and recommend to the University for the Award of the Degree **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY Theology** in **Religions** to Mr. **R.N. Peter**.

Bishop Dr. Jagdhari Masih
Former Principal and Professor Emeritus
Religions and Philosophy,
Allahabad Bible Seminary
External Examiner

Prof. Sam P. Mathew
Professor of New Testament
United Theological College, Bangalore
Ex. Associate Professor, Faculty of Theology, SHUATS
Advisor

Prof. John David
Dean, Warner College of Dairy Technology, SHUATS, Prayagraj
Chairman, Final Defense Examination

10th September, 2019

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

At the outset, I thank Almighty God for His abundant blessings. He has given me sound health, mind, environment, and patience to work hard to complete this dissertation. I have deep heartfelt gratitude to **Bishop Dr. D. K. Sahu**, the Dean, Gospel and Plough Institute of Theology, SHUATS for his encouragement and support throughout my work. In a special way, I would like to thank my advisor **Dr. Sam Peedikayil Mathew**; Associate Professor of New Testament in the Faculty of Theology for motivating me to move forward with this task of writing. He is my source of encouragement and inspiration in reaching to the completion of my journey of writing the dissertation.

I am also thankful to **Rev. Dr. Packiam T. Samuel**, Director of Henry Martyn Institute of Islamic Studies, Hyderabad, for his guidance as a co-advisor in writing my thesis. I am also very much thankful to **Dr. Waheed Multani**, senior faculty of Islamic studies, HMI, Hyderabad, for all his assistance with regards to the Arabic study material and his assistance in correcting my thesis, especially in editing the Arabic part.

My special thanks to my close friend **Rev. Samson Lankeshwar** for his constant support in editing and also supplying the study material. I am also thankful to my friend and senior colleague **Rev. Dr. Binod Peter Senapati**, who was one of my SAC members, for his support, suggestions, time and again providing the research material and guidance for this research. I am also thankful to **Dr. John Mathew K.M.** for his help and suggestions. I am also very much thankful to **Mrs. Indira Elizabeth Solomon** who helped in correcting English language at the initial stage and **Mrs. Jyothi Suhasini Uday Kumar** who has gone through my entire thesis and editing English language and providing some material for my research work.

Heartfelt thanks to my beloved wife **Sukanya** for being the source of inspiration, looking after family responsibility in my absence during my research work. Last but not the least, I am so much thankful to my beloved children **Jasper, Shirley, Joshua, Prashanth Kumar** and **Jenny Floret** who supported me a lot in typing the material and supporting financially to accomplish this great journey of writing the dissertation.

This work is dedicated to my heavenly Father Almighty God, Lord Jesus Christ and to my earthly parents who gave me birth late **Mr. R. Nathaniel** and **Mrs. R. Krupamma**.

Rev. R.N. PETER

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the problem	2
Elaboration of the problem	3
Justification of the research	3
Objectives	4
Method of the research	4
Scope and limitations	4
Structure of the research	4
CHAPTER ONE	
REVIEW OF LITERATURE	6
Introduction	6
1.1. The Muslim intellectuals	6
1.2. The Christian intellectuals	14
Conclusion	25
CHAPTER TWO	
JESUS IN THE QUR'AN	26
Introduction	26
2.1. Jesus, the descendant of the family of Abraham	27
2.2. Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary	28
2.3. The name was given to Jesus as 'Jesus son of Mary' mentioned in the Qur'an	30
2.3.1 The various names of Jesus found in the Qur'an	31

2.3.2. There are other names given to Jesus	32
2.4. Jesus, the Word of God.	33
2.5. Jesus, <i>al-Masiha</i> , the Messiah	36
2. 6. Jesus as ‘Holy’, in the light of Qur’an	37
2.7. Jesus, the Son of God	43
2.8. Jesus strengthened by the spirit of God	44
2.9. The relationship between Jesus and the Holy Spirit	48
2.10. Miracles did by Jesus, son of Mary	49
2.10.1. Speaking from the cradle	50
2.10.2. Creating birds from clay	51
2.10.3. Healing the blind and the leper	51
2.10.4. Raising the dead	51
2.11. Crucifixion	51
2.12. Jesus and the problem of the Crucifixion	54
2.13. Substitution	55
2.14. Ascension of Jesus	55
2.15. Second coming of Jesus son of Mary	56
2.16. Jesus son of Mary with Adam	58
2.17. Jesus and the Trinity	59
2.18. The return of Jesus	61
2.19. Jesus and the last Judgment	61
2.20. Jesus, the honorable in this world and in the hereafter	62
Conclusion	62

CHAPTER THREE JESUS IN HADITH

	64
Introduction	64
3:1 Jesus in Sunni <i>Hadith</i>	65
3.1.1. Jesus as a forerunner of prophet	65
3.1.2. The second coming of Jesus	65
3.1.3. The return of Prophet Jesus	67
3.1.4. Various honors awarded to Jesus	67
3.1.4.1. Prophet greets Jesus	67
3.1.4.2. Jesus as God's Word	67
3.1.4.3. The best physical appearance of Jesus	68
3.1.5. The purity of Jesus	69
3.1.6. Jesus as an ascetic prophet	69
3.1.7. Miracles performed by Jesus	71
3.1.8. Uncomplaining patience of Jesus	72
3.1.9. Jesus rejects nominal worships	72
3.1.10. Jesus expects to seek Paradise	72
3.1.11. Jesus' humbleness	72
3.2. Jesus in Shi'a <i>Hadith</i>	73
3.2.1. The birth of Jesus	74
3.2.2. The childhood of Jesus.	74
3.2.3. Second coming of Jesus.	75
3.2.4. The concept of resurrection	76
3.2.5. Jesus as the Word of God and spirit of God	76

3.2.6. Intercession of Jesus	76
3.2.7. Infant Jesus talks in the cradle	77
3.2.8. Jesus is love	77
3.2.9. Jesus sanctified by God	77
3.2.10. Jesus the provider of food	78
Conclusion	78

CHAPTER FOUR

JESUS IN THE MUSLIM STORIES AND SUFI SAYINGS 79

Introduction	79
4.1. Jesus in Muslim stories	79
4.1.1. Images of Jesus by IbnKathir al-Kisai, and Ibn Askari	80
4.1.2. Images of Jesus by Oddbjorn Leirvik	82
4.1.3. Images of Jesus by Tarif Khalidi	83
4.1.4. Images of Jesus in <i>agrapha</i> (sayings of Jesus in the pre-Islamic era)	84
4.1.5. The famous seventh century saying	84
4.1.6. Ninth century sayings on ascetic life of Jesus	84
4.1.7. Eleventh-century sayings on miracle work of Jesus	85
4.2. Sufi sayings	86
4.2.1. Sufi reception of Jesus-sayings and stories of Jesus	88
4.2.2. Basic Sufi characteristics of Jesus	89
4.2.2.1. The ascetic life of Jesus	89
4.2.2.2. Jesus as a breath of life	89
4.2.2.3. Jesus appreciates the love which is in the size of an atom	89

4.2.2.4. Jesus saved a mountain from the hell	90
4.2.3. Various representations of Jesus in Sufism	90
4.2.3.1. Jesus in Sufi ‘moralism’	90
4.2.3.2. Transgressions of orthodoxy in search of union with God	91
4.2.3.3. Jesus in the orthodox Sufism of al-Ghazali	92
4.2.3.4. Jesus in the theosophical system of Ibn al-‘Arabi	95
4.2.3.5. Jesus in the poetry and meditative discourses of Rumi	97
4.2.3.5.1. A smiling ascetic	98
4.2.3.5.2. Healing love, life-giving breath	99
4.2.3.5.3. Jesus’ return in Sufi <i>Tafsir</i> (Sufi commentary)	99
4.2.4. Summarizing central features of Sufi images of Jesus	100
4.2.5. Christian-Muslim dialogue on Jesus	101
4.2.5.1. Jesus as the perfect man: a generalising concept	101
4.2.5.2. Jesus as theophany: a non-exclusive attribute	101
4.2.5.3. Sainthood and breath	102
4.2.5.4. The spiritual meaning of the miracles	102
4.2.5.5. Suffering, death, and cross	103
Conclusion	105
CHAPTER FIVE	
THE EXEGETICAL STUDY	
	107
Introduction	107
5.1. Surah 2:87 The Holy Spirit	107
5.1.1. Background of Surah 2 (the cow)	107
5.1.2. An analysis and explanation of the Arabic phrases	108

5.1.3. Muslim scholars' discussion on the Holy Spirit	110
5.1.3.1. Zamakhshari	110
5.1.3.2. Al-Razi	111
5.1.3.3. Al-Qurtubi	111
5.1.3.4. Al-Baydawi	111
5.1.3.5. Ibn Kathir	112
5.1.3.6. Jalaluddin Al-Suyuti	112
5.1.3.7. Maududi	113
5.1.3.8. Ayatollah Nasir Makarem Shirazi	113
5.1.3.9. 'Allamah Tabatabai	113
5.1.3.10. Yusuf Ali	114
5.1.3.11. Ibn al-'Arabi	114
5.1.4. Christian scholars' discussion on the Holy Spirit	115
5.1.4.1. Geoffrey Parrinder	115
5.1.4.2. Judy Tao Shih-Ching	116
5.1.4.3. Binod Peter Senapati	116
5.1.4.4. John Gilchrist	117
5.1.4.5. Abd al-Masih	117
5.1.4.6. E. Van Donzel	117
5.1.4.7. Olaf Schumann	117
5.1.4.8. James Robson	118
5.2. Surah 3:45 b 'A word from Him	119
5.2.1. Backfround of Surah 3 (The Family of 'Imran)	119
5.2.2. An analysis and explanation of the Arabic phrases	120

5.2.3. Muslim scholars' discussion on the word of God	122
5.2.3.1. Al-Tabari	122
5.2.3.2. Zamakhshari	122
5.2.3.3. al-Razi	122
5.2.3.4. Ibn Kathir	122
5.2.3.5. Al-Baydawi	123
5.2.3.6. Jalaluddin Al-Suyuti	123
5.2.3.7. Maududi	123
5.2.3.8. 'AllamahTabatab'i	123
5.2.3.9. Abu Yakub al-Sidjistani	124
5.2.4. Christian scholars' discussion on the Word of God.	125
5.2.4.1. R.C. Zaehner	125
5.2.4.2. John of Damascus and Timothy of Baghdad	125
5.2.4.3. Steenbrink	126
5.2.4.4. C.H. Corbin	127
5.2.4.5. BinodPeter Senapati	127
5.2.4.6. John Gilchrist	127
5.2.5. Muslim lexicons	128
5.3. Surah 3:45d... 'The Messiah' (<i>al-Masihu</i>)	129
5.3.1. The background and context	129
5.3.2. Analysis and explanation of the Arabic phrases	129
5.3.3. Muslim scholars' discussion on the messiah	131
5.3.3.1. Al-Tabari	131

5.3.3.2. Zamakhshari	131
5.3.3.3. Al-Razi	131
5.3.3.4. Al-Baydawi, al-Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir	131
5.3.3.5. ‘Allamah Tabatabai’	132
5.3.4. Christian scholars’ discussion on the messiah	133
5.3.4.1. Geoffrey Parrinder	133
5.4. Surah 3:49 ‘Jesus, the Performer of Miracles’ (<i>Mujezahkarnewala</i>)	135
5.4.1. The background and context	137
5.4.1.1. Analysis and explanation on verb (<i>khalafa</i>) ‘creating’	137
5.4.1.2. Analysis and explanation on Arabic term فَانْفَخُ (<i>fanafakha</i>)	138
5.4.1.3. Analysis and explanation on Arabic term الطِّين (<i>tin</i>)	138
5.4.1.4. Analysis of the Arabic term بِإِذْنٍ (<i>bi-idh'ni</i> “by the permission”) and its explanation	138
5.4.2. Muslim scholars’ discussion on the miracles	139
5.4.2.1. Al-Baydawi	139
5.4.2.2. Ibn Kathir	139
5.4.2.3. Al-Qurtubi Jalaluddin and Ayatollah	139
5.4.2.4. ‘Allamah Tabataba’i	140
5.4.2.5. Al-Tabari	140
5.4.2.6. Zamakhshari	140
5.4.2.7. Al-Razi	140
5.4.2.8. Ibn ‘Arabi	141
5.4.3. Christian scholars’ discussion on the miracles	141

5.4.3.1. Geoffrey Parrinder	141
5.4.3.2. Neal Robinson	142
Conclusion	146
CHAPTER SIX	
COMMON GROUND FOR DIALOGUE	
	148
Introduction	148
6.1. Dialogue in the Bible	149
6.1.1. Dialogue in the Old Testament	149
6.1.2. Dialogue in the New Testament	151
6.2. Dialogue in the Qur'an	152
6.3. Christian Ecumenical Responses to People of other Faiths	155
6.3.1. Protestant contributions.	155
6.3.2. Roman Catholic contributions	157
6.3.2.1. Vatican II	158
6.3.2.2. <i>Nostra Aetate</i>	158
6.4. Christian-Muslim relations in India: A Critical Survey	159
6.4.1. Islam in Post-partition India	159
6.4.2. Christianity in post-partition India	161
6.4.3.1. Forerunners of Christian-Muslim Dialogue	162
6.4.3. 2. HenryMartyn (1781- 1812).	163
6.4.3.3. G.C. Pfander (1803-1865) and G.A. Lefroy (1854-1919)	164
6.4.3.4. Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-1898)	165
6.4.3.5. Catholic pioneer: Fr. Victor CourtoisS.J. (1907-1960)	165

6.4.4. The Henry Martyn Institute and the Dialogue Approach	168
6.4.4.1. Earlier history	168
6.4.4.2. The beginnings of the dialogical approach	169
6.4.4.3. The work towards and in dialogue	171
6.4.5. Catholic Initiatives	173
6.4.5.1. Catholic awakening to dialogue with Muslims in India.	173
6.4.5.2. The work and approach of the dialogue commission of the C.B.C.I.	175
6.4.6. Muslim Initiatives	178
6.4.6.1. Islam and the Modern Age Society	178
6.4.6.2. The Tughluqabad Seminar on Mosque and Church	179
6.4.7. The Agra consultation in March 1979 and the task ahead	182
6.4.8. The conflict between Muslims and Christians in Kerala	183
6.5. Interfaith dialogue and Islam	185
6.5.1. Muslim-Christian witness	185
6.5.2. Interfaith dialogue	186
6.5.3. The contribution of WCC and CMCU understanding	187
6.5.4. Interfaith dialogue in the light of the Qur'an and <i>Hadith</i>	188
6.5.5. The broad-minded view of inter-religious dialogue	190
6.5.6. Dialogue and <i>DAWAH</i>	191
6.6. An understanding of common Ground for Dialogue	191
6.6.1. Tolerance and mutual understanding	193
6.6.2. Friendship and genuine pilgrims	194
6.6.3. Avoiding mission consciousness	195

6.6.4. Priority of listening	195
6.6.5. Religious tolerance	195
6.7. Guidelines for dialogue	196
6.8. Motivating factors	197
6.9. Conditions for a fruitful dialogue	197
6.10. Possibility and outcome of dialogue	198
Conclusion	200
CONCLUSION	201
Findings	206
Recommendations	207
BIBLIOGRAPHY	208
1. Books	208
2. Articles in books	226
3. Articles in journals	229
4. Commentaries/ dictionaries	236
5. Websites	236
6. Dissertations	237

ABBREVIATIONS

AD	<i>Anno Domini</i>
AH	<i>Anno Hijrah</i>
AI	Annales Islamologiques
AIC	All India Consultation
AIUON	Annali dell' Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli
AKM	Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes
AMEL	Arabic and Middle Eastern Literatures
AO	Acta Orientalia
AO Hung	Acta Orientalia (Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae)
Ar.	Arabic
ArO	Archiv Orientální
AS	Asiatische Studien
AS	Peace (<i>salam</i>) be upon him or her
ASJ	Arab Studies Journal
ASP	Arabic Sciences and Philosophy
ASQ	Arab Studies Quarterly
attrib.	Attributed
b.	born
bet.	between
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
BEA	Bulletin des Études Arabes
BGEA	Billy Graham evangelistic Association
BH	Before Hijrah

CE	Common Era
c.	century
ca.	<i>circa</i> (approximately)
CB	Christian Believers
CBCB	Cross Border Community Building
CBCI	Catholic Bishops' Conference of India
ch.	Chapter
CISRS	Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society
CMCU	Centre for Muslim Christian Understanding
comm.	Commentary
CWE	Consultation on World Evangelization
CWM	Christian Witness to Muslims
CWME	Commission on World Mission and Evangelism
CWR	Council of the World's Religions
d.	died
DFI	Dialogue with people of living Faiths and Ideologies
diss.	Dissertation
EFMA	Evangelical Foreign Mission Association
EAL	<i>Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature</i>
EALL	<i>Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics</i>
ibid.	<i>ibidem</i> (in the same place, book or article)
idem	the same (author)
ed.	Editor, edition, edited by
e.g.	For example
EI 2	<i>Encyclopaedia of Islam</i> , 2nd edition

EI 3	<i>Encyclopaedia of Islam</i> , 3rd edition
EIr	<i>Encyclopedia Iranica</i>
ff.	and following
fl.	Flourished
HMI	Henry Martyn Institute
HMIIS	Henry Martyn Institute of Islamic Studies
ICCC	International Council of Christian Churches
ICWE	International Congress on World Evangelization
IFMA	International Foreign Mission Association
IIS	Indian Institute of Islamic Studies
IMC	International Missionary Conference
IRF	International Religious Foundation
IRFWP	Inter-Religious Federation for World Peace
K	Kitāb (Book)
LCWE	Lausanne Committee on World Evangelization
lit.	Literally
masc.	Masculine
MB	Muslim Believers
MS	MSS manuscript, manuscripts
n.	note number
n.d.	No date
n.p.	No place or no publisher
no.	Number
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
OED	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>

PBUH	Peace Be Upon him
PBUT	Peace Be Upon Them
pl.	Plural
Q	Qur'an
r.	ruled
R.A.	May Allah be pleased with him
Re.	Regarding
S.A	Allah's peace and blessing be upon him and his kins folk
Sic	<i>sic erat scriptum</i> (thus was it written)
SVM	Student Volunteer Movement
SWT	Subhanahu wa ta'ala (Glory to Him)
viz.	<i>videlicet</i> (namely)
vol.,	vols. volume, volumes
WCC	World Council of Churches
WEF	World Evangelical Fellowship
WMC	World Missionary Conference

GLOSSARY

<i>Abd Allah</i>	Servant of God
' <i>Adl</i> political	justice, especially distributive justice: social, economic,
' <i>Adhān</i>	call to <i>salat</i> (prayer)
<i>Aḥad</i>	one
<i>Ahad</i>	Islamically means One Alone
' <i>Ākhirah</i>	hereafter or eternal life
<i>al-ḥamdu li-llāh</i>	Praise be to God
<i>Allah</i>	God the Almighty
<i>al-kalimah Allah</i>	the word of God
<i>Al-khāliq</i>	The Creator, Allah
<i>Al-Masih</i>	Messiah
<i>al-Masih-al-Dajjal</i>	the Antichrist "false messiah"
' <i>Āshūrā</i>	Tenth day of the month of Muharram.
' <i>Aṣl</i>	Root, origin, source; principle.
' <i>Astaghfirallāh</i>	I seek forgiveness from God.
' <i>Aslimtaslam</i>	Submit to Islam
<i>As-Salāmu 'Alaykum</i>	The Islamic greeting; literally "Peace be upon you"
' <i>Āyah</i> (singular)	A sign.(specifically a 'verse' in the Qur'an)
' <i>āyāt</i> (plural)	More specifically, the 'verses' in the Qur'an.
<i>Āyatullāh</i>	Title given to highly ranked religious scholars in Sh'ia sect
<i>Bi-idh'ni</i>	by the permission of God
<i>Dajjāl</i> "deceiver"	The Islamic equivalent of the Antichrist; means "liar" or
<i>Dargah</i>	royal court, especially the shrine or tomb of a saint
<i>Darūd</i>	blessing
<i>Dar'ulHarb</i>	House of War
<i>Dar'ul Islam</i>	House of Islam
<i>Darwīš</i>	an initiate of the Sufi Path, one who practices Sufism
<i>Da`wah</i>	the call to Islam, proselytizing
<i>Dhimmi</i>	"protected person"; Jews and Christians
<i>Dīn</i>	(literally 'religion') the way of life-based on Islamic revelation
<i>Fadl</i>	Divine grace
<i>Fajarah</i>	Wicked evildoer
<i>Falāḥ</i>	deliverance, salvation, well-being
<i>Faqir</i>	lit. "poor", in the sense of "poor in spirit"
<i>Fatwā</i>	a legal decision inIslam based on <i>shari`at</i> (Islamic law)
<i>Fiqh</i>	jurisprudence built around the <i>shariah</i> (law) by custom
<i>Hādī</i>	a guide, one who guides; A Muslim name for God is The Guide

<i>Hadith</i>	sayings and doings of Prophet Muhammad
<i>Hāfiẓ</i>	someone who knows the Qur'an by heart
<i>Haji</i>	a person who has performed the <i>hajj</i> to Mecca
<i>Halal</i>	that which is permitted; lawful
<i>Haram</i>	that which is forbidden
<i>hatam al-awliya</i>	‘the Seal of the Saints’
<i>Hilāl</i>	Crescent moon.
<i>Iblis</i>	the Devil
’Imām	literally, leader; e.g. a man who leads the prayer; the Shi'a sect
<i>Iman</i>	faith, especially on six doctrines, held bt the Muslims
<i>Injil</i>	Gospel
’ <i>Isa</i>	Jesus
<i>Jāhilīyyah</i>	the time of ignorance before Islam was realized
<i>Jahannam</i>	the Hell-fire; Hell
<i>Jāmi ‘ah</i>	"gathering;" i.e. a university, a mosque
<i>Janāzah</i>	Funeral. <i>Ṣalāt al-Janāzah</i> is a funeral prayer.
<i>Jannah</i>	Paradise, Heaven, the Garden
<i>Jizya</i>	poll-tax charged by a Muslim state on non-Muslims
<i>Kalimatullah</i>	the Word of God
<i>Kalimatīn min Allah</i>	a word from God
<i>Kalimatuhu</i>	His word
<i>Khalaqa</i>	‘creating’
<i>Khalīl</i>	devoted friend
<i>Kun</i>	God's command to the universe, 'Be!' is sufficient to create it
<i>Lailatu ’l-qadr</i>	“The night of Power.”A special night in the month of Ramazan
<i>Maryam</i>	Mary
<i>Masih</i>	the Messiah Jesus
<i>Matn</i>	the substance of “text” of <i>Hadith</i>
<i>Mawlānā</i>	literally meaning "our lord" or "our master".
<i>Min al-salihin</i>	Among the righteous
<i>Mubarak</i>	blessed
<i>Murid</i>	lit. ‘One who is desirous’; a disciple of a <i>pir</i> (religious leader)
<i>Nabī</i>	prophet
<i>Nafakha</i>	blowing
<i>Qaulu ’l-Haqq.</i>	The Word of Truth

<i>Qibla</i>	the direction to be faced by Muslims in prayer, viz., Mecca-wards
<i>Qisas al-anbiya</i>	“Stories of the Prophets”
<i>Rasūl</i>	messenger
<i>Ruhi l-qudusi</i>	Spirit of God
<i>Ruhul Quds</i>	The Holy Spirit
<i>Ruhun min Allah,</i>	A Spirit from God
<i>Ruhun-minhu</i>	A Spirit from him
<i>Sahih</i>	lit. “Correct” or “sound”
<i>Sayyid</i>	lit. “Lord”, “chief”
<i>Shahada(t)</i>	“an act of witnessing” reciting the <i>Kalima</i>
<i>Shariah</i>	Islamic law
<i>Shi’a</i>	lit. the “followers” (of a person), or “party” or followers of ‘Ali
<i>Sirk</i>	"sharing as an equal partner"
<i>Sufi</i>	A person who professes the mystic doctrines known as
<i>tasawwuf</i>	
<i>Surah</i>	Chapter
<i>Tafsir</i>	Commentary on Qur’an
<i>Ta’āla</i>	Almighty
<i>‘Taqarrubi’</i>	nearer to God
<i>Taurat</i>	Pentateuch
<i>Tawhid</i>	oneness of God
<i>Tayr</i>	a bird
<i>Tin</i>	clay
<i>Ulama</i>	the learned doctor of Muslim society
<i>Ustad</i>	a master, teacher
<i>Wadjih</i>	worthy of esteem in this world and the next
<i>Wahi</i>	revelation, inspiration
<i>Yahya</i>	John
<i>Zabur</i>	Psalms
<i>Zakiyya</i>	faultless
<i>Zuhd</i>	lit. “Renunciation” of the world, by a traveler on the Mystic Way

ABSTRACT

This work is basically to understand the genuine attributes of Jesus found in Qur'an, *hadith* and from other Islamic literature. The problem is since there are similarities and differences between Jesus in Islam and Jesus in Christianity the confusion has taken place to accept the right attributes of Jesus for both the communities. In order to eliminate the differences in understanding Jesus between Muslims and Christians, this task of writing has been taken up.

The major objective of this study is to find the common attributes of Jesus that are found in Qur'an, *hadith*, Muslim stories, and Sufi sayings in order to discuss with Muslims through the means of dialogue to clarify their misunderstandings and build a cordial relationship between these two communities. In order to get the authentic attributes of Jesus, the researcher has done the exegesis on few titles of Jesus from the Qur'an to find out the common ground for dialogue to discuss on few complicated issues such as Jesus as divine along with the common attribute of humanity.

The method of research is historical critical, exegetical and dialogical approach applied to discover the common attributes of Jesus to be discussed by both the communities. The findings of the research for Muslim Christian dialogue are:

Findings

The understanding of Jesus in Islam as the Word of God, Messiah, and prophet is well understood and it is very similar as it is believed to have from Abrahamic origin. But there are some understanding of Jesus in Islam is differs to Christianity. Therefore, the researcher finds inter-faith dialogue is very essential and important.

Dialogical approach significantly improves one's own understanding of the "other". While one can learn a significant amount about another religion from books, talking to people who practice that religion about what others believe, what others do and how others feel about it transforms one's knowledge and more importantly the understanding.

Further investigation is necessary about Jesus as God in the writings of Ibn Kathir's, book *Stories of the Prophets*.

INTRODUCTION

Jesus is understood in versatile form in Islam. He is the ‘son of Mary’ *Īsā ibn Maryam* عيسى بن مريم, the apostle of God and *al-Masih*, the Arabic term for *Messiah* (Christ), he is sent to guide the Children of Israel with a new revelation: *Injil* ‘the gospel’. He is believed to be a prophet who is found mentioned in the Qur’an in 93 verses directly or indirectly, over 187 times.

The Qur’an is the central religious text of Islam. Most *ahadith*¹ as testimonial reports mention Jesus to have been born as “pure boy” without sin to Mary (مريم) as the result of virgin birth, similar to the event of the annunciation in Christianity. In Islamic theology, Jesus is believed to have performed many miracles, several being mentioned in the Qur’an. Over the centuries, Islamic writers have referenced other miracles like casting out demons, having borrowed from some pre-Islamic sources and from canonical sources as traditions about Jesus were expanded. Like all prophets in Islam, Jesus is also called a Muslim, as he preached that his followers should adopt the straight path. In Islam Jesus returns back to fight against the *Al-Masih ad-Dajjal* (Anti-Christ) and establish peace on earth.

Jesus is believed to have been the precursor to Muhammad, attributing the name *Ahmad* to someone who would follow him. However, Islam teaches that Jesus was not God incarnate, nor the Son of God, and according to some interpretations of the Qur’an: the crucifixion, death and resurrection are not believed to have occurred, but God saved him. Despite the earliest Muslim traditions give reference and exegesis quoting somewhat conflicting reports regarding a death and its length, the mainstream Muslim belief is that Jesus did not physically die, but was instead raised alive to heaven.

Jesus, *‘Isa* is the icon of both Islam and Christianity. Both religious traditions have similarities and differences in understanding Jesus. In Muslim tradition through the contributions of Islamic commentators and intellectuals, there is a difference? What is the difference in understanding the figure of Jesus? Most of the Orthodox Muslims and their scholars uphold the monotheistic supremacy of Islam. They try to present Jesus as a common human being. At the same time, they do acknowledge that Jesus is different from all other prophets in many ways.

¹ Plural of *hadith* (Sayings and doings of Prophet Muhammad).

Although, there are several facts with regards to the exalted status of Jesus that are mentioned in the Qur'an and *hadith* they deliberately ignore and present him as one among many prophets.

Muslims believe that Jesus is a Prophet, highly honored in this world and the world to come. The Orthodox Muslims have stood very strongly by the teachings of Qur'an regarding Jesus and taught in the same line to the ordinary Muslims about the personality of Jesus. Though Jesus was born with the power of God's breath, '*ruha*' to Virgin Mary, Muslim scholars may opine that he is equal to the prophet Adam who was created by God without a parent. Muslims may be stick with in stating that Jesus is a created being and not the creator. These differences in Christology may be are the main orthodox Muslim viewpoints.

Statement of the Problem

The life and mission of Jesus are mentioned both in the Qur'an and the Bible but few images of Jesus in the Qur'an are entirely different from Jesus in the Bible. There are more similarities than differences between Jesus of the Qur'an and Jesus of the Bible. The similarities are Jesus, the descendant of the family of Abraham, Jesus was born of Virgin Mary, Jesus is a Prophet, Jesus is a healer, Jesus is life-giver, Jesus is the *Messiah (Al-Masih)*, the Word of God (*kalimatullah*) and Spirit of God (*ruhallah*), Jesus is honored in this world and the world to come, and Jesus is coming again. But the major differences are that Jesus is not the Son of God and did not die on the cross.

The Muslims have difficulty to accept the authority of the Bible (Surah 3:71, 2:75) as they believe that Christians have altered the Bible and it is not the original one. They believe that Jesus is one among all the prophets but he is not the divine. Keeping these in mind the researcher wants to make an attempt to take the common images of Jesus which are very much found both in the Qur'an and the Bible in developing a genuine image of Jesus.

The divinity aspect of Jesus and his mission is not adequately elaborated in Qur'an. The title for Jesus as Messiah is mentioned in the Qur'an eleven times but with no explanation. In fact, the term 'Messiah' is derived from the Hebrew word '*Mashiach*'² this literally means 'Anointed'³. The anointed people are selected by God to carry on God's mission as kings and

²Hebrew word meaning, (Accessed on 01/09/2019, at 9:28 am). In modern Jewish texts in English spelled '*mashiach*'

³Ibid.,

priests to serve God's people. But there is no further explanation found in the Qur'an for the important title given to Jesus as Messiah. The Muslim scholars argue that Jesus is an ordinary human but not God. Jesus is referred as Word from Him (God) (*bikalimatim-minhu*) (Surah 3:45) and His (God's) word (*wakalimatuhu*) (Surah 4:171) but interpreted as a spoken word of God but not the Word of God.

It is important to bring a clear picture of Jesus through re-reading of the Qur'an, the *hadith*, related Islamic literature, commentaries, and books written by Islamic scholars and by doing in-depth study on the images of Jesus for a meaningful dialogue so that mutual understanding and co-existence between the two communities can be strengthened.

Elaboration of the Problem

Jesus is highly exalted as born of Virgin Mary in Qur'an. He lived his life without sin, he is a healer and life-giver and he is coming back again to rule the world. Though he is a healer and life-giver, the scholars emphasise that he did not actually heal and give life to the people but God gave him permission to do so.? Though his birth was unique, born without the father, he was born by the command of God to 'Be' and he became sinless and pure.

There is a vibrant diversity in all religions, while at the inner level of spirituality there is deep commonality. While the diversity of the two religions should be respected, and the commonality in spirituality should be recognized and emphasised. It is the otherness of the other that which deeply binds together. The creativity of human spirit in religious expressions has to be held in esteem; at the same time, the creativity of the divine spirit has to be discerned in them. The dialectics between spirituality and religion can be the basis for a new global culture of dialogue.

The researcher would like to draw some implications in order to have the freedom of religion, practicing religious tolerance, appreciating each other's views and exchange healthy religious criticism. One needs to participate in dialogue in order to know each other's opinion in-depth, to understand each other and have a broader perspective of the other's stand and then become a channel of peace and harmony between the two communities.

Justification of the Research

According to the Holy Qur'an, Muslims have deep respect and honour for Jesus but they do not believe Jesus as God. At the same time their diversities within the religious community

which brings disunity and division which in turn affects the other religious group for confrontation. Therefore, this is an attempt to fill the lack of mutual trust and to build a friendly, peaceful and harmonious existence of two communities.

Objectives

- To *study* the sayings in order to understand the genuine image of Jesus in Islam.
- To attempt to *analyze* the status of Jesus in Islam through exegesis.
- To *explore* common ground for the Muslims and Christians Dialogue.

Method of the Research

The Research is based on historical critical method and dialogical approach. The aim of the historical critical approach is to try the culture and structure of all religions in such a way that our viewpoint, methods of investigation, and interpretation should be meaningful to the follower and scholars of different religions. It is the historians' discipline that has been largely responsible for the development of grave norms by which literary and other written sources can be reliably investigated. Hence the study is entirely based on library research.

Scope and limitations

The scope is confined to study the images of Jesus in the Qur'an, *hadith*, Muslim stories, Sufi sayings and also doing comprehensively study on the specific passages such as Surah 2:87, 3:45 b, 3:45 d, and 3:49. The literature in English, as well as Arabic, will be used to make the study authentic.

Structure of the Research

The Thesis is divided into six chapters with an introduction and a Conclusion.

Chapter One deals with the review of the literature to understand the work done by the eminent scholars of both the communities. The scholars' work divided into two parts: the contributions of Muslim scholars and the contributions of Christian scholars and their views on Jesus are taken into account.

Chapter Two focuses on the main characteristics of Jesus that are found in the Qur'an. The researcher discusses the issues on the various titles of Jesus to bring out the genuine picture of Jesus to help both Muslims and Christians to know the images of Jesus based on Qur'an.

Chapter Three is about *hadith*. *Hadith*⁴ is the next authentic source after the Qur'an. Sunni and Shi'a have their own *ahadith*⁵. The images of Jesus that are mentioned in Sunni and Shi'a *hadith* very much helpful to both Muslims and Christians to understand Jesus.

Chapter Four is about Muslim stories and Sufi sayings on Jesus. The stories that were told on the life of Jesus by the ancient Muslim common people and stories of Jesus told by Sufis. Sufism is a movement in Islam leading to very religious strict and simple faith. The mysticism is from Arabic Islamic traditions of the pre-modern period. In this chapter, the reader finds various images of Jesus in mysticism which helps both communities to understand the divinity of Jesus from the common Muslim stories and Sufi sayings.

Chapter Five deals with the Qur'anic exegesis on the specific verses which deal with the important titles of Jesus such as Jesus, the Holy Spirit, Jesus, the Word of God, Jesus, the Messiah and Jesus as the performer of miracles. The researcher has discussed on the outstanding scholar's exegetical work from both the communities to understand about Jesus in-depth. Moreover, the findings from this chapter will help both the communities to have meaningful dialogue.

Chapter Six proposes a common ground for dialogue between Muslims and Christians.

⁴ *hadith* (Singular).

⁵ *ahadith* (Plural).

CHAPTER ONE

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The images of Jesus mentioned in the Qur'an and the Bible developed enormously in the middle of nineteenth century. Scholars from both the communities wrote books and articles on the images of Jesus to foster better understanding between Muslims and Christians. There are several books and articles written on the topic 'Jesus in Islam.' There are similarities and differences between these two communities on the personality of Jesus. One of the main and foremost differences between these two groups is that Islam projects Jesus as one of the Prophets and Christianity projects Jesus as not only a Prophet but also God and one of the Persons in Trinity. Some writers discuss the commonalities of the both to build a relationship between these two communities by taking a neutral stand. This chapter is divided into two sections:

- The writings of Muslim intellectuals
- The writings of Christian intellectuals

There are three types of writers. The first is exclusive group, who say that their own faith is true and right, others' faith and religion are false; the second is inclusive; and the third one is pluralistic.

1.1. The Muslim intellectuals

Moulvi Muhammad in his book *Muhammad and Christ*⁶ wrote in detail about the life and mission of Jesus from Qur'anic and Biblical perspective. His extensive critic on the image of Jesus which is mentioned in the Bible seems one-sided. In his attempt, he tried to prove that the Bible is not infallible.⁷ He tried to establish that the perfect image of Jesus is Qur'anic rather than the Biblical Jesus.

⁶ Moulvi Muhammad Ali, *Muhammad and Christ* (Lahore: Ahmadiyah Anjuman-I-Ishaat-I-Islam, 1921).

⁷ Ibid., 35

M. Kamel Hussein in his book *City of Wrong: A Friday in Jerusalem*,⁸ described the crucifixion of Jesus which is the central theme of Christianity. The book was written as a novel which was awarded the Egyptian State prize for literature and had a wide readership both among the intellectuals and common people in Egypt. The book includes an introductory note of Kenneth Cragg and the translation by French orientalist, and the book became internationally popular and helpful for insightful inter-religious dialogue.⁹ Kamel Hussein concluded that the event of the Good Friday is sin and evil. Our everyday life itself is filled with tragedy. With our consciousness, we need to avoid all the factors related to evil. A person can experience joy, gladness, liberty of life and well being by avoiding evil.¹⁰ The concept of sin is lost in Islam but M. Kamel Hussein brings out its presence in Islam through his writings.

M. Ali Merad, a French Muslim of Algerian origin in his book, *Christ in the Qur'an*¹¹ criticizes those Muslim commentaries which try to disprove Christian dogmas than to see clearly what the problem of Christ is all about.¹² Merad is balanced in one sense. Although he is a Muslim he criticises the Muslim commentators' negative attitude on Christ. He argues that Muslims should be sensitive about Christ as Word of God and Spirit from Him¹³ because it is written both in the Bible and Qur'an. He suggests that Muslims need to be open to receive Jesus as He is highly exalted person from in Qur'an. Muslims understand Jesus not just on the level of a prophet but on a higher level than that but less than divine. Merad honours Christ but does not accept the Lordship of Christ. He contradicts himself because he accepts Jesus as a highly exalted person but at the same time he denies the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Another noteworthy contribution comes from the Indian Shi'ite writer Hasan Askari. In an essay "The Dialogical Relationship between Christianity and Islam" where he discusses dialogical relationship between Christianity and Islam, he refers to a mystic Rumi who says that to know the sign of god one needs to merge one's own soul with God the Almighty.¹⁴ Askari approaches Christ as a common 'sign' for Christians and Muslims. He is very positive in his approach to the lordship of Jesus Christ. For him, the sign is Jesus as divine proof. He wants to

⁸ M. Kamel Hussein, *City of Wrong A Friday in Jerusalem*, (London: Geoffrey Bles, XXV, 1959).

⁹ Ibid., 209.

¹⁰ Ibid., 210.

¹¹ M. Ali Merad, *Christ in the Qur'an*, (1968),

¹² Ibid., 3.

¹³ Ibid., 17.

¹⁴ Hasan Askari, "The Dialogical Relationship between Christianity and Islam", in *The Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, (Vol. 8, 1972), 477.

bring Muslim and Christian Communities together on one platform on the basis of Jesus as a central figure for both the communities. But he failed to bring them together on one platform. He emphasizes on the concept of sign and says that Christ as Sign of God liberates from the bondage of religion and opens the door for the genuine dialogue. He further opines that dialogue between Christian and Muslim is not that easy. It has to go through pain and nervousness. He opines that Divine Sign will be known through this process of pain and suffering.¹⁵

Ahmad Shafaat in his book *The Gospel according to Islam* has offered a new Gospel, a Muslim equivalent to the existing Gospels of the Christian New Testament. In this book, Shafaat takes the ninety-three verses of Qur'an which mentioned about Jesus directly or indirectly and inserts along with it the gospel verses to form a complete story of Jesus.

This story is told in the familiar style and form of the ancient canonical Gospels. This, in turn, is supplemented by extensive notes to further explain, support, and enhance the picture of Jesus painted in the Gospel text. For instance, he presents the meaning of the word 'John of the Bible which is equivalent to the 'Yohanan' used in the Qur'an as 'Yahya' whose meaning is means "God favoured him". This explanation is acceptable to both the communities.¹⁶ This is interesting to read because both the Qur'anic passages and Gospel passages together project the entire picture of Jesus. Ahmad Shafaat's book is helpful to understand the acceptable picture of Jesus for both Christians and Muslims but he did not make an attempt to bring these two communities together to study and participate in the dialogue.

The poetical contributions including those from Arab poets kindle fresh reflections on the theme of 'miracles' and the 'cross' in Christology or Christianity. Seyyed Hossein Nasr from a Shite background is also a prolific author of several books.

In a short essay on "Jesus through the eyes of Islam", he asserts that the only irreducible 'fact' separating Christianity and Islam is the question of the crucifixion and the related issue of redemption. He emphasizes the excellence given to Christ as 'the seal of sanctity' in Sufism.

In his other book *Ideals and Realities of Islam*, Nasr accepts Christ as 'the seal of sanctity', 'Spirit of God' (*ruh Allah*) and his 'supernatural birth', connected with the virginity of Mary¹⁷ is highly appreciated. But still, it seems he is biased because he says that Jesus foretold about

¹⁵ Ibid., 486.

¹⁶ Ahmad Shafaat, *The Gospel According to Islam*, (New York: Vantage Press, 1979), 57-58.

¹⁷ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Ideals and Realities of Islam*, (Cairo: The American University of Cairo, 1989), 34.

Muhammad's coming which is actually only an Islamic interpretation but not the understanding of Christianity.

The issue of Christ, Muhammad, and human conscience emerges as perhaps the most exciting aspect of the contributions from modern Egyptian writers. Hugh Goddard has also presented a study of modern Indian and Pakistani perceptions of Christ and Christianity. Recently, there has been a marked interest to examine the image of Christ as it can be found not only in the Islamic source material but also in contemporary Muslim literature such as Persian and Urdu poetry. Here again, Hugh Goddard also projects inclusive nature in his approach¹⁸ but has not paved the way to engage in building Christian Muslim relations.

Kate Zebiri, in her book, '*Muslims and Christians Face to Face*', underlines the difference between popular, missionary and scholarly contributions on both sides. On the one hand, She highlights the different approaches found in Muslim popular literature on Christianity and in Protestant missionary literature on Islam and on the other hand the study of Christianity by Muslim intellectuals and approaches to Islam by Christian Islamists and theologians.¹⁹ In her approach, she is balanced in presenting her view which is appreciable but does not mention at least a few possibilities of approaches for meeting Muslims and Christians together.

'*The Muslim Jesus Sayings and Stories in Islamic literature*'; is an elaborate work done by Tarif Khalidi. It contains several hundreds of stories ascribed to Jesus. These materials trace a tradition of love and reverence for Jesus that has characterized Islamic thought for more than a thousand years. It is an invaluable resource for the history of religions, as it contains the collection of documents of how Islam assimilated the immense religious features of Christianity. It is a work of great significance for an understanding of both Christianity and Islam; and has profound implications for modern-day inter-sectarian relations and ecumenical dialogue.

Tarif Khalidi's introduction and commentaries place the sayings and stories of Jesus in their historical context, showing how and why this "gospel" arose and the function it served within Muslim devotion. The Jesus that emerges here is a compelling figure of deep and life-giving spirituality. There are about three hundred sayings and stories arranged in it chronological

¹⁸ Engineer 1991 for Urdu and Persian poetry, Wysham 1952 and Souroudi 1979 for Persian poetry, Addleton, 1990 and Goddard 1994 for Pakisrani literature.

¹⁹ Oddbjorn Leirvik, *Images of Jesus Christ in Islam*, (Uppsala: Swedish Institute of Missionary Research, 1999), 16-17.

order.²⁰ They show to the reader how the image of Jesus evolved throughout a millennium of Islamic history.²¹ Tarif Khalidi's work is, in fact, a very extensive and diligent effort in bringing the image of Jesus from the ancient Islamic culture which is appreciable.

The most widely circulated of Muslims books which bases their argument on the Gospel of Barnabas. The book, *Jesus - A Prophet of Islam*, written by the Pakistani Muslim

Muhammad 'Ata ur- Rahim and published by Millat Book Centre is the most widely circulated Muslim books which base their argument on the Gospel of Barnabas. The work contains well-known material about Christ which is on par with the Qur'an and *hadith*, without any critical debate of the sources. He seems bit biased in his approach, for instance on page 221, he has mentioned a common greeting phrase usually pronounced after the prophet's name listed in the Qur'an, i.e. 'peace and blessings of Allah be upon him' used for Prophet Muhammad about five times after the name of Prophet Muhammad. But in the same page he stated Jesus' name three times but he failed to apply that common greeting phrase after the name Jesus.²² Like Ahmed Deedat's pamphlets, the book has had wide readers and echoes or reflects a major trend in contemporary Muslim polemics.

A broad variety of approaches and studies have already been presented, in the field of Islamic Christology and its bearing on Christian Muslim dialogue. The major contribution done by a Muslim scholar on Christian Muslim dialogue is Mahmoud Ayoub who was known as a giant in Christian-Muslim dialogue.²³ He has done tremendous work on intercultural exploration by taking different essays in his book *A Muslim view of Christianity* and his article '*Towards a Muslim Christology*' deserve special mention . Ayoub has also published a meditation on '*the miracle of Jesus*', and a study on the terms *walad* and *ibn* as used in the qur'anic *Tafsir* discussions of the divine Sonship of Christ.

Ayoub has done an extensive work of taking Qur'anic passages and New Testament passages, for instance taking Gospel of John 1:1 and comparing with Surah 3:45, where it is mentioned that Jesus the Word of God to enlighten both the communities to understand each other's perspectives in balance. In certain points, he is liberal in accepting the Christian concepts

²⁰ Tarif Khalidi, *The Muslim Jesus sayings and stories in Islamic literature*, (London: Harward Unuversity Press, 2001), 218.

²¹ Ibid., Cover page.

²² Muhammad 'Ataur, *Jesus A Prophet of islam*, (New Delhi: Millat Book centre, 2005), 221

²³ Mahmoud Ayoub, *A Muslim view of Christianity, Essays on Dialogue*, (New Delhi: Logos Press, 2007), cover page.

but in some other points he places the Islamic point of view above Christian teachings.²⁴ He also challenges some theological concepts which differ theologically with Christian understanding. His article, “Towards an Islamic Christology: An image of Jesus in early Shi’i Muslim literature” (July 1976) is a helpful presentation bringing Jesus and ‘Ali on one platform.

Ayoub took resources from Shi’ah *hadith* like *Baqir* and *al-Kafi* to bring out the possibilities of building the bridge between Christians and Muslims by comparing Christ and Imam Ali’ both as a spirit of God.²⁵ The rational approach of Mohamoud Ayoub to bring these two communities together is good attempt, and can be appreciated. But he differs when it comes to Islamic doctrinal issues where he is inclined towards his own Islamic ideology and negates Christian understanding. E.g. he accepts Jesus as the word of God but not as incarnated word of God. For him, the incarnated word of God is the Qur’an. He writes reference to Gospel of John 1:1, that “If we read this verse (John 1:1) Islamically, we would read, “And the Word became Book and entered our history.’ To be shaped by it and to shape it”.²⁶ His approach is sometimes inclusive and sometimes exclusive in presenting his view on the Christian and Muslim doctrines.

In her book, *A Comparative Study of Christianity and Islam*, Ulfat Azizus brings out the similarities and differences of Christianity and Islam very extensively. She discussed the origin and background of the formation of the Gospels and Qur’an in detail.²⁷ But in her conclusion she brings out the supremacy of Islam and declares that Christianity is limited to only Israelites: “The Christianity of Jesus Christ was not meant to be a universal religion...Jesus was one of these national Prophets. He was the Messiah of the Israelites.”²⁸

Asghar Ali Engineer is a well-known reformist, writer, and activist. Internationally known for his work on liberation theology in Islam, he leads the progressive Dawoodi Bohra reform movement. He was a Chairperson, Centre for Study of Society and Secularism, Mumbai, and Director, Institute of Islamic Studies, Mumbai.

He was born on 10th March 1939, at Salumbar, Rajasthan and died on 14th May 2013. He was a Shiate Muslim scholar who was very active in interfaith dialogue and issues of communal

²⁴Ibid., 11-12.

²⁵ Mahmoud M. Ayoub, “Towards Islamic Christology: An Image of Jesus in early Shi’I Muslim literature” in *The Muslim world*, (ed.), Willem A. Bijlefeld, (Hartford: The Duncan Black Macdonald Centre, Vol.LXVI, July 1976), 163-188.

²⁶ Mahmoud Ayoub, *A Muslim view of Christianity*, (New Delhi: Logos Press, 2009), 12.

²⁷ Ulfat Azizus Samad, *A Comparative Study of Christianity and Islam*, (New Delhi: Adam Publishers & Distributers, 2007), 1-13.

²⁸ Ibid, 116.

harmony in South and Southeast Asia. He held liberal, rational views on Islam and promoted a culture of peace. He wrote extensively on Hindu-Muslim relations and growing communal violence in India. He supported the ban on Salman Rushdie's "Satanic Verses" because he felt that the novel "is an attack" on religion. In his famous book, "*A Living Faith, My Quest for Peace, Harmony and Social Change*", he discusses at length how the Dawoodi Bohars were treated as slaves by their head priest called Syedna Muhammad Burhanuddin. He brought reforms in Bohra community at Udaipur, Rajasthan to gain them freedom. Prior to his reform, there was no freedom for Bohara to marry or bury or set up any organization or contest elections without the permission of the religious priest. He fought constantly against exploitation and restriction of freedom of expression which was both Islamic as well as constitutional right.²⁹ He examined the Indian/Pakistani and Persian interpretations of Christ as well as their use of Christian symbolism in his paper. He expressed that Islamic thinkers and writers teach about Jesus Christ in their own way which appeals to emotion rather than to intellect.³⁰ Asghar has written several articles on Interfaith Dialogue and published them in *Islam and Modern Age*. He says that both Muslims and Christians can discuss with each other openly for the freedom of conscience to know each other better as Prophet Muhammad used to practice in his lifetime:

We are lacking such tolerance today even in 21st century. The Prophet recognised the fact that for genuine faith, freedom of conscience is absolutely necessary. Without such freedom no one can freely choose one's faith. Coercion in matters of faith is a contradiction in terms. This doctrine of freedom of faith was practiced by the Prophet and has also been mentioned in the revealed text.³¹

Ibn Kathir in his book *Stories of the Prophets*, translated by Sheikh Muhammad Geme'ah has written exclusively on the lives of the Prophets mentioned in the Qur'an very authentically because he was the writer of the *hadith* Bukhari (a famous *hadith* for Sunnies) which is the most authentic book after the Qur'an. He has written a section called the story of Jesus (*'Isa*) where he pointed out Jesus as the Spirit of God, Jesus as sinless, and Jesus as a Judge. But there is a contradiction in his saying that only Allah the Most Merciful is eligible to judge. In this particular incident, Jesus being sinless, pass judgment upon an adulterous woman but Ibn Kathir does not take into account this fact. . He stated Jesus as sinless on one hand but on the other he

²⁹ Asghar Ali Engineer, *A Living Faith, My quest for peace, Harmony and social Change*, (New Delhi: Orient Black Swan, 2011), 44.

³⁰ Asghar Ali Engineer, 1991, 18.

³¹ Asghar Ali Engineer, 'Islam, Inter and Intra-faith Dialogue,' (*Islam and Modern Age*, Jan. 2005), 1-6.

declared God as a judge instead of Jesus.³² This is a deliberate attempt to minimise the divinity of Jesus and safeguard the supremacy of Allah.

Khanam is a professor of Islamic Studies at Jamia Milla Islamia. She affirms the importance of healthy relationship between Christians and Muslims and foresees that positive relations between the followers of these two faiths will enrich life here on earth.³³ In her article, called 'Interfaith Dialogue and Islam', in *Interfaith Spirituality, The power of Confluene*, wrote the broad view of Islam to invite Christians for dialogue. She states as follows:

“the objective of Islam is to bring about divine revolution, to invite people to the Worship of God, to strive for a society in which spiritual, ethical, and human values are cherished, Islam advocates an atmosphere where peace, tolerance, love and well wishing is the order of the day - where controversies are resolved without the use violence. This world can be established only through peaceful dialogue. The truth is that Islam is based on monotheism, with regard to God; and on peaceful dialogue, with regard to methodology. This is the essence of Islamic teaching.”³⁴

Farida Khanam invites Christians to foster peace between Christians and Muslims through dialogue. It is a good thing and it may be appreciated but she is biased in her approach because she invites the people of other faith on the basis of pure monotheism (*Tawhid*).³⁵

Khanam expressed Qur'anic view openly in her article "Interfaith dialogue and Islam." According to her while following one's own religion a person needs to respect others and discover the common bond between each other. She quotes from the Qur'an and says:

“In other words, the principle of dialogue given by Islam is, “Follow one and respect all” or the method of 'mutual respect'. As per the teachings of Islam, while respecting others, we have to welcome differences whole heartedly without any reservation. It is hatred that has to be eliminated, and not difference of opinion. People may have their differences in belief, religion, culture, etc., but while following the religion, they have to have mutual respect for others and discover a common bond between them, which shows them all to be human beings.

The following is another relevant verse:

"Revile not those whom they call upon wrongfully besides God, lest they revile

³² Ibn Kathir, *Stories of the Prophets*, (New Delhi: Islamic Book Service, 2013), 346-347.

³³ Ambrogio Bongiovanni, Introduction, in *Dialogue in a Pluralistic World*, (Delhi: ISPCK, 2013), viii.

³⁴ Farida Khanam, 'Interfaith Dialogue and Islam', in *Interfaith Spirituality, The power of Confluene*, (ed. Ambrogio Bongiovanni) (New Delhi: ISPCK, 2014), 70 -71

³⁵ Oneness of God.

God in their ignorance." (Surah 6:109)³⁶

There are several Muslim intellectuals who have tried to build the relations between Muslim individuals and between Muslim and Christian communities. One among them is Maulana Wahiduddin who is the founder of Centre for Peace and Spirituality in New Delhi. In his famous book *Non-Violence and Peace-building in Islam*, he declares that Qur'an and *hadith* as the base to draw lessons to negotiate differences and conflicts between individuals and communities at all levels.³⁷ It is, in fact, the need of the hour to bring peace and harmony between the communities but by taking the scripture of one particular religion as the basis makes his approach one-sided.

In building a relationship between the other faith communities, particularly between Muslims and Christians the most prominent Muslim intellectuals are Asghar Ali Engineer, Ali Merad, Hasan Askari and Farida Khanam. Their contributions are most useful to the experts who work among Muslims and Christians.

1.2. The Christian intellectuals

Like Muslim intellectuals Christian intellectuals also wrote their views on Jesus both from Christian and Islamic perspectives. Among them, there are three types. The first category is exclusivist, and the second group is inclusivist, and the third group is pluralistic which is balanced or unbiased on their views. A brief discussion about their contributions regarding the figure of Jesus is given below:

James Robson, lecturer in Arabic at Glasgow University wrote the book, *Christ in Islam* which narrates the life and ministry of Jesus in a concise form. This book is helpful to know about the life of Jesus mentioned in the Qur'an and stories connected with Jesus in a nutshell. It offers information for ordinary Christians and Muslims to understand the life and works of Jesus of the Qur'an. James Robson brought out the Islamic understanding of Jesus as Holy Spirit by quoting from the *hadith* (stories connected with Jesus).³⁸ If he would have mentioned the status of Jesus from *hadith* and discussed the divinity of Jesus it would have been more helpful. However, he is balanced in his approach.

³⁶ Farida Khanam, "Interfaith Dialogue and Islam" in *Interfaith faith Spirituality, The power of Confluence*, (ed.), Ambrogio Bongiovanni, (New Delhi: ISPCK, 2014), 68.

³⁷ Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, *Non-Violence and peace-building in Islam*, (Noida: Goodword Books, 2017), 5.

³⁸ James Robson, *Christ in Islam*, (London: John Murray. W, 1929), 95-96.

L. Levonian wrote a book on *Muslim Mentality*, to explain extensively what Muslim understands about Jesus and the Christian believers. It is very helpful to a Christian to understand the concepts of Muslims about Jesus from his book.³⁹ He provides a balanced approach in presenting Christ to the Muslims by emphasising the love of Jesus which is found very much in Jesus of the Bible than in the Qur'anic Jesus.

J.W. Sweetman has done very extensive work in bringing out pre-Islamic literature such as Jewish, Christian, Arabic ancient stories, and incidents recorded in the Qur'an in his book, *Islam and Christian Theology* Vol.1. There are more similarities and fewer differences in Qur'an and Pre-Islamic literature.⁴⁰ It seems that most of the insights of the Qur'an are borrowed from the Jewish, Syrian, Greek, and Christian sources. It is indeed very informative and thought-provoking material to understand the origin of Islamic theology from the pre-Islamic literature. However, his views seem to be one-sided.

The book, *Le Christ de l'Islam* was written by the Catholic Lebanese called Michel Hayek. Although he is a Christian, he has done extensive study on Muslim sources such as Qur'an, *hadith*, commentaries, and legends. Hayek writes in line with the tradition of the French scholar Louis Massignon, dealing especially on Sufi sources, but presenting a wide range of Christ-related material from Islamic sources. Although his book presents interesting historical material, the compilation of sources is often uncritical.

From the beginning of the twentieth century, the journal *The Moslem/ Muslim world* has presented smaller studies and apologetical treatises on the subject. More recently, the Rome-based *Islamochristiana* as well as the journal *Islam and Christian - Muslim Relations*, published by the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations in Birmingham, UK have published articles relevant to the subject.⁴¹

From the mid-fifties, significant contributions on this topic have been published in the 'Melanges de l'Institut Diminic and 'Etudes Orientales', (MIDEO) in Cairo. The magazine *Al-Mushir* of the Christian Study Centre in Rawalpindi, Pakistan deserves special mention. Roman Catholic newsletters like *Encounter* (Documents for Muslim-Christian Understanding', published by the Pontificio Instituto di Studi Arabi, Rome) And *Encuentro Islamo-Christiano* have been

³⁹ L. Levonian, *Muslim Mentality*, (London: George Allen, 1928), 28-30.

⁴⁰ J. Windrow Sweetman, *Islam and Christian Theology- A study of the interpretation of theological ideas in the two Religions*, (London: Lutterworth Press, Vol. I, 1945), 42-82.

⁴¹ Oddbjorn Lervik, *Images of Jesus Christ in Islam*, 14.

publishing shorter presentations and studies pertaining to the subject of Christ in Islam.⁴² From the sixties onwards, a series of dialogically oriented presentations from the Christian point of view have been published but they do not highlight the Islamic perspective. In 1960, Henri Michaud published a short study entitled *Jesus selon le Coran*. His desire was that there should be a joint veneration of Jesus in a 'community of hearts' between the adherents of two monotheistic faiths. In his thematic exposition of the Qur'anic image of Christ, he interprets the Qur'an by the Qur'an. What he earnestly desires is a communication that transcends the substantial differences between Christians and Muslims in their dogmatic teachings about Christ that promotes Christian Muslim relations.⁴³ There must be mutual respect between Christians and Muslims for the Bible and the Qur'an, if this goal has to be achieved.

Geoffrey Parrinder in his monumental book *Jesus in the Qur'an* presented in detail the images of Jesus based on Qur'an, *hadith* and traditional stories. This book must be regarded as a modern classic in the field of comparative religion. Further, he has done major work on the history of religion and comparative religion. This book is extensively useful to both Christians and Muslims to understand the valid status of Jesus mentioned in the Qur'an, *hadith*, and stories connected with Jesus. He arranged all the verses related to Jesus' birth, and titles given to Jesus, in order to identify them easily. Parrinder is balanced in presenting Jesus from Qur'an and the Bible.⁴⁴ To some extent, he brought out the views of both Islamic classical commentators and western Christian scholars view on Jesus. He used several cross-references from the Qur'an and New Testament to present clear status of Jesus. He also expressed his own stand on the status of Jesus as Holy Spirit by comparing from the Qur'an and the Bible.⁴⁵ As per Islamic understanding, *hadith* is also an authentic source to present the images of Jesus. He has taken the quotation from al Bukhari, stating the positive images of Jesus such as Jesus as Holy Spirit and Jesus as word of God. He attempts to show 'what Qur'an says about Jesus' with a critical examination of the Qur'anic teaching on it. Therefore, Parallels are given to this teaching in the Gospel, where they occur. Thus, his approach is fully within the tradition of comparative religion. Parinder adopts an inclusive approach to win Muslims by highlighting the status of Jesus from the gospel.

⁴² Ibid.,

⁴³ Henri Michaud, *Jesus selon le Coran*, (1960), 9.

⁴⁴ Geoffrey Parrinder, *Jesus in the Qur'an*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1965), 15.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 48-51.

In 1975, the German scholar Olaf Schumann published his dissertation *Der Christus der Muslime, Christologische Aspekte in der arabisch-islamischen Literatur* (enlarged and re-edited in 1988, later it was translated into English as *Jesus the Messiah in Muslim Thought* published in 2002. this book is very helpful to the English speaking readers). He includes the question of Christ in the dialogue with Muslim, not because of its importance in a Muslim context, but for its centrality in Christian theology. He also argues that a serious study of Christ of the Muslims can give-up some Christian false perception, and even lead to a fuller understanding of the Islamic articles of faith. He concludes his study with a discussion of concepts of God and man in Muslim-Christian controversies and particularly about Christology which is more useful feature in Christian Muslim dialogue to widen their understandings. So this book is of value to those who are engaged in Christian-Muslim encounters and gives orientation about themes and issues on the agenda of Christian-Muslim dialogue.⁴⁶ He did not deal with the important aspect of the divinity of Jesus but suggested that both the communities need to discuss on their scriptures without taking their traditional interpretations and get practical insights on some common issues as a model for each other.

Bandi Sreenivasa Rao's book *Christ in the Qur'an and Bible, (Was He Crucified?)*, is a comparative study on Jesus in the Qur'an and the Bible.⁴⁷ This approach leads the religious community towards discovering the distinction between two religions. It leads towards differences and widens the gap between the two religions ultimately.

The work of the Franciscan missionary Guilio Bassetti-Sani. *The Koran in the Light of Christ: a Christian interpretation of the Sacred Book of Islam* may be said to represent a category of its own. As the subtitle suggests, the author aims at 'a Christian interpretation of the sacred book of Islam'. The author explains his shift in orientation moving from a rather hostile approach to Islam towards a reading of Islam as a revelation that may prepare the way for Christ.⁴⁸ Although the inclusivist approach is positive; the theological perspective of the author and his 'theology of history' leaves little room for genuine objective study of Islam, and his interpretation of the Qur'an is one-sided. However, his work on Qur'an and understanding Qur'anic Jesus is quite helpful to have a meaningful dialogue between Muslims and Christians.

⁴⁶ Olaf Schumann, *Jesus the Messiah in Muslim thought*, (Delhi: ISPCK/HMI, 2002), vii-viii.

⁴⁷ Bandi Sreenivasa Rao, *Christ in the Qur'an and Bible, (Was He Crucified?)*, (Eluru: Bandi Brothers, 1975), 123-136.

⁴⁸ Guilio Basetti-Sani. *The Koran in the Light of Christ a Christian interpretation of the Sacred Book of Islam*, (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1977), 99-106.

Ibrahimkhan O. Deshmukh's book *The Gospel and Islam* is an important source for both Muslims and Christians to understand their basic doctrines. He discusses the concept of Oneness of Godhead (*Tawhid*)⁴⁹ of Islam, comparing it with the Holy Trinity of Christian God and tries to bring them as one component.⁵⁰ It seems his stand is one-sided but it enables Muslims and Christians to understand Christ through Islamic doctrines and literature.

Kenneth Cragg is the most creative contemporary author on Christian-Muslim relations. He published a famous book called *Jesus and the Muslim, an Exploration*, on this subject in 1985 with the title *Jesus and the Muslim, an Exploration* as a follow-up and sequel to his book *Muhammad and the Christian*, published in 1984,⁵¹ in which he aims at a shaded appreciation of Muhammad's prophethood from a Christian perspective. The preceding two books, *The event of the Qur'an* and *The Mind of the Qur'an*, (1971 and 1973) were the studies of the Qur'an and its *Tanzil*. In these books, Cragg pointed out the incidents in history, its major themes, its vocabulary, and its significance for the Muslims and for the non-Muslims. In these two books, Cragg deliberately excluded the Christian issues in the Qur'an in order to concentrate on the main concern of Muhammad's mission with pagan polytheism and its overthrow by an effective and eternal monotheism. In his book *Jesus and the Muslim*, Cragg presented not only the relevant Muslim sources for the Christians but also the New Testament for the Muslim readers.⁵² His main perspective is thus not historical, but gently apologetic and with a call to genuine dialogue.

In fact, his books on Jesus and the Muslim an Exploration as an extensive work done after his two books were published in 1971 and 1973. His book, *Jesus and the Muslim an Exploration* has two aims in one attempt: The first aim is to present the Islamic portrayal of Jesus in Qur'an and the tradition for Christian study; and the second aim is to interpret why and how the New Testament, from the same ground of history, understands the Christ in Jesus. It also aims to explore it as a document, to examine the place of Paul and John and so to reveal what unites and divides Islamic and Christian theology and worship, with Jesus as the crux. Like Geoffrey Parrinder, Cragg expresses his own view about Jesus by bringing out the passages from both the scriptures i.e. New Testament and the Qur'an. For example, he takes the issue such as crucifixion which is, in fact, controversial doctrine between the two communities. For the sake of clarity, he

⁴⁹ Ibrahimkhan O. Deshmukh, *The Gospel and Islam* (Mumbai: GLS, 1982), 195.

⁵⁰ Ibrahimkhan O. Deshmukh, 195-196.

⁵¹ Kenneth Cragg, *Muhammad and the Christian*, (London: Orbis Books, xiii-xv, 1984), 1-2.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 3-5

divides this crucifixion subject into three aspects: one is the will *to* it (on the part of doer), the will *for* it (on the part of sufferer), and the will *in* it (as it might be understood concerning God or God's act). Further Cragg concludes by saying that the first and second are in line with the understanding of the Qur'an but the third one 'God' act' is not on par with Qur'anic understanding because Qur'an says God was *not* in Christ reconciling the world to himself, he was with Jesus withdrawing him to heaven.⁵³ By doing this he presents a platform where both the religious groups discuss each other's views reasonably and try to maintain harmony between them.

Michael Nazir Ali in his book, *Frontiers in Muslim-Christian Encounter*, discusses certain theological concepts such as Jesus as Holy Spirit, Jesus as word of God, and Jesus as The Sent One (*rasul*)⁵⁴ to bring out the similarities and differences between Christian and Muslim theology. He has also brought out the differences and similarities between these communities on the doctrine of God to build bridges between them by using inter-faith dialogue. He is biased in his discussions and is exclusive in his presentation. He has dealt with theological issues related to Jesus such as, The Sent one, Spirit of God, and the Word of God, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ in an apologetic manner.⁵⁵ But he has not discussed in his book about healing the sick and raising the dead which is the most important work of Christ. The miracle works of Jesus' 'healing the sick and raising the dead' is a more important subject which point towards his divinity.

A journal *Christians and Muslims together, An Exploration* edited by Byron L. Haines and Frank L. Cooley provides wide information and suggestions on how to build relations between Muslims and Christians in general and particularly in the western countries such as the United States of America where most of the Muslims live there for their business purpose. But not much attention has been given to the Christians to explore a closer relation between Muslims and Christians in the US.⁵⁶ It is helpful to the Christians who live in the US and elsewhere to utilize the weapon of faithful witness among Muslim-populated countries to develop Christian Muslim relations.

⁵³ Ibid., 167-168.

⁵⁴ Michael Nazir Ali, *Frontiers in Muslim-Christian Encounter*, (London: Oxford Regnum Books, 1987), 31.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 31-37.

⁵⁶ "Christians and Muslims together, An Exploration", (ed.), Byron L. Haines and Frank L. Cooley, (Philadelphia: The Geneva Press, 1987), 91-99.

During the eighties, two comprehensive studies on Islamic Christology have been presented by Roger Arnaldez, *Jesus fils de Marie Prophete de l'Islam* and *Jesus dans la penseemusulmane* (1988). In his first work, Arnaldez focuses on Christ in the Qur'an, as viewed by various Qur'an-commentaries. In his well-known work, Arnaldez focuses on images of Jesus in Sufism. He pays special attention to the Sufi commentary to the Qur'an of al-Qushayri, the references to Christ in the works of Abu Talib al-Makki and al-Ghazali, the image of Christ in the esoteric Sufism of Ibn al-'Arabi, and the case of al-Hallaj. The book also contains chapters on the images of Christ in the works of the Mu'tazilite theologian al-Jahiz (cf. Schumann) and in Shi'ite Islam.⁵⁷ In his writings, he presents an inclusive approach.

Neal Robinson presented extensively the clear status of Jesus in his book *Christ in Islam and Christianity*. The highlight of his work is that he paid particular attention to the Classical exegesis and used Shi'a and Sufi understanding of Jesus to establish the divinity of Jesus. In his exegesis, he brought clarity to present Jesus' divinity by connecting the verbs like creating (*khalafa*) and blowing (*nafakha*) with God's creation account.⁵⁸ Neal Robinson has done work on Shi'a commentaries but has not dealt with Shi'a *hadith* which is the second authentic source for the Shi'a community.

S. J. Samartha served as lecturer and director in Karnataka Theological College, United Theological College, and Senate of Serampore College. He also taught at the South Asia Theological Research Institute (SATHRI) in Bangalore. He was the first director of the Dialogue Programme of the World Council of Churches in Geneva. In his renowned book, *One Christ - many Religions, Toward a Revised Christology*, proposes Christology that is biblically sound, spiritually satisfying, theologically credible, and pastorally helpful. The main purpose of this book was to examine the new perceptions of religious pluralism in the contemporary, global community and, direct the reader's attention to a revised Christology. He states that theological politeness is required, not just of Christians towards each other but also towards other faiths.⁵⁹ His writing is clear and compelling but rather repetitive.

Kenneth Cragg, has written another book called *To Meet and To Greet* which gives an extensive information on how to understand the people of other faith. He invites the reader to walk along any street in town or village meeting men and women of many different faiths or of

⁵⁷ Oddbjorn Leirvic, *Images of Jesus Christ in Islam*, 16.

⁵⁸ Neal Robinson, *Christ in Islam and Christianity*, (New York: State University of New York, 1991), 143.

⁵⁹ S.J. Samartha, *One Christ – Many Religions toward a Revised Christology*, (New York: Orbis Books, 1991), 114-115.

none. The suggestions given in this book are taken from his life experiences. His suggestions can be helpful for a common understanding between the Christians and people of other faith⁶⁰ but when it comes to contradictory issues like the divinity of Jesus in Islam there is no valid discussion.

Kenneth Cragg's, book called *Troubled by Truth, Biographies in the Presence of Mystery*, aims to explore the trouble with the truth that has to do with the interpretation and management of life, with the reckonings that occupy the faiths of the world. Cragg has dealt with the biographies of thirteen scholars among them six of whom he has known personally. There are scholars from Islam, Christian and Jewish faith who went through their scriptures and highlighted the truth and emphasized the importance of religious tolerance and respect for others.⁶¹ This work, in fact, is a remarkable and immensely rewarding volume and an admirable contribution to the cause of inter-religious understanding and cooperation. Through the medium of biography, it explores inconsiderable depth and with commendable frankness, not only the fascinating avenues of interfaith dialogue, but also some of the problems and difficulties that such adventure inevitably poses for those who take their faith seriously. All these figures stand 'in the presence of mystery' and their stories illuminate that sacred experience.⁶² It is quite obvious that scholars can understand other faith people and respect other faiths but Cragg did not mention the solution for the common people's understanding of other religious groups and respecting the faith of others.

Christine Schirmacher has examined two specific aspects of modern Christian - Muslim controversies on the Bible and Christology. In the first part of her work *Mit den Waffen des Gegners*, she deals with the Indian roots of modern polemics, with reference to the nineteenth-century controversy between the Indian Muslim Rahmatullah al-Kairanawi and the Christian missionary Karl Gottlieb Pfander. In the second part, she analyses the twentieth-century controversy over the Gospel of Barnabas⁶³ which is noteworthy.

In 1996, Maurice Borrmans published a survey of the images of Jesus among Muslims of today, entitled *Jesus et les musulmans d'aujourd'hui*. After referring to the Meccan and Medinan revelations pertaining to Jesus, Mary, and the Christians, he discussed about the image of Jesus

⁶⁰ Kenneth Cragg, *To Meet and To Greet*, (London: Epworth Press, 1992), 1-3.

⁶¹ Kenneth Cragg, *Troubled by Truth Biographies in the Presence of mystery*, (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1992), 1-14.

⁶² Ibid.,

⁶³ Oddbjorn Leirvik, *Images of Jesus Christ in Islam*, 15.

presented in some modern textbooks for Islamic education. He then deals with four influential commentaries on the Qur'an from this century, and the images of Jesus that can be found in some other works by modern Muslim literature, more specifically, Jesus-biographies by Egyptian Muslims, and Muslim poetry that includes Jesus-symbolism. Bormans concludes his book with a dialogical chapter, entitled '*Jesus, engimeoumystere*'?⁶⁴ In addition to the works mentioned in English, French and German there are of course numerous works relevant to the issue in other languages as well. Some of them in the form of general introductions relying on internationally recognised research.

Abd al-Masih, in his book, *Who is the Spirit From Allah In Islam?* He has done extensive work on the Spirit of God explained in both Qur'an and Bible. It is very useful to both the communities to know the role of the Spirit from both perspectives. In this book, Abd al-Masih highlighted the nature of Jesus with regard to the coming of Spirit upon him and mentioned that Jesus as Holy Spirit⁶⁵. He further described the exalted personality of Jesus that 'Isa's (عيسى) unique miracles prove his divine authority, according to Qur'an. But he failed to bring these two communities to a common understanding.

Oddbjorn Leirvik, in his book, *Images of Jesus Christ in Islam*, discussed the status of Jesus from various sources like Qur'an, *hadith*, traditions of Sunni, Shi'a, Sufi and stories from various traditions. His work is also insightful because of his rich experience particularly from the notion of 'conscience' in Christian Muslim dialogue from mid-eighties which gives added strength to those who are involved in Christian-Muslim dialogue.⁶⁶

In his book, *Christology in Dialogue with Muslims, A critical analysis of Christian Presentations of Christ for Muslims from the Ninth and Twentieth Centuries*, Mark Beaumont analysed Christian presentations of Christ for Muslims in the most creative period of Christian-Muslim dialogue, the first half of the ninth and the second half of the twentieth century. His outstanding study provides invaluable resources for addressing some of the most crucial areas of Muslim-Christian dialogue today.⁶⁷ It is highly useful to understand the dialogical events that occurred in the ninth and twentieth centuries and enables the readers to help these two communities to have peace and harmony.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 16.

⁶⁵ Abd al-Masih, *Who is the Spirit From Allah In Islam?* (1997), 21-31.

⁶⁶ Oddbjorn Leirvik, *Images of Jesus Christ in Islam*, (Uppsala: Swedish Institute of Missionary Research, 1999), 5-6.

⁶⁷ Mark Beaumont, *Christology in Dialogue with Muslims, A critical analysis of Christian presentations of Christ for Muslims from the ninth and twentieth centuries*, (Cumbria: Paternoster, 2005), 200-212.

In her thesis, Judy Tao Shih-Ching, written on *Holy Spirit in the Qur'an, An assessment from a Christian Perspective*, explains the concept of Holy Spirit both in Christianity and Islam. Taking common aspects of the Holy Spirit she establishes the bridge between Christianity and Islam.⁶⁸ Differences between Christianity and Islam on the Holy Spirit that need to be discussed in-depth in order to have fruitful dialogue.

Binod Peter Senapati in his book, *Jesus the Kaimatullah, A Christian-Muslim Relations*, has attempted to bring Christians and Muslims together on one platform. He has selected and dealt in detail on important titles of Jesus such as Jesus as the Messiah, Jesus as a spirit from Allah, Jesus as the word of God by taking a key verse from the Qur'an i.e. Surah 4:171.⁶⁹ But other passages in the Qur'an such as Surah 3:49 and Surah 5:110 which deal with the miracles of Jesus are missing. He could have done an in-depth study on a few passages from the Qur'an, to be more authentic in proving the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Another very simple and useful book for the Christian Muslim understanding and dialogue is *Understanding Islam*, written by an experienced writer in the field of Christian-Muslim relations is Sam V. Bhajjan. It is more of an eye-opener for the common evangelical Christians to look at other faith people in broadens sense. Though his stand is evangelical yet he is very much inclusive in his approach. He gives his opinion on the ordinary Christian preachers who often present the other religious weak points without much experience. Sam V. Bhajjan says that Christians should not preach what the other religions lack but make a positive witness to the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ.⁷⁰ Sam Bhajjan further highlighted some of the key concepts of Islam like the conception of Christ in Islam, God and secularism in Islam. This helps one to understand the Islamic stand on Christ. Bhajjan pointed out some of the preconceived ideas of Islam which most of the Muslims have in general when they come for dialogue with Christians.⁷¹

Karel Steenbrink, in his book, *The Jesus verses of the Qur'an*, pointed out the entire list of the images of Jesus found in Qur'an which helps both Christians and Muslims to understand the status of Jesus in Qur'an. In the end, he has dealt with the special titles of Jesus briefly⁷² but he did not express his stand on the divinity of Jesus which is the heart of the discussions between Christians and Muslims.

⁶⁸ Judy Tao, Shih-Ching, *Holy Spirit in the Qur'an, An assessment from a Christian perspective*, (2006), 22-33.

⁶⁹ Binod peter Senapati, *Jesus the Kaimatullah, a Christian-Muslim relation*, (Delhi: ISPCK, 2009), 47-67.

⁷⁰ Sam V. Bhajjan, *Undersanding Islam*, (Mumbai: GLS, 2011), 156-158.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 165.

⁷² Karel Steenbrink, *The Jesus verses of the Qur'an*, (Hyderabad: Henry Martyn Insitute, 2011), 186-193.

Todd Lawson in his book *crucifixion and the Qur'an, A study in the Muslim thought*, , wrote on the crucifixion passage found in Qur'an i.e. Surah 4:157-158. He has collected detailed exegesis of these verses from various scholars' point of view that is from pre-Tabari period to the modern period which is quite widespread work. His main purpose is to establish whether Jesus really died on the cross or was it only a person who appeared like Jesus who died on the cross? Jesus' death on the cross is a controversial issue between Muslims and Christian. But Todd Lawson attempted to bring out the truth on this issue but he concluded by quoting few scholars' views that suffering of Jesus was genuine. Those scholars are Al-Tabataba'i, Mohmoud Ayoub (redemptive suffering in Islam), Kamel Hussein, and a woman *Mufassira* (commentator), Bint al-Shati.⁷³

David Emmanuel Singh, has written an article in "Jesus, 'the Living Wali'? In *Jesus and the Resurrection, Reflections of Christians from Islamic contexts, A Revisionist Reading of Surah 18:60-8*. The resurrection of Jesus is a controversial issue between Christian and Muslim. Taking 'resurrection' as a subject to build the relation between Christians and Muslims with Jesus is a challenge. David Emmanuel Singh, in his article, taking Qur'anic verse and explaining Moses as an example saint is interesting. Emmanuel Singh emphasized Christian and Islamic traditions and its continuity as a base for Muslim and Christian conversation.⁷⁴

In his thesis, *Christology in Christian-Muslim dialogue: the hermeneutics of interreligious dialogue for the promotion of common value*, Afayori Robert highlighted the titles given to Jesus in Qur'an justifies the meaning of those names given to Jesus by the classical Islamic commentators like Al-Tabari, Zamakhshari. Based on the keywords such as Christology, Dialogue, Comparative Theology, and Hermeneutics, he wanted to bring the Muslim and Christian communities together through the process of proper dialogue. His attempt to build the relation between Christian and Muslim through dialogue is highly appreciated. In his opinion dialogue is an exercise to share each other's thoughts and clarify some issues, learning from each other to build Christian-Muslim relations. By taking Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics as a model to discover some common values such as prayer and submission to God, peace and peaceful co-

⁷³ Todd Lawson, *Crucifixion and the Qur'an, A study in the Muslim thought*, (New York: One world, 2011), 141-150.

⁷⁴ David Emmanuel Singh, "Jesus, 'the Living Wali'?" in *Jesus and the Resurrection, Reflections of Christians from Islamic contexts, A Revisionist Reading of Surah 18:60-8*, (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2014), 23.

existence and solidarity with the poor and the marginalized.⁷⁵ Encountering with Muslims with just one Christian theologian's (Paul Ricoeur) point of view is not practically possible.

Conclusion

The Christian writers have written about the attributes of Jesus by taking the Qur'an as their major source. It is worth to mention that attributes of Jesus also found in other resources such as *hadith*, Muslim stories and Sufi sayings. Few writers have taken the images from the *hadith* and Sufi sayings but they are biased in their presentation of Jesus. Few scholars like Karel Steenbrink, Afayori Robert, are balanced in their respective work. The work done so far is not sufficient to develop a viable dialogical approach which can influence both Muslim and Christian communities to accept whole heartedly.

⁷⁵ Afayori, Robert, *Christology in Christian-Muslim dialogue: The hermeneutics of Interreligious Dialogue for the Promotion of Common Values*, (Scotland: University of Edinburgh, 2015), v.

CHAPTER TWO JESUS IN THE QUR'AN

Introduction

Qur'an and *hadith* (حديث) are the two main foundations of Islam. Qur'an is the direct revelation of God and is a primary source of Islam. *Hadith* (حديث) is simply sayings and doings of Prophet Muhammad and it is counted as a secondary source of Islam. In this chapter, the researcher is going to look into different titles of Jesus mentioned in the Qur'an and study in detail to find out which are similar to the Bible.

In Qur'an after the name 'Jesus' always find a phrase attached as 'son of Mary'. Jesus is understood to be a Prophet but not as God. In the Qur'an this term mentioned in 93 (آيات) (*ayats*) verses with various titles attached such as "Son of Mary" and other relational terms, mentioned, directly and indirectly, over 187 times. Jesus is thus the most mentioned person in the Qur'an by reference; 25 times by the name 'Isa, third-person 48 times, first-person 35 times, and the rest as titles and attributes. Among several titles, few titles of Jesus are very much similar to Biblical understanding. In this chapter, the researcher is taking twenty titles of Jesus to examine which are closer to the biblical understanding. At the end of this chapter the researcher is making an attempt to find the titles which are more transparently acceptable for both the communities.

There are several names given to Jesus in Qur'an. The basic name given to Jesus in Qur'an is 'Isa, (عيسى) which actually derived from Hebrew name *Esau* and *Yeshua*.⁷⁶ There are other titles and names such as *Messiah* (*Al-Masih*, المسيح), the Word of God (*kalimatullah*, كلمة الله) and Spirit of God (*ruhallah*, روح الله) given to Jesus in Qur'an which is found in the Bible too. The Islamic image of Jesus took shape in the Qur'an, even before Islam existed. As Geoffrey Parrinder states the term *Messiah* (*Al- Masih*, المسيح), has been known in the north and south Arabia in pre-Islamic times.⁷⁷

The Holy Qur'an which was revealed to Prophet Muhammad is found with both the similarities and differences of Jesus. The differences are found in a few titles such as Jesus as

⁷⁶ Encyclopedia of Islam, Vol. 4, ed. E. Van Donzel, B. Lewis and Ch. Pellat, Netherlands: E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1978, 19

⁷⁷ Geoffrey Parrinder, *Jesus in the Qur'an* (London: Faber and Faber, 1965), 31.

Son of God and Jesus as the Holy Spirit. In fact Muslims say that Jesus as a son of God is not correct. Andreas D'Souza in his article, "Jesus in Ibn 'Arabi's *Fusua al-Hikam*" pointed out that Jesus occupies a special place in the Qur'an, though Orthodox Islam has minimized this position in favour of Muhammad.⁷⁸ In the Qur'an the name Jesus had been mentioned directly or indirectly in fifteen *Surahs* and ninety-three verses. It is exceptional that three of the long chapters of the Qur'an; that of the Family of 'Imran (Surah 3), that of the Table Spread (Surah 5), and that of Mary (Surah 19), are named in reference to the person of Jesus and His work.⁷⁹

The central differences between Jesus mentioned in the Qur'an and the Bible is the crucifixion of Jesus, the sonship of Jesus and Trinity. Let us see those possible similar and different images of Jesus that are found in the Qur'an.

2.1. Jesus, the descendant of the family of Abraham (عيسى مبعوث من عائلة ابراهيم)

Christian and Muslims have a common origin of Abraham mentioned both in the Qur'an and in the Bible. (Genesis 26:4 and Deuteronomy 7:6).

In Surah 2: 47 it is mentioned that " O Children of Israel, call to, the (special) favour which I bestowed you, and that I preferred you to all others (for My Message) " A. Yusuf Ali. mentioned that Jesus is from the lineage of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Surah 29:27). Both Christians and Muslims believe that Jesus came from Abraham's family and there is no contradiction between two faiths.⁸⁰

As per Qur'an, all the prophets are the descendants of Isaac and not of Ishmael who was the son of Abraham's bond-maid Hagar.⁸¹ Maududi states that Israel experienced God's special favor and is also called a 'nation exalted above all the peoples of the world'.⁸²

⁷⁸ D'Souza, "Jesus in Ibn 'Arabi's *Fusua al-Hikam*" in *The Bulletin of Christian Institute of Islamic studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1-2, Jan-June 1983, 28-54.

⁷⁹ Emmanuel Luther Ratiq, *Jesus, Contact and Conflict Between Christians and Muslims*, (Hagersten: IKBS International, 1999), 17.

⁸⁰ A. Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an, Translation and Commentary*, foot noteno. 3447, 1035.

⁸¹ Emmanuel Luther Ratiq, 21. 21.

⁸² Syed Abul-A'la Maududi, *The Meaning of the Quran*, Vol.1, 8th ed., 73.

2.2. Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary (عيسى مولود من مريم الباكرة)

The Qur'an (Surah 19:20-21) agree that Jesus was born to the Virgin Mary.

Muslims believe that Jesus (called *'Isa*, عيسى in Arabic) was the son of Mary, and was conceived without the intervention of a human father. The Qur'an describes that an angel appeared to Mary, to announce to her the "gift of a holy son" (Surah 19:19). She was astonished at the news, and asked: "How shall I have a son, seeing that no man has touched me, and I am not unchaste?" (Surah 19:20). When the angel explained to her that she had been chosen for the service of God and that God had ordained the matter, she devoutly submitted herself to His will. (Surah 3:47).

In the Qur'an and other Islamic sources, there is no mention of Joseph the carpenter, nor any recollection of the inn and manger legend. On the contrary, the Qur'an describes that Mary retreated from her people (outside the city), and gave birth to Jesus under a remote date palm tree. The tree miraculously provided nourishment for her during labor and birth. (See Chapter 19 of the Qur'an for the entire story. The chapter has aptly been named "The Chapter of Mary.")

However, the Qur'an repeatedly reminds us that Adam, the first human being, was born with neither a human mother nor a human father. Therefore, Jesus' miraculous birth affords him no higher standing or presumed partnership with God. When God ordains a matter, He merely says, "Be" in Arabic *Kun* (كُنْ) and it is so. "The similarity of Jesus before God is as that of Adam. He created him from dust, and then said to him: "Be!" And he was" (Surah 3:59). So Jesus was born to Virgin Mary by God's command when God says 'Kun' (Be)'. In Islam, Jesus is regarded as a human prophet and messenger of God, not part of God Himself.

A well-known tradition called *Masharq ul-Anwar*; no. 929⁸³ points out that Jesus and Mary were not touched by Satan at their birth. It means every child at their birth happens to touch by Satan except Mary and Jesus were exempted because of their mission of purity.

The reason for the unique conception of Jesus is that he had been born to the Virgin Mary through the Holy Spirit (روح الله) without the involvement of a male parent. Adam was created without the agency of a human father or mother because, as the first man on earth, he could not have had earthly parents. Such an act of creation was necessary at the beginning of the world of mankind. Someone had to be created first. But in the case of Jesus, he was born without a human father when God's natural process of procreation had long been in existence.

⁸³ Emmanuel Luther Ratiq, *Jesus, Contact and Conflict Between Christians and Muslims*, 24.

Here we see God interrupting the course of nature, and overriding the very laws of procreation that he had himself established, in order that Christ might thus have a virgin-birth. Why? Surely such an act could not have been without meaning. It points to the profound truth that Jesus Christ held a very special relationship with the One who was the architect of this miraculous conception – a relationship that is shared by no other prophet. The birth of no other prophet has been anything as remotely close as the miraculous conception of Jesus Christ. Anything God does, do with a purpose. Without purpose, God did not create anything. So should not question God’s doings. (Surah 38:27)

In the Qur’an, it is the very absence of such a clearly defined purpose in the unique conception of Jesus, which perplexes the seeker of truth as to the meaning behind this miraculous birth. Being born of a virgin woman, Jesus had an exceptional and unique beginning to his life on earth. As he was the only man in all human history to come into the world in this unusual way, we cannot be satisfied with the Qur’an’s summary declaration that it was no more than just an exercise of God’s power. We will see on the divinity of Jesus in the Fifth chapter under the section Jesus as the performer of miracle in detail.

The Qur’an teaches that the Virgin birth of Jesus was simply a manifestation of God’s power.

Surah 3:47: “She said: My Lord! How can I have a child when no mortal hath touched me? He said: So it will be. Allah createth what He will. If He decreeth a thing, He saith unto it only: Be! And it is.” (Surah 3:47⁸⁴)

The truth of the matter is that the virgin birth of Jesus Christ was not a random manifestation of God’s creative power as implied in the Qur’an. While the fact that it was brought about by the power of God is without any doubt, however, this in itself does not explain its meaning or purpose. Surely the great act of creating the whole world – with all the animate and inanimate things in it – out of nothing are sufficient proofs of God’s creative power. What necessity was there to give a new demonstration of this power? The Qur’an itself teaches that the mere fact that God could create men out of nothing is surely proof that God can raise them from the dead.⁸⁵

Surah 22:5: “O mankind! If ye have a doubt about the Resurrection, consider that we created you out of dust...” (Yusuf Ali)

⁸⁴ (Pickthal).

⁸⁵ Jesus in Qur’an, (Accessed on 27/07/2018, at 9:05 pm).

As such, Allah is saying that no proof of the ultimate resurrection is needed for the unbelievers since his initial act of creation is sufficient for a man to perceive his creative powers. In other words, there is no need for Allah to further demonstrate his creative powers. The miraculous conception of Jesus just could not have been for the purpose of a manifestation of God's power as there was no visible demonstration of God's power for humans to behold when he caused the conception to take place. The miraculous conception could not be physically demonstrated as there was no visible evidence of it.

Thus, we accept it on the basis of our faith in God's Word. Though there was no external visible sign of God's power, we know the miraculous conception to be true because it was prophesied centuries in advance in God's unfailing Word. Since no one could actually see the miraculous power at work at the time of conception, it certainly would be futile for God to use it as a means to demonstrate his power for others to see. Therefore, the virgin-birth could not have been an arbitrary demonstration of the power of God, as the Qur'an claims. There must have been another reason for it.

Why was the virgin birth of Jesus a necessity? Surely, God would not do such an unusual act without reason if it were unnecessary. He would cause the virgin-birth to take place only if it was utterly necessary to do so. Something must have required that Jesus be born in this way.

The virgin-birth is an article of faith, which is repeatedly upheld in the Qur'an, and yet we find that there is no explanation for the miraculous birth. In the Qur'an we are assured that it took place, but is not given utmost importance, why it took place.⁸⁶

2.3. The name was given to Jesus as 'Jesus son of Mary' mentioned in the Qur'an

(اسمائى مختلفه ورد فى القرآن لعيسى ابن مريم)

In the Qur'an, it is stated that "Behold! The angels said: "O Mary! Allah giveth thee Glad tidings of a Word from Him: his name will be Christ, held in honour in this world and the hereafter... (3:45)⁸⁷. In Qur'an and other translation of the Qur'an it is mentioned 'Messiah' for Jesus instead of Jesus Christ. Here one thing needs to be noted that for the term Messiah there is no definition mentioned in the Qur'an (Surah 3:45).⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Ibid.,

⁸⁷ Yusuf Ali, 134.

⁸⁸ Geoffrey Parrinder, 68.

2.3.1. The various names of Jesus found in the Qur'an

The names were given to Jesus in Qur'an and how many times it is used in Qur'an are found as follows:

- *al-Masi*(المسيح)

This title is found in Qur'an eleven times. Actually, this term Messiah is derived from the Hebrew word (*Mashiach*), which means 'the anointed one'. So, in general, the Kings and prophets of Israel were anointed when they began their office. Therefore Jesus is anointed for the office of King to rule the world. Al-Kamalan, the commentator, opines that Jesus is called *al-Masih* either because he was both blessed and anointed by the angel Gabriel, or because whomsoever Jesus touched was healed.⁸⁹

- *Nabi* (النبي)(Prophet) (Surah 29:30,)

Another title was given to Jesus in Qur'an is Prophet, one who foretells God's message) *Rasul* (envoy, messenger, Surah 4:157,171, 5:75), Jesus is also called as *Rasul* which means one who not only receives messages from God but also communicates that message to the people.

- *Ibn Maryam*, (ابن مريم)

"Son of Mary" found in Qur'an 33 times, *'Isa ibn Mariyam* 16 times, *Ibn Maryam* 17 times. In Qur'an Jesus called as the son of Mary. Due to the Virgin birth of Jesus, this name was given to identify Jesus as pure in his life. The meaning for this term given is "from whom He was born by the power of God". (The title of the Surah 19 is named as *Ibn Mariyam*)

- *Min al-mukarrabin*, (من المقربين) (Nearest to God. Surah 3:45 Yusuf Ali)

"Those nearest to God" (3: 45). In many aspects, Jesus is closer to God. Since Jesus is born without a male parent with the spirit of God Jesus is closer to God or nearer to God than all other prophets.

- *Wadjih* (وَجِيهًا) (honour Surah 3:45, Yusuf Ali)

"held in honour in this world and the hereafter". (3:45). Since Jesus was born without the involvement of a male parent, Jesus honoured in this world and the hereafter. (al-Baydawi a classical Islamic scholar explains Jesus is called on earth as a prophet and in heaven as an

⁸⁹ Thomas Patrick Hughes, "Jesus Christ" in *Dictionary of Islam*, London: W.H. Allen and Co. limited, 1885, 229.

intercessor). Baydawi being a traditional Islamic scholar regarded Jesus as the mediator between God and people of this world.⁹⁰

2.3.2. There are other names given to Jesus

- *Mubarak*, (مبارك)"blessed" (19: 31). Jesus is blessed because he was born of the Holy Spirit.
- *Kawl al-hakk* (قول الحق) (Surah 19:34Pikthal/Yusuf Ali) "Statement of the truth" which means definite word. Jesus is mentioned in the Qur'an as the Word of God.
- *Abd Allah*, (عبدالله) "Servant of God". Jesus is also called the servant of God because he was sent to this world by God with a particular mission.⁹¹

It is also important to point out that Muslims believe that the Gospels as we read today are not the same exact literal word of God revealed to Jesus, a belief shared by many other Christian and secular scholars such as Bart Ehrm an, Professor of Religious Studies at University of N. Carolina, Chapel Hill. Though considered altered from the original, it does not mean that the Gospels as we see them now should not be respected as Holy Scriptures. The subject of alteration is complex and too detailed to be covered here. The researcher wanted to mention it for the sake of covering both sides of the equation.⁹²

The Qurar'nic names for Jesus Christ given as followed: *'Isa* (عيسى) which means Jesus. Al-Baizawi, an Islamic famous Qur'an commentator says that the term *Isa* is as equal as the Hebrew word *Ishu'*, and is derived from *al-'ayat*, "white mingled with red," without, however, explaining this derivation.⁹³ Like that there are several scholars who have given their own interpretations and meaning based on the term used for Jesus in Qur'an.

Neal Robinson noted and calculated how many times the term '*Isa* (عيسى) is used in Qur'an. According to him the name *'Isa* (عيسى) (Jesus) occurs twenty-five times: nine times by itself (2: 136; 3:52, 55, 59, 84; 4: 163; 6: 86; 42: 13; 43: 63) and sixteen times in conjunction

⁹⁰ Ibid.,

⁹¹ *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 81.

⁹² <http://www.irshad.org>

⁹³ Thomas Patrick Hughes, "Jesus Christ" in *Dictionary of Islam*, London: W.H. Allen and Co. limited, 1885, 229.

with one or more other names or title.⁹⁴ *kalimatu'llah*, (كلمة الله) "the Word of God." Surah 4:171. "His Word." Kamalan Hussain says by this expression is meant he who was born at the express fiat of God. (Sura 19:36: "He says only to it BE and it is."). This term "the Word of God" is used more commonly by Christian and Muslim communities very often and mentioned in their respective scriptures also (Surah 4:171 and John 1:1). *Qaulu 'l-Haqq*. (قول الحق) "The Word of Truth." Surah 19:34. Some commentators take the expression *qaulu 'l-haqq* as referring to "the word of truth." while others take it as referring to Christ Himself, "The Word of Truth." *Ruhun min Allah*, (روح من الله) "A Spirit from God." In Surah 4:171 it is mentioned as: A Spirit from Him." Al-Baizawi says it is a spirit which proceeded from God. The title *Ruhu 'llah* (روح

الله) is the special *Kalimah* for Jesus Christ.⁹⁵ As per Qur'an, it is mentioned as "a spirit from Him (Allah الله) some commentators have suggested that spirit (*ruh* روح) could also mean 'mercy' so Jesus would be a 'mercy from God',⁹⁶

As per Geoffrey Parrinder, there are few more titles given to Jesus. They are: Jesus as a sign (*aya* آية), (19: 21; 21:91; 23:52; 3:50); Jesus as a witness (*shahid* شَهِيدًا) (4:159;5:117) and Jesus as among the righteous (*min al-salihin*, الصَّالِحِينَ) (3:46).⁹⁷ In Qur'an Jesus called as *zakiyya* (زَكِيًّا), "faultless" Surah 19:19. (Pickthal, The Meaning of the Glorious).

2.4. Jesus, the Word of God (عيسى كلمة الله)

Both in the Bible and in the Qur'an Jesus declared as the Word of God. According to the Bible: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). According to the Qur'an, it is mentioned that "Behold! The angels said: O Mary! Allah giveth thee Glad tidings of a Word from Him: his name will be Christ Jesus, the son of Mary..."

The Arabic term for Word of God is *Kaliamatullah* (كلمة الله).

There are differences of opinion between Christians and Muslims on the term 'the word of God'. The Bible says Jesus is The Word. (John 1:1-3) but Muslims argue that all prophets and messengers speak the word of God. That is true but none of the other prophets or messengers

⁹⁴ Neal Robinson, "Jesus" in *Encyclopedia of the Qur'an*, eds., Jane Dammen McAuliffe, (Brill: Koninklijke, 2003), Vol.3, 8.

⁹⁵ Thomas Patrick Hughes.

⁹⁶ Geoffre Parrinder, *Jesus in the Qur'an*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1965), 49.

⁹⁷ Geoffre Parrinder, 51-53.

were given the title “*Kalimatullah*” كلمة الله only Jesus. Jesus is the word of God. He is the Word became flesh (human). The Bible also says the following:

Muslims can believe that the eternal and divine word of God came from heaven down to earth, was incarnated in human language, for man to recite, and confined to the pages of an earthly book. But they cannot believe that the eternal and divine Word of God, Jesus, came down from heaven, incarnated in human form, and was confined in an earthly human body of flesh and blood.⁹⁸

In Surah 4:171, Jesus is called, “His Word.” And in Surah 3:45 the Qur’an states that Allah gave Mary a glad tidings “of a Word from Him.” In the original Arabic, the expression used here is “*kalimatim-minh* (مَتَّهِ كَلِمَةً). It means *kalmia* كلم (word), *min*, مِّنْ (from), *hu*, هُوَ (Him). It is of vital importance for Muslims to note that Jesus is the only Prophet who ever lived, who is called a Word from God and as per Surah 4:171 he is God’s word. Centuries before the Qur’an came into existence, this same title was given to Jesus in the Bible:

John 1:14: “And the Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son who came from the father, and He was full of undeserved kindness and truth.”

Revelation 19:13: “...the name by which he is called is the Word of God.”

But why is Jesus called the “Word of God”? In view of the fact that the Qur’an attributes this title to Jesus without explanation, it is in the Bible that we find the ultimate meaning of this term. He is designated as such not only during his life here on earth but also during his pre-human spirit existence in heaven. Furthermore, in the Bible, in the book of Revelation it reveals that even after his resurrection, Jesus is still known as the “Word of God.”⁹⁹ Biblical titles often describe the function served or the duty performed by the bearer. For instance, in Exodus 4:16, it is stated that God made Aaron the “mouth” or the “spokesman” of Moses, saying:

“He must speak for you to the people; and it must occur that he will serve as a mouth to you, and you will serve as God to him.”

⁹⁸ <https://davidiqbalkarim.wordpress.com/tag/ruhullah/>

⁹⁹ <https://davidiqbalkarim.wordpress.com/tag/ruhullah/>

In a similar way, Jesus served as the Mouth, or Spokesman, for his Father, the great King of Eternity. He was God's Word for conveying information and instructions to the worshippers of God on earth. Prior to Jesus' coming to earth, on many occasions when God communicated with humans, he used Jesus as his angelic mouthpiece. Showing that Jesus continues to serve as his Father's Spokesman, or Word, Jesus told his listeners:

John 12:49-50: "I have not spoken out of my own impulse, but the Father himself who sent me has given me a commandment as to what to tell and what to speak....Therefore the things I speak, just as the Father has told me them, so I speak them."

The ascription "His Word" and "a Word from Him" are unique in the Qur'an. In spite of all appearances of reverence towards the person of Christ, Muslim apologists secretly view him as a rival to the grandeur of Muhammad. Therefore, it should not surprise us when they try to simplify the profound and unique titles of Jesus Christ. Consider for example how Muslim scholars try to twist the meaning and undervalue the true meaning and application of the title of Jesus as "The Word from God." One Muslim website states:

"Whenever God decides to do something, like giving life or causing death, He says the word "Be" and it happens. Since Jesus was born without a father, he was not conceived by the male sperm cells. Instead, his creation, similar to Adam, is solely attributed to the Word of God, 'Be.' God says: "Indeed the likeness of Jesus to God is as the likeness of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him, 'Be,' and he was." (Qur'an 3:59).

In essence, Jesus is God's 'Word' because he came into existence by God's Word – 'Be'.

Most Muslim scholars also give a similar explanation. If this explanation is true, then why Adam is not called the "Word of God"? If the title "Word of God" is given because of God's means of bringing an individual into existence by the utterance of the word "Be," then is it not more appropriate for Adam to receive this title as he was the first man to be created in this manner? The Qur'an identifies only two persons by name to be created in this manner – by the utterance of the word, *Kun* كُنْ "Be." The first was Adam and the second, Jesus. Yet, Adam was not called the "Word of God" in the Qur'an. Even though like Jesus, he had no human father, yet he is not known as the "Word of God." Neither are the angels nor other creatures are given this title. In the Qur'an, Jesus alone is called the Word of God. The title applies to Jesus alone.

In fact, obedience to Jesus, the "Word of God," is an important requirement in the Bible:

John 3:16-18: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.”

John 5:24: “He who hears My word and believes Him who sent me has eternal life”

John 8:31: “If you continue in My word you are truly My disciples”

And in the Qur’an too, Jesus is said to have stated the following:

Surah 3:50: “I have come to you, to attest the Law which was before me. And to make lawful to you part of what was before forbidden to you; I have come to you with a Sign from your Lord. So fear God, and obey me.” (Yusuf Ali).¹⁰⁰

2.5. Jesus, *Al-Masih*, the Messiah (عيسى مسيح)

The term Messiah found both in the Quran (3:45, 4:172) and in the Bible (John 1:45, 4:25). As it is mentioned earlier the word *Messiah* مسيح is not of Arabic word but it is derived from the Hebrew word *Mashiach*. Islamic commentator ‘Allamah Tabatabai, in his commentary states that *Al-Masih*, (الْمَسِيحُ) means God gave Jesus to Mary without the agency of man so Jesus is called as *Al-Masih*. (Surah 4:171. ...The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary ... (Pickthal). He further referred that the word *Masih* is an Arabicised form of *Messiah* derived from original Hebrew *mashih* (modern Hebrew) *mashiha* in Arabic, in Greek this became *messiah*, the form now in common use.¹⁰¹ Jesus alone is called the *Messiah* in the Qur’an. No other prophet, patriarch or priest is given this title. In Arabic, it is simply *al-Masih*. The Qur’an awards this title to Jesus on eleven separate occasions, including in Sura 4:171, where a denial of Jesus’ divinity is also made. However, the Qur’an makes no attempt to define the title as mentioned earlier by Geoffrey Parrinder. Few titles like Jesus as ‘faultless’, ‘Holy’ (Surah 19:19) and Virgin birth of Jesus (19:20-22) found very clear in the Qur’an. In Surah 19:19 the Arabic word ‘*Zakiyya*’ (زَكِيًّا) used which means holy, blameless, and sinless. In the following section, the reader can find on Jesus as ‘Holy’ in detail under section (2. 6. Jesus as ‘Holy’, in the light of Qur’an). To find the meaning of the term, *Messiah* one has to search into the Jewish and Christian Scriptures to find

¹⁰⁰ <https://davidiqbalkarim.wordpress.com/tag/ruhullah/>

¹⁰¹ www.al-Mizan.org

its meaning. When we look there we find that the expressions Messiah and Son of God were synonymous.¹⁰²

Over 300 Old Testament prophecies speak of the coming Messiah (“Christ” derived from Greek term ‘*Christos*’) and describe him as a man that stands above all other men, including the other messengers of God, and that he would have authority, majesty, splendour, and excellence above all other men. Indeed, he would have divine attributes. Jewish believers used the term Messiah and Son of God interchangeably. For example, Peter, one of the first Jewish followers of Jesus said, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God (Matthew 16:16).” Nathaniel (John 1:49), Mark (Mark 1:1), and Martha (John 11:27) are other examples who used the terms Messiah and Son of God interchangeably. Caiphas, the Jewish High Priest also used the terms Messiah and Son of God together. When Jesus was on trial, Caiphas asked Jesus, “I adjure you, by the living God; tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God (Matthew 26:63).”

Even demons recognized him in this way. They knew him from all eternity as the eternal Son from the Father and recognized him in human form when he commanded them with authority to depart:

“And demons also came out of many, crying, ‘You are the Son of God!’ But He rebuked them, and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that He was the Messiah (Luke 4:41).”

Thus, by saying that Jesus is the Messiah, the Qur’an has duly given Jesus a title which implies that he is the very person that the Qur’an is otherwise at such pains to deny—the Son of God himself.

2. 6. Jesus as ‘Holy’, in the light of Qur’an (عيسى¹⁰³ القُدُس في ضوء القرآن)

The Angel said to Mary: Surah 19:19: “He said: Nay, I am only a messenger of thy Lord, (to announce) to thee the gift of a holy son.” (Yusuf Ali). Yusuf Ali in his translation of Qur’an declared Jesus as ‘Holy son’ whereas Piktal refers to Jesus as ‘faultless son’. “He said: I am only a messenger of thy Lord that I may bestow on thee a faultless son.” S. Abul A’la Maududi used Jesus as ‘pure son’¹⁰⁴ and Maulana Wahduddin Khan used as ‘a son endowed with

¹⁰² Masiha, (Accessed on 24/05/2018 at 8:30 am).

¹⁰³ *Al qudus* (القُدُس) means holiness, sacredness in Arabic-English Dictionary, *The Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, (New York: Spoken Language Services, Inc., ed. J.M. Cowan, 1976), 747.

¹⁰⁴ S. Abul A’la Maududi, *The Holy Qur’an Translation and brief notes with Text*, (Lahore: Islamic Publications, pvt Ltd.1987), 485.

purity'¹⁰⁵. Allama Shabbir Ahmad Usmani mentioned as 'a pure and clean, a blessed and a fortunate son from God . . . he would be absolutely pure . . .'¹⁰⁶. Ayatullah Agha Haji Mirza Mahdi Pooya Yazid used as 'a son purified (in footnote mentioned as 'Holy')'¹⁰⁷. In Arabic-English Dictionary the meaning of the word 'Zakiyya' (زَكِيَّة) mentioned as pure, chaste, guiltless, blameless, and sinless.¹⁰⁸

The Arabic word, "zakiyya" (زَكِيَّة) (faultless) implies that Jesus was total without sin. Among mankind, only Jesus Christ is described as faultless or sinless in both the Qur'an and the Bible. He is emphatically described as such in both books. On the other hand, both the Qur'an and the Bible describe the sins of other prophets and both leave us with the firm impression that Jesus alone was without sin.

In the above Qur'anic verse, the holiness of the son of Mary is shown to be the reason for the unique birth of Jesus. This implies that a man cannot be born of a Virgin unless he is faultless. Hence Jesus Christ, being the only man to be born in this way, must of necessity also be the only sinless man who ever lived.

Having come from God and not from the seed of man, Jesus' life was untouched at birth by the effects of sin. Contrary to the claim made by Muslims that all prophets are sinless, it is evident in the Qur'an itself that even the great prophets prayed for God's forgiveness. Unlike Jesus, they too, like all other men, were born from the seed of Adam. The Qur'an shows that even the great prophets sinned and required God's forgiveness, for example:

- **Adam**

Surah 7:23: They said: "Our Lord, we have wronged our own souls. If thou forgive us not and bestow not upon us Thy mercy, we shall certainly be lost." (Yusuf Ali)

- **Abraham**

Surah 26:82: "And Who I hope will forgive me my faults on the Day of Judgment." (Sher Ali).

¹⁰⁵ Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, *The Quran*, (New Delhi: goodword Books, 2011), 918.

¹⁰⁶ Allama Shabbir Ahmad Usmani, *The Noble Qur'an- Tafseer – E – Usmani*, (New Delhi: Idara Isha'at-e-Diniyat, Trans.Mohammad ashfaqAhmad, 1992), Vol.2, 1383.

¹⁰⁷ Ayatullah Agha Haji Mirza Mahdi Pooya Yazid, *The Holy Qur'an – The Final Testament*, (New York: Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an, Trans. S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali, 5th Ed., 2005), 945.

¹⁰⁸ Arabic-English Dictionary, 379.

- **Moses**

Surah 28:16: “He prayed: ‘O my Lord! I have indeed wronged my soul! Do Thou then forgive me!’ So God forgave him.” (Yusuf Ali)

- **David**

Surah 38:24: “And David gathered that We had tried him; he asked forgiveness of His Lord, fell down, bowing in prostration, and turned to God in repentance.” (Yusuf Ali)

- **Solomon**

Surah 38:35: “He said, ‘O my Lord! Forgive me’...” (Yusuf Ali)

- **Jonah**

Surah 37:142-144: “Then the big Fish did swallow him, and he had done acts worthy of blame. Had it not been that he repented and glorified God, he would certainly have remained inside the fish.” (Yusuf Ali).

The Qur’an also testifies that even Muhammad is a sinner and is in need of forgiveness.¹⁰⁹

- **Muhammad**

Surah 48:1-2: “Lo! We have given thee O Muhammad a signal victory, That Allah may forgive thee of thy sin that which is past and that which is to come.” (Pickthall)

Surah 47:19: “So know (O Muhammad) that there is no God save Allah, and ask forgiveness for thy sin and for believing men and believing women. Allah knoweth (both) your place of turmoil and your place of rest.” (Pickthall).

Surah 40:45 (Pikthal),...”you have patience (O Mohammad and ask forgive ness of thy sin...”).

Both Muhammad and the Muslims are told to repent of their sins, conclusively illustrating that Muhammad was in need of forgiveness. In fact, centuries before the Qur’an came into existence, the Holy Bible attested to this truth:

Romans 3:23: “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

- **The only exception – Jesus the Christ**

1 Peter 2:22: “He (Jesus) committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.”

Concerning Jesus:

¹⁰⁹ <https://davidiqbalkarim.wordpress.com/tag/ruhullah>

Hebrews 4:15: “For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in every way, like ourselves, but without sin.”

Yes! Jesus Christ committed no sin. What kind of man is he that has never sinned? There is not a single verse in either the Qur’an or the Bible stating that Jesus asked forgiveness from God. The reason is clear; he was Holy; he was Faultless and Pure. He came from the realms above and he is not of this world. That is why the Qur’an acknowledges that Jesus is a Spirit from God. Jesus himself testified to this truth in John 8:23: “So he went on to say to them: ‘You are from the realms below; I am from the realms above. You are from this world; I am not from this world.’”

The *hadith* also records that Jesus was sinless. Muhammad himself believed this! It is recorded in both Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim. Sahih Bukhari, Volume 4, Book 55, Number 641:

Narrated By Said bin Al-Musaiyab: Abu Huraira said, “I heard Allah’s Apostle saying, ‘There is none born among the off-spring of Adam, but Satan touches it. A child, therefore, cries loudly at the time of birth because of the touch of Satan, except Mary and her child.’” Then Abu Huraira recited: “And I seek refuge with You for her and for her offspring from the outcast Satan”¹¹⁰ (Surah 3:36)

Abu Huraira reported Allah’s Messenger (saw) as saying: The Satan touches every son of Adam on the day when his mother gives birth to him with the exception of Mary and her son.

Why should Jesus be the only man who is without sin among mankind? The Qur’an says about pure life of Jesus but gives us no reason for it. The fact that the Qur’an testifies that Jesus was a prophet does not answer our question. Why then are other prophets not described in the Qur’an as being faultless? In fact, quite a few are shown to be wrongdoers. But we must ask again, “Why Jesus was the only one who is sinless and not other men and prophets?” We can only comprehend this if we understand the full significance of Jesus’ role in God’s purpose. We will also appreciate why all these unique features are vested in one man. Since the Qur’an does not reveal what made Jesus so unique, we need to go to the Bible for the answer.

¹¹⁰ Sahih Muslim, Vol. 4, 1261.

The unique features of the life of Jesus not only support the belief that he is the Son of God, but they are also absolutely necessary for Christians to prove the doctrine of the Sonship of Jesus Christ. Thus, our conviction is based solidly on evidence and not on emotions.

Both the Qur'an and the Bible tell us very clearly that Jesus had no human father. We must, therefore, ask ourselves this vital question, "Since Jesus is addressed as a 'son' by the angel Gabriel both in the Qur'an (Surah 19:19) and in the Bible (Luke 1:35), whose son is he?"

Is he Mary's? In Surah 19:19, the angel Gabriel said to Mary: "I am only a messenger of thy Lord, to announce to thee the gift of a holy son." Here, Gabriel refers to a son who was to be given as a "gift" by God to Mary.

Since the Qur'an makes it very clear that the son is a gift from God, it shows that Mary was only the recipient of that gift. She is not the source of that gift but God. The gift belongs to God. The gift was a son. Therefore, the son belongs to God which means that Jesus is His son. In other words, Jesus is God's Son because he was born with the Spirit of God through the Virgin Mary without the male parent. This testifies to the Gospel truth that Jesus is the Son of God.

Muslims have a great misunderstanding about what is meant by calling Jesus the Son of God. To them, it means that God performed a physical sexual act to conceive a child. This is an objectionable blasphemy because Christians too agree that "it is not fitting to the majesty and holiness of God that He should beget a son" through sexual means. (Surah 19:35). We know that it is impossible for God to beget a son as a man begets a son. God is incapable of such a physical act. No Christian would ever think of such a blasphemous thing of the true and living God. Christians do not believe that Jesus is the Son of God in a physical sense. They believe that Jesus is the Son of God in a spiritual sense.

The Qur'an asks a question in Surah 6:101: "How can He have a son when He hath no consort?" The carnal and physical traits of humans are attributed to God in this verse. No consideration whatsoever is given for the divine, infinite nature of God. Just because men on earth cannot have sons unless they cohabit with their wives, so the Qur'an blasphemes when it concludes that God cannot have a son unless he cohabits with a wife. According to the absurd logic of the Qur'an, although God Almighty created the vast universe and every living being in it out of nothing, he could not produce a son for himself without a wife. If God could actually cause Mary to produce a son without a husband, why would it be impossible for him to similarly produce a son without a wife? Before we answer the question raised in Surah 6:102, we must draw the attention of Muslims to the fact that the Qur'an itself answers this question in

Surah 39:4:

“If Allah had willed to choose a son, He could have chosen what He would of that which He hath created. Be He Glorified! He is Allah, the One, and the Absolute.” (Pickthall)

This Qur’anic verse proves that Allah can and could have a son? Then observe the question raised in Surah 6:102. This Qur’anic verse asks, “How can God have a son without a wife?” If Muslims can accept the fact that it was possible for Mary to conceive a son without a consort (husband) why do they find it difficult to accept the fact that the Almighty Creator can have a son without a consort (wife)? Yes, if Mary can beget a son without the sexual involvement of a husband, surely the Almighty God can have a son without the association of a wife. It would be very foolish for anyone to limit the power of God by saying, “God cannot have a son.” The Qur’an itself proclaims in Surah 2:20: “Lo! Allah is Able to do all things.” (Pickthall)

God is the Creator of the universe. He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth and all the living creatures in them. And God asked Abraham “Is anything too hard for the Almighty?” (Genesis 18:14). A person who is submissive to the Omnipotent God must agree with Jesus Christ, the greatest Prophet of God, who said, “With God all things are possible.” (Matthew 19:26).

No Muslim will deny that it is God who created humans and equipped them with procreative powers to bear sons and daughters. Yes, God created Adam with the power to have sons and daughters. Now ask yourself, The one who gave mankind the power to have sons, can He not have a son? The logical answer is an indisputable affirmation. The word “son” means “a human male considered with reference to both his parents and either one of them; a male descendant.” Every male child or person has to be the son of a father who produced or generated his life. Adam had no human father, but still, he had to be the son of someone. Of whom then was he a son of? Adam must have been the son of God because God was the originator of his life. God was his father. Luke 3:38.(“son of Enos, son of Seth, son of Adam, so of God”) Surah 3:59 states:“Lo! the likeness of Jesus with Allah is as the likeness of Adam.” (Pickthall). Neither of them had a human father. Hence, in as much as Adam was a son of God, so is Jesus. However, similitude stops here. This does not in any way equate Adam with Jesus, the glorious firstborn Son (Rom 8:29) who lives with his heavenly Father forever. Even before Adam or anything or anyone else was ever created Jesus was there. Jesus was and is the unique Son of God. (John 3:16; 8:58; Hebrew 1:5).

Some Muslims believe that because Jesus was born without a human father, the Christian doctrine of Jesus as the Son of God was automatically established from this point in time onwards. Muslims need to appreciate that Jesus was born in a supernatural way because there was no other way, as the Son of God who had a pre-human existence, could be born. If he had been conceived by ordinary means, there would have been little to argue for his pre-existence as a spirit creature. The doctrine of the virgin birth is central to the Christian belief that Jesus is the Son of God. The very uniqueness of His birth is vital to the Christian belief. Since the Qur'an denies that Jesus is the Son of God, it does not find meaning in this phenomenon. The Bible, states that Mary was a virgin that the conception was miraculous and that the agent was the Holy Spirit. The supernatural form of the virgin-birth gives its real significance and meaning. The virgin birth declares that God acts on His own. The Qur'an unwittingly goes a long way towards hinting at this meaning, ultimately to stumble at it through its denial of Jesus as the Son of God.¹¹¹

2.7. Jesus, the Son of God

Jesus the Son of God is a controversial issue between Christians and Muslims. Son of God is one of the major differences between Christians and Muslims because it reflects the divinity of Christ. Jesus differed from human beings in being derived from no human father and in His freedom from sin.

Islam, in no uncertain terms, denies the Sonship of Jesus Christ. However, the Qur'an provides internal evidence that testifies to the Biblical truth that Jesus is indeed the Son of God. The testimonies regarding Jesus in the Qur'an itself clearly show that he is more than a prophet.

Although Jesus is a highly respected prophet in Islam, it nevertheless considers him as just one among the many prophets. However, for Christians, it is an uncompromising truth that Jesus is the unique Son of God. While the Qur'an denies his Sonship openly, there is internal evidence in the Qur'an that point to his Sonship. In fact, most Muslims are ignorant the Qur'an confirms the following magnificent facts concerning Jesus:

¹¹¹ <https://davidiqbalkarim.wordpress.com/tag/ruhullah/>

- He was born of a Virgin - Surah 3:45-47; Surah 19:17-21.
- He was the Word of God - Surah 4:171.
- He was a Spirit from God - Surah 4:171.
- He was Faultless (Sinless) - Surah 19:19.
- He was the Messiah - Surah 4:171.
- He was Illustrious in this World and would continue to be so in the Hereafter - Surah 3:45.
- He was taken to Heaven by God - Surah 4:158.
- He will come back as a Sign

2.8. Jesus, strengthened by the spirit of God (عيسى مويّد من روح الله)

In the Qur'an Surah 4:171, Jesus mentioned as 'a Spirit from Him'. Interchangeably it is used as 'a Spirit of God. In Qur'an it is declared Jesus was supported by God with the Holy Spirit.

The Qur'an confirms that God strengthened Jesus with the Holy Spirit. Few Muslim scholars such as Ibn Kathir and Maududi referred Holy Spirit as angel Gabriel. Few classical Muslim scholars such as Zamakshari¹¹² and Al- Baydawi¹¹³ and Al-Razi¹¹⁴ declared Jesus as Holy Spirit.

Qur'an says Jesus is strengthened by the Holy Spirit. (2:253):

“Those messengers We endowed with gifts, some above others: To one of them Allah spoke [referring to Moses]; others He raised to degrees (of honor); To Jesus the son of Mary We gave clear (Signs), and strengthened him with the *Holy Spirit*.” Surah 2:253

One of Jesus titles in the Qur'an is *Ruh Allah*, meaning “the Spirit of God”. The *spirit of God*, however, does not denote the same meaning as the Father, Son and *the Holy Spirit* components in the doctrine of Trinity. Jesus Christ was endowed with many unique miracles,

¹¹² Abu al-Qāsim Maḥmūd ibn 'Umar al-Zamakhsharī, *Al-Kashshāf 'an Ḥaqā'iq at-Tanzīl*, (Riyaz: Maktabah al-Abikan, 1998), Vol. 2, 293.

¹¹³ Nasir al-Din al-Baydawi, *Anwar al-Tanzil wa-Asrar al-Ta'wil*, (Berut: Dar Ihyaturath al-Arabi, n.d), Vol. 1, 92-93.

¹¹⁴ Fakhruddin al-Razi, *Tafsir al-kabir*, (Berut: Dar al-Fikr, n.d.), Vol. 3, 190-191.

reflecting some of God's attributes, the likes of which are not seen before or after him. God bestowed these miracles upon him as a sign to fulfill his prophecy.

In Islam, Jesus is given the title, *Ruhullah*, (روح الله) meaning "Spirit of God." It comes from the same text, Surah 4:171, where Jesus is called *wa-ruhun-minhu*, "a spirit from Him." (*ruh* (spirit), *min* (from), *hu* (him)). In this case, we do find some evidence in the Qur'an that helps us to define the title. "He hath written faith upon their hearts and hath strengthened them with a Spirit from Him," (Sura 58:22, Pickthall).

These are the same words used as in Surah 4:171, *ruhun-minhu*, "a Spirit from Him." Nowhere else in the Qur'an does this expression occur? In his commentary on the Qur'an, Yusuf Ali says that the "phrase used is stronger" than that for the Holy Spirit (*Ruhul-Quds*) in the Qur'an who is identified in Islam as the Angel Gabriel. Ali implies that this Spirit of God is greater than the mighty angel and says it is, "the divine spirit which we can no more define adequately than we can define in human language the nature and attributes of God." The Muslim commentator has, unintentionally but very impressively, given a precise definition of the Holy Spirit as Christians know him in the Bible.

He is the "divine spirit" who cannot be defined in human language with terminology other than that used for God himself. Yet the Qur'an, in the only other place where this expression occurs, applies this same divine title to Jesus! Yusuf Ali declared in his commentary as 'divine Spirit in footnote no. 5365.¹¹⁵

So Muslims have a third title in Surah 4:171—Spirit of God—which attributes divine features to Jesus just as the titles Messiah and Word of God do. Significantly, they are synonymous with titles used in the Bible for Jesus to further express his profile towards mankind as the eternal Son from the Father.

The Qur'an, in the very passage (Surah 4:171)—which contains a denial of the deity of Jesus ("Do not say Trinity! God is only one God. Far be it from His glory to have a son.") — paradoxically attributes three titles to him which affirm his deity! He is the Anointed Son of God/Messiah; he is the divine Word of God, and he is a Spirit coming from God. Jesus was not just another prophet called to the office at an appropriate point in time. He is the message of God, he came from God, and His very spirit is the Spirit of God.

¹¹⁵ A.Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an*, (Lahor: 1934), 1518.

In fact, not only does the Qur'an affirm the deity of Jesus, it affirms the Christian understanding of the Trinity by its use of the expression *ruhun-minhu*! Yusuf Ali freely concedes that this is no created spirit of which the book teaches but the divine spirit, which comes from God, and must be defined in the same terms as God.

Twice the Qur'an uses the expression, once for Jesus Christ, and once for the Spirit which comes from God (and strengthens believers), and must be defined in the same terms as God. A closer definition of the Trinity you could hardly hope to find. Surah 58:22 defines the Spirit of God in terms synonymous with those applied to the Holy Spirit in the Bible and Surah 4:171 expressly nominate Jesus in the same terms.¹¹⁶

Surah 10:34/35 (Yusus) – “Say: Can any of your partners (associate-gods) produce a creation, then reproduce it? Allah produces creation, and then reproduces it.” Only God can create and give life.

- **Jesus Creating a Bird and Miracles**

And [make him] a messenger to the Children of Israel, [who will say], in (Surah3:49):

“Indeed I have come to you with a sign from your Lord in that I design for you from clay [that which is] like the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird by permission of Allah. And I cure the blind and the leper, and I give life to the dead – by permission of Allah. And I inform you of what you eat and what you store in your houses. Indeed in that is a sign for you, if you are believers.”

The writer of this thesis found this verse from the Qur'an very interesting because one time the writer read a comment by a Muslim criticizing Jesus and the Bible because he said that the Bible says Jesus made a bird out of dust and he had a hard time believing it. Those made him feel that the Bible could not be the truth. The author was unaware of such a verse in the Bible so the author asked him to show where that verse was in the Bible. He did not answer the author. Yet, it was in the Qur'an, not the Bible.

Jesus was clear about his role; He was both human and divine. The miracles He performed were by the power, permission, and grace of his Lord, Allah the Exalted, who aided

¹¹⁶ [https:// en.wikipedis.org](https://en.wikipedis.org)

His Prophet with miracles so that the people would heed his words and follow his mission. Jesus took a lump of clay and shaped it into the form of a bird. When Jesus breathed into it, it became a live bird—a miracle from Allah.

When Allah will say: O Jesus, son of Mary, remember My favour to thee and to thy mother, when I strengthened thee with the Holy Spirit; thou spakest to people in the cradle and in old age, and when I taught thee the Book and the Wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel, and when thou didst determine out of clay a thing like the form of a bird by My permission, then thou didst breathe into it and it became a bird by My permission; and thou didst heal the blind and the leprous by My permission; and when thou didst raise the dead by My permission; and when I withheld the Children of Israel from thee when thou camest to them with clear arguments — but those of them who disbelieved said: This is nothing but clear enchantment. (Surah 5:110).¹¹⁷

This parallelism has never been explained by Muslims except to use it to perversely claiming that the Bible is corrupt. They argue that the original Bible contained the apocryphal story of Jesus making and animating clay birds and that the Qur'an was merely correcting the wrong exclusion of these Apocrypha from the canon.

This is mistaken as the *sira* (auto-biography) tells how Muhammad, far from receiving these stories from Allah (via the angel *Jibreel*/Gabriel), heard it from three Christians. Saifullah & Azmy of Islamic-awareness has kindly provided the following evidence:

Those who talked to Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, were Abu Haritha Ibn `Alqama, Al-`Aqib `Abdul-Masih and Al-Ayham al-Sa`id. They were Christians according to the faith of the king with differences between them; they say: He is Allah, and say: He is Son of Allah, and say: He is the third of three (i.e., part of Trinity) and these are the claims of Christianity. They use as evidence for their claim that He is Allah the argument that] he used to raise the dead, cure the sick, create from clay bird-like structure then breathe into it to make it a living bird.

All this was by the leave of Allah, the praiseworthy the exalted to appoint him as a sign for men (Surah 19:21). They also argue for saying that he is Son of Allah by saying he had no known father and spoke in infancy which is something never done by any human being. They use as evidence for their claim that He is the third of three (i.e., part of Trinity) the argument that Allah says: We did, We commanded, We created and We judged (i.e., by using the plural for Himself), and whereas if He was one, He would say: I did, I judged, I commanded and I created;

¹¹⁷ Muslim Objections Refuted Jesus and The Bird Explanation From wikiislam. net.

but it is He, Jesus and Maryam. The Qur'an was revealed addressing all these arguments.” Abu Muhammad `Abd al-Malik Ibn Hisham al-Ma`afiri, *Al-Sirah Al-Nabawiyah*, 1998, Volume II, Dar al-Hadith: Cairo (Egypt), p 181-182.¹¹⁸ The reader can see an explanation with the exegetical work done by Robinson in the fifth chapter under section 5.4, Jesus the performer of miracles more in detail on the miracle passages, Surah 3:49.

2.9. The relationship between Jesus and the Holy Spirit (ربط بين العيسى والروح القدس)

The discourse here is centered on three Qur'anic texts: Surah 2:87; 2:253 and 5:110, that state Jesus was “strengthened by the Holy Spirit”. To discover what this phrase means reader needs to consider the exegetical views of three Islamic scholars – namely Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari, Abu al-Qasim Mahmud ibn Umar al-Zamakhshari and Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Umar ibn al-Husayn al-Taymi al-Bakri al-Tabaristani Fakhr al-Din al-Razi; because of the lengthy nature of these names we shall adopt their fully recognized shorter forms such as al-Tabari, al-Zamakhshari, and al-Razi for simple referencing.

These three classical Islamic commentators enjoy some degree of historical proximity to the early stages of the development of Islam and therefore have the privilege of being classical commentators. Yet, on the other hand, their commitment to the religion of Islam, coupled with their desire to learn more about the religion through the application of linguistics, philosophical and exegetical tools, brings freshness to the issues of textual interpretations in the Qur'an. These commentators provide the insiders' perspective with respect to the interpretations of the above Qur'anic texts.¹¹⁹ The texts under consideration are:

Surah 2:87 – “We gave Moses the scriptures and we sent messengers after him in succession. We gave Jesus, son of Mary, clear signs and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit. So now, how is it that whenever a messenger brings you something, you don't like, you become arrogant, calling some imposters and killing others?”

Surah 2:253 – “We favoured some of the messengers above others. We gave Jesus, son of Mary our clear signs and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit.”

Surah 5:110 – “Then God will say, ‘Jesus, son of Mary! Remember my favour to you and your mother: how I strengthened you with the Holy Spirit, so that you spoke in your

¹¹⁸ [https:// en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org)

¹¹⁹ Afayori Robert, *Christology in Christian-Muslim Dialogue: the hermeneutics of interreligious dialogue for the promotion of common value*, (Scotland: University of Edinburgh, 2015), 151-153

infancy and as a grown man; how I taught you the Scriptures and the wisdom, the Torah and the Gospel; how by My leave, you fashioned the shape of a bird out of clay, breathed into it and it became by My leave a bird; how by My leave, you brought the dead back to life; how by My leave, I retrained the children of Israel from harming you when you brought them the clear signs and those of them who disbelieved said, ‘This is clearly nothing but sorcery.’”

Al-Zamakhshari, a Sunni classical Islamic scholar¹²⁰ explained that the Arabic word *ruhi l-qudusi* (Spirit of God) is an adjective form. He opines that Jesus is nearer to God by using the Arabic word ‘*taqarrubi*’ for nearer to God in his *Tafsir* (Commentary).¹²¹

Moreover, in the above particular verse (Surah 2:87) it is clearly declared that Jesus is very much related to the Holy Spirit. ‘We supported him with Holy Spirit.’ (*ayyadnaahu bi-ruuhil-qudus*, أَيْدِنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ). In all the above verses the name of Jesus (Jesus, son of Mary) is mentioned. Here the name (Jesus, son of Mary) is understood as it is related to Jesus. The mission Jesus performed by the power of the Holy Spirit referred along with the name of Jesus because Holy Spirit has a close relationship with Jesus in connection to his birth narratives and the miracles performed by Jesus. (Surah 3: 45, 2: 87, 2: 253, 4:171; 3:49, 5:110; 19:17;21:91 and 66:12).

2.10. Miracles did by Jesus, son of Mary (معجزات على يد عيسى ابن مريم)

Basically Surah 3: 49 and Surah 5:110 are called as miracle passages. They deal with the four prime miracles that Jesus performed in his adulthood: one giving life to a clay bird, two healing the blind, three healing the leper and fourth one is raising the dead. While he was a child he performed one miracle i.e. speaking from the cradle to defend his mother Mary when false accusations were made by others:

Surah 19:30. “He (Jesus) spake: Lo! I am the slave of Allah, He hath given me the Scripture and hath appointed me a Prophet,” apart from these there are many more being added over the centuries by writers and historians. Miracles were attributed to Jesus as signs of his prophethood and his authority, according to educator and professor Ishaq Musa Al-Husayni (d. 1990), an author most known for *Mudhakkirat Dajaja (Memoirs of a Hen)* (Cairo: Dar al-Maarif, 1943; 2nd ed. 1967). In *Christ in the Quran and in Modern Arabic Literature* (1960), Al-Husayni wrote Muhammad attributes no miracles to himself. The above five miracles mentioned

¹²⁰ 1075 A.D-1144A.D, was a Persian born Arabic scholar, his famous *tafsir* is “The Discoverer of Revealed Truths

¹²¹ Abu al-Qāsim Maḥmūd ibn ‘Umar al-Zamakhsharī, *Al-Kashshāf ‘an Ḥaqā’iq at-Tanzīl*, (Riyaz: Maktabah al-Abikan, 1998), Vol. 2, 293.

in the Qur'an are without detail unlike the Gospel and their non-canonical sources, which include details and mention other attributed miracles. Over the centuries, these miracle narratives have been elaborated through *hadith* and poetry, with religious writings including some of the other miracles mentioned in the Gospel, non-canonical sources, and from lore (traditions).¹²² Consider briefly the Jesus performed in his childhood and four prime miracles He performed in his adulthood:

2.10.1. Speaking from the cradle

Speaking from the cradle is mentioned in the Qur'an in three places: *al-Imran* (3): 46, "He (Jesus) will speak unto mankind in the cradle..." *al-Maid* (5): 110 "O Jesus son of Mary! Remember My favour unto thee and unto thy mother: how I strengthened thee with the Holy Spirit so that thou spakest unto mankind in the cradle..." and *Maryam* (19): 29-30. "Then she pointed to him (baby Jesus). They (people) said; how can we talk to one who is in the cradle, a young boy? He (Jesus) spoke: Lo! I am the slave of Allah. He hath given me the Scripture and hath appointed me a Prophet. Part of the narrative has the infant Jesus defending his mother Mary from the accusation of having given birth without a known husband. Early Islam was unclear about Joseph and his role. Jesus speaks as the angel Gabriel had mentioned at the annunciation: Jesus proclaims he is a servant of God, has been given a book, is a prophet, is blessed wherever he will go, blesses the day he was born, the day he will die, and the day he is raised alive. Although this particular narrative is not found in the Bible, the theme of speaking from the cradle is found in the non-canonical pre-Islamic Syriac Infancy Gospel. That source also has Jesus declaring himself the Son of God, the Word, and affirming what the angel Gabriel had previously announced to Mary as detailed in the Gospel.¹²³ Jesus speaking from the cradle only in Surah 5:110 used the phrase "I strengthened thee with the Holy Spirit" for Jesus enable to talk in his infant age. In other passages, it is mentioned that Jesus just began to talk on his own to defend the people on behalf of his mother, Mary. If one can observe carefully in other miracles like giving life to clay bird, giving sight to blind, healing lepers and raising the dead there used the phrase "By the permission of God". One can pose a question why this phrase used for these four miracles and not used while Jesus speaking in the cradle? Well the answer could be various. One answer could be baby Jesus speaking in cradle may not be the

¹²² [https:// en.wikipedis.org](https://en.wikipedia.org)

¹²³ Geffery Parrinder, *Jesus in the Quran* (London: Oxford One world Publications, 1965), 33.

miracle so it cannot be counted as miracle so the phrase “By the permission of God” is not used. Another reason could be baby Jesus speaking in the cradle could be happened in abnormal circumstances? So it is not counted as miracle. But by human nature naturally infant baby cannot speak in that age. If one can logically think baby Jesus speaking at His infant age is impossible. If at all it happens, it will happen only with the power of God or supernatural power of Jesus Himself. As per Surah 3:46 and Surah 19: 29-30 it is understood that baby Jesus spoke with His supernatural power.

2.10.2. Creating birds from clay

The miracle of creating birds from clay and breathing life into them is mentioned in *al-Imran* (3) 3:49 and *al-Maida* (5):110. Although this miracle is also not mentioned in the canonical Gospel, it is found in at least two pre-Islamic sources: the Infancy Gospel of Thomas and the Jewish Toledot Yeshu, with few variant details between the Qur’an and these two sources.¹²⁴

2.10.3. Healing the blind and the leper

Like in the Gospels, the Quran mentions Jesus healing the blind and the lepers in *al-Imran* (3):49 and *al-Maida* (5):110. Muslim scholar al-Baydawi¹²⁵ written in his commentary that Jesus healed the people through prayer.¹²⁶

2.10.4. Raising the dead

Jesus raised people from the dead, as mentioned in *al-Imran* (3):49 and *al-Maida* (5):110 although no detail is given as to who was raised or the circumstance. At least three people are mentioned in the Gospel (a daughter of Jairus, a widow's son at Nain, and Lazarus).¹²⁷

2.11. Crucifixion

The Muslims deny that Jesus physically died, either on a cross or another manner. The contention is found within the Islamic traditions with the earliest *hadith* (traditions) reports

¹²⁴ Leirvik 2010, 60

¹²⁵ (d. 1286)

¹²⁶ Leirvik 2010, 61

¹²⁷ Leirvik 2010, 60

quoting the companions of Muhammad stating Jesus having died, while the majority of subsequent *hadith* (traditions) and *Tafsir* (Commentaries) argue in favor of the denial through exegesis and apologetics, becoming the popular (orthodox) view.

Professor and scholar Mahmoud M. Ayoub sums up what the Qur'an states despite interpretative arguments:

"The Quran, as we have already argued, does not deny the death of Christ. Rather, it challenges human beings who in their folly have deluded themselves into believing that they would vanquish the divine Word, Jesus Christ the Messenger of God. The death of Jesus is asserted several times and in various contexts." (3:55; 5:117; 19:33)

Some disagreement and discord can be found, beginning with Ibn Ishaq's (d. 761) report of recounting events leading up to the crucifixion: Jesus was replaced by someone named Sergius, Jesus' tomb is located at Medina and citing the places in the Qur'an (3:55; 4:158) that God took Jesus up to heaven himself.¹²⁸

An early interpretation of verse 3:55 (specifically "I will cause you to die and raise you to myself"), Al-Tabari (d. 923) records an interpretation attributed to Ibn 'Abbas, who used the literal "I will cause you to die" (*mumayyitu-ka*) in place of the metaphorical *mutawaffi-ka* "Jesus died", while Wahb ibn Munabbih, an early Jewish convert, said "God caused Jesus, son of Mary, to die for three hours during the day, then took him up to himself. Tabari further transmits from Ibn Ishaq: "God caused Jesus to die for seven hours", while at another place reported that a person called Sergius was crucified in place of Jesus. Ibn-al-Athir forwarded the report that it was Judas, the betrayer, while also mentioning the possibility it was a man named Natlianus. Al-Masudi (d. 956) reported the death of Christ under Tiberius.¹²⁹

Ibn Kathir (d. 1373) follows traditions which suggest that a crucifixion did occur, but not with Jesus. After the event, Ibn Kathir reports that the people were divided into three groups with three different narratives; The Jacobites believed 'God remained with us as long as He willed and then He ascended to Heaven;' The Nestorians believed 'The Son of God was with us as long as he willed until God raised him to heaven;' and the Muslims believed; 'The servant and

¹²⁸ Watt, William Montgomery (1991). *Muslim-Christian Encounters: Perceptions and Misperceptions*, (London and New York: Routledge), 39.

¹²⁹ Watt, 1991, 47.

messenger of God, Jesus, remained with us as long as God willed until God raised him to Himself.¹³⁰

Another report from Ibn Kathir quotes Ishaq Ibn Bishr, on the authority of Idris, Wahn ibn Munabbih, that "God caused him to die for three days, then resurrected him, then raised him."¹³¹

Qur'anic commentators denied the crucifixion of Jesus by following material interpreted in *Tafsir* (Commentaries) that relied upon extra-biblical Judeo-Christian sources, venturing away from the message conveyed in the Qur'an, with the earliest textual evidence having originated from a non-Muslim source; a misreading of the Christian writings of John of

Damascus regarding the literal understandings of Docetism (exegetical doctrine describing spiritual and physical realities of Jesus as understood by men in logical terms) as opposed to their figurative explanations. John of Damascus emphasized the Qur'an's assertion that the Jews did not crucify Jesus, explaining that it is the varied Qur'anic exegetes in *Tafsir* (Commentaries), and not the Qur'an itself, that denies the crucifixion, further stating that the message in the 4:157 verse simply affirms the historicity of the event.¹³²

Ja'far ibn Mansur al-Yaman (d. 958), Abu Hatim Ahmad ibn Hamdan al-Razi (d. 935), Abu Yaqub al-Sijistani (d. 971), Mu'ayyad fi'l-Din al-Shirazi (d. 1078) and the group Ikhwan al-Safa also affirm the historicity of the Crucifixion, reporting Jesus was crucified and was not substituted by another man as maintained by many other popular Qur'anic commentators.

In reference to the Qur'anic quote "We have surely killed Jesus the Christ, son of Mary, the apostle of God" (4:157), Muslim scholar Mahmoud Ayoub asserts this boast not as therepeating of a historical lie or the perpetuating of a false report, but an example of human arrogance and folly with contempt towards God and His messenger(s). Modern scholars of Islam interpret the historical death of Jesus the man as man's inability to kill God's Word and the Spirit of God, which the Qur'an testifies were embodied in Jesus Christ. Ayoub highlights the denial of the killing of Jesus as God denying men such power to vanquish and destroy the divine Word.

¹³⁰ Gregg, (Stephen; Barker, Gregory, 2010), 121.

¹³¹ Ayoub 1980, 108. [Muhammad b. 'Ali b. Muhammad al-Shawkani, *Fath al-Qadir al-Jami bayn Fannay al-Riwaya wa 'l Diraya min 'Ilm al-Tafsir* (Cairo: Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi, n.d.), I, 346, citing Ibn Asakir, who reports on the authority of Ibn Munabbih.]

¹³² Lawson, Todd (1 March 2009). (*The Crucifixion and the Quran*: Oneworld Publications), 14.

The words, "they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him" speaks of the profound events of ephemeral human history, exposing mankind's heart and conscience towards God's will. The claim of humanity to have this power against God is illusory. "They did not slay him...but it seemed so to them" speaks to the imaginations of mankind, not the denial of the actual event of Jesus dying physically on the cross.¹³³

Islamic reformer Muhammad Rashid Rida agrees with contemporary commentators who interpret the physical killing of Christ as a metaphorical interpretation.¹³⁴

2.12. Jesus and the problem of the Crucifixion

Jesus' death on the cross is also a controversial issue in Christian-Muslim relations. Qur'an says that Jesus was taken from the cross and did not die on the Cross. Surah 4:157 says "The people of the book said, we killed the Messiah, Jesus, Mary's son, God's messenger, God But they did not kill him. They did not crucify him....No; God raised Jesus to himself;"

Encyclopedia of Islam mentions this issue:

As per the Islamic understanding Jesus did not die on the cross. Instead of Jesus some other person who resembled Jesus died on the Cross and Jesus was lifted alive to heaven. Surah 4: 155-157. Islamic attitude to the death of Jesus shows Firstly, that the resurrection referred to in 19: 84 is the general resurrection which the Qur'an proclaims for the end of the world; there was a special resurrection for Jesus, since Jesus did not die on the cross. Later tradition stated that it would be at the end of time, when Jesus returned again, that he would die a natural death announced in 19: 34. Secondly, the word *tawaffa* usually means a death which is blessed, a return to God for the final judgment, but it is also used in 6:60 for God's recalling the souls of those who sleep while they are asleep and returning them when they awake. The verb is twice used of Jesus, in 3:48 and 5:119. The first passage could imply an elevation of the living Jesus to God. The second is ambiguous. The question is settled by the passage 4:155-157, in which it is stated that Jesus was not killed by the Jews but was

¹³³ Ayoub 1980, 117.

¹³⁴ Ibid.,

raised up to heaven. The following succession of events occurred: apparent death, ascension, second coming, natural death, general resurrection. (Michaud, 60-64).”¹³⁵

2.13. Substitution

It is unclear where the substitutionist interpretation originated, but some scholars consider the theory originated among certain Gnostic groups of the second century. Leirvik finds the Qur’an and *hadith* to have been clearly influenced by the non-canonical ('heretical') Christianity that prevailed in the Arab peninsula and further in Abyssinia.

Muslim commentators have failed to disprove the crucifixion. Rather, the problem was compounded by adding the conclusion of their substitutionist theories. The problem was one of understanding.¹³⁶

"If the substitutionist interpretation (Christ replaced on the cross) is taken as a valid reading of the Qur’anic text, then the question arises whether this idea is represented in Christian sources. According to Irenaeus' *Adversus Haereses*, the Egyptian Gnostic Christian Basilides (2nd century) held the view that Christ (the divine nous, intelligence) was not crucified, but was replaced by Simon of Cyrene. However, both Clement of Alexandria and Hippolytus denied that Basilides held this view. But the substitutionist idea in general form is quite clearly expressed in the Gnostic Nag Hammadi documents *Apocalypse of Peter* and *The Second Treatise of the Great Seth*."¹³⁷

2.14. Ascension of Jesus (صعود عيسى)

The Islam understand of ascension is Jesus did not die but ascended to heaven by God. (Surah 4:158).

Modern Islamic scholars like Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba’i interpret the ascension of Jesus as spiritual, not physical. This interpretation is in accord with Mu’tazila and *Shia* metaphorical explanations regarding anthropomorphic references to God in the Qur’an.

¹³⁵ Encyclopaedia of Islam, 84.

¹³⁶ Ayoub 1980, 116.

¹³⁷ Watt 1991, 39-40.

Although unpopular with traditional Sunni interpretations of the depiction of the crucifixion, there has been much speculation and discussion to logically reconcile this topic.¹³⁸

In ascetic Shia writings, Jesus is depicted as having "ascended to heaven wearing a woolen shirt, spun and sewed by Mary, his mother. As he reached the heavenly regions, he was addressed, "O Jesus, cast away from you the adornment of the world."¹³⁹

2.15. Second coming of Jesus son of Mary (بعثته ثانية لعيسى ابن مريم)

As a matter of fact, the Second Coming of Jesus is such a hot issue which is subject to a lot of controversy among the followers of Christians and Muslims. The believers of each faith have their own conception of this event. It is ironic that each faith has a different account of the anticipated incident.

As for Muslims, they believe in both the Messiah of the Jews and the Messiah of the Christians but according to a different belief system. Muslims believe that some of the People of the Book, including Jews and Christians, will believe in Jesus as a Prophet and Messenger of Allah when he comes back to fight the False Messiah (the Antichrist) right before the end of the world. In 4:157-159 it is mentioned:

And [for] their saying, 'Indeed, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, the messenger of Allah.' And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but [another] was made to resemble him to them. And indeed, those who differ over it are in doubt about it. They have no knowledge of it except the following of assumption. And they did not kill him, for certain. Rather, Allah raised him to Himself. And ever is Allah Exalted in Might and Wise. And there is none from the People of the Scripture but that he will surely believe in Jesus before his death. And on the Day of Resurrection he will be against them a witness. (An-Nisaa' 4:157-159)

Commenting on the above verses, Al-Hasan, an eminent Muslim scholar, confirmed: By Allah, i.e. before Jesus' death. By Allah, he is alive with Allah. If he descends, let everybody of you believe in him. According to Islam, the Second Coming of Jesus is considered one of the signs of the end of the world (the Hour). The Qur'an says:

And indeed, Jesus will be [a sign for] knowledge of the Hour, so be not in doubt of it, and follow Me. This is a straight path. (Az-Zukhruf 43:61)¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ Roberts, Alexander (*I May 2007*). The Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325 Volume I - The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus. (New York: Cosimo Classics), 349.

¹³⁹ Ayoub 1980, 116.

¹⁴⁰ Second Coming of Jesus (Accessed on 24/09/2019, at 6:45 am).

According to Abu Dawud *hadith* Prophet Muhammad foretold the Second Coming of Jesus who, according to him, will disown Christianity and preach monotheism and the worship of Allah alone. Prophet Muhammad said:

“By Him in Whose hands my soul rests, surely Jesus, Son of Mary, will soon descend amongst you and will judge mankind judiciously, as an honest ruler. He will break the cross, kill the pig and abolish Jizya. Money will abound in such excess that no one will wish to accept it. A single prostration to Allah, in prayer, will be better than the whole world and all it contains.”¹⁴¹

Abu Hurayrah, the narrator, added, “If you wish, you can recite this verse from the holy Quran:

And there is none from the People of the Scripture but that he will surely believe in Jesus before his death. And on the Day of Resurrection he will be against them a witness. (An-Nisaa’ 4:159)

Prophet Muhammad also prophesied that Jesus will come back to uphold Islam as the true monotheistic message of Allah to humanity. He informed us that Jesus (peace be upon him) will keep fighting the followers of all religions other than Islam and will kill the Antichrist. According to Prophet Muhammad, he will live for forty years and Muslims will offer the funeral prayer for him when he dies.

Abu Hurairah narrated that Prophet Mohammad said:

“There is no Prophet between me and him (Jesus Christ). He shall descend, so recognize him when you see him. He is a man of medium height, (his complexion) is between reddish and white; he will be between (dressed in) two slightly yellowish garments; his head looks as if it is dripping water even though it is not wet. He will fight people in the cause (for the sake) of Islam, break the Cross, kill the swine (pig) and abolish Jizya (tax on Christians and Jews); and Allah will put an end to all religious sects except Islam during his (Jesus’) time. He (Jesus) will slay the Antichrist (Dajjal) and he will stay in the world for 40 years. Then, he will die and the Muslims will offer the funeral prayer for him.”¹⁴²

According to Islamic tradition, Jesus’ descent will be in the midst of wars fought by *al-Mahdi*. The literal meaning of the term *al-Mahdi* means "the rightly guided one", known in Islamic eschatology as the redeemer of Islam, against *al-Masih-Dajjal* (the Antichrist "false messiah") and his followers. Jesus will descend at the point of a white arcade, east of Damascus,

¹⁴¹ Sunna Abu Dawud Book 37, Number 4310.

¹⁴² Sunna Abu Dawud Book 37, Number 4310.

dressed in yellow robes—his head anointed. He will say prayer behind *al-Mahdi* then join him in his war against the *Dajjal* (Anti Christ). Jesus, considered a Muslim, will abide by the Islamic teachings. Eventually, Jesus will slay the *Dajjal* (Antichrist), and then the People of the Book (*ahl al-kitāb*, referring to Jews and Christians) will believe in him. Thus, there will be one community, that of Islam.¹⁴³ Allah's Apostle said,

"The Hour will not be established until the son of Mary (i.e. Jesus) descends amongst you as a just ruler; he will break the cross, kill the pigs, and abolish the *Jizya* (tax). Money will be in abundance so that nobody will accept it (as charitable gifts)."¹⁴⁴

After the death of *al-Mahdi*, Jesus will assume leadership. This is a time associated in Islamic narrative with universal peace and justice. Islamic texts also allude to the appearance of *Ya'juj* and *Ma'juj* (known also as Gog and Magog), ancient tribes which will disperse and cause disturbance on earth. God, in response to Jesus' prayers, will kill them by sending a type of worm in their necks. Jesus' rule would be around forty years, after which he will die and buried at Medina.¹⁴⁵

2.16. Jesus son of Mary with Adam (عيسى ابن مريم مثل آدم)

The Qur'an emphasizes the creationism of Jesus,¹⁴⁶ through his similitude with Adam with regard to the absence of human origin.

Islamic exegesis extrapolates a logical inconsistency behind the Christian argument of divine intervention; as such implications would have ascribed divinity to Adam who is understood only as creation.¹⁴⁷ Adam likewise was both created through the Word of God and described as a spirit from him. Furthermore, their equation is also depicted numerically, as both of them are referred to by name 25 times each. Muslims believe that Jesus was a precursor to Muhammad and that he prophesied the latter's coming. This perspective is based on a verse of the Qur'an wherein Jesus speaks of a messenger who will appear after he named "*Ahmad*". Islam associates *Ahmad* with Muhammad, both words deriving from the *h-m-d* triconsonantal root which refers to praiseworthiness. Muslims assert that evidence of Jesus' pronouncement is

¹⁴³ Sahih Muslim (in Arabic). Part 2, 193.

¹⁴⁴ Sahih al-Bukhari, Volume 3, Book 43: *Kitab-ul-'Ilm* (Book of Knowledge), *Hâdith* Number 656:

¹⁴⁵ Anawati, G.C. (6 June 2016) [2012]. "Īsā". In P. Bearman; Th. Bianquis; C.E. Bosworth; E. van Donzel; W.P. Heinrichs. *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2nd ed.). Brill

¹⁴⁶ Akhtar, Shabbir (October 24, 2017) [October 2007]. "PART 1 Quranic Islam and the secular mind". *The Quran and the Secular Mind: A Philosophy of Islam*. Routledge, 31.

¹⁴⁷ Akhtar 2010, 32

present in the New Testament, citing the mention of the *Paraclete* whose coming is foretold in the Gospel of John.

Muslim commentators claim that the original Greek word used was *periklutos*, meaning famed, illustrious, or praiseworthy—rendered in Arabic as *Ahmad*; and that this was replaced by Christians with *parakletos*.¹⁴⁸ This idea has been debated, to find out if the traditional understanding is supported by the text of the Qur'an.

Islamic theology claims Jesus had foretold another prophet succeeding him according to Sura 61:6, with the mention of the name *Ahmad*. (*Ahmad* is an Arabic name from the same triconsonantal root *H-M-D* = [ح-م-د].) In response to Ibn Ishaq's biography of Muhammad, the *Sirat Rasul Allah*, Islamic scholar Alfred Guillaume wrote:

Muslims have suggested that the term “*Ahmad*” is the translation of *periklutos*, celebrated or the Praised One, which is a corruption of *parakletos*, the *Paraclete* of John 14, 15 and 16.¹⁴⁹

2.17. Jesus and the Trinity

The concept of Trinity is a very controversial issue between Christians and Muslims. As per the Encyclopedia of Islam Jesus is honoured both in the present world and in the world to come but not as God. Jesus is just a created being but not God. God in three persons is the most unpardonable thing in Islam. The concept of Trinity is not new in Islam. Trinity was also practiced in the pre-Islamic period. The Pre Islamic Goddesses are three. They are Al-Lat, Al-Uzza, and Manat. They are the idols of pagan Arabs. They believed them as daughters of Allah. In the Qur'an, Al-Lat is mentioned along with al-‘Uzzá and Manāt in Sura 53:19–23. The tribe of ‘ād of Iram of the Pillars is also mentioned in Sura 89:5–8, and archaeological evidence from Iram shows copious inscriptions devoted to her for the protection of a tribe by that name. Al-lāt is also explicitly attested from early Islamic records discussing the pre-Islamic

¹⁴⁸ Watt 1991, 33-34.

¹⁴⁹ Liddell and Scott's celebrated Greek-English Lexicon gives this definition for *periklutos*: "heard of all round, famous, renowned, Latin *inclutus*: of things, excellent, noble, glorious". Rev. James M. Whiton, ed. A Lexicon abridged from Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon. New York: American Book Company, N.D. c.1940s, 549. *Periklutos* occurs in *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, and Hesiod's *Theogony*.

period. According to the Book of Idols (Kitāb al-'Aṣnām) by Hishām ibn al-Kalbi, the pre-Islamic Arabs believed Al-lāt resided in the Ka'bah and also had an idol inside the sanctuary.¹⁵⁰

Al-'Uzzá was also worshipped by the Nabataeans, who equated her with the Greek goddess Aphrodite Ourania (Roman Venus Caelestis). A stone cube at at-Ṭā'if (near Mecca) was held sacred as part of her cult. She is mentioned in the Qur'an Sura 53:19 as being one of the goddesses that people worshiped. The temple dedicated to al-'Uzzá and the statue itself was destroyed by Khalid ibn al Walid in Nakhla in 630 AD. Shortly after the Conquest of Mecca, Muhammad began aiming at eliminating the last idols reminiscent of pre-Islamic practices. He sent Khalid ibn Al-Walid during Ramadan 630 AD (8. AH) to a place called Nakhlah, where the goddess al-'Uzzá was worshipped by the tribes of Quraish and Kinanah. The shrine's custodians were from Banu Shaiban. Al-'Uzzá was considered the most important goddess in the region.¹⁵¹

Islam, based strictly on monotheistic faith, does not agree with Trinity rather counts it as polytheistic religion. The Encyclopaedia of Islam states the following:

In the passage of Qur'an Sura 3:40, Jesus is mentioned as being among those "close" to the Lord (*min al-mukarrabin*). Jesus will be glorious, honoured both in the present world and in the world to come. This privilege of being close to God is shared by Jesus with the angels, but both remain created beings. The unity of God is stated in the Qur'an.¹⁵²

Muhammad insists on the entire human condition of Jesus: "They are unbelievers who say, 'God is the *Messiah*, Mary's son' ". And the Christians are no more the sons of God than is Jesus himself. With such a perspective, the Qur'an formally rejects any doctrine of the Trinity. However the Trinity as understood and rejected is not the same as that taught by Christian dogma, and defined by the Councils which was held before the revelation of the Qur'an. The Qur'an Trinity seems to be a triad composed of Allah, of Mary his consort and of Jesus their child (5:116); a concept which is meaningful, on the one hand of the planetary triads of the pre-Islamic Pantheon, and on the other hand, of the cult of Mary verging on idolatry practiced by certain Christian sects of Arabia, the Maria mites and the Collyridians. Certain modern Muslim writers, taking note of the explanations provided by their Christian informants, are inclined to

¹⁵⁰ Trinity in Pre-Islamic period (Accessed on 24/08/2019 at 5:35 pm).

¹⁵¹ Ibid.,

¹⁵² Encyclopaedia of Islam, 89.

recognize the basic monotheism of the Christian religion, without however admitting its revealed nature.¹⁵³

2.18. The return of Jesus (نزول عيسى)

In Christianity and Islam, the concept of the return of Jesus is very clear. The only problem is in the personality of Jesus' coming to his method of reign and for whom he reigns is different. A.Yusuf Ali declared in his translation of Qur'an Surah 43:61 that Jesus is the sign for the coming of the Hour of Judgement.¹⁵⁴ The return of Jesus found in Sahih Muslim *Hadith*.¹⁵⁵ The Encyclopedia of Islam explains:

“The only authority is the passage 43:61, which contains some variant reading: the first reading, that of the Vulgate: "He (Jesus) has truly a knowledge of the Hour", i.e. he by whose descent the approach of the Hour is known: the second reading, the canonical variant: "And he (Jesus) is truly a sign for the Hour"; the third reading, in the recession of Ubayy: "And he (Jesus) is truly a warning of the hour"; fourth reading: the *hu* refers to the Qur'an. If the second coming of Christ is taken as established, his death is placed after the Hour as mentioned above, and then the references in 4:159 and 19:33 are easily explained. Similarly, the expression *kahl* in 3:46 become clear, because when he was "raised" he was still *shabb*, young, and had not attained *kuhula*; (al-Baydawi,). On these few facts tradition has succeeded in accumulating a mass of detail and in producing books devoted specially to this subject, among them. Some of these details are: Jesus, on returning to the earth, will descend on to the white arcade of the eastern gate at Damascus, or , according to another tradition, on to a hill in the Holy Land which is called 'Afik; he will be clothed in two *musarra*; his head will be anointed. He will have in his hand a spear with which he will kill the Antichrist. Then he will go to Jerusalem at the time when the dawn prayer is being recited, led by the *imam*. The later will try to help him, but Jesus will pray behind the *imam* following the prescription of Muhammad.¹⁵⁶ Then Jesus will kill all the pigs, will break the cross, destroy the synagogues and the churches, and kill all the Christians except those who believe in him (following 4:159.) Once he has killed the false Messiah (*al-Masih-daddjal*), all the People of the Book will believe in him, and there will be only one community - that of Islam.¹⁵⁷

2.19. Jesus and the last Judgment

The Last judgment is mentioned in Christianity and Islam but the method of judgment differs. In Encyclopedia it is mentioned as follows:

At the time of his night-time ascension Muhammad met Abraham, Moses and Jesus. Concerning the Final Hour, Jesus announced: To me has been confided the knowledge of what will predict its occurrence. As to the occurrence itself, only God can determine this. This verse enables us to understand the passages where Jesus is called 'knowledge of the hour': he knows

¹⁵³ Ibid.,

¹⁵⁴ A.Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an*, (Lahore: 1934), 1337.

¹⁵⁵ Sahih Muslim, 155.

¹⁵⁶ Encyclopaedia of Islam, 90-91.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.,

of its existence, but not the exact time, this being reserved to God alone. In spite of his ascension to God's side and his purification, Jesus will not assist God in the Judgment which will follow the Hour: it is God alone who decides, He is the only Judge. On the day of the universal Resurrection, Jesus will be a witness against the Christians, accusing them of having regarded him and his mother as equal with God, but he will not be their judge.¹⁵⁸

Holy Qur'an has given more names and attributes to Jesus than any other prophets of both in Islam and Christianity. Through these names and attributes, it gives the notion of giving high regard, respect, and honour to Jesus. The researcher opines that Islamic literature does not declare openly Jesus as a divine person. These things need to be discussed in and through the medium of dialogue from the pluralistic point of view.

2.20. Jesus, the Honorable in this world and in the hereafter. (وَجِبَّهَا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمِنَ الْمُفَرِّقِينَ)

In Surah 3:45, Jesus has been given the title of one “honorable in this world and the world to come”. Several classical Muslim scholars also stated that Jesus is an honored one. Only Jesus got this title in the Qur'an. Zamakhari, in his commentary *Al-Kashaf* states the office of the prophet and supremacy over men in this world, and in the next world the office of intercessor and loftiness of the rank in Paradise. Baidawi, referred in his commentary that Jesus has the office of a prophet in this world and office of the intercessor in the next world. In turn, both Zamakhari and Baydawi opine that Jesus intercedes for the sinner. Few Muslim have misinterpreted that Muhammad is interceding for others, but it is false. Many scholars observe there is no reference of intercessory prayer of Muhammad. The office of the intercessory is, therefore, for Jesus alone.¹⁵⁹

Conclusion

Qur'anic Jesus has similarities (Jesus born to Virgin Mary, Jesus is pure and Holy, Jesus, the descendant of the family of Abraham, Jesus, the Word of God, Jesus, the Messiah, Jesus, the Honorable in this World and in the hereafter, Jesus the Holy Spirit, Jesus is coming back) and differences (Jesus as son of God, Crucifixion of Jesus, Resurrection of Jesus) with the biblical Jesus.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 85.

¹⁵⁹ Emmanuel Luthe Ratiq, *Jesus & Conflict between Christians and Muslims*, (Sweden: IKBS International, 1999), 55-56.

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to study the images of Jesus mentioned in the Qur'an. The prime titles of Jesus found in the Qur'an are as follows:

Jesus as the descendant of the family of Abraham (Surah 2:47), Jesus born to Virgin Mary (Surah 19:20-21), Jesus as Messiah (Surah 3:45, 4:171), Jesus as the Word of God (Surah 3:45, 4:171), Jesus as Holy Spirit (Surah 2:87), Jesus as Holy (Surah 19:19), Jesus as the Servant of God, (Surah 19:30), Jesus as Messenger of God (Surah 4:170), Jesus as Revelation (sign) (Surah 19:21,91), Jesus as mercy (Surah 19:21), Jesus as *Isa* (2:136, 3:52), Jesus, the Performer of miracles (Surah 3:49, 5:110), Jesus is honorable in this world and the world to come (Surah 3:45).

From the above few titles of Jesus, can be selected such as Jesus born to Virgin Mary, Jesus is pure and Holy, Jesus, the descendant of the family of Abraham, Jesus, the Honorable in this World and in the hereafter and have a dialogue with Muslims to clarify the miss understandings between them and us in order to be more friendly with them. Apart from these other titles are not acceptable between Christians and Muslims. Few titles like Jesus as Holy Spirit, Jesus as Word of God, Jesus as the Messiah can be enlightening to them from the Qur'an.

The study of Jesus in Qur'an leads to a greater understanding of the Person of Jesus Christ through the related titles of Jesus (such as Jesus born to Virgin Mary, Jesus is pure and Holy, Jesus, the descendant of the family of Abraham, Jesus, the Honorable in this World and in the hereafter), to build bridges of cordial friendship, mutual respect and trust in an effort to shape the society where people can live in religious harmony, peace, and tolerance.

CHAPTER THREE

JESUS IN HADITH

Introduction

Hadith (حديث) is the second foundation of Islam. *Hadith* is nothing but the narratives or the story and record of the doings and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad. This record was written by the companions of Prophet Muhammad after his death. *Hadith* is also called *Sunna* which means literally 'a path or manner of life'. It is commonly believed that Muhammad was inspired by God.¹⁶⁰ The Qur'an states that all the Muslims need to follow the *hadith*. (Surah 33: 21, 36; Surah 47:2) Six books of *Ahadith* (احاديث) acknowledged by *Sunnis* are called *Sihahsitta* "the six sound" books. They are Al-Bukhari, d. 870; Muslim, d.875, Abu Daud, d.888, Al Tirmidhi, d.892; Al Nasa' i d. 915; Ibn Majah, d. 896. Among these first two books are very special and vital among the Sunni Muslims.¹⁶¹

Shia' has its own *Ahadith* (احاديث). They have four best *Ahadith* (احاديث) collections called four books ('*Al-Kutub Al-Arbah*'). They are as follows: *Kitab al-Kafi* collected by Muhammad Ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni., Collected 15,176 *hadith* in 10th .A.D, *Man la yahduruhu al-Faqih* collected by Muhammad Ibn Babuya collected 9,044 *ahadith* in 11th A.D. *Tahdhib al-Ahkam* Collected by Shaykh Muhammad Tusi collected 13,590 *ahadith* in 12th A.D. and *Al-Istibsar* collected by Shaykh Muhammad Tusi collected 5,511 *ahadith* in 12th A.D. Shi'a Muslims use this different set of *hadith* rather than the six major *Ahadith* collections followed by the Sunni. Shi'a considers only the Imams, Muhammad's descendants through Fatima Zahra and Imam Ali bin Abu Talib are trustworthy.¹⁶²

Hadith have played a very important role in shaping the religious life of common Muslims.

¹⁶⁰ Christopher Augustus Bixel/Tirkey, *Major Religions of India*, (Delhi: ISPCK, 2001), 411.

¹⁶¹ L. Bevan Jones, *The People of the Mosque*, (Delhi: ISPCK, 1939), 63-64, 70.

¹⁶² www. Alislam.org M.J. Mahmud.

3:1 Jesus in Sunni *Hadith* (حضرت عيسى في ضوء الحديث)

There are two Sunni *ahadith* such as Sahih al-Bukhari, *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Vol. IV, 1984), Imam Muslim, *Sahih Muslim*, trans. Abdul Hamid Siddiqi Vol. IV, 1976), extensively tells about the sanctity and personification of Jesus.¹⁶³

In these *ahadith* there are other characters of Jesus declared: They are Jesus as forerunner Prophet, the Second Coming of Jesus, and Jesus as word of God, Purity of Jesus, and Jesus as Ascetic Prophet. *Ahadith* are the second authentic literature next to Qur'an. The reader can find them as follows:

3.1.1. Jesus as a forerunner of prophet (حضرت عيسى مبعوث قبل محمد)

As a prophet of Islam Jesus prepared the way for Muhammad. There are not many references to support this view about Jesus but one such record reported by Abu Huraira that the prophets are brothers, sons of one father by co-wives which Chellaian Lowrance also referred"¹⁶⁴ Another *hadith* by the same reporter says, Jesus, is nearest and closest to Muhammad in the prophethood and also in blood relations."¹⁶⁵ Another *hadith* asserts that Jesus is closely related to the Prophet Muhammad.¹⁶⁶

3.1.2. The second coming of Jesus (بعثة ثانية لعيسى ابن مريم)

There are several references in *hadith* about the coming of Jesus to judge the world and to rule the world. It is recorded in the *hadith* noted by Sunna Abu Dawud.¹⁶⁷ Another saying about Jesus as a Judge from Al Bukhari, Narrated Abu Huraira¹⁶⁸

In Sahih Muslim the second popular *hadith* after Al-Bukhari, the coming of Jesus, Jesus fighting against the *Dajjal* (Anti-Christ)¹⁶⁹ and the enemies under the title: Preparing to the

¹⁶³ Sahih al-Bukhari, The translation of the Meaning of Sahih Al-Bukhari, Trans. Muhammad Musin Khan (New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, Vol. IV, 1984), 425-426.

¹⁶⁴ Chellaian Lawrence, *Jesus as Prophet in Christianity and Islam a model for Interfaith dialogue*, (Delhi: ISPCK, 1997), 149.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 434

¹⁶⁶ Hadith, (Book 030 of Muslim, Number 5835).

¹⁶⁷ Sunna Abu Dawud Book 37, Number 4310.

¹⁶⁸ Sahih al-Bukhari, *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Trans. Muhammad Muhsin Khan (New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, Vol. IV, 1984), 436-437.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 437.

Conquest of Constantinople and the appearance of the *Dajjal*, and descent of Jesus son of Mary (Jesus Christ).¹⁷⁰ In *hadith* number 1520, this is again referred to as follows:

The saying from *Sahih Muslim* regarding the last hour comes after the ten signs.¹⁷¹

The following *hadith* is from *Sahih Muslim* saying about judgment in the last days. God's Apostle said "How will you be when the son of Mary (i.e. Jesus) descends amongst you and he will judge people by the Law of the Qur'an and not by the law of Gospel."¹⁷²

The following *ahadith* are from Al-Bukhari, Vol.3&4, showing about Jesus judgment as a Muslim and of the breaking of the cross.¹⁷³

Further references in *hadith* towards the coming of Jesus would lead to killing of swine and abolishing the *jizya* (a tax payable by a community which accepts the protection of a Muslim ruler but whose members do not embrace Islam), and the *sajda* (the position in a Muslim's prayer where the forehead is placed on the ground):

Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, as saying, "By Him in whose hands my soul is, the son of Mary will soon descend among you as a just judge. He will kill swine and abolish the *jizya* (a tax payable by a community which accepts the protection of a Muslim ruler but whose members do not embrace Islam), and wealth will pour forth to such an extent that one will accept it, and one *sajda* (the position in a Muslim's prayer where the forehead is placed on the ground), will be better than the world and what it contains"¹⁷⁴

Another saying about Jesus as a Judge from Al Bukhari. Narrated by Abu Huraira:

God's Messenger said, "By Him in Whose Hands my soul is, surely (Jesus,) the son of Mary will soon descend amongst you and will judge mankind justly by the law of the Qur'an (as a Just Ruler); he will kill the pigs and there will be no *Jizya* (i.e. taxation taken from non-Muslims)."¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁰ Imam Muslim, *Sahih Muslim*, trans. Abdul Hamid Siddiqi, (Lahore: SH. Muhammad Ashraf, Vol. IV, 1976), 1501.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 1503-1504.

¹⁷² *Fateh-ul Bari* page 304 and 305 Vol 7) (*Sahih Muslim* Book 030, Number 5834).

¹⁷³ (*Sahih Bukhari* volume 3, book 43, number 656).

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 150.

¹⁷⁵ *Sahih al-Bukhari, The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Trans. Muhammad Muhsin Khan (New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, Vol. IV, 1984), 436-437.

Jesus is coming to Judge and his judgment will be final but on what basis are they claiming that He will be Muslim and will judge from the Muslim perspective.¹⁷⁶ This particular viewpoint is totally contradictory and misleading for Christian understanding.

3.1.3. The return of Prophet Jesus (نزول عيسى)

In Sahi Muslim *hadith* declares that Jesus returns and establishes His kingdom as per the law of Qur'an.¹⁷⁷

3.1.4. Various honours awarded to Jesus (القاب حضرت عيسى المذكور في الحديث)

There are few more characters of Jesus declared in Al Bukhari *hadith*. They are Jesus and Prophet both greet each other and Jesus as God's Word and Jesus has the best appearance than Moses and others which are as follows:

3.1.4.1. Prophet greets Jesus (سلم ورحب محمد على عيسى)

Exchange of greetings takes place between the Prophet Muhammad and Jesus. First Prophet Muhammad greets Jesus and John then both they responded their greetings to Prophet Muhammad.

Malik bin Sa'sa' narrated this which is as follows:

Narrated Malik bin Sa'sa'a that the Prophet (PBUH) talked to them about the night of his Ascension to the Heavens. . . .Gabriel said "these are John (*Yahya*) and Jesus, so greet them, 'I (Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) greeted them and they (John and Jesus) returned the greeting saying 'Welcome, O Pious Brother and Pious Prophet,"¹⁷⁸

Here need to make a note that first Prophet Muhammad greets Jesus and John later John and Jesus extend their greetings to Prophet Muhammad.

3.1.4.2. Jesus as God's Word (عيسى كلمة الله)

Jesus as God's Word also found in *hadith* which is as follows:

Narrated Ubada: The Prophet (PBUH)said, " If anyone testifies that None has the right to be worshipped but Allah Alone Who has no partners, and that Muhammad is His Slave and His Messenger and that Jesus is Allah's Slave and

¹⁷⁶ Sahih Bukhari volume 4, book 55, number 651.

¹⁷⁷ Sahih Muslim 155.

¹⁷⁸ Sahih al-Bukhari, *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Trans.MuhammadMuhsin Khan (New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 1984), 425.

His Messenger and His Word which He bestowed on Mary and a Spirit created by Him, and that Paradise, is true, and Hell is true, Allah will admit him into Paradise with the deeds which he had done even if those deeds were few."¹⁷⁹

In this *hadith*, Prophet Muhammad himself recognizes that Jesus is also a Slave of Allah, and Messenger of Allah and Jesus was supported by God's Spirit.

3.1.4.3. The best physical appearance of Jesus (صفات بدنيه لعيسى)

There are several descriptions about Jesus mentioned in the Qur'an and *ahadith* which are higher than other prophets. In this *hadith* physical appearance of Jesus expressed as finest appearance than Moses and others.

As per Al Bukhari's *hadith* it is mentioned as follows:

Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet (PBUH) said, "I met Moses on the night of my Ascension to heaven." The Prophet (PBUH) then described him saying, as I think, "He was a tall person with lank (thin, lifeless) hairs as if he belonged to the people of the tribe of Shanu's." The Prophet (PBUH) further said, "I met Jesus." The Prophet described him saying, "He was one of moderate height and was red-faced as if he had just come out of a bathroom. I saw Abraham whom I resembled more than any of his children did"¹⁸⁰

Further, as per this *hadith* Muhammad described the physical appearance of Jesus as follows:

Narrated ibn 'Umar: the Prophet (PBUH) said, "I saw Moses, Jesus and Abraham (on the night of my Ascension to the heavens) Jesus was of red complexion, curly hair and a broad chest. Moses was of brown complexion, straight hair, and tall stature as if he was from the people of Az-Zutt."¹⁸¹

In these two *ahadith* Moses was compared by the earthly personalities like Shanu and Az-Zutt and Muhammad to Abraham whereas Jesus was not compared with any human being on the earth. As per this *hadith* Muhammad did not find any human figure to show as example to Jesus. As per the researcher's understanding, Jesus had an incomparable personality than Moses, Abraham, and Muhammad.

According to these sayings of *ahadith* Muhammad and Jesus are blood relatives. They belong to the same religion both in this world and in the world to come. In these *ahadith* Jesus is

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 429

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 431-432

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 432

not compared with any person in this world whereas Moses is compared with two personalities and Muhammad's personality is compared with Abraham.

As in Qur'an, in *ahadith* also Jesus is honoured and respected more than any other Prophets like Abraham, Moses and even Muhammad.

3.1.5. The purity of Jesus (طہارت عیسیٰ)

As per Qur'an everybody who is born cries because Satan touches him/her. Only two persons who were not touched by Satan when they were born. They are none other than Mary and Jesus. It is mentioned in Al Bukhari *hadith*.¹⁸² This particular aspect is also more than enough to exclude Jesus from all existing prophets. And one should acknowledge his highly exalted nature, which is incomparable. One cannot simply write or read and miss its true meaning. One, who studies and engages in dialogue, should be ready to accept the truth when it comes to him in a plain and simple manner.

Muslim traditions include several sayings about Jesus and by him which indicates his lifestyle and the content of his message. Jesus is characterized primarily as an ascetic prophet and as a prophet of failure in the Muslim traditions.

3.1.6. Jesus as an Ascetic prophet (زید عیسیٰ)

Muhammed 'Ata ur-Rahim in his book, *Jesus a Prophet of Islam*, gives the ascetic life of Jesus.¹⁸³ This *hadith* completely portrays the ascetic life of Jesus and Jesus lives like a monk.

Another picture of Jesus as an ascetic who measures the valuable things of this world equal to the invaluable things. About money, Jesus says to them "But they and mud are alike to me".¹⁸⁴

In this *hadith*, Jesus identifies himself with the poorest of the poor of this world. "There is no poor man poorer than I."¹⁸⁵

'Ata ur-Rahim described the ascetic life of Jesus which is as follows:

¹⁸² Ibid., 426.

¹⁸³ Muhammaed 'Ata ur-Rahim, *Jesus A Prophet of Islam*, (New Delhi: Idara Isha'at-EDiniyat, 2009), 269.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 270.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.,

“Ka’b al-Akbar said: Jesus son of Mary, was a ruddy man, inclined to white; he did not have long hair, and he never anointed his head. Jesus used to walk barefoot, and he took no house or adornment, or goods, or clothes, or provisions except his day’s food. Wherever the sunset, he arranged his feet in prayer till the morning came. His head was disheveled and his face was small. He was an ascetic in the world, ‘ongoing for the next world and eager for the worship of Allah. He was a pilgrim in the earth till the Jew sought him and desired to kill him. Then Allah raised him up to heaven, and Allah knows best.”¹⁸⁶

Jesus’ ascetic life projected in the following *hadith* in which Jesus throws his comb by seeing a poor man who combing his beard with his fingers and in another occasion when Jesus saw a man drinking water from a river with his palms, Jesus throws his jug:

“Jesus in his life used to take nothing but two things with him: a comb and a jug. Once Jesus saw a man combing his beard with his fingers immediately Jesus threw away the comb; and on another occasion Jesus saw a person who was drinking water from a river with the palms of his hands, immediately Jesus threw away his jug.”¹⁸⁷

Jesus not only led an ascetic life but also called upon the people to follow asceticism.¹⁸⁸ If one just depends on the worldly things he will also vanish one day or other. So in this *hadith*, Jesus says, “He who seeks after the world is like one who drinks seawater; the more he drinks, the more his thirsts increases until it kills him.”¹⁸⁹ Another two *ahadith* also portrayed Jesus as a hermit.¹⁹⁰

Jesus emphasized the importance of asceticism in his teachings. This world is like a bridge one has to cross over but cannot build a house and stay forever there.

He also said: "This world is a bridge. Pass over it, but build not your dwelling there".¹⁹¹ This most famous saying gives a good summary of his message. This world is nothing but a place of transition. We are all pilgrims. This world is meant only for pilgrimage.

Al- Ghazali's *Ihya'* records: "Jesus said, be with good people who remind you of God."¹⁹² The following *hadith* explains the ascetic life of Jesus as follows:

¹⁸⁶ Muhammaed 'Ata ur-Rahim, *Jesus A Prophet of Islam*, 2005, 22.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 224.

¹⁸⁸ Muhammaed 'Ata ur-Rahim, *Jesus A Prophet of Islam*, (New Delhi: Idara Isha'at-EDiniyat, 2009), 271

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*,

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*,

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*,

It is very true and challenging attribute from Jesus' life. One needs to think it over; it is the reality of life.¹⁹³

One need to think it over, it is the reality of life. Life is momentary and everyone still continues to wrestle with this world and end up as enemies but life passes by in no time. This profound truth of Jesus' life challenges everyone.

Another divine image of Jesus can be found in one *hadith*. While Jesus was walking on the water, his disciples asked him, How is that you are walking on the water but we cannot?. Then Jesus asked them a question by showing a coin or a dinar and the dirham, "What do you think of this dinar and dirham? The disciples replied, "They (the pieces of money) are good". Then Jesus said to them "Dinar coins are money for you but for me, both money and mud are equal to me so I am able to walk on the water."¹⁹⁴

3.1.7. Miracles performed by Jesus (معجزات عيسى)

The basic miracles that Jesus performed were giving sight to a blind man, healing the leper and raising a man from the dead.

In Sunni *hadith* the miracle work of Jesus is mentioned:

Ka'b al-Akbar said: Jesus was curing the man who was blind from birth and healing, the lepers and raising the dead by Allah's permission and was telling his people what they were eating in their houses and what they were storing up for the morrow, and he was walking on the surface of the water in the sea."¹⁹⁵

These sayings are taken from the miracle passages from the Qur'an may be by Ka'b al-Akbar might have paraphrased it. One more thing needs to be observed here is that the Islamic scholars have pointed out in the miracle passages of Jesus that Jesus performed the miracle by the 'permission of God'. But they do not go in-depth, tallying the Arabic words, for instance, *khalaqa* (creating), and *nafakha* (blowing) which God used the same Arabic words in the creation account of first human and father of all human beings Adam.

¹⁹² Chellaian Lawrence, 156.

¹⁹³ (Sahih Bukhari volume 3, book 34, number 425).

¹⁹⁴ Muhammed 'Ata ur-Rahim, 223.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 222.

3.1.8. Uncomplaining patience of Jesus. (صبر عيسى)

In Sunni *hadith*, few things are found about Jesus bearing abnormal things. Once Jesus was walking on the way along with his disciples where they found the carcass of a dog. The disciples were unable to bear the foul smell of that dead dog and remarked about the bad smell. Even though he was also bearing the bad smell Jesus said: “How white are its (carcass of a dog) teeth!”¹⁹⁶

3.1.9. Jesus rejects nominal worships (حرض عيسى على الاخلاص)

Giving priority to action is one of the ascetic and mystic characteristics. Jesus knew the heart of the people. In one tradition of the Sunni *hadith*, it is mentioned that Jesus happened to see a man who was worshiping God not from his heart but just for the sake of showing others his devotion. Jesus met him and asked “what are you doing?” the man replied with pride, “I am devoting myself to God”. Then Jesus asked a question “Who is giving you what you need?” The devotee immediately replied, “My brother is providing whatever I need”. Then Jesus said to him, “Your brother is more devoted to Allah than you”.¹⁹⁷

3.1.10. Jesus expects to seek Paradise

In another *hadith* Jesus taught the world is nothing but seeking and sought. This *hadith* expresses the battle between spiritual affairs and material affairs. Jesus said, “He who seeks the next world, this world seeks him until his provision in it is complete; and he who seeks the present world, the next world seeks him until death comes and seizes him by the neck”.¹⁹⁸

3.1.11. Jesus’ humbleness (تواضع عيسى)

The phrase ‘Jesus’ humbleness’ seems to denote Jesus’ limitations or weakness. It is actually Jesus’ victorious life over the world. Since Jesus was another-worldly prophet, he could not be victorious in this world. He was, nevertheless, fully aware of his humbleness and its implications.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.,

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 223.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.,

Since Jesus was another-worlds prophet, he could not be victorious in this world. He was, nevertheless, fully aware of his humbleness and its implications. Jesus' response to the question, "How are you this morning?" expresses his recognition of his humbleness: "Unable to forestall what I hope, or to put off what I fear, bound by works, with all my good in another's hand. There is no poor man poorer than I"¹⁹⁹. In the Bible also mentioned that Jesus humbled Himself. (Philippians 2:8, II Cor. 8:9, NRSV).

Jesus expressed his humbleness in this prayer found in Al-Ghazali's *Ihya'*:

O God I have reached a point where I am unable to repel what I abhor or to accomplish what I hope. Things have passed into the hands of others. I have become a prey in my task. There is no poor man in a poorer state than I. O God, do not let my adversary gloat over me or my friend think evil of me. Do not allow my piety to be my calamity nor let this world be my maximum distress. Do not give me into the hand of those who will have no mercy on me, O Thou ever-living One, O Thou eternally abiding."²⁰⁰

Although Jesus realized the gravity of his humbleness, his other-worldly spirituality was such that he never thought of an alternative style of life. Using the power of physical force to change the situation was alien to Jesus' prophethood. In his *Ihya'*, Al-Ghazali gives an account of how Jesus led a brigand who had infested the highway for forty years to repentance. Had Jesus wanted to transcend his humbleness and become a successful prophet, he could have recruited the brigand's violence and "redeemed" him for an effective revolution instead of inducing his repentance.²⁰¹

Was Jesus a failure or as per Al-Ghazali's *Ihya'* a failure? If one comes with a blatant statement about the unique person in the world and also one whom Qur'an gave exalted honor, then ultimately one would definitely call Al-Ghazali's *Ihya'* a fool. And if one comes with an accusation, then one cannot have peaceful, dialogue.

3.2. Jesus in Shi'a *Hadith* (حضرت عيسى في ضوء الحديث عند الشيعة)

Unlike Sunni *hadith*, there are several new stories found in Shi'a *hadith*. Shi'a *hadith* basically records the birth of Jesus, the childhood of Jesus, the Prophethood of Jesus, the characteristics of Jesus, the religion of Jesus, the successor of Jesus, the disciples of Jesus, the

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.,

²⁰⁰ Chellaian Lawrence, 156.

²⁰¹ Ibid.,

episode of the bell, the children of Israel (about their Food, their Denial, their Extremism and their Monasticism), ascension of Jesus, the second coming of Jesus, the Resurrection of Jesus, Jesus in his own words, the supplications of Jesus, the conduct of Jesus, the conversations of Jesus, God's Words to Jesus, the Preaching of Jesus, a portion of the Gospel.²⁰²

3.2.1. The birth of Jesus (ميلاد عيسى)

As per, Bihar, 14, Abu Basir said, the birth of Jesus was pure and sinless.²⁰³ In Bihar, Jesus is mentioned as the Messiah²⁰⁴

Six creatures that never in a womb: Adam, Eve, the ram of Abraham, the snake of Moses, the she-camel of Saliah²⁰⁵ and the bat that Jesus made and it flew by the permission of God.²⁰⁶ Again when they acknowledged that Jesus is pure and sinless, then there is no one comparable to him. Not even Muhammad. Then the question arises, "Why are they still ignoring this plain truth from their own Scriptures?"²⁰⁷

3.2.2. The childhood of Jesus (مرحلة الطفولة لعيسى)

Jesus at his childhood got Divine wisdom when he was seven months old. Jesus went to the school in his seventh month along with his mother Mary and seated in the class. The teacher asked him to recite the divine word called *abjad*. Jesus, a seven-month-old child instead of reciting the divine word *abjad* Jesus asked a question to his teacher:

"Do you know the meaning of the word *abjad*". The teacher got angry and without knowing the divinity of boy Jesus, he was about to beat Jesus with a lash. Jesus told the teacher, "Don't hit me if I know the meaning of this word or do not know I will explain it to you. The teacher was astonished by the wisdom of Jesus who explained the meaning of the divine word *abjad*. This story shows the omniscient wisdom of God that Jesus possessed in his tender age. Jesus had divine wisdom and that wisdom was available for divine people."²⁰⁸

²⁰² www..alislam.org, taken on 26-10-201

²⁰³ Bihar 14,202,14.

²⁰⁴ Bihar,14,199, 8

²⁰⁵ Bihar, 15, 261, 42.

²⁰⁶ Bihar,93,243,8.

²⁰⁷ Bihar 14, 202,15.

²⁰⁸ Bihar, 14, 515, 4

Jesus is a divine personality. Other hadith, Tahdhib says Jesus is the exalted one. He has the authority to exercise on others.²⁰⁹ And he was called Messiah²¹⁰ and had twelve disciples. In Bihar hadith, it is mentioned that Abu Ja‘far Imam Baqir said:²¹¹ At the resurrection²¹² day Jesus was also raised along with other four²¹³ main prophets such as Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Muhammad.²¹⁴

Jesus is also known as the Messiah.²¹⁵ Jesus had twelve disciples.²¹⁶ Jesus is called noble²¹⁷ and ascetic.²¹⁸ Jesus is Messiah because he has traveled²¹⁹ and Jesus also has olive oil which represents his anointing and Jesus also used to pray with olive oil to heal the sick.²²⁰ One more important characteristic of, Jesus in hadith is Jesus is love.²²¹ Jesus fed four thousand people in the wilderness.²²² Jesus was strengthened with the Holy Spirit.²²³ Jesus got power over everything since he was born to the Virgin Mary without any human father.²²⁴

3.2.3. Second coming of Jesus (بعثة ثانية لعيسى ابن مريم)

Unless people recognize Jesus as *al-Mahdi*, they will be rejected.²²⁵ The Apostle of Allah²²⁶ said, “How can a community perish when I am at the beginning of it, Jesus the son of Mary will be at the end of it and *al-Mahdi* will be in the middle of it.”²²⁷

This particular aspect is very much contradictory. With proper understanding and discernment, one can unravel its true meaning and show a willingness to accept it.

Jesus is also mentioned as the Spirit of God and God’s Word and He will come again and will kill the Anti Christ mentioned as followed:

²⁰⁹ Kafi, 1, 321, 10.

²¹⁰ Bihar, 39, 38, 9 and 13, 332, 13.

²¹¹ Bihar, 15, 286, 8

²¹² Bihar, 14, 515, 4.

²¹³ Kharaj’ij Wal al-Jara’ih, 2, 899.

²¹⁴ Tahdhib, 6, 84, 3.

²¹⁵ Kafi, 1, 175, 3.

²¹⁶ Bihar, 14, 250.

²¹⁷ Bihar, 15, 272, 17

²¹⁸ Bihar, 40, 78, 22, 343.

²¹⁹ Dalal’il al-Imamah, 2, 238.

²²⁰ Bihar, 13, 332, 13.

²²¹ Tafsir al-Imam al-‘Askari, 498.

²²² Bihar, 14, 249, 37.

²²³ Bihar, 14, 339, 14.

²²⁴ Bihar, 25, 117

²²⁵ Tafsir Al-Qummi, 1, 158.

²²⁶ Khisal, 2, 476.

²²⁷ Dala’il al-Imamah, 234.

“It is reported that Abu ‘Abd Allah (‘a) said, “Jesus the son of Mary is the Spirit of Allah and His Word. He was thirty-three years old in the world. Then Allah raised him to heaven. He will descend to the earth and it is he who will kill the Antichrist (Dajjal.)”²²⁸

Acknowledging Jesus is the Spirit of God and God’s Word should not be debated at all. The one who understands this concept and what it means will understand the divinity of Jesus. Having known such genuine truth from the *hadith* but still denying it, means they are denying the *hadith* or have a biased attitude towards it.

3.2.4. The concept of resurrection (تصور آخرت)

In this *hadith*, it is mentioned that after the murder of ‘Ali (‘a) and Yusha’ ibn Nunu, and on the same night i.e. the nineteenth of Ramadan Jesus the son of Mary was raised...²²⁹

3.2.5. Jesus as the Word of God (وعيسى كلمة الله) and spirit of God (وعيسى روح الله)

In Shi’a *hadith* it is mentioned about the resurrection day, on that day people will rise. The angels will say, ‘This is the spirit of Allah and His word! This is Jesus the son of Mary!’ In this particular *hadith*, Jesus is accepted as His word. Again a question, maybe asked whether the word is apart from God or part of Him? Logically thinking before a word comes out of our mouth it is there in our mind so Jesus is part of God.

3.2.6. Intercession of Jesus. (شفاعت عيسى)

It is acknowledged that all the prophets including Jesus point to Muhammad, who will intercede for people before the Lord and He will say, ‘Be free.’

Then he will bring them to the door of heaven and will go to meet them from the Door of Mercy and he will fall prostrate and remain as long as Allah wills. Then Allah will say, ‘Raise your head and intercede, you will be answered and ask, you will be given.’ It is His saying,²³⁰ About intercession, again there is a contradiction. Few Muslims do not believe in the intercession of Jesus but few Muslim scholars like Zamakhshari and Baydawi declare that Jesus intercedes for the sinners as mentioned earlier in Chapter two under section Jesus, the Honorable in this world and in the hereafter.

²²⁸ Tafsir Al-Qummi’, 2, 271

²²⁹ Bihar, 14, 336, 4 & Tafsir al-‘Ayyashi,2,n64, 68.

²³⁰ Ikhtisas.1, 355.

3.2.7. Infant Jesus talks in the cradle (عيسى فى المهد والكهبل)

Jesus spoke to the people who were accusing his mother Mary while he was in the cradle.

Yazid al-Kunasi said, Jesus the son of Mary had the authority from Allah for the people of his time when he spoke from the cradle' He said, 'He was on that day a prophet, an authority from Allah, but not a messenger. Did you not hear his saying when he said, Verily, I am a servant of Allah. He has given me the Book, and has made me a prophet, and has made me blessed wherever I may be. And He has enjoined on me prayer and charity (*zakah*) as long as I live. (19:30-31). When Jesus reached seven years, he spoke as a prophet and messenger since he received revelation from Allah, the Exalted. Jesus was the authority for John and all the people. O Abu Khalid (Yazid)! The earth cannot endure even for a single day without authority from Allah for all people, from the day that Allah created Adam and settled him on earth.'²³¹

Some sayings of Jesus regarding the simple life, Jesus say natural things are a healthy one. He sleeps while he has nothing and he rises while he has nothing and yet he says there is no one on earth more wealthy than I.²³²

3.2.8. Jesus is love (عيسى هو الحب)

To tell a moral story, Jesus explained that greedy persons die in fulfilling their greed.²³³ The Shi'a *tafsir* (Commentary) states that Jesus is love.²³⁴ Jesus projected himself as humble. In a Shi'a *hadith* everyone who wants to look at Adam in his dignity, Moses in the intensity of his grip and Jesus in his asceticism, look at the one coming, then 'Ali came.²³⁵

3.2.9. Jesus sanctified by God (قدس الله عيسى)

Abu' Abdullah said that a mountain called al-Ghari, where Noah buried his ark (Ark of the Covenant), on that same mountain God talked with Moses, and called Abraham as a friend, and sanctified Jesus...²³⁶ Why is the term sanctification used for Jesus? The term sanctification is used for Jesus alone and not used for Prophet Muhammad. The act of Jesus' crucifixion occurred on the mountain but is it the same mountain where Prophet Noah, Prophet Moses, Prophet Abraham performed their prime mission. The term used for Jesus' mission is sanctification. Further research must be done to find why term sanctification has been used because of the death

²³¹ Kafi,1.382,1

²³² Bihar 14,239, 17

²³³ Majmu'ah Warram,1,179.

²³⁴ Tafsir Al-Imam al-'Askari, 498.

²³⁵ Bihar,40, 78.

²³⁶ Jami 'al-Akhbar, 21.

and resurrection of the Biblical Jesus or is it the term used for Jesus' lifted unto heaven which is the Qur'anic mission of Jesus.

3.2.10. Jesus the provider of food (اطعام عیسی)

It is declared in Bihar *hadith* mentioned below that Jesus moved with compassion and fed people those who are hungry. This act also counts as a miracle done by Jesus.

Jesus blessed a flat loaf of bread and fishes to feed four thousand and seven hundred people.²³⁷

Conclusion

The study of Jesus in Sunni *hadith* is important because there is a possibility to find the attributes of Jesus. The prime attributes of Jesus found in Sunni *hadith* are Jesus' purity, Jesus as the Word of God, Jesus as ascetic, Jesus as a judge in the Last Days. There is a serious difference about Jesus as a Judge in Christian understanding and Islamic understanding. In Christian understanding, Jesus comes with his sole power and judge the people based on the law of the gospel whereas Muslim believe that Jesus will judge people based on the law of the Qur'an and he will die physically and buried beside the burial place of Prophet Muhammad. In order to understand these serious concepts of Islam with regards to Jesus, an in-depth study with much-needed patience is necessary.

Shi'a *hadith* are basically sayings of 'Ali (first *imam* of Shi'a) and his successors. In these above *ahadith*, the personality of Jesus is highly exalted and acknowledged and presents the positive sign for both the communities. These *ahadith* are helpful to have a fruitful discussion with Muslims, to avoid certain misunderstandings that Muslims have about Jesus.

The prime attributes of Jesus found in Shi'a *hadith* are Jesus is love, Jesus is noble, Jesus is the Messiah, and Jesus is the word of God, Jesus is the Holy Spirit, Jesus is ascended, Jesus will rose again on the resurrection day, Intercession of Jesus, sanctification of Jesus and Jesus returns. Jesus is love and Intercession of Jesus is the important images of Jesus to be discussed with Muslims.

²³⁷ Bihar, 14, 249, 37.

CHAPTER FOUR

JESUS IN THE MUSLIM STORIES AND SUFI SAYINGS

Introduction

Islamic mythology is the body of myths associated with Islam and the Qur'an. Islam is a religion that is more concerned with social order and law than with religious myths. *The Oxford Companion to World Mythology* identifies a number of traditional narratives as "Islamic myths". These include a creation myth and a vision of the afterlife, which Islam shares to some extent with the other Abrahamic religions, as well as the distinctively Islamic story of the *Kaaba*. The traditional biography of the Islamic prophet Muhammad, which plays a central role in Islamic teachings, is generally recognized as being largely historical in nature, and Islam depends less on mythology than Judaism and Christianity. However, the canonical narrative includes two key supernatural events: the divine revelation of the Qur'an and the *Isra* and *Mi'raj*— the night journey to Jerusalem followed by the ascension to the Seventh Heaven. In addition, Islamic scriptures contain a number of legendary narratives about biblical characters, which diverge from Jewish and Christian traditions in some details.²³⁸

4.1. Jesus in Muslim stories

Muslim stories simply mean the early storytelling tradition from Wahb²³⁹ and onwards and the widespread 'Stories of the Prophets' by Tha'labi and Tirmidhi (drawing on Wahb and others, as well as Christian sources). The historical, as well as religious value of this story-telling tradition is disputed. Some would see the stories as 'designed to while away the evening hours, and at the same time serve a basis for discussion with other revealed religions.'²⁴⁰

²³⁸ Islamic mythology, (Accessed on 29/08/2019 at 2:24 pm).

²³⁹ Wahb ibn Munabbih (d. 728) was a Yemenite Muslim traditionist of Dhimar (two days' journey from Sana'a) in Yemen; died at the age of ninety, in a year variously given by Arabic authorities as 725, 728, 732, and 737 C.E. He was a member of Banu Alahrar (Sons of the free people), a Yemeni of Persian origin. He is counted among the Tabi'in and a narrator of Isra'iliyat.

²⁴⁰ Balic, 1979, 2.

Stories of Jewish and Christian origin have, however, been told among Muslims from the beginnings of the Muslim community, and their impact on popular Islam has been considerable.²⁴¹

In contrast to the rich lore in classical collections of prophet stories, modern books on pre-Islamic prophets often rely solely on Qur'anic and sound *hadith* material.²⁴² The classical *Tafsir* exegesis of the Qur'an drawn on and discusses not only *hadith* material, but also Muslim ancient stories and Christian sources. Tarif Khalidi (1994) underlines the fact that Muslim lore about Jesus in many cases pre-dates the canonical *hadith* - material pertaining to Jesus. Khalidi declares that there is no much investigation done on these ancient stories material. So there is not much authentic material on these stores. But Khalidi says Jesus-sayings and stories of Jesus played an important role not only in popular Muslim piety but also in intra-Muslim polemics of the first two Islamic centuries.²⁴³

The stories about Jesus were shared by Jews and Christians among the Arabs even before the birth of Islam. The researcher does not go into a detailed study of Jews and Christian storytelling about Jesus among the Muslims. The stories and sayings of Jesus which are found in the Arabic Islamic literary traditions are the focus of study.

4.1.1. Images of Jesus by Ibn Kathir²⁴⁴ Al-Kisai, and Ibn Askari

In his book *Stories of the Prophets*, translated by Rafiq Abdur Rahman (2013), Ibn Kathir observed that in those days Jews accused Jesus of adultery.²⁴⁵ Ibn Kathir also said that some other called Jesus god.²⁴⁶ This aspect of Jesus as god no other Islamic source projected straightaway on the divine image of Jesus as a god. Probably the image of Jesus as God he might have got from the Christian sources. If possible the researcher intends to do further investigation on this statement of Jesus as a god. Because the researcher is aiming to find the divinity of Jesus from the Muslim ancient stories. In Ibn Kathir's book, Jesus is underlined as a son of Allah.²⁴⁷ 'Jesus as a son of God' is very much found in the New Testament He further said that the

²⁴¹ Leirvik, *Images of Jesus Christ in Islam*, 58.

²⁴² Cf. Iftekar Bano Hussain: Prophets in the Qur'an, Vol.1-2, London: Ta-Ha Publishers, 1994-1995.

²⁴³ Leirvik, *Images of Jesus Christ in Islam*, 58-59.

²⁴⁴ (d. 1373)

²⁴⁵ Ibn Kathir, *Stories of the Prophets*, (New Delhi: Idara Impex, tras. By Rafiq abdur Rahman, 2013), 350.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.,

²⁴⁷ Ibid.,

believers regarded Jesus as servant of Allah, His messenger, son of Mary²⁴⁸. Ibn Kathir explains that Allah is only one, he cannot have son. Allah is the creator.²⁴⁹ Al-Kisai portrayed Jesus as wonder-worker.²⁵⁰ Al-Kisai may have taken this view either from Qur'an or from the New Testament. Ibn Askari project Jesus as a poor person. Maybe he has taken from Sufi sources. According to him Jesus was a servant of God, word of god and spirit of god.²⁵¹

Ibn Kathir expresses the term '*Ruh Allah*' is just a sign of honour. It is a creation of Allah, like any other creative and similar to the sayings *Bayt Allah* (house of Allah), *Naaqat Allah*, (she-camel of Allah). Quoting Sayyidina 'Isa Ibn Hathis says that Jesus is the creative word of God ("Be") as Adam was created (Surah3:59)²⁵². He reported the sayings of Jews and Christians. "Uzayr is the son of Allah, while the *Nasarasay Al - Masih* is the son of Allah." this is saying by their mouths (At-Tawbah, 9:30). Ibn Kathir says have been made these allegations by Jews and Christians because of their ignorance.²⁵³ Ibn Kathir's critique of Christians and Jews is questionable. Maybe he is saying because of his prejudice. Jews believe Messiah who is coming to rule the world in last days. Christians believe that Jesus is Messiah because he is God himself.

Ibn Kathir declared in his previous book about the bravery of Jesus even talking with the scribes (learned *Ulema*). "The scribes were disturbed by the boy's (Jesus') boldness and puzzled by the questions Jesus asked, for they were unable to answer him"²⁵⁴ Ibn Kathir also projects Jesus' passion and concern for the poor people and rebukes the acts of the so-called religious people like Pharisees and Sadducees. "Jesus was astonished and said why did the priests (Pharisees and Sadducees) burn a lot of offerings inside the temple, while thousands of poor people were hungry outside it?"²⁵⁵ He presents Jesus' teaching about sin and the thoughts of believers and unbelievers. "Jesus told them that caring for this world is a sin, not fit for pious worshipers. The unbelievers care for it because they do not know a better way. As for the believers, they know that their sustenance is with Allah, so they trust in Him and disrespect this world."²⁵⁶ The teaching on worshiping of One God was given by Jesus. "Jesus continued to

²⁴⁸ Ibid.,

²⁴⁹ Ibid.,

²⁵⁰ Oddbjorn Leirvik, *Imags of Jesus Christ in Islam*, (Uppsala: Swedish Institute of Missionary Research, 1999), 61.

²⁵¹ Ibid., 69.

²⁵² Ibn Kathir, (*Stories of the Prophets*, 2013), 351

²⁵³ Ibid.,

²⁵⁴ Ibn Kathir, *Stories of the Prophets*, (New Delhi: Islamic Book Service, Trans. By Sheikh Muhammad Mustafa Geme'ah, 2000), 342.

²⁵⁵ Ibid, 344.

²⁵⁶ Ibid, 345-346.

invite people to worship the Only Lord, Who are without a partner, just as he invited them to purify the heart and soul”²⁵⁷

Ibn Kathir states that Jesus brought four people back from the dead: a friend of his named Al-Azam, an old woman’s son, and a woman’s only daughter. These three had died during his lifetime. When the Jews saw this they said: “You only resurrect those who have died recently; perhaps they only fainted. They asked him (Jesus) to bring back to life Sam the Ibn Noah.”²⁵⁸

When he (Jesus) asked them to show him his (Sam the Ibn Noah) grave, the people accompanied him there. Jesus invoked Allah the Exalted to bring him back to life and behold, “Sam the Ibn Noah came out from the grave gray-haired.”²⁵⁹ Ibn Kathir refers to the power of judgment day in the conversation between gray-haired Sam the Ibn Noah and Jesus. Jesus asked Sam the Ibn Noah: “How did you get gray hair when there is no aging in your time? He (Sam Ibn Noah) answered: O, Spirit of Allah, I thought that the Day of Resurrection had come, from the fear of that day my hair turned gray”.²⁶⁰ Jesus himself answered the questions of scribes in the temple of God and outward ritual-acts of temple priests. But Ibn Kathir relied upon Muslim legend. Khalidi’s introduction and commentaries place the sayings and stories of Jesus in their historical context, showing how and why this “gospel” arose and the function it served within Muslim devotion. The Jesus that emerges here is a compelling figure of deep and life-giving spirituality. The sayings and stories, some three hundred in number are arranged in chronological order.

In the above paragraph, Ibn Kathir referred are mostly acceptable to New Testament stories. Except one that is Jesus as adultery. Al-Kisai, referred to Jesus as wonder-worker and Ibn Askari as a poor man which are also tuned with the New Testament.

4.1.2. Images of Jesus by Oddbjorn Leirvik

The stories of Jews and Christian origin have been told among Muslims from the beginning of the Muslim Community, and their impact on popular Islam has been considerable.²⁶¹ The classical collections of prophet stories, modern books on pre-Islamic prophets often rely exclusively on Qur’anic and sound *hadith* material. The classical *Tafsir*

²⁵⁷ Ibid, 346.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 347.

²⁵⁹ Ibid, 347.

²⁶⁰ Ibid, 347-348.

²⁶¹ Leirvik, 58.

exegesis of the Qur'an draws on and discusses not only *hadith* material but also Muslim legend and Christian sources.²⁶² Why Leirvik says Muslim legend and Christian sources are effective in a classical exegesis of Qur'an? May be for Leirvik Muslim legend and Christian sources are also a primary source to identify the images of Jesus.

4.1.3. Images of Jesus by Tarif Khalidi

He highlights the fact that Muslim tradition about Jesus in many cases pre-dates the canonical *hadith*-material pertaining to Jesus.²⁶³ The popular Muslim Jesus... was the Jesus whose stories and sayings were preserved in several works of *adab* (cultured manners), piety, *zuhd* (asceticism), *qisas al-anbiya'* (stories of the prophets) and Sufism.²⁶⁴ It means Khalid's writing on the images of Jesus is very much identical with the image of Jesus in Islam and with the images of Jesus in Christianity. This is helpful in the dialogue between Muslims and Christians for their mutual understanding and co-existence.

In Tarif Khalidi's book *The Muslim Jesus sayings and stories in Islamic literature* (2001), contains several hundreds of stories ascribed to Jesus. These materials trace a tradition of love and reverence for Jesus that has characterized Islamic thought for more than a thousand years. It is an invaluable resource for the history of religions, the collection of documents of how Islam assimilated the immense religious features of Christianity. It is a work of great significance for the understanding of both and has profound implications for modern-day inter-sectarian relations and ecumenical dialogue.²⁶⁵

Tarif Khalidi's introduction and commentaries place the sayings and stories of Jesus in their historical context, showing how and why this "gospel" arose and the function it served within Muslim devotion. The Jesus that emerges here is a compelling figure of deep and life-giving spirituality. The sayings and stories, some three hundred in number are arranged in chronological order;²⁶⁶

²⁶² Ibid.,

²⁶³ Leirvik., 59

²⁶⁴ Khalidi, 1994, 146.

²⁶⁵ Tarif Khalidi, *The Muslim Jesus sayings and stories in Islamic literature*, (London: Harvard Unuversity Press, 2001), 218.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.,

4.1.4. Images of Jesus in *Agrapha*²⁶⁷ (Sayings of Jesus in the pre-Islamic era)

Even before the Islamic era (pre-Islamic) there are some sayings of Jesus found in *logia et agrapha*. In the most scientific of these studies, Michael Asin y Palacios, Professor of Arabic at Madrid University, examined 103 sayings attributed to Jesus in al-Ghazali's famous work *Ihya'ulum al-din* (The Revival of the Religious Sciences), and 122 passages in Arabic and Latin from other Muslim writers (Asin et Palacios 1917 and 1926). Michael Asin y Palacios defines *agrapha* as sayings attributed to Jesus that with reasonable probability may be deemed to be pre-Islamic.²⁶⁸

4.1.5. The famous seventh century saying

Many of the other sayings have ascetic flavor, warning against the dangers of the riches and worldly desire. Another much-cited logion of Jesus, which can be traced back to the seventh century, is incorporated in the story of Jesus and the dead dog. When Jesus passed by the carcass of a dog one of His disciples said, "How foul is the smell of this dog"? Jesus responded immediately and said: "How white are his teeth"²⁶⁹ This story is paralleled by Christian apocryphal stories revealing Jesus' care and respect for animals. This saying reflects the humble and forbearance life of Jesus. The most prominent storyteller known in this century is Wahb b. Munabbih, who has always been celebrated by later writers as an authority on the traditions of the People of the Book. His knowledge must have come from an extensive intellectual exchange with learned Jews and Christians.²⁷⁰

4.1.6. Ninth century sayings on ascetic life of Jesus

Another source of Muslim tradition attributed to Jesus - of the more ascetic kind - is *Kitab al-zuhd* by Ahmad Ibn Hanbal and similar books on asceticism and piety also found from the ninth century.²⁷¹ Ahmad Ibn Hanbal is a well-known scholar, Founder of Hanbal school.

²⁶⁷ *Agrapha*, Greek for "non written"; (singular *agraphon*) are sayings of Jesus that are not found in the canonical Gospels. The term was used for the first time by J.G. Körner, a German Bible scholar in 1776.

²⁶⁸ Leirvik, 59.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 60

²⁷⁰ Leirvik, 59.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*,

4.1.7. Eleventh-century sayings on miracle work of Jesus

'Stories of the Prophets', (*Qisas al-anbiya'*), is the title of widespread books relating to the lives of pre-Islamic prophets and heroes, and emerging in the eleventh century. The section on Jesus in Talabi's *Qisas* is easily accessible through Arthur Jeffery's translation in "A reader in Islam." They borrow extensively from Christian sources, and the Qur'anic material is dramatized for maximum effect. The *Qisas* (stories) have played an important role in shaping the image of Jesus among ordinary Muslims. According to those acquainted with the Persian tradition, prophet stories have been told by pious mothers to their children all the way up to this century, in an independent chain of transmission paralleling the religious education of the *mullahs*. The enormous emphasis on the miracles of Jesus as a healer in the *Qisas* (stories) may be reflected in the widespread image of Jesus as a healer in Indo-Pakistani Islam. It would be a theme for further investigation to what extent the Muslim legendary material about Jesus (based mostly on Christian legends) is really alive in the minds of ordinary Muslims of today, and in which parts of the Muslim world.

The Tha'labi's *Qisas* (stories of Tha'labi) probably give a representative picture of the Muslim image of Jesus as it developed after the formative years of Islam and was reflected in Muslim *Tafsir* and theology, in Muslim polemics against Christians, and in popular piety. However, the amount of Muslim legendary material is overwhelming, and the stories of Tha'labi constitute a relatively sober example of the stories of Jesus and Mary in Muslim tradition. In other *qisas* (stories) like that of al-Kisa'i and in more fairytale-like collections, the imagination seems to have no limits.²⁷²

The main focuses in the Tha'labi *Qisas* on Jesus are as follows:

- Mary's pregnancy, the birth of Jesus and the flight to Egypt.
- The infancy miracles of Jesus.
- The disciples of Jesus.
- The virtues of the adult Jesus, again with an emphasis on his miracles.
- The end of his life, and his descent from heaven seven days after he had been raised up.
- The death of Mary, and 'the king of Rome'.
- The second descent of Jesus, in the last days.

²⁷² Ibid

In Muslim storytelling, apart from the several images of Jesus such as purity of Jesus, Jesus as a miracle worker, Jesus as the servant of God, Jesus as word of God, Jesus as a Spirit of God, two extreme images of Jesus are found. Among them, one is a negative picture of Jesus as adulterer and other one is the positive picture of Jesus, Jesus as God and son of God.

4.2. Sufi sayings

The Islamic Arabian literary tradition of the pre-modern period has several hundred sayings and stories ascribed to Jesus. These stories are in different forms such as ethical, popular devotional, works of Adab (bells-letters), works and sayings of Sufis and anthology of wisdom, etc.²⁷³ The research is confined to Sufi sayings which are closer to Jesus' life and sayings.

A city called Kufa in Iraq was also an original home for stories and sayings of Jesus. Many of the Kufan founding fathers are called devout worshipers and are described as preachers and Qur'an readers who belong to the ranks of "official" scholars. Their short sermons and stories are called sacred *hadith (hadith qusasi)*. This particular group is called a mobile group, traveling from place to place, admonishing rulers and preaching a more personal type of piety.²⁷⁴ In Kufa again there are several mystic scholars like Al-Ghazali,²⁷⁵ Ibnal 'Arabi came out to exhibit the complete mystic image of Jesus. Tarif Khalidi expressed Ibn 'Arabi as a Sufi master who invented the honorific title for Jesus as "The Seal of Saints".²⁷⁶ Sufism is the term used to denote the mystical dimension of Islam.

In Umayyad²⁷⁷ and early Abbasid period, peoples' existence was not much mystic but they were as ascetics. They reminded orthodox Muslims that inward Islamic spirituality was better than the outward spirituality. Outward spirituality is performing mere daily prayers and other rituals while inward spirituality is like contemplating or meditating on God with heart and soul. For them, Jesus was a model way fare ascetic and they saw in Jesus the Messiah. There are several explanations for the title messiah but they took one specific meaning of this title that Jesus as a traveler or a wanderer and the Kufa mystic scholars exercised inward spirituality in their life. For the Sufis, the title the Messiah (*al-Masih*) is an indication that both of his feet were worn out (*mamsuh*) by continual walk. The later Sufis also picked up the simple life of Jesus and

²⁷³ Tarif Khalidi, *The Muslim Jesus, Sayings and stories in Islamic Literature*, (London: Harvard University Press, 2001), 3.

²⁷⁴ Tarif Khalidi, 31.

²⁷⁵ Zwemer 1917, Asinet Palacios 1917/1974, Massignon 1932.

²⁷⁶ Tarif Khalidi, 41-42.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 20.

followed accordingly. One of the most famous Sufis in this period was Hasan al-Basri who was renowned for his scholarship as well as his piety.²⁷⁸

One of the famous sayings of Jesus they used to contemplate for their ascetic life is as follows: Jesus used to say:

“My daily bread is hunger, my badge is fear, my raiment is wool, my mount is my foot, my lantern at night is the moon, my fire by day is the sun, and my fruit and fragrant herbs are such things as the earth brings forth for the wild beasts and the cattle. All night I have nothing, yet there is none richer than I”²⁷⁹

The images of Jesus depicted the ascetic life of Jesus very clearly in Sufism. Renowned Islamic scholars like Al-Ghazali and Ibn al-‘Arabi expressed the aim of mature Sufism is often described as *fana*, passing from the consciousness of the self towards *baqa*, reaching a state of union with the divine – purified and transformed by God. To reach the goal, the state of *baqa*, several stations have to be passed, with the aim of purifying the soul.²⁸⁰

The early profound Sufi woman saint Rabia al- ‘Adawiyya who was from Basra in southern Iraq is worth mentioning here. In the formative years of Sufism, asceticism was regarded as essential for the purifying process, with Hasan al- Basri as a typical representative. Later, more emphasis was placed on the language of love as represented by Rabia and others. Rabia is attributed with a famous prayer, which expresses the heartbeat of Sufi devotion as yearning love for God Himself is worth mention here:

Oh, my Lord, if I worship Thee from fear of Hell, burn me in Hell, and if I worship Thee in hope of Paradise excluded me thence, but if I worship Thee for Thine own sake withhold not from me Thine Eternal beauty.²⁸¹

Noteworthy versions of Sufism are with al-Bistami²⁸² and al-Hallaj, are Extraordinary mystics.

²⁷⁸ Neal Robinson, *Christ in Islam and Christianity*, (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), 53.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.,

²⁸⁰ Oddbjorn Leirvik, *Images of Jesus Christ in Islam*, (Uppsala: Swedish Institute of Missionary Research, 1999), 81

²⁸¹ Neal Robinson, 54.

²⁸² (d. 875).

4.2.1. Sufi reception of Jesus-Sayings and stories of Jesus

Famous sayings of Jesus have become the model for the Sufi to maintain their ascetic life. Jesus' teaching became the prime source for the mystical Sufis. From the beginning of Sufism, Jesus was given a prominent place in the spiritual teachings of Islamic mystics. The collection of Javad Nurbakhs in 1982 entitled "*Jesus in the Eyes of the Sufis*" and the collection of Nurbakhsh (head of the Khaniqahi Nimatullahi order) contain a wellspring of sayings of and stories of Jesus, copied mainly from Persian Sufi poets like Rumi, Attar, and Hafez, but also from al-Ghazali and from modern Sufi books. Many Sufi teachers speak of the 'Jesus stage' as one of the higher stations of spiritual growth.²⁸³

Jesus' words are extensively used among Sufi poets and theologians, the most famous example being al-Ghazali's *Ihya*. In agreement with the general Sufi interest in sayings attributed to God (*Hadith Qudsi*), Islamic mystics also know a number of God's words to Jesus'.²⁸⁴ What are those God's words about Jesus? Are they borrowed from the Qur'an or from elsewhere? Are their sayings and practices developed from the Qur'an or from the Bible? Some may say that most of their sayings are similar to the teachings from the Bible (Gospel) and the Qur'an. They are not borrowed either from the Qur'an or from the Bible? They may have been taken from the early literary tradition of the pre-modern period.

In addition to sayings, Sufis can tell several stories about Jesus. In general, the Jesus-stories recorded in Sufi works differ from the more fairy-tale-like legends of the *Qisas* (stories) by being more 'moralist' and 'inwardly directed,' often in the form of reported dialogues and parables. The stories include that of Jesus asking the disciples what they would do if they came upon a brother exposing his private parts while asleep. As a parable of listening to gossip, Jesus astonishes them in suggesting that rather than cover him up they would expose them even more.²⁸⁵ Another story much appreciated by Sufis is that of Jesus walking with a pious worshipper whose self-righteousness is revealed and condemned when their company is sought

²⁸³ Oddbjorn Leirvik, 82.

²⁸⁴ Nurbakhsh, 1982, 67-69.

²⁸⁵ A story found both with al-Ghazali in *Ihya* (in book 15/II. 5 about friendship and brotherhood).

by a notorious sinner asking for mercy.²⁸⁶ Apart from the sayings and stories, Jesus is often cited as a spiritual model in Sufi poetry and meditative discourses, most notably those of Rumi.

4.2.2. Basic Sufi characteristics of Jesus

Generally, Jesus is regarded by the Sufis as a model wanderer, ascetic and wisdom teacher. As a ‘proto-Sufi’, he is reported to have worn woolen clothing. Sufi traditions about Jesus’ self-denial are plentiful.

4.2.2.1. The ascetic life of Jesus

The line Ahmad ibn Hanbal²⁸⁷ is about the ascetic life of a learned Sufi. Just gaining more knowledge is gaining more pride if you do not act accordingly.²⁸⁸

In later Sufism, as with the Persian poet Farid ud-Din ‘Attar, in detachment of Jesus is seen as an essential feature of his uniqueness: If for only a moment you free yourself From this prison around you You will be like Jesus, Unique in detachment.²⁸⁹

About detachment of the world, ‘Abdallah ibn al- Mubarak²⁹⁰, mentioned as follows: Jesus said to his disciples, “Just as kings have left wisdom to you, so you should leave the world to them”²⁹¹

4.2.2.2. Jesus as a breath of life

However, in later Sufi poetry and theology, the name of Jesus stands not only for asceticism and detachment from the world but also for the breath of life and love. In that respect too, he is a role model for Sufis, as can be seen from the following words of Attar:

“As Attar’s word gives life to the soul, clearly he is of the same breath as Jesus.”²⁹²

4.2.2.3. Jesus appreciates the love which is in the size of an atom

In his *Musibat-nama*, Attar tells the story of Jesus and the man who desired an atom of love, with the following conclusion:

²⁸⁶ Nurbakhsh, 1982, 97f.

²⁸⁷ (d. 855).

²⁸⁸ Tarif Khalidi, 76.

²⁸⁹ Oddbjorn Leirvik, 83.

²⁹⁰ (d.797).

²⁹¹ Tarif Khalidi, 53-54.

²⁹² Oddbjorn Leirvik, 83.

“An atom, even in Love, is too much; conceit in Love is unbecoming, besides Love itself, whatever else subsists, is, Like an idol-temple, Within the Ka’ba. When alien names from the heart, are extirpated, the veils From the Loved One’s visage are raised.”²⁹³

4.2.2.4. Jesus saved a mountain from the hell

Abu al-layth al-Samarqandi²⁹⁴, speaks about Jesus’ conversation with the mountain. At a certain point, Mountain says to Jesus,

“Jesus, people cut stones from me and prepare idols and worship instead of worshipping God, I fear that God will cast me into hell-fire, for I have heard God say, ‘And fear the flame whose fuel consists of men and stones’. God inspired Jesus to tell the mountain, “Be at peace, for I have saved you from hell.”²⁹⁵

4.2.3. Various representations of Jesus in Sufism

4.2.3.1. Jesus in Sufi ‘moralism’

A ninth century moralist mystic al-Muhasibi²⁹⁶, especially in his *kitab al-wasayya* (‘The book of commandments’²⁹⁷) presents the moral teachings of Jesus based on Sermon on the mount. Kenneth Cragg declared that al-Muhasibi is a person of thorough self-examination and self-discipline. Cragg opines that he might have read Arabic Canonical Gospels because his wrings are similar to Sermon on the Mount. Most important sayings of Muhasibi is like ‘do not repay wrong with wrong’ and ‘one should bless but not curse the evildoers’.²⁹⁸

Cragg commented that the book *kitab al-wasayya* (‘the book of commandments’²⁹⁹), was written by Muhasibi, might have taken from the canonical gospels. This may or may not be true. This is because Cragg himself was not sure of Muhasibi's original sources. Further research must be carried out to find out the sayings and teachings and life of mystics original sources. One can

²⁹³ Ibid.,

²⁹⁴ (d. 983).

²⁹⁵ Tarif Khalidi, 135.

²⁹⁶ Harith ibn Asad al-Muhasibi (781–857) of Baghdad was a master of Sufi ethics and the father of Sufi psychology. He is most famous for his theory of the three-part nature of the human soul. His nickname, "al-Muhasibi," refers to his practice of *muhasaba*, the critical examination of actions, motives, and spiritual states. He was an exemplar of ethical conduct and refused to allow any form of self-deception. He taught his disciples to follow reason and avoid emotionalism. His major opponent was Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 855). Ibn Hanbal criticized al-Muhasibi for his rationalism and his use of dialectical reasoning. He incited his followers in Baghdad to intimidate al-Muhasibi and prevent people from attending his lessons.

²⁹⁷ Translated into English by Margaret Smith, with the title *An Early Mystic Baghdad* (London:1935)

²⁹⁸ Cragg, 1985, 49

²⁹⁹ Translated into English by Margaret Smith, with the title *An Early Mystic Baghdad* (London:1935)

find similar parallels to the Sermon on the Mount in other branches of Sufism as well. Morris S. Seale (1968) has analysed the striking parallels between the forty-five articles of the heterodox Malamatiyya movement³⁰⁰ and the spirituality of the Sermon on the Mount.

4.2.3.2. Transgressions of orthodoxy in search of union with God

There are mystics who go to the extreme to exercise or to detach them completely from the world and be united with God Almighty. Later they claim that they are Gods. It is called the self-praise. Since they associated with God they were called as *sirk*,³⁰¹ many times they get excommunicated later on they were punished to death by the rulers. Al- Bistami³⁰² is said to have exclaimed ‘Glory be to me! He even said that ‘How great is my majesty’ during his ecstatic *mi’raj*, i.e. the heavenly ascent of his soul during ecstasy. Several Sufis found guilty in transgressions were put to death for blasphemy in Baghdad during the ninth and tenth centuries, the most famous being Mansur-al-Hallaj who was executed in 922 A.D for declaring *ana l-haqq*, ‘I am the Truth’.³⁰³

Many Sufis spiritualized the death of al-Hallaj and equated it with Jesus’ death on the cross. They interpreted that although al-Hallaj was crucified, it was only his body that suffered while his soul was raised to God.³⁰⁴ The death of al-Hallaj is historical and has a proof for the death of al-Hallj who was executed in 922 A.D. for declaring himself as “*anal-haqq*” (I am the Truth). Everyone knows that since al-Hallaj claimed himself as the Truth and he was executed. Similar controversial expressions of a mystical spirituality within Shi’ite Islam can be found in the teachings of the *Ikhwan al-Safa* (The Brethren of Purity) from the tenth and eleven centuries.³⁰⁵ The researcher opines that these ideas are nothing but spiritualizing the facts that occurred in history especially in the case of al-Hallaj who was killed but not lifted up to Allah (God) as Jesus was taken to heaven

³⁰⁰ Al-Sulami, d.1021.

³⁰¹ Sharing as an equal part.

³⁰² (d.875).

³⁰³ Oddbjorn Leirvik, 84-85.

³⁰⁴ L.Massignon *Le Passion de Hallaj*, 4 vols. 2nd ed. (Paris: Gallimard 1975); Amaldez 1988, Ch.2 III; and Robinson 1991, 54f.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.,

4.2.3.3. Jesus in the orthodox Sufism of al-Ghazali.³⁰⁶

In later days, Sufism was practiced by the well learned and orthodox Muslims like al-Ghazali. His famous achievement is the reunion work. Al-Ghazali, in his ‘Revival of the Religious Sciences’ (*Ihya uum al-din*), orthodox Islamic law and theology are interpreted with typical Sufi emphasis on religious experience and inner devotion.³⁰⁷

In this work, where numerous references to Jesus can be found, he is pictured as an ascetic wayfarer, a teacher of profound wisdom and a lover of God - but without any uniqueness being attributed to him. Although David, Moses, and Jesus are repeatedly cited as supreme examples to be imitated, the tone³⁰⁸ against Jews and Christians is often critical. Like David and Moses, Jesus is appropriated for Islamic purposes, as bringing more of the same message that Muhammad taught.

Attention is drawn towards Jesus through a number of Jesus-sayings, a great part of which are derived from unknown sources. The sayings are cited on par with sayings of the Prophet, and serve general illustrative purposes as examples to be imitated:

“He [Jesus] was asked: ‘Are there anyone on the earth like you?’ He answered: ‘Yes. Whoever has prayer for his speech, meditation for his silence and tears for his vision, he is like me.’”³⁰⁹

The sayings attributed to Jesus in the various books of al-Ghazali’s *Ihya* include the agrapha about life as a bridge: This saying shows the image of Jesus as a pilgrim who is attached to the divine rather than the worldly desires. “The world is a bridge. Pass over it. Do not linger on it.”³¹⁰

This bridge illustration is a very inspired one and thought-provoking.

The saying about the world as a bridge is quoted twice in *Ihya*, in book 26 (III.6) on the reproach of the world, and book 34 (IV.4) on poverty and renunciation. Both books abound with sayings attributed to Jesus, such as:

³⁰⁶ (d.1111)

³⁰⁷ Fazul ul-Karim has made an English translation of *Imam Gazzali’s Ihya Ulum-id-din*, (Lahore: Sind Sager Academy, n.d)

³⁰⁸ a quality in the voice that expresses the speaker’s feelings or ... high or low the voice is that can change the meaning of a word or sentence.

³⁰⁹ From book 39 (IV. 9) on meditative thinking (*al-tafakkur*). Quoted from Cragg, 1985,

³¹⁰ Nurbakhsh’ translation, 1982, 81.

“The seeker after the world is like one who would drink from the sea; the more he drinks the more thirsty he becomes- until it kills him in the end. Love of the worlds and the love of the hereafter cannot be brought together in the heart of the believer, any more than fire and water can coexist in one place.”³¹¹

Jesus lay down one day with his head upon a stone. Satan, passing by, said: ‘O Jesus, you are fond of this world.’ So Jesus took the stone and cast it from under his head, saying: ‘This be yours, together with this world.’³¹²

In book 24 (III.4), on the evils of the tongue, Jesus recommends silence as the major portion of devotion: Devotion is of, ten parts. Nine of them consist of silence, and one in solitude.³¹³

The other side of Jesus’ warnings against the world is his commitment to the poor, cited as an example in book 5 (I.5) on the secrets of *zakat*: “If a man sends away a beggar empty from his house, the angels will not visit that house for seven nights.”³¹⁴

For a message to grow, it requires a soft heart: Christ (peace be upon him) said: Crop grows on soft ground, and not on rock. Similarly, wisdom works in the heart of the humble, and not in the heart of the haughty. Or do you not see that if a man lifts his head up to the roof it wounds him, but if he bows down his head it shelters and protects him?³¹⁵

Many of the sayings come close to words of Jesus known from the biblical gospels, such as his instructions for fasting and giving, in book 28 (III.8) on the evil of status and hypocrisy.

Jesus told his disciples, “Do not apply oil unto your hair and do not appear as that you are fasting and if you want to give something with your hand, your left hand should not know it and if you want to pray, close your doors and pray alone so that others should not know that you are so spiritual.”³¹⁶

There are few Sufi sayings which are similar to the sayings of the Bible like the one above.

³¹¹ Ibid., 80-81.

³¹² Cragg 1985, 48.

³¹³ Margoliouth 1893-1894, 107/ Cragg 1985, 48, Nurbakhsh 1982, 79.

³¹⁴ Ibid.,

³¹⁵ Oddbjorn Leirvik, 87.

³¹⁶ Ibid.,

Jesus' long speech directed against dishonest, learned men, and suggestive of his speech against the Pharisees as recorded in Matthew 23 and other places in the Gospels, is cited twice in book 27 (III.7) on the criticism of smartness and love of wealth, and in book 28 (III.8) on the blame of status and hypocrisy. The beatitudes are alluded to in book 29 (III.9) on the reproach of pride and vanity, where Jesus blesses those who are humble in this world and keeps their minds pure. They shall gain a high rank on the day of resurrection, and they shall see God. Other parts of the Sermon on the Mount are also cited, cf. Book 32 (IV.2) on patience and gratitude, in which al-Ghazali refers to what he himself, saw in the Gospel:

“I saw in the *Injil* that Jesus son of Mary said: You have been told before to take a tooth for a tooth and a nose for a nose. But I say to you: Do not fight evil with evil, but rather turn your left cheek to the one who slaps your right cheek. Give your mantle to the one who takes your loincloth. Walk two miles together with the one who makes you to walk one mile with him.”³¹⁷

Other sayings are more in tune with the apocryphal gospels, or they may be from other, unknown sources. A prayer, attributed to Jesus is included among the selected invocations that end the section on *dikr* and invocations in *Ihya ulum al-din*. In al-Ghazali's book on 'The beginning of guidance' (*Bidayat al-hidaya*), which contains guidance for spiritual discipline, he recommends this prayer in connection with the dawn worship: This prayer reads: “O! God because of your grace this morning I am alive and I will do my work sincerely and I do not depend on others I do not depend upon the rich because you are my resource. Because of me, no enemy rejoices on me or no any friend thinks badly about me.”³¹⁸

The historical appreciation of the sayings and their possible authenticity is of course difficult. More important is the observation of how they are converted to fit into a general ascetic and spiritualized perception like that of Sufism, a process that began already in the esoteric representation of Jesus in the Gnostic writings of the apocryphal gospel tradition.

Although al-Ghazali is critical of the traditional Christian understanding of the incarnation, he teaches clearly that human beings have a God-given capacity to imitate divine qualities, in the sense of acquiring the character traits of God' (*tahallaqu bi-ahlaq Allah*).³¹⁹ Like

³¹⁷ Ibid, Cf. Gospel according to Matthew 5:38-41.

³¹⁸ W.Montgomery Watt: *The faith and practice of Al-Ghazali*, (Oxford: One world 1994),116.

³¹⁹ T.J. Winter (ed.): *Al-ghazali on Disciplining the soul... and on Breaking the two desires...* (Cambridge: Islamic Text society, 1995 / 1992), xxxiv.

Muhammad, Jesus is among those who are created with a good character. But normally, the human character has to be trained through discipline. In al-Ghazali's treatise about 'The highest aim in explanation of the excellent names of Allah' (*Al-maqsad al-asma fi sarh asma al-husna*) he explains how human beings can assume the character traits that are associated with the ninety-nine names of God. He declares that the perfection and happiness of man consist in conforming to the perfections of God most high, in adorning himself with the meanings of his attributes and names in so far this is conceivable for man.³²⁰

The endeavour to acquire some of the character traits of God must not, however, lead to a confusion of what is human and what is divine. For that Al-Ghazali compares those mystics who in a state of ecstasy identify themselves with God to Christians who mistakenly identify Jesus with God: in each case the individual has failed to distinguish an indwelling divine Presence from the human form it inhabits.³²¹

4.2. 3.4. Jesus in the theosophical system of Ibn al-'Arabi

In more heterodox representations of Sufism, the uniqueness of Jesus tends to be enhanced. He is seen not only as a role model but as representing a cosmic principle. Born in twelfth-century Spain, the Sufi Muslim Ibn al-Arabi³²² expressed a monistic religious view known as *wahdat al-wujud*, 'unity of being'. In his work *Fusus al-hikam* ('Bezels of Wisdom'), he dedicates one chapter to Jesus, as he does to other pre-Islamic prophets. Ibn al-Arabi also deals extensively with the role of Christ in his *Al-futuh al-Makkiyya*.

Ibn al-Arabi is concerned with the role of the Spirit (*ruh*) and the way it is imparted to matter and form. In particular, he is concerned with the role of the Spirit in the creation of Jesus, and his life-giving powers. He portrays Jesus as a Spirit from none other than God, so that he might raise the dead and bring forth birds from clay, and become worthy to be associated with his Lord, by which he exerted great influence, both high and low, God purified him in body and made him transcendent in the spirit, making him like Himself in creating.

³²⁰ Quoted from the translation of David B. Burrell and Nazih Daher: *Al-Ghazali The Ninety-Nine beautiful names of God*, (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1995 / 1992), 30.

³²¹ Pinault, 1987, 106, note 2.

³²² (d. 1240)

As per the expressions of Ibn al-‘Arabi above he accepts the divinity of Jesus Christ by saying that Jesus is the Holy Spirit who raised the dead and gave life to a clay bird. Because of these works, Ibn al-‘Arabi says that Jesus is with God.³²³

Ibn al-Arabi asserts the divine origin and divine power bestowed on Jesus that Jesus raised the dead because he was a divine spirit. In this, the quickening was of God, while the blowing itself came from Jesus, just as the blowing was from Gabriel, while the Word was of God.³²⁴

Notwithstanding Jesus’ transcendence’, Ibn al-Arabi underlines the humility of Jesus. He is at the same time the Spirit of God and the Slave of God. He expresses that the humility of Jesus was such that his community was commanded that they should pay the poll-tax completely, humbling themselves, that if any one of them were struck on one cheek, he should also turn the other, and that he should not hit back or seek revenge.³²⁵

Ibn al-Arabi goes on to relate the humility and the life-giving ability of Jesus to the female and male principles respectively and he further explains that this aspect [of his teaching] derives from his mother, since the woman is lowly and humble, being under the man, both theoretically and physically. His powers of revival, on the other hand, derive from the blowing of Gabriel in human form, since Jesus revived the dead in human form.³²⁶

Ibn al-Arabi also pays attention to the fact that ‘the various sects quarrel concerning the nature of Jesus’, and refers the controversy back to the different perspectives from which Jesus can be viewed in his mortal form, one might say that he is the son of Mary. In his form of humanity, he is of Gabriel, with respect to the revival of the dead; one might say that he is of God as Spirit. Thus one might call him the Spirit of God, which is to say that life is manifest into whomsoever he blows.³²⁷

³²³ Ibnal-‘Arabi, *The Bezels of Wisdom*, 174-175.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, 176.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, 177.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*,

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, 181.

However, by being a spirit of God, Jesus only reveals a more general aspect of the Cosmos as by saying whoever wishes to know the divine breath, then let him know the Cosmos, for ‘who knows himself, knows his Lord’, Who is manifest in him.³²⁸

Ibn al-Arabi’s works owe much to Neo-Platonism, and it is clearly the latter perspective of Jesus – that of divine spirit- that appeals most to him. Jesus is integrated with his perception of how ‘the Cosmic Pole’, the universal rational principle, is represented in human history through ‘the temporary Pole’, or chief saint, of every period. Beneath each Temporal Pole, there are seven saints deriving their power from one of the prophets of the seven heavens – of whom Jesus is the one. In Ibn al-Arabi’s system, the uniqueness of Jesus lies in his virginal conception as ‘the Seal of the Saints’ (*hatam al-awliya*, cf. the notion of Muhammad as ‘Seal of the Prophets’), and in being a spirit from God with life-giving ability.³²⁹

Ibn al-Arabi believes Jesus as divine. A few of the sayings of Sufi are borrowed from the Bible, for some Sufis, it is not a problem to accept Jesus as God. Sufis like Ibn al-‘Arabi accept the divinity of Christ but how far do they accept the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

4.2.3.5. Jesus in the poetry and meditative discourses of Rumi

A high point in Sufi references to Jesus is the great poetical work *Mathnawi* of the Persian born Sufi Jalal al-Din Rumi³³⁰. As in the tradition of Muslim legend and in Ibn al-Arabi’s *Fusus al-hikam*, a wide range of characters from the history of religions in the Middle East are called upon by Rumi as holy examples and teachers of profound wisdom. References to Jesus can also be found in other works of Rumi, such as his ‘Discourses’ (*Fihi ma fihi*).³³¹

Through the eighties and nineties, several scholars have presented studies on Rumi and Christ. John Renard³³² surveyed the role of Jesus and other Gospel figures in Rumi’s works. The function of Jesus and Joseph in *Mathnawi* has been examined by James Roy King (1990). Annemarie Schimmel (1995) presented a study on Jesus and Mary as poetical images in Rumi’s verse. The Konya scholar Erkan Turkmen presents a collection of sayings pertaining to Jesus in

³²⁸ Ibid., 181.

³²⁹ D’Souza 1982 and Robinson 1991, 57f

³³⁰ (b. 1207, d.1273 in Konya).

³³¹ R.A. Nicholson, *The Mathnawi of Jalaluddin Rumi*, 8 vol., London 1925-40/3 vols. 1977.

³³² (1987)

the works of Rumi in his booklet *Rumi and Christ* (1992) and emphasizes Rumi's historical importance for Jews, Christians and Muslims.

As for the way Rumi approaches Christ, Renard emphasizes that in contrast to Ibn al-Arabi in *Fusus al-hikam*, Rumi 'never intended to elaborate a complete and 'systematic' exposition of prophetic revelation'. But he was 'intensely interested in retelling the tales of the Prophets'. Although Jesus was one of his favourites, Renard notes that the space given to Jesus indicates that 'Jesus' importance for Rumi was slightly below that of Moses, about equal to that of Abraham, and slightly greater than of David, Solomon, and Noah. Another biblical figure of particular interest to Rumi is Joseph. James Roy King (1990) holds the view that prior to Rumi, both Jesus and Joseph had acquired pre-eminence in Sufi thinking as embodiments of perfect humanity.

Basically, Rumi portrays Jesus in accordance with the main lines of Islamic Christology: as a messenger of God, conveyor of the Gospel, a miracle worker, and a sign from Allah. He also accepts the idea that Jesus was substituted on the cross. However, Rumi goes beyond the prevailing Islamic view and portrays Jesus as an absolutely extraordinary individual, embodying perfect humanity in being absorbed in essential unity with the divine. As a spirit from the Divine Spirit, as a fully integrated personality, Jesus stands beyond sects and creeds. He is 'unicoloured', 'as simple and one-coloured as light.'³³³

4.2.3.5.1. A smiling ascetic

Like other Sufis, Rumi portrays Jesus as the ideal ascetic. He was a homeless desert-wanderer, and a by severe spiritual regime, he sought release from the body and the world. 'Jesus is the model of one who must strive to be grateful for the loving favour of being driven out by constant reminders that he is a pilgrim.' But unlike many other ascetics, he was known for always smiling. Jesus laughed much; John [the Baptist] wept much. John the Baptist said to Jesus: 'You have become exceedingly secure against the subtle deceits that you laugh so much'. Jesus replied: 'You have become all to unmindful of the subtle, secret and wonderful graces and kindness of God that you weep so much.'³³⁴

³³³ *Mathnawai* I 500-504. King, 1990, 86.

³³⁴ *Fihi ma fihi/ discourses* 11, Quoted from Arberry, 60f.

Rumi cited the word of God, in response to ‘one of God’s friends who were present’ who asked ‘Which of them has the higher station?’ God answered: ‘He who thinks better of Me’. In accordance with God’s kindness and the example of the smiling sage, wrath should be suppressed:

“Jesus, upon whom be peace, was asked ‘Spirit of God, what is the greatest and most difficult thing in this world and the next?’ He replied, ‘The wrath of God.’ They asked again, ‘And what shall save a man from that?’ He answered: ‘You master your own wrath and suppress your rage’.”³³⁵

4.2.3.5.2. Healing love, life-giving breath

In Rumi, love is equated with Jesus and raises him far above this world: When Jesus, Love’s spirit, takes flight; never again will he lower his wing to return to the realm of labor.³³⁶ But his love is, first of all, healing love for others. As Schimmel notes: for Rumi, ‘The life-bestowing breath of Christ is the equivalent of a kiss’ Schimmel stated that when someone asks you: ‘How did Christ quicken the dead?’ Then give me a kiss in his presence: ‘Thus!’³³⁷

For Rumi, as for Ibn al-Arabi, Jesus life-giving power is symbolized by his breath (in Persian: *dam-i-masih*). Jesus is the great spiritual physician: “Myriads were the therapeutic art of Galen³³⁸. Before Jesus and his (life-giving) breath they were a laughing stock.”³³⁹

Although every human spirit may become like the breath of Jesus and a Messiah for his world, there is still something far beyond the ordinary human in the creative spirit of Jesus. For Rumi, this feature of Jesus’ uniqueness is related to his knowledge of the name of God, and his ability to express it effectively. In an allegorical reading of the story of Joseph and Zalikha, Rumi associates Jesus’ miraculous powers with his intimate knowledge of ‘the Name of Hu (God)’.³⁴⁰

4.2.3.5.3. Jesus’ return in Sufi Tafsir (Sufi Commentary)

As far as Sufism is a concern there are two famous commentators: One is al-Qushayri and another is al-Qashani. Al-Qushayri is much in tune with mainstream Tafsir. Al-Qashani is

³³⁵ *Fihi ma fihi/ discourses* 68, Quoted from Arberry 239.

³³⁶ *Diwan-e-shams*, Quoted from Nurbakhsh 1982, 57.

³³⁷ Quoted from Schimmel, 1995, 147.

³³⁸ (the famous Greek Physician d. 130 A.D.).

³³⁹ *Mathnawi* I 528, Quoted from Nicholson, vol, II, 7.

³⁴⁰ *Mathnawi* VI, 4039-4041, Quoted from Nicholson, vol, IV, 481.

more esoteric in his interpretation. Jesus' return is perceived by al-Qashani as a necessary step in Jesus' own spiritual development to reach the level of Muhammad. All the outward details in the *ahadith* concerning the descent of Jesus are given a spiritual interpretation. Anti-Christ, whom Jesus (according to *hadith*) will defeat in his second coming, is interpreted by the Sufi 'psychologist' and contemporary to Rumi, Najmud-Din Razi³⁴¹ as the demanding ego of the one-eyed self.³⁴²

According to Sufi as well as traditional understanding, Jesus will share more fully in our human life in his second coming than he did during his first stay on earth; marrying, begetting children and being buried. But in the view of Sufis, the aim of his second coming is spiritual perfection, under similar life circumstances to those of Muhammad.

4.2.4. Summarizing central features of Sufi images of Jesus

Despite their wide influence on Sufism, both al-Hallaj and Ibn al-Arabi are regarded by mainstream Islam to be heterodox. But Jesus has persistently played a central role both in orthodox and heterodox versions of Sufism. As Kenneth Cragg states:

Nowhere is Islamic awareness of Jesus more lively or more perceptive than in the Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Urdu poems of the mystics of Islam. Sitting loosely by doctrinal contentiousness, they are free to aspire towards that soul-affection which first kindled the theology pundit's dispute and which transcends what punditry can attain. The Jesus of Sufism kindles mutual recognition.³⁴³

The general mystical outlook of Sufi Islam, as well as its theosophical speculation, implies a different context of interpretation from that of Sunnite Orthodoxy- Jesus is perceived either as a role model for the loving ascetic, or a cosmic agent. Being aware of the fact that Sufism has always been an undercurrent of Official Islam, the image of Jesus in Sufism must be given due consideration in the investigation of the actual role of Jesus in the belief of Muslims. There are different levels in this. One is the general influence of Sufi teaching on the average Muslim, another esoteric transmission of higher spiritual knowledge.

³⁴¹ (d.1256)

³⁴² Razi's 'Marmuzat - e - asadi' in Nurbakhsh, 1982, 61-64.

³⁴³ Cragg, 1985, 60.

4.2.5. Christian-Muslim Dialogue on Jesus

Some general points can still be made, for Christian-Muslim dialogue:

4.2.5.1. Jesus as the perfect Man: a generalising concept

The Sufi concept of the Perfect Man (*al-insan al-Kamil*) is associated with Ibn al-Arabi, and further developed in the theosophical Sufism of Abd al-Karim al-Jili, in his book *Al-insan al-kamil*. The title *al-insan al-kamil* is linked with all the major prophets of Islam (including, of course, Muhammad) because they reached the loftiest stages of human perfection. Following R.A. Nicholson and his commentary on *Rumi Mathanwi*, James Roy King

summarizes the Sufi view of Jesus in the light of this concept:

‘Perfect Man’ is mystical Islam’s way of suggesting that Jesus (and a very few others) were individuals whose extra ordinaries did not lie in any number of fine qualities they possessed but rather in the absolute uniqueness of their moral and intellectual fibre, in their particular relationship with God and man, individual and cosmos, heaven and earth, the one and the many, ultimate reality and the created world.³⁴⁴

4.2.5.2. Jesus as theophany: a non-exclusive attribute

The Perfect Man not only perfecting humanity but also displays to mankind the attributes of God. The Shi’ite Sufi master Javad Nurbakhsh interprets the Sufi appellation of Jesus as *ruhullah*, ‘Spirit of God’, as implying that ‘he is that Perfect Spirit which is a theophany (*mazhar*) of the All-Comprehensive Name: Allah’, that is to say, ‘a complete mirror of the Divine Attributes.’³⁴⁵

Sufis come astonishingly close to a Christian image of Christ. Although Sufis may look upon ‘Jesus as the manifestation of the Divine Attributes of the Creator and Reviver’ and Mary ‘as a manifestation of the Attribute of Sustainer’, perfected human beings like Mary and Jesus are still ‘not that source but merely a mirror reflecting the Attributes’.³⁴⁶

³⁴⁴ James Roy King, 1990, 85.

³⁴⁵ Nurbakhsh, 1982, 26.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 32f.

The elevation of Jesus is relativised by attributing the capability of theophany to mankind in general:

...the human being is, in essence a theophany (*mazhar*) and an object of tutelage (*marbub*) for all the All-Comprehensive Name, Allah...The Rational Soul (*nafs-e-nateqa*) of man is unhampered by corporeal trappings and, consequently, divine and pure in nature.³⁴⁷

4.2.5.3. Sainthood and breath

In *Mathnawi*, Rumi retells a story of Jesus and John communicating in the wombs of their mothers.³⁴⁸ In the modern context of Nurbakhsh, the story is taken in a generalising sense to ‘illustrate the telepathic nature of communication among saints.’³⁴⁹ Accordingly, he points to the Persian Sufi poet ‘Attar ,³⁵⁰ the Qur’an mention of the infant Jesus speaking from the cradle only confirms that: “Every Christ-like saint as sweetly, as Jesus spoke such secret, words in his infancy.”³⁵¹

Also, the more specific attribute of Jesus in Sufism, his breath, is generalised by Sufi poets as seen in above section with Ibn al-‘Arabi and Rumi: the breath of Christ, That brought the dead to life, was out of my Divine breath, the nurturer of Spirits. (Fakhr ud-Di ‘Iraqi, d. 1289).³⁵²

4.2.5.4. The spiritual meaning of the miracles

As for the general spiritualising interpretation of the miracles in Sufism, a most important saying attributed to Jesus is found in Najm ud-Din Razi’s *Marmuzat-e-asadi*:

‘Jesus the prophet said: ‘The Lord granted me the power to bring the dead to life and make the blind to see and the congenitally deaf to hear, but He did not give me the power to cure a fool.’³⁵³

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 26f.

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 28, Cf. Gospel according to Luke 1:41-44

³⁴⁹ Ibid.,

³⁵⁰ (d.1220),

³⁵¹ Ibid., 29.

³⁵² Ibid., 52.

³⁵³ Ibid., 86.

The same point is made in Rumi's *Mathnawi*, in a narrative masterpiece that tells how Jesus is seen running for the hills- 'you would say that a lion wished to shed his blood'. A man is astonished by the sight of such a fear shown by the miracle-maker Jesus. Jesus replies although he has revived many a dead man, he has recited the Name in vain over the heart of a fool:

The disease of folly is (the result of) the wrath of God: (physical) disease and blindness are not (the result of Divine) wrath: they are an (a means of) probation.³⁵⁴

Rumi also tells the story of how Jesus was asked by a fool to be taught the Divine Name in order to revive a pile of dead bones. Jesus complains to the Lord that the fool apparently is more concerned about reviving dead bones than putting life into his own dead self. But in the end, Jesus yields to the insisting fool. The fool revives a lion that immediately strikes him dead. And the lion warns:

Take heed! Do not wish your currish (fleshly) soul alive, for it is the enemy of your spirit since long ago.³⁵⁵

The story of Jesus, the liar, the loaves and the gold is retold by al-Ghazali, as a warning against worldly desires, but with some change in the miracles performed by Jesus to convince that liar, including that of walking on water, a cherished motif in Sufism.³⁵⁶

4.2.5.5. Suffering, death, and cross

Although the purified soul will be victorious over death, yet meditation on death as a fearful reality is not neglected by Sufism, 'Attar is sensitive to Jesus' trembling before death:

Though joy to Jesus was like second nature, still he trembled when he remembered death. Though endowed with warm heartedness and blessed with expansiveness, he shook in awe from head to foot, drenched in a bloody sweat, mortified by his own mortality.³⁵⁷

³⁵⁴ *Mathnawi* III 2592, Quoted from Nicholson, vol. II, 145. Cf. Nurbakhsh 1982, 114-116.

³⁵⁵ *Mathnawi* II, 474, Quoted from Nicholson, vol. II, 146. Cf. Nurbakhsh 1982, 120.

³⁵⁶ Cf. Nurbakhsh 1982, 107f.

³⁵⁷ *Mosibat-nama*, quoted from Nurbakhsh, 1982, 108f.

In Rumi's works there is a significant reference to the breath of Jesus, in which his life-giving ability is contrasted with the violent fate of al-Hallaj:

O You! Who sometimes revive this earthen flesh Like Jesus, with a breath,
And sometimes show up beneath the gallows Like Hallaj... Come.³⁵⁸

Does Rumi imply a parallel both in the qualities (breath) and the fate (gallows/cross) of Jesus and Hallaj? Rumi is aware that love can imply degradation and suffering, his expression in *Mathnawi*: 'through love, the king becomes a slave.' The world rejects life-giving breath and divine love. Does this awareness enable acceptance of the cross as a symbol of rejection and suffering? Sufism does not necessarily shun the cross but may give it an esoteric interpretation. Kenneth Cragg points to Rukn al-Din Awhadi (b.1274), who writes remarkably 'about the mystery of suffering and of Jesus as its epitome':

"One day the Messiah was with his friends, His disciples, the repositories of him. He made his exposition to them the subject of love, declared the matter openly and then concealed it..."³⁵⁹

In the midst of his discourse, his companions saw, He was weary, with tears streaming from his eyes. So they asked him for a sign and proof of love. He said: 'Tomorrow is the day of Abraham's fire.' Upon the next day, when he proceeded to his task and set his foot upon the plank of the gallows, He said:

"If there be any man present here, This surely is sufficient proof of love. Whoever turns his countenance to God He must press his back against the Cross. Until his body has been tried to the gallows, His soul cannot mount up to heaven"³⁶⁰.

The concept of the cross as a proof of love may come very close to a Christian understanding. But as Cragg also notes al-Hallaj:

...died more for the hiddenness of an esoteric wisdom he could not loyally reveal than for the preaching of a kingdom of grace that could not be hid. His was, we might say, a Calvary of the esoteric. For all its mysterious appeal, it belongs to Sufi view of the body, of suffering and of evil, hardly to be fitted into the history of the Gospels. So we look to Sufi poetry about

³⁵⁸ Rumi: *Diwan-e shams*, Quoted from *ibid*, 52f.

³⁵⁹ Quoted from Cragg, 1985, 62f. (Taken from the English translation in A.J. Arberry, *Classical Persian Literature*, London, 1958, 307-308).

³⁶⁰ Quoted from Cragg 1985, 62f (Taken from English translation in A.J. Arberry)

Jesus for the evangelical themes of poverty, meekness and surrender, rather than for the evangelical transaction of pardon and peace.³⁶¹

Sufi Movement is based on mystic life. Though there are roots of Sufi from the Qur'an and from the ascetic life of Prophet Muhammad, They took the life and teachings of Jesus very seriously and went deep in the meditation of loving God. The spreading of Islam took place in India, because of the life and work of Sufis. The famous Sufi scholars like Ibn al-'Arabi and Al-Ghazali are the great Sufi masters. Most of the Sufis believe in the divinity of Jesus, Jesus as the Word of God, Jesus as the Holy Spirit and Jesus as life-giver. Why did Jesus become central icon for the Sufis? Of course, their root is from the Qur'an and the mystic life of Prophet Muhammad. They were attracted to the life of Jesus who lived in the first century. How and from where did they get information about the life and teachings of Jesus? Most probably they got from the Qur'an, *hadith* and sayings and stories of Jesus from a pre-modern period of Islamic literary traditions. How did they spread their faith? What was their mission to spread their faith? As far as the Christian mission is concerned, evangelism (sharing about Jesus) and Muslim mission is *dawa* concept (witnessing about the oneness of Godhood, '*kalima*').

Sufis spread in large number both in India and abroad. History says Islam in India spread much faster with the Sufi movement without practicing the concept of winning others. How? The simple answer is that they just maintained their mission of renouncing the worldly life and contemplated much on godly life. They believed in the authority of Qur'an and accepted Prophethood of Muhammad. It can be an eye-opener for the orthodox Muslims and evangelical Christians in spreading their respective faith by implementing the words of Allah / the life of Jesus Christ. Sufis might have got the knowledge of Jesus' life and His sayings from the stories and the scriptures of Christians and Muslims. The images of Jesus led them to live their life as mystic and ascetic.

Conclusion

There are various understanding of Jesus in Muslims' story and Sufi sayings and they are very important to know a different picture of Jesus Christ. Ibn al-'Arabi believes - Jesus as Holy Spirit.

³⁶¹Cragg 1985, 63.

Ibn al-Arabi's concern with the role of the Spirit (*ruh*) and the way it is imparted in matter and form. In particular, he is concerned with the role of the Spirit in the creation of Jesus, and his life-giving powers. He portrays Jesus as a Spirit from God, so that he might raise the dead and bring forth birds from clay, and become worthy to be associated with his Lord, by which he exerted great influence, both high and low, God purified him in body and made him transcendent in the spirit, making him like Himself in creating.

Ibn al-‘Arabi believe Jesus is with God. He accepts the divinity of Jesus Christ by saying that Jesus is the Holy Spirit who raised the dead and gave life to a clay bird. Because of these works, Ibn al-‘Arabi says that Jesus is with God.

Ibn al-‘Arabi asserts the divine origin and divine power bestowed on Jesus that Jesus raised the dead because he was a divine spirit. In this, the quickening was of God, while the blowing itself came from Jesus, just as the blowing was from Gabriel, while the Word was of God.

Ibn al-‘Arabi believe Jesus as a servant of God notwithstanding Jesus’ transcendence’, Ibn al-Arabi underlines the humility of Jesus. He is at the same time the Slave of God. He expresses that the humility of Jesus was such that his community was commanded that they should pay the poll-tax completely, humbling themselves, that if anyone of them were struck on one cheek, he should also turn the other, and that he should not hit back or seek revenge.

Rumi, believe Jesus as Divine Spirit: Basically, Rumi portrays Jesus in accordance with the main lines of Islamic Christology; he goes beyond the prevailing Islamic view and portrays Jesus as an absolutely extraordinary individual, embodying perfect humanity in being absorbed in essential unity with the divine. As a spirit from the Divine Spirit, as a fully integrated personality, Jesus stands beyond the sects and creeds. He is ‘unicoloured’, ‘as simple and one-coloured as light.’³⁶² Following the Sufi method of witnessing God, the Almighty Allah / Christ by implementing the divine character in and through us.

³⁶² *Mathnawi* I 500-504. Cf. King, 1990, 86, and Schimmel, 1995, 152.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE EXEGETICAL STUDY

Introduction

In the previous chapters, the researcher has analyzed the various images of Jesus in the Qur'an, *Hadith*, and Muslim stories and Sufi sayings. This chapter is a study of four titles of Jesus to find the divinity of Jesus. For each title, a passage from the Qur'an has been taken and discussed in detail to find out the meaning such as 1). Jesus, the Holy Spirit, 2). Jesus, the Word of God 3). Jesus, the Messiah and 4). Jesus, the Performer of miracles. The purpose of choosing these titles is to have an in-depth study to clarify the misunderstandings of Muslims. The total titles mentioned in the Qur'an are more than fifteen (15). The designated Jesus' titles names are taken from the Qur'an and fourth title name is not found as it is in the Qur'an but the performance of miracles done by Jesus is mentioned in the Qur'an very clearly.

5.1. Surah 2:87 The Holy Spirit

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَقَفَّيْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ بِالرُّسُلِ ۖ وَآتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ ۗ أَفَكُلَّمَا جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ بِمَا لَا تَهْوَى أَنْفُسُكُمْ اسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ فَفَرِيقًا كَذَّبْتُمْ وَقَرِيقًا تَقْتُلُونَ

“And verily We gave unto Moses the Scripture and We caused a train of messengers to follow after him, and We gave unto Jesus, son of Mary, clear proofs (of Allah's sovereignty), and We supported him with the holy Spirit....

Surah 2:87 ...The Holy Spirit, ‘And We supported him with the Holy Spirit’ (*waayyadnaahu bi-ruuhil-qudus*, أَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ).

5.1.1. Background of Surah 2 (The Cow)

This phrase taken from *Surah Al-Baqarah* (The Cow) is so named from the story of the yellow heifer (vv. 67-71).³⁶³ All suggestions to the contrary notwithstanding, it seems probable

³⁶³ Mohammed Marmaduke Pikhthall, *The meaning of the Glorious Qur'an*, (Delhi: S.Sajid Ali For Adam Publisher, 1996), 32.

that the whole of this *Surah* was revealed during the first four years after the Hijrah (After 622 A.D. i.e. between 622 to 626), and that by far the greater portion of it was revealed in the first eighteen months of the Prophet's reign at Al-Madinah – that is to say, before the battle of Badr.³⁶⁴

5.1.2. An analysis and explanation of the Arabic phrases

أَيَّدْنَاهُ وَ wa/ ayyad/ na/ hu (And we supported him)

The fourteenth word of verse (Surah 2:87) is divided into 4 morphological segments. A conjunction, verb, subject pronoun and object pronoun. The prefixed conjunction *wa* is usually translated as "and". The form II perfect verb (ماضٍ فَعْل) is the first person plural. The verb's trilateral root is *hamza yā dāl* (أ د ي). The suffix (نا) is an attached subject pronoun. The attached object pronoun is a third person masculine singular.

Conjunction – prefixed conjunction *wa* (and).

verb – 1st person plural (form II) perfect verb *āyad* (supported).

pronoun – subject pronoun *nā* (We).

pronoun– 3rd person masculine singular object pronoun *hu* (him).

و wa and (conjunction).

ن na means, 'We' is Subject pronoun. Here 'We' plural but since it is used for God it is the royal pattern. For example, if the king wants to say 'I will come' He will use in royal pattern as 'We' will come

أَيَّدَ āyadnā (Verb) means 'supported' (The verb is II form perfect verb). It is The first-person plural)

The root word is *hamza yā dāl* (أ د ي).

هُ hu means 'him'. It is a third-person masculine singular. Here 'him' is Jesus.

Various meanings for أَيَّدَ āyadnā - give help, support, encouragement or financial aid to; cover the back of something.

بِرُوحٍ (bi/ruha) bi means with, ruha means 'Spirit'. As per Arabic-English dictionary the

meaning of رُوحٍ (ruha) is breath of life, soul, spirit (in all sense). Also, it is الْقُدُسِ qudus which means

³⁶⁴ Noldeke, *Gaschichte des Qoran*, Zweite Auflage, bearbeitet von Fr. Schwally, Part 1, 173ff.

Holy Ghost.³⁶⁵ Muslims, in general, they declare رُوح as Angel Gabriel.

The fifteenth word of verse (2:87) is divided into 2 morphological segments. One is a preposition *bi* and the other one is *ruhu* noun. The prefixed preposition *bi* is usually translated as "with" or "by". The noun is masculine and is in the genitive case (مجرور). The noun's trilateral root is *rā wāw ḥā* (ح و ر). Together the segments form a preposition phrase known as *jār wa majrūr* (ومجرور جار).

Preposition – *bi* Prefixed preposition means (with or by).

Noun – *ruh* genitive masculine noun means (Spirit).

الْقُدُسُ *qudus* means Holy or Holy Spirit.

Noun – Genitive masculine noun.

The sixteenth word of verse (2:87) is a masculine noun and is in the genitive case (مجرور). The noun's trilateral root is *qāf dāl sīn* (س د ق).

The Holy Spirit (رُوح الْقُدُسُ *ruuhil-qudus*) is a key term in both Christian and Muslim theology. The basic essence of the Holy Spirit is God Himself. The general understanding is God revealed his message through His Spirit. God used the angel Gabriel as a mediator to reveal His scriptures, His will and His prophecy of the future. This particular verse (Surah 2:87) clearly states Jesus is very much related to the Holy Spirit. 'We supported him with Holy Spirit.' (*ayyadnaahu bi-ruuhil-qudus*, أَيَدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ). 'Ruha' means, in general, a spirit. Several meanings for 'ruh' are as follows:

-a spirit or vital principle; inspiration; Revelation; Word of God; the Holy Qur'an; angel; joy and happiness and mercy of God. He sent down to Mary and a mercy from Him (Surah 4:171). He (God) sends down the angels with revelation (Surah 16:3). They ask thee concerning the soul (Surah 17:86). And He breathed into him of His Spirit (Surah 32:10). We sent to her, our angel (Surah 19:18) on the day when the Spirit and the angels will stand in rows (Surah 78:39). Holy or blessed Word of God, or the Spirit or angel of holiness, these expressions generally are taken to signify the angel Gabriel: A gentle wind; a breeze; breath; joy, happiness.³⁶⁶ In the Arabic-English dictionary the term رُوح (*ruha*) mentioned as breath of life, or soul.

³⁶⁵ Arabic-English Dictionary, Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern written Arabic, ed., J. Milton Cowan, (New York: Spoken language Services, 1976),365.

³⁶⁶ www. Al islam.org, Dictionary of Qur'an

Obviously, the Holy Spirit plays an active role in the creation and in revelation. The Holy Spirit commonly called as the Spirit (*al-ruh*) has evidently inspired all the prophets and even believers according to the Qur'an.³⁶⁷ For Muslim, a common title for Jesus is *Ruh Allah* (the Spirit of God)³⁶⁸. In the Qur'an, the Holy Spirit is explained in different ways in relation to Jesus. The mission Jesus performed by the power of the Holy Spirit is mentioned along with the name of Jesus because the Holy Spirit has a close relationship with Jesus in connection to his birth narratives. (Surah 2: 87, 2: 253, 4:171; 5:110; 19:17; 21:91 and 66:12). A question may arise why did Jesus alone get this special privilege? Why not other prophets? Among the Islamic scholars, and others there are differences of opinions about this title. In the ancient period before Islam the term for breath was used as *ruh* (spirit) but later Prophet Muhammad introduced the term Holy Spirit for *ruh*.³⁶⁹

However, let us discover the differences of opinion among the scholars on the title Holy Spirit. Several Islamic scholars opine that Jesus is understood as the Holy Spirit, which is as follows:

5.1.3. Muslim scholars' discussion on the Holy Spirit

5.1.3.1. Zamakhshari.³⁷⁰

He mentioned that the Arabic word *ruhi al-qudusi* (Spirit of God) is an adjective form. He denoted that Jesus is the Holy Spirit because Jesus is God's prophet who is nearer to God. He used the Arabic word '*taqarrubi*' for nearer to God. Zamakhshari further mentions that Gabriel, Jesus, and the Gospel are nearer to God. It means for him angel Gabriel, Jesus and the Gospel are the Holy Spirit.³⁷¹ Zamakhshari misses the point that Jesus is not only close to God but he is far greater than that. Jesus has unique qualities than an angel and Gospel.

Jesus was born to a Virgin Mary without the presence of a male partner; he possessed the power to heal the blind and leper and gave life to the dead. Jesus performed the miracle of giving life to a clay bird by breathing into it (Surah 3:49) as God breathed into Adam to give him life

³⁶⁷ Judy Tao Shih-Ching, *Holy Spirit in the Qur'an, An assessment from a Christian Perspective*. (Stellenbosch: University of Stellenbosch, 2006), i.

³⁶⁸ Michael Nazir Ali, *Frontiers in Muslim-Christian Encounter*, (Oxford: Regnum Books, 1991), 32.

³⁶⁹ Judy Tao Shih-Ching, *Holy Spirit in the Qur'an, An assessment from a Christian Perspective* (Stellenbosch: University of Stellenbosch, 2006), i

³⁷⁰ 1075 A.D-1144A.D, was a Persian born Arabic scholar, his famous *tafsiris* "The Discoverer of Revealed Truths.(a Sunni classical Islamic scholar)

³⁷¹ Abu al-Qāsim Maḥmūdibun 'Umar al-Zamakhsharī, *Al-Kashshāf an-Haqā'iq at-Tanzīl*, (Riyaz: Maktabah al-Abikan, 1998), Vol. 2, 293.

(Surah 15:29; 32:9; 38:72). These are the special qualities that Jesus got by the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is part and parcel of the Holy Spirit compared to angel Gabriel and the gospel.

5.1.3.2. Al-Razi³⁷²

He opines that the Holy Spirit is angel Gabriel and he admits that Jesus is also the Holy Spirit because as per his understanding Jesus got a status from God to give life back to dead.³⁷³ Here Razi has rightly pointed out that since Jesus gave life back to the dead, he is Holy Spirit but not traced the reason why Gabriel is Holy Spirit.

5.1.3.3. Al-Qurtubi³⁷⁴

Another Islamic scholar, al-Qurtubi denotes angel Gabriel (*Jibril*) as Holy Spirit (*ruh*), at the same time he also mentions that Jesus is also the Holy Spirit because Jesus is ‘*ruh*’ purity of God, existed by God’s command ‘Be’ and he became. 42:52.³⁷⁵ Al-Qurtubi expressed two additional special characteristics of Jesus declared by Razi. He says that Jesus is Purity of God and Jesus came to exist by command of God ‘Be’. Apart from Adam and Jesus, nobody existed by the command of God.

In this process of creation of Adam and Jesus, Jesus has a unique outcome. Since Adam was created by the creative word of God through the dust. Later Adam ended his life with dust whereas Jesus was created by the Holy Spirit in the womb of Mary and later his life did not become dust rather became a life-giving (Surah 3:49, 5:110) instrument and still he is alive (Surah 4:158). So Jesus can be counted higher than Adam though he was created in the same process as Adam.

5.1.3.4. Al-Baydawi

Another classical Islamic scholar, Al-Baydawi³⁷⁶, explains that the Holy Spirit is both angel Gabriel and Jesus. He did not give any explanations about Gabriel to say why Gabriel is Holy Spirit but he gives reasons why Jesus is the Holy Spirit? He denotes that Satan has not

³⁷² b.1150 AD- d.1210 AD, was an Iranian Sunni Muslim scholar, wrote his famous *tafsir* called ‘*Tafsir al-Kabir*’, The Great Commentary

³⁷³ Fakhruddin al-Razi, *Tafsir al- kabir*, (Berut: Daral Fikr, n.d.), Vol. 3,190-191.

³⁷⁴ b. 1214 A.D d. 1273 A.D, born in Cordoba, Al-Andalus, his famous *tafsir* is “*Tafsir al-Qurtubi*

³⁷⁵ www. islam.orgqurtubitafsir, taken on 02-08-2018.

³⁷⁶ D.1286 A.D, his famous Commentary called “The Lights of Revelation and the Secrets of Interpretation

touched Jesus at his birth that is why Jesus is the Holy Spirit.³⁷⁷ In the explanation of Baydawi itself says that Jesus is fit to be called as the Holy Spirit because as per Baydawi Jesus is pure and was not touched by the Satan at his birth.

5.1.3.5. Ibn Kathir³⁷⁸

In his book, *Stories of the Prophets* mentioned Jesus as Spirit of God, while Jesus raised Sam the Ibn Noah from death. On the occasion of uncovering the cloth to take food sent by God disciples addressed Jesus as “O Spirit of Allah (God), you are the most deserving” to uncover the cloth on the table.³⁷⁹ Ibn Kathir also mentioned that Jesus was sinless and being sinless he is the judge over sinners. In this context, Ibn Kathir mentioned that “His (Jesus) voice rose in the middle of the Temple, making a new law on adultery, for the sinless to be a judge. There was none eligible; no mortal can judge sin, only Allah the Most Merciful.”³⁸⁰ Ibn Kathir seems to be contradicting himself by saying only Allah the Most Merciful is eligible to judge.

In this particular event Jesus being sinless only asked the people to stone the woman caught in adultery to death those who were sinless. They could not kill her with stones as per the Mosaic Law and they left without punishing her. Jesus is sinless and being a Spirit of Allah (God) very much deserves to judge and even passed the judgment and rescued the woman who was caught in adultery. Due to his prejudice, Ibn Kathir dishonoured the divinity of Jesus to safeguard the monotheistic supremacy of Allah (God). Because Ibn Kathir clearly said Jesus is sinless and he is Spirit of Allah and Jesus is still immortal, he did not die as per Qur’an he raised to heaven and he is in heaven. (Surah 4:158).

5.1.3.6. Jalaluddin Al-Suyuti³⁸¹

He writes in his commentary that the Holy Spirit is Gabriel. He further describes the Holy Spirit as Jesus’ sanctity.³⁸² Why did al-Suyuti not given reason to say Gabriel is Holy Spirit?

³⁷⁷ Nasir al-Din al-Baydawi, *Anwar al-Tanzilwa-Asrar al-Ta’wil*, (Berut: Dar ihyaturath al-Arabi, n.d), Vol. 1, 92-93.

³⁷⁸ Ibn Kathir (c. 1300A.D-1373 A.D) was highly influential, historian, exegete, and scholar during the Mamluk era in Syria. He was an expert on tafsir (Quranic exegesis) and faqih (jurisprudence) and wrote several books, including a fourteen-volume universal history. He worked on the subject of the *hadith* in the texts and chains of narrators.

³⁷⁹ Ibn Kathir, *Stories of the Prophets*, (New Delhi: Islamic Book Service, 2013), 347, 351.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*,

³⁸¹ Jalaluddin (1445 A.D 1505 A.D.), born at Cairo, co-author of *Tafsir al-Jalalayn* called Commentary of Two Jalals

³⁸² www.alim.org.Jalaluddin, Taken on 26-07-2018

Jesus can be called as Holy Spirit because Jesus is a holy person (sanctity of Jesus). Al-Suyuti explains Jesus' sanctity is Holy Spirit.

5.1.3.7. Maududi³⁸³

He expressed his view on the Holy Spirit by citing Surah 4:171 very highly (In his commentary on 2:87 See his comment on Holy Spirit in 4:171. He elucidates in the footnote Number 213, that Jesus himself is a Spirit from God. He is a pure and perfect soul and he is the personification of truth, authenticity, righteousness, and excellence.³⁸⁴ Maududi declared that Jesus is the pure and perfect soul and his personification of truth is authentic and righteous. According to Maududi Jesus is Holy Spirit.

5.1.3.8. Ayatollah Nasir Makarem Shirazi³⁸⁵

He mentioned that the Holy Spirit is angel Gabriel. He views Jesus as the Holy Spirit but the Holy Spirit is hidden in him.³⁸⁶ Ayatollah also accepts Jesus as the Holy Spirit in a passive way. It seems for him, it is mysterious to express the truth of Jesus as Holy Spirit.

5.1.3.9. 'Allamah Tabatabai³⁸⁷

He gives a reason why other prophets and their names are not mentioned along with the Holy Spirit means they did not have a close relationship with the Holy Spirit. For example, in Surah 57:25 it is mentioned as 'Allāh (God) says: Certainly, We sent our apostles with clear evidence'. This verse just mentions apostles but does not give any particular name of the apostle or messenger. In Surah 16:2 it is mentioned as 'He sends down the angels with spirit by His commandments on whom He pleases on His servants, (saying): Give the warning . . .

Tabatabai declares the reason why Jesus possesses a special privilege? Jesus possesses special privileges because he raised the people from the dead, healed the blind and leper and gave life to clay bird by breathing into it and gave information of the unseen. (Surah 3:49). All these things occurred because of the special relationship between the life and the Spirit. Further, he concludes that 'Īsā (Jesus) himself was clear evidence of the power of Allāh (God), as he was

³⁸³ 1903 – 1979, Modern Islamic scholar, his famous Commentary is called "towards understanding the Qur'an

³⁸⁴ www.Alim.org.Maududi tafsir taken on 27-07-2018, foot note no.213.

³⁸⁵ b.1927A,D. Shi'a scholar born in Shiraz, Iran, his *Tafsiris* called as "*Tafsir-e-namoona*

³⁸⁶ Ayatollah Nasir Makarem Shirazi, *Tafsir-e-namoona*, trns. Maulana Sayeed Safdar Hussain, (Lateefa bad: Sabeel-e-Sakeenah, n.d), Vol. 1, 258-261.

³⁸⁷ 1903A.D.-1991A.D. Shi'a Muslim scholar, from his famous commentary called *Tafsir al-Mizan*

born without a father. Allāh (God) says: and made her (*Maryam*) and her son a sign for the worlds (21:91).³⁸⁸

ʿAllamah Tabatabai³⁸⁹ states that Jesus is the Holy Spirit. He takes a step further and mentioned that ‘the spirit from him’ (4:171) means the spirit came from the command of God. He gives a reference for this from Surah 17:85 ‘The Spirit is by the commandment of my Lord’ so he opines that Jesus is the ‘Holy Spirit’ because Spirit also came into existence by God’s command.³⁹⁰

Tabatabai expressed his view on the Holy Spirit in a special way. In this verse i.e. Surah 2:87: ‘and We gave clear (evidence) to ‘*Īsā*, son of Maryam,’ here the first person plural “We” is used for God alone. It is God who strengthened Jesus with the Holy Spirit.

5.1.3.10. Yusuf Ali

In his commentary mentioned he about that Jesus was “the divine spirit” and it is an incomprehensible as God himself.³⁹¹ This expression is equivalent to the biblical saying Jesus as Holy Spirit. Therefore Jesus is God in essence and nature as well.³⁹²

5.1.3.11. Ibn al-‘Arabi

Ibn al-‘Arabi an orthodox Muslim poet mentioned that Jesus the Holy Spirit. He has given the term to Jesus as Divine Spirit.³⁹³ Ibnal ‘Arabi also mentioned that Jesus is the seal of Saint.³⁹⁴ There is, however, one further feature of Ibn ‘Arabi’s description of Jesus such as Virgin birth. Jesus was able to create birds from clay and raise the dead because he was a spirit from God and it is of the essence of spirits to create life in whatever they touch. He does, however, qualify this:

³⁸⁸ www.almizan.org taken on 29-08-2018, 2:30 am

³⁸⁹ 1903A.D.-1991A.D. Shi’a Muslim scholar, his famous *Tafsir* called *Tafsir al-Mizan*

³⁹⁰ www.almizan.org taken on 29-08-2018, 2:30 am.

³⁹¹ Ibid., 54

³⁹² A Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur’an*, (Lahore: no name of publication, 1934), 1518.

³⁹³ Muhy I-D-Din Ibn-‘Arabi, *The wisdom of the Prophets*, (Gloucestershire: Beshara Publications, 1975), 70.

³⁹⁴ Andreas D’Souza “Jesus in Ibn’Arabi’ *Fusus al Hikam*” in *The Bulletin of Christian Institutes of Islamic studies*, Vol. 6, No.1-2, Jan-June 1983, 28-54. And M.Chodkiewiz, *Le sceau des saints*, (Translated into English as *Seal of the Saints: Prophethood and Sainthood in the Doctrin of Ibn ‘Arabi*, trans. L.Sherrard (Cambridge, islamic Texts Society, 1993).

The act of giving life was God's and the breathing was Jesus' just as the breathing was Gabriel's and the word was God's. However, the act of giving life to the dead was the outcome of Jesus' breathing.³⁹⁵

If one carefully observes the differences among the Islamic scholars' view. Al-Tabari and Ibn Kathir say only Gabriel is the Holy Spirit whereas most of the scholars say Jesus are Holy Spirit. Tabari's and Ibn Kathir's understanding of angel Gabriel as Holy Spirit may be because of their preoccupied mind and prejudices. Other Islamic scholars such as Zamakshari, Al-Razi, Al-Baydawi, Jalaluddin Al-Suyuti, Yusuf Ali and Ibn al-'Arabi expressed their view of Jesus as the Holy Spirit.

No human being is free from evil, everybody is born in sin. This shows clearly that Jesus is something unique. What is the Holy Spirit? Is He in separate from God or He is a part of God or the very being of God? If it is so, then He is God, and this one cannot deny. On this aspect, few scholars are not very clear or they want to divert the attention of reader to some other issue, rather than understanding its true meaning. On this aspect, no Muslim scholar offers proper attention, which in fact demonstrates Jesus' divinity.

Together with the above Muslim scholars, some Christian intellectuals have dealt with this issue. Many of them are convinced that Jesus is the Holy Spirit and so it establishes his divine nature. Such scholars' views are as follows:

5.1.4. Christian scholars' discussion on the Holy Spirit

5.1.4.1. Geoffrey Parrinder³⁹⁶

He expressed that the title Jesus as Spirit of God is obscure in the Qur'an.³⁹⁷ But taking the view of Muslim scholars such as Ibn Ishaq and 'Ibn Arabi, Parrinder opines Jesus as the Spirit of God. The statement of Ibn Ishaq and Ibn 'Arabi is most worthy to be noted. Ibn Ishaq quoted a letter sent from Muhammad to the Negus of Abyssinia in which the Prophet said, 'I bear witness that Jesus son of Mary is the spirit of God and his word which he cast to Mary the

³⁹⁵ Neal Robinson, *Christ in Islam and Christianity*, 58.

³⁹⁶ 1910-2005, Reader in the Comparative Study of Religions in the University of London

³⁹⁷ Geoffrey Parrinder, *Jesus in the Qur'an*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1965), 48.

Virgin. Ibn ‘Arabi said that God had reserved to Jesus being Spirit, and gave him this extra gift of life-giving breath.³⁹⁸

5.1.4.2. Judy Tao Shih-Ching

In her thesis, Shih-Ching examined that, the term *ruh* in Hebrew has a different meaning as wind, breath but *ruh* as a spirit it is Muhammad who introduced it. But in the New Testament it clear that the Holy Spirit is referred to Jesus Christ (Rom.8:9; Acts 16:7). Judy Tao Shih-Ching also refers to Shaughnessy and states in detail about the material which Prophet Muhammad took to suit his own objectives. She cites the Shaughnessy’s references to the Spirit chronologically into four groups, according to Muhammad preaching in four periods of time: the first one is the Spirit is a certain person playing an active part with angels; the second, the Spirit is an impersonal entity, a breath of life, originating with Allah; third, the Spirit is from the *amr* (command) of the Lord (*Surah* 17:87); and fourth the Spirit of holiness. The Holy Spirit is a person or an impersonal being. Judy Tao Shih-Ching notices that the extensive use of writings by Judeo-Christian and Gnostic sects indicating parallelism with the verses of the Qur’an is an excellent contribution in exploring the meaning of the Spirit in the Qur’an. She comments that although the chronological order of the verses and the context are a good procedure, the divergence of opinions among Muslim commentators and Western scholars are still problematic.

In the end, Shih-Ching concludes that Muhammad combined the information taken from those sources to accommodate his purpose and his followers’ religious needs.³⁹⁹

5.1.4.3. Binod Peter Senapati

Another Christian thinker Binod Peter Senapati rightly mentioned that Jesus is not created being but created in the process of Adam but Jesus is an eternal being who took human form on this earth.⁴⁰⁰ The title mentioned in the Qur’an *ruhun-minhu* “a spirit from Him” (*Surah* 4:171), described in Islamic traditions as *ruhullah*, “Spirit of God”.⁴⁰¹ As per *Surah* 70:4, the angels and the Spirit ascend unto Him in a Day whereof the span is fifty thousand years. This is also mentioned in *Surah* 78:38; 97:4, there is a clear distinction between angel and Spirit. It was the Holy Spirit who supported Jesus during his mission (*Surah* 2:87, 253; 5:110). Then he further

³⁹⁸ Ibid., 50.

³⁹⁹ Judy Tao Shih-Ching, 49.

⁴⁰⁰ Binod Peter Senapati, *Jesus the Kalimatullah, A Christian-Muslim relation*, (New Delhi: ISPCK, 2009), 52-53.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., 54.

opines that when Muslim exegete identifies God's Spirit as distinct from God, which in their opinion undermines God's oneness.⁴⁰² He further mention that the Qur'an says Jesus is the Spirit in connection with the creation of man, the birth of Jesus by the Virgin Mary, the life of Jesus Christ on this earth.⁴⁰³

5.1.4.4. John Gilchrist

Another distinguished scholar, John Gilchrist in his book, *The Titles of Jesus in the Quran and in the Bible: Christianity and Islam* series, expressed Jesus as divine.⁴⁰⁴

5.1.4.5. Abd al-Masih

He says all the verses in the Qur'an that refer to the spirit from Allah are analyzed in the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It plays its part in revealing the true face of Islam.⁴⁰⁵

5.1.4.6. E. Van Donzel

According to him, the concrete formula reads, "We have...confirmed him with the Holy Spirit" is used in the Qur'an only with reference to Jesus⁴⁰⁶.

5.1.4.7. Olaf Schumann⁴⁰⁷

Olaf Schumaann in his writing mentioned that in the early first Meccan period the Spirit was in no way associated with Jesus (the earliest mention of Jesus is probably Surah 19:16 ff.). He further expresses his view that in later period i.e. from early Meccan period to later Meccan period and then to Madinan period, the Spirit was apparently conceived as a personal angel and Jesus and later holy Spirit come down to the servants of God (Surah 16:2 and 102; 58:22). Later, the Spirit was connected closely to the active word *amr* Allah to Adam and Jesus which actually placed them above the angels.

In this context, Schumann cited the O'Shaughnessy and expressed that Prophet Mohammad would adjust his material to suit his own objectives and what he perceived as the religious needs of his compatriots.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰² Ibid., 56

⁴⁰³ Ibid., 57

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., 55. Cf. John Gilchrist, 25.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid., 57.

⁴⁰⁶ E. Van Donzel et al eds., *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Vol.4, 83.

⁴⁰⁷ (born in 1938, a German scholar)

⁴⁰⁸ Olaf Schumann, *Jesus the Messiah in Muslim Thought*, (Hyderabad: Henry Martyn Institute, 2002), 14-15.

5.1.4.8. James Robson

Robson in his book *Christ in Islam* cited stories connected to Jesus as Holy Spirit.⁴⁰⁹ The words used in Surah 4:171 are *ruhun-minhu*, means “a Spirit from him.” Thus, the Qur’an clearly describes the human Jesus, as a Spirit from God himself. With Jesus being the only exception, no humans are ever depicted as such. However, no attempt is made to explain this absolutely unique statement of belief in the Qur’an. Yet, the Qur’an strongly supports the Christian belief that Jesus was a pre-existing Spirit creature who took on a human form. Surah 4:171 presupposes Jesus existed before he was conceived by a virgin-woman as per David Iqbal Karimis concern.⁴¹⁰

For the Qur’an to identify Jesus as a Spirit from God who was committed to Mary indicates that he was with God even before he was given to her. It is the closest the Qur’an comes to admitting the pre-existence of Jesus before his conception on earth. The lack of any explanation of its significance, however, suggests that Muhammad heard and adopted Christian teachings and titles applying to Jesus without understanding them or seeing their ominous implications that Jesus was more than a prophet. Jesus was a Spirit before he came to earth as a human. The Bible, in no uncertain term, testifies to this divine truth:

John 16:28: “I came out from the Father and have come into the world. Further, I am leaving the world and am going my way to the Father.” If Jesus was spoken in Qur’an as “The Word of God” (on which we discuss as next title) and as “A Spirit from God” then these two statements would make Jesus more than a prophet because no man can be called by such titles. Such titles would be appropriate only for the one who is unique in his nature and life.⁴¹¹

Muslims are forced to acknowledge that the unique titles given to Jesus elevate him into a heavenly realm and provide the reason why he was taken up there following his death on earth, while Muhammad’s ordinary status as nothing more than a prophet of Allah explains why he returned to very dust from where he had come from.⁴¹²

In the *Taurat*, (Pentateuch) the Spirit is described in various ways as a life-giver, a profound characteristic of God, i.e. the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, and in

⁴⁰⁹ James Robson, *Christ in Islam*, (London: John Murray, 1929), 96.

⁴¹⁰ <https://davidiqbalkarim.wordpress.com/tag/ruhullah/>

⁴¹¹ Ibid.,

⁴¹² Ibid.,

knowledge; it also represents the life-giving power of God (Job 33:4). Further Judy Tao Shih-Ching,⁴¹³ argues that even in the later prophetic writings, *ruh* is used of the spirit of prophecy, but it is always recognized that it is the Spirit of God himself and not an angelic being who breathes into the prophet the spirit of prophecy.⁴¹⁴

From the above discussion, it is very much evident that Jesus is the Holy Spirit. He is far greater than any angels. He is a part of the divine being or God himself. This aspect is admitted both by Christian theologians and most of the Muslim commentators. That establishes the truth that Jesus is the Holy Spirit. And if Jesus is the Holy Spirit, then it is part of God. Hence Jesus is God. This is what Muslim commentators did not emphasize or deliberately avoided. But whether one avoids or misinterprets, that does not negate the original meaning. The work of the Holy Spirit is very evident in the birth of Jesus and at the virginal conception.

Ibn al-‘Arabi an orthodox Muslim poet has given the term Holy Spirit to Jesus as Divine Spirit.⁴¹⁵ Ibn ‘Arabi also mentioned that Jesus is the seal of Saint.⁴¹⁶

The following titles attempt to prove the divinity of Jesus.

5.2. Surah 3:45 b ‘A word from Him’ (*bikalimatim-minhu* بِكَلِمَةٍ مِّنْهُ)

إِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَا مَرْيَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكِ بِكَلِمَةٍ مِّنْهُ اسْمُهُ الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ وَجِيهًا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ

“(And remember) when the angels said: O Mary! Lo! Allah giveth thee glad tidings of a word from Him, whose name is Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, illustrious in the world and the Hereafter, and one of those brought near (unto Allah). Surah 3: 45.⁴¹⁷

5.2.1. Background of Surah 3 (The Family of ‘Imran)

Āl ‘Imrān (Arabic: آل عمران, "narmi fo ylimaF ehT")⁴¹⁸ is the third chapter (Surah) of the Qur’an with two hundred verses (*ayat*).

⁴¹³ Judy Tao Shih-Ching, in her thesis called, *Holy Spirit in the Qur’an, An assessment from a Christian Perspective*. 2006

⁴¹⁴ Judy Tao Shih-Ching,

⁴¹⁵ Muhy I-D-Din Ibn-‘Arabi, *The wisdom of the Prophets*, (Gloucestershire: Beshara Publications, 1975), 70.

⁴¹⁶ Andreas D’Souza “Jesus in Ibn ‘Arabi’ Fusus al Hikam” in *The Bulletin of Christian Institutes of Islamic studies*, Vol. 6, No.1-2, Jan-June 1983, 28-54. And M.Chodkiewiz, *Le sceau des saints*, (Translated into English as *Seal of the Saints: Prophethood and Sainthood in the Doctrin of Ibn ‘Arabi*, trans. L.Sherrard (Cambridge, islamic Texts Society, 1993).)

⁴¹⁷ All the references are taken from here after, from M.M. Pickthall, *The meaning of the glorious Qur’an*.

⁴¹⁸ P. Bearman; Th. Bianquis; C.E. Bosworth; E.van Donzel; W.P. Heinrichs, ‘Imrān”. *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2nd ed.). Brill. eds. (2012). (Accessed on 24/08/2019 at 7:18 am.)

Imran in Islam is regarded as the father of Mary (mother of Jesus). This chapter is named after the family of Imran, which includes Imran, Saint Anne, Mary, and Jesus. Regarding the timing and contextual background of the supposed revelation (*Asbāb al-nuzūl*), the chapter is believed to have been either the second or third of the Medinan Surahs, as it references both the events of Badr and the Uhud. Almost all of it also belongs to the third year of the Hijra, though a minority of its verses might have been revealed during the visit of the Najrān Christian deputation and the Mubahala,⁴¹⁹ which occurred around the 10th year of the Hijrah.⁴²⁰ This chapter primarily focuses on the departure of prophethood from the Mosaic dispensation.

According to the Catholic, Orthodox, and Anglican traditions, Joachim is the husband of Saint Anne and the father of Mary, the mother of Jesus. The chapter takes its name from the family of Imran mentioned in verse (أَطَّتْ , ayah) 33.⁴²¹

5.2.2. An analysis and explanation of the Arabic phrases

The eighth word of verse (3:45) is divided into 2 morphological segments. *bi/kalimatim*. A preposition and noun. The prefixed preposition *bi* is usually translated as “of” “with” or “by”. The indefinite noun is feminine and is in the genitive case (مجرور). The noun's trilateral root is *kāf lām mīm* (ك ل م). Together the segments form a preposition phrase known as *jār wa majrūr* (ومجرور جار).

bi/kalimatim بِكَلِمَةٍ means: of/a word/from/him.

Preposition – prefixed preposition *bi* means (of).

Noun – genitive feminine indefinite noun *kalimatim* means (a word).

The ninth word of verse (3:45) is divided into 2 morphological segments. I.e *min/hu*. A preposition (*min* means from) and object pronoun (*hu* means Him/God). The attached object pronoun is third person masculine singular. Together the segments form a preposition phrase known as *jār wa majrūr* (ومجرور جار).

P – Preposition

pron – 3rd person masculine singular object pronoun

⁴¹⁹ The Event of Mubahala was a meeting between the Islamic prophet Muhammad and a Christian delegation from Najran (present-day Saudi Arabia), in the month of Dhu'l-Hijja, 10 AH (October 631, October 631-2, October 632-3), where Muhammad invoked a curse attempting to reveal who was lying about their religious differences. (Accessed on 24/08/2019 at 7:18 am.)

⁴²⁰ Maududi, Abdul Alaa, *Tafhim-ul-Quran*. (Accessed on 24/08/2019 at 7:18 am.)

⁴²¹ M.A.S. Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, (Oxford University Press, 2005), 34.

The Arabic word ‘*kalimah*’ (كَلِمَةً) means ‘a word’. As per the dictionary of Qur’an, there are different meanings for the Arabic term *kalimah*. They are ‘He talked or spoke’ to him; he injured him or he wounded him; God spoke to Moses particularly (4:64); a word from Allah (3:39); ‘word’ or ‘prophesy’; ascend good words (35:10).⁴²²

The significance of this phrase ‘a word from Him’ (*kalimatim-minhu* 3:45 b) is the God’s word only as per Surah 4:171 which says ‘...and His word (*wakalimatuhu*) which He conveyed unto Mary...’ in the context of Jesus’ birth. The root word for *klima* comes from three Arabic letters, i.e., (*kaf, lam, mim*).

The Arabic term *kalimah* simply means a word; an expression; a proposition; a sentence; a saying; an argument; an assertion; an expression of opinion; also meant as a decree; a commandment.⁴²³

According to Islam God created the universe by His Command, saying ‘Be’ and it came into being. So also God created Adam and Jesus by His command ‘Be’. In this verse angel Gabriel announces to Mary “Lo! Mary there is good news for you that God is sending a word to you and that word is no other than Jesus.” Jesus is designated as ‘a word from God. In this verse ‘a word from Him’ in Arabic it is written as *bikalimatim-minhu* (بِكَلِمَةٍ مِّنْهُ). The pronoun *hu* referred to (Him) God. So one can say *kalimatim-minhu* as ‘a word from God’. Interchangeably can be said it as ‘word of God’ but as per this verse ‘Jesus is a word from Him’. Even in other places we see the same as 3:39 ...a word from God, (*kalimatim min Allah*) 3:45... a word from Him. (*kalimatim-minhu*). In 4:171 it is mentioned as ‘...His word’ (*kalimatuhu*).

Although there is no reference to Jesus in the Qur’an that specifically uses the phrase the word of God (*al-kalimah Allah*), yet we do note that God calls Jesus the Word of God in the Qur’an. *kalimatim min Allah* (a word from God) and *kalimatuhu* (His word), are used exclusively for Jesus among all prophets and human beings. No other prophet or any other human being is given the title by which Allah honors Jesus as His word; so, in this sense, we do affirm that Jesus is the Word of God.

⁴²² www.alislam.org/dictionary quran.pdf taken on 09-092018. 4;10 am.

⁴²³ www.google.com, five volumes commentary on Qur’an. Taken on 09-09-2018 at 4:35 am.

5.2.3. Muslim scholars' discussion on the Word of God

5.2.3.1. Al-Tabari⁴²⁴

Tabari⁴²⁵ was a classical Sunni commentator, an influential Persian scholar, historian, and exegete of the Qur'an, his Qur'anic commentary known as *Tafsir al-Tabari*)⁴²⁶ mentioned that 'word' is a messenger of God. He further stated that Jesus is the word of God because he existed with the divine command *Kun* 'Be' (3:47).⁴²⁷

5.2.3.2. Zamakhshari⁴²⁸

He⁴²⁹ explained his view based on Surah 4:171, that Jesus is the word of God because he was born not of any sperm but born by the command of God *Kun* 'Be'.⁴³⁰

5.2.3.3. Al-Razi

He opines that all the Prophets communicated the message of God to the people. But they did not become the word of God. But, Jesus became a word from God.⁴³¹ Further Razi stated that Jesus 'was called a word' because he was the fulfillment of the word spoken to the prophets.⁴³²

5.2.3.4. Ibn Kathir,

He expressed his view by quoting Surah 3:39. He stated that this is the meaning of Allah's statement about *Yahya* (John the Baptist) mentioned *Yahya* (Who cometh) to confirm a word from Allah, Here 'a word from him' is none other than Jesus. As per Maududi *Tafsir* expresses the same thought lordly, chaste, a Prophet of the righteous...Here it is foretold to *Yahya* about Jesus who is chaste and righteous Prophet coming as a word from him. So as per Ibn Kathir word from him means 'Jesus.'⁴³³

⁴²⁴ Abu Jafar Muhammad bin Jarir al-Tabari.

⁴²⁵ (tabari d.923.A.D.).

⁴²⁶ Abu Jafar Muhammad bin Jarir al-Tabari, *jamial-bayanatawilaya al-Quran (tafsir e Tabari)*, (Dar hijr: Markaz al-bahus, n.d., Vol. 5, 407.

⁴²⁷ Ibid.,

⁴²⁸ www. Zamakhshari, Wikipedia.

⁴²⁹ (Zamakhshari 1075 A.D-1144 A.D)

⁴³⁰ Abu al-QāsimMaḥmūdibn 'Umar al-Zamakhsharī, *Al-Kashshāf' anḤaqā'iq at-Tanzīl* , (Riyaz: Maktabah al-Abikan,1998), vol. 2, 181.

⁴³¹ Fakhruddin al-Razi, *Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, (Berut: DaralFikr, n.d), Vol. 3, 190-191.

⁴³² Geoffery Parrinder, 46.

⁴³³ www.alislam.org, Ibn Kathir tafisr.

5.2.3.5. Al-Baydawi⁴³⁴

Baydawi⁴³⁵ commented on this verse 3:45 and stated that ‘a word from God’ is Jesus because he came into existence by God’s command without a father so that he resembled the new creation.⁴³⁶

5.2.3.6. Jalaluddin Al-Suyuti⁴³⁷

His commentary called ‘Commentary of the Two Jalals’ mentioned that Jesus being a word from Him is good news to Mary and Mary gave birth to Jesus without sperm (father), so he is exalted and honored in this world and in another world to come through his intercession.⁴³⁸

5.2.3.7. Maududi⁴³⁹

Another Modern Islamic commentator a Muslim philosopher, jurist, journalist, and Imam, Qur’anic exegesis,) exegetes the phrase ‘a word from Him’ or ‘and His word’ also as a creative word of God as ‘Be’ (*kun*).⁴⁴⁰ Maududi⁴⁴¹ in his *Tafsir* based on Surah 4: 171, in the footnote number 212, used the term ‘command’ for ‘word’ and states through God’s command Mary got pregnant (wet through without coming into contact with sperm). So as per Maududi Jesus is a command from God. Through God’s command, Jesus existed in physical form in the womb of Mary.⁴⁴² In Qur’an the title ‘word of God’ is used as ‘a word from Him’ and ‘His word’ interchangeably.

5.2.3.8. ‘Allamah Tabataba’i⁴⁴³

A Shi’a Islamic famous modern commentator and a scholar. He was one of the most prominent thinkers of philosophy and contemporary Shi’a Islam. His famous *tafsir* called *Tafsir al-Mizan*, has also commented Jesus as creative word of God *Kun* ‘Be’. There is an important connection between the “Word of God” as a title for Jesus and the creative word of God; because Jesus is directly created by the command (*amr*) of God without the mediation of a male parent. He further expressed his view that Jesus is the divine word of God. According to Qur’anic terminology, the meaning of the word *kalima* means ‘that which shows the will of

⁴³⁴ In his famous commentary called ‘The lights of Revelation and the Secrets of Interpretation’).

⁴³⁵ (Bydawi d.1286. A.D.)

⁴³⁶ Geoffery Parrinder, 45.

⁴³⁷ (Jalaluddin Al-Suyuti 1445 A.D–1505 A.D.).

⁴³⁸ www.alislam.org/Jalalintafsir in English. Taken on 13-8-2018.

⁴³⁹ www.google.com *Towards understanding Islam*, Maududi tafsir in English .taken on 18-08-2018.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid.,

⁴⁴¹ (Maududi 1903-1979A.D.).

⁴⁴² www.google.com, *Understanding Islam*.

⁴⁴³ (Tabataba’i 1904-1981).

Allah' (God). He further stated that it may be an order, e.g., the word of creation when He says to a thing, 'Be'; or it may be a word of revelation and inspiration, etc.⁴⁴⁴

His own interpretation based on Surah 3:42 – 45 where he mentioned that Jesus is created by His command by saying 'Be' and Jesus became word and he is above the normal creation. Tabatabai expresses his interpretation as followed:

Surah 3:42, it refers to 'Īsā (a.s.) because he was the word of creation, i.e., the Divine Command, 'Be'. No doubt every man, nay, everything, comes into being by the creative word, 'Be'; but everyman is conceived and born according to the well-known normal system: the usual course is for the male sperm to fertilize the female ovum —But the conception of 'Īsā did not follow this course; many usual and gradual causes were simply missing. His existence was just by the creative word, 'Be', and no usual causes intervened. And in this way, he became the "Word" itself, as we see in the verse: ...and His Word which He communicated to Maryam (4:171).It gets support from verse 3:59.⁴⁴⁵

Tabatabai used the English capital letter 'W' ...he became "the Word" which refers to God and God's Word.⁴⁴⁶

5.2.3.9. Abu Yakub al-Sidjistani

The fourth-century Abu Yakub al-Sidjistani specifies, 'Paradise is the *kalimat Allah* (Word of God) by whose means He was founded by those things which exist in paradise'.⁴⁴⁷ He further mentioned that in Penultimate chapter of the book says the *kalmia* is analyzed letter by letter according to the principles of *djafr*, with reference to the Isma'ili hierarchies and in this analysis, the prime Intelligence is identified with *Kalam Allah*, *Kalimat Allah* and becomes synonymous with the first cause of the oneness,⁴⁴⁸

Almost all the prominent scholars of Islam do acknowledge Jesus is a word from God, he came into the world as a human in an unusual manner as compared to all other human beings. This should be a sufficient reason to understand the unique birth of Jesus. At the same time, whether it is 'a word' or 'the word' from God, one thing is certain that he is a word from God. There is no debate at all. Then the question arises if he is word from God, then can word be

⁴⁴⁴ al-mizan.org

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid.,

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid.,

⁴⁴⁷ Senapati, *Jesus the Kalimatullah*, 59. Cf. C.H. Corbin, 29.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid.,

different from God or is it a part and parcel of God? Some Christian Scholar too has expressed their views that must be examined.

5.2.4. Christian scholars' discussion on the Word of God.

5.2.4.1. R.C. Zaehner

Zaehner in his exegetical work on Jesus he expressed that 'word of God' is produced directly by God's created Word or Logos. He is not son acquired by God but is brought into existence in the Virgin's womb by the direct action of the Divine Word 'Be!'⁴⁴⁹

5.2.4.2. John of Damascus and Timothy of Baghdad

Both were argued based on Surah 4:171 where it is mentioned Jesus as God's word (His word) that can be equated with eternal Word of God in the Qur'an because it is mentioned in Surah 4:171 which is very much part of the Qur'an. They pointed out the unity of Godhead, Allah as one, so God's word used for Jesus can be counted as the eternal Word of God. John of Damascus (eighth-century Christian apologist) rightly expressed his opinion that Muslims say there is no partner to God if it is there it is claimed as *Shirk*⁴⁵⁰ whereas eternal Word of God Qur'an is one but it is mutilating (*qat'*) God by separating from him 'His Word and Spirit'.⁴⁵¹ Few Islamic scholars justify One Godhead but when they come to the phrase Jesus as 'His word' or God's word they separate God's word from God which is in fact misinterpretation.

In the Qur'an, Surah 3:45, Jesus is a Word from God. Then, what is "Word from God" means "Word of Allah. In Surah 4:171 what does it mean? Jesus is 'His word' means Jesus is God's word.

Since Jesus was created by the command (*amr*) of God, he can be compared to Adam who was also created by the command (*amr*) of God but created from soil and later his body became a soil. Jesus was created in a unique way. Why? Because he has created out of nothing (*ex nihilio*) in the womb of the Virgin *Maryam*. Since he was born by the divine command, his body and his life became holy right from his birth. As it is mentioned in Surah 3:45 he is illustrious in this world and hereafter, He is nearer to Allah. Since Jesus is holy and created by

⁴⁴⁹ R.C. Zaehner, *At Sunday Times* (London: SCM Press, 1959), 206. Cf. Senapati, 60.

⁴⁵⁰ (The association of partners with God.)

⁴⁵¹ Michael Nazir Ali, 32.

God's word, in principle he is part of God 'eternal Word'. This is contradicting by pointing out that Jesus is in fact from 'His word' to 'eternal Word' which is in heaven.⁴⁵²

5.2.4.3. Steenbrink's⁴⁵³

He was born in Breda, the Netherlands, and Professor Emeritus of Intercultural theology, opinion there is a need for new interpretations on both sides.⁴⁵⁴ He strictly ponders on the oneness of Godhead. In Christian understanding, Jesus is part of One Godhead and Trinity. Muslims need to broaden their understanding of what Christians believe about their God. Regarding the issue of Unity of God (*Tawhid*) as far as Christianity is concerned, Ibrahimkhan O. Deshmukh (a Muslim convert to Christianity and a Muslim thinker) says that Christianity strongly condemns the concept of polytheism. It upholds the unity of God (*Tawhid*) in the same way as Islam does.⁴⁵⁵ He further opines that what Christians believe as Unity in Trinity should not be mistaken for Triune God. Jesus himself denies these assertions in clear terms. Surah 5:116-118.

He concludes that there is no doubt whatsoever that Christians⁴⁵⁶ worship only One God as the Muslims do.⁴⁵⁷ In this context, Muslims strongly assert that Jesus is not divine because he was created by the command of God 'Be' so he is created being. Surah 3:45 itself is enough to claim that Jesus has a quality of the divine as far as the Qur'anic text is concerned. He is 'from God' and he was born to the Virgin Mary without a human father and he is nearer to God Himself. To sort out issues like these both Christians and Muslims should come together and discuss without bias and come to a right understanding and live in harmony and in a healthy atmosphere.

Many Muslim writers have spoken of Jesus as the word of God (*Kalimatullah*).⁴⁵⁸ In general, Muslim commentators do not differentiate between Jesus' being a 'word of God' and his being a 'word from God'. They tend to emphasize 'from God' since it is less liable to be misunderstood by non-Muslims who say that Jesus is divine because he is God's word.⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵² Ibid.,

⁴⁵³ (Steenbrink b.1942).

⁴⁵⁴ Karel Steenbrink, *The Jesus Verses of the Qur'an*, (Hyderabad: Henry Martyn Institute, 2011), 190.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibrahimkhan O. Deshmukh, *The Gospel and Islam*, (Mumbai: GLS, 2012), 195-196.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid.,

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid.,

⁴⁵⁸ Senapathy., 57.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid., footnote, 57-58.

5.2.4.4. C.H. Corbin

C.H. Corbin in his book *Trilogie ismaelienne*⁴⁶⁰ mentioned that “the word of God” should be understood as the divine imperative from Allah by whose will the prime Intelligence exists.

5.2.4.5. Binod Peter Senapati

Senapati rightly comments in his book *Jesus the Kalimatullah* that in the case of the Qur’an, the word of God is conveyed to Mary by His spirit.⁴⁶¹ He may, therefore, be called both the word of God and the spirit of God.

5.2.4.6 John Gilchrist

His view was also worth mentioning that every prophet of God is a messenger but only Jesus is the word of God.⁴⁶² The Qur’an certified that Jesus was born not as a usual human being, but came into existence by the divine command of God and the word of God became a man in the womb of Virgin Mary. Jesus existed with God from the very beginning and then took birth as a complete man from Mary. So the birth record of Jesus extends back to that of God, whose birth is unknown to anyone and is a mystery to the universe! Qur’an further says that Jesus is still alive, and would come back at the end of universe to fight against *Dajjal* (Anti-Christ), the predictable feature of death for a “man” or “a living creature” or “a mortal being”, is not applicable to Jesus Qur’an indirectly states that Jesus is immortal!!⁴⁶³

The description of Jesus as a Word of God is unambiguous. From the above discussion we can come to some conclusion as follow:

It is clear that Jesus is With Allah as His Word and His Spirit since the Beginning of Allah.

The word "Logos" has many meanings. One form "*Logos*" gives us the English "logic", which means not just ordinary speech (words), but mind expressed or intelligent expression. God created the world by His intelligent Mind / by His Thoughts / by His Word, all of which mean the same. God and His mind are the same substance. This distinction between us and our mind is merely intellectual and does not involve separation but difference of function. God and His Mind

⁴⁶⁰ C.H. Corbin, *Trilogie ismaelienne* (Tehran: Islamic Study Centre, 1961), 57. Cf. Senapati, 59.

⁴⁶¹ Senapati, 60-61.

⁴⁶² John Gilchrist, 32. Cf. Senapati, 62.

⁴⁶³ Sijo. <https://www.christianforums.com/threads/muslims-find-here-the-real-quranic-jesus>.

are interdependent and form an integral part of each other for their proper functioning. When we speak of God, His Mind from which His Thought, His Word, His Spirit, and His Wisdom proceeds, we are not separating them, but only clarifying the issue.

The English translation uses the relative pronoun "his" to render a masculine personal pronoun in the Arabic language. Since "*Kalima*" (Arabic for "word") is in the feminine gender it becomes clear that "a word" does not just mean "a word of language" but a person! This is clarified in the sayings of famous Muslim scholar Ibn 'Arabi.⁴⁶⁴ If God was without Mind at any time He would not be God; or if he was without Thoughts at any time He would cease to be the Almighty One, which is impossible!

5.2.5. Muslim lexicons

The Shi'a and Sufi lexicon the 'word of God' is referred to Jesus. In another lexicon, there is a link between the Word of God and the Qur'an and the "perfect words" (*KalimatMuzair*) is the creation of Jesus in Mary's womb.⁴⁶⁵ However, the Islamic interpretation of Jesus as 'the word of God' raises some questions. If Jesus is called 'the word of God' because of the way he was created according to the Qur'an, which is similar to the way Adam was created, then why is Adam not called 'the word of God'? And if it was because Jesus' powerful preaching of God's word, why then is Muhammad (PBUH), not honoured with this title? Though the Islamic explanations seek to avoid the risk of undermining the oneness of God, this does not prove satisfactory.⁴⁶⁶

From the above discussion on the title, 'Jesus as the word of God', we do ascertain that He is truly 'the word of God'. But somehow Muslim intellectuals disregard it and deliberately avoid the true meaning that comes out so clearly from the Qur'an itself. While interpreting the sacred text, one should not deviate from its true meaning and should not play with the word of God.

⁴⁶⁴ *Fusus al Hukm*", Part II, 13, 36, by Al Shaikh Muhyi al Din al 'Arabi.

⁴⁶⁵ Senapati, *Jesus the Kalimatullah*, 59. Cf. C.H. Corbin, *Kitab al-Muzair*. 13.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 60.

5.3. Surah 3:45d... ‘The Messiah’ (*Al-Masih*, الْمَسِيحُ)

إِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَا مَرْيَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكِ بِكَلِمَةٍ مِّنْهُ اسْمُهُ الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ وَجِيهًا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ

“ (the And remember) when the angel said: O Mary! Lo! Allah giveth thee glad tidings of a word from Him, whose name is Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, illustrious, in the world and the Hereafter, and one of those brought near (unto Allah).” Surah ‘Aali-‘Im-raan 3: 45.

5.3.1. The Background and Context

The background of this Surah mentioned in above section Surah 3:45 b

5.3.2. Analysis and explanation of the Arabic phrases

The eleventh word of verse (Surah 3:45) is a proper noun in the nominative case (مرفوع).

pn – nominative proper noun - Messiah (*Masih*, الْمَسِيحُ)

The title ‘a word from Him’ refers to Jesus. It is given to Jesus as the ‘Messiah’. In general ‘name’ is the identification of a thing or a person. Jesus identified as a special person for the purpose of distinguishing from others. Why? Reasons can found from the following discussions:

In Qur’an, there is no mention of the meaning of the term Messiah.⁴⁶⁷ But it is certain the term Messiah is used for Jesus alone in the Qur’an. Jesus is addressed by this title eleven times.⁴⁶⁸ In fact, Jesus receives the title, Messiah in all the Medina Surahs (3:40, 45; 4:156,157; 4:169,171; 4:170,172; 5:19, 17 twice; 5:76, 72 twice; 5: 79, 75; 9:30, 31). This title used for Jesus’ personal purpose is found in 5:72, 76 (The Messiah said, “O children of Israel, serve God”)⁴⁶⁹

The term Messiah comes from Arabic word الْمَسِيحِي ‘*al-masih*’. The root Arabic letters for *masih* are *mim*, *sin*, *ya*. As per the dictionary of Qur’an, there are several meanings for the term *al-masih*. They are: ‘he wiped a thing with his hand’ or passed his hand over it to remove the wet or dirt that was over it’. Another meaning is you pass over wet hand over your heads (5:6),

⁴⁶⁷ Geoffrey Parrinder, *Jesus in the Quran*, (London: Faber and Feber, 1965), 30ff

⁴⁶⁸ John Gilchrist, *The title of Jesus in the Quran and in the Bible*, Christianity and Islam Series, No. 5 (London: SCM Press, 2001), 12.

⁴⁶⁹ Geoffrey Parrinder, 30.

He passed his hand wet with water over a thing. Another meaning ‘May God removes that which is in thee or washes and cleanses thee from thy sins’.⁴⁷⁰

Another meaning is he set forth journeying through the earth or land which has been stated by the classical Sunni Islamic scholars like Razi. Messiah was known as *masiih* because he was anointed or blessed by God. The word messiah also means a king; beautiful in the face.⁴⁷¹

As per the encyclopedia of Islam, there are two root words for the term Messiah: one verb *Masaha* means ‘to rub with the hand’ and ‘to anoint’. In the passive sense Jesus is *Messiah* because, a) he is anointed by means of blessings and honors b) he is covered from birth onwards by the wings of Gabriel to shield him from the bite of Satan, and c) he is anointed in Adam, like a man, but in a particular way in order to be implanted in Mary.

Jesus is Messiah because, a) he anointed the eyes of the blind to cure them (Surah 3:49) b) he rubbed the sick people with his hand, and c) he anointed with holy oil. The second root is the verb *Saha*, which means, ‘to travel’, ‘to go on a pilgrimage’, and ‘to wander’.⁴⁷² However, the word ‘Messiah’ did have a religious connotation for Muhammad and seemed to hint at something extraordinary, which is not clearly defined. The word itself was probably derived from Syriac – *m’Shiha*, and became known to Muhammad in its Arabic version.⁴⁷³

Most of the meanings taken from Encyclopedia of Islam and dictionary of Qur’an refer to Jesus as Messiah because he rubbed his hand to heal the sick, he was anointed with holy oil, he was a king, he was a blessed person, he traveled all over the country, he was pure and untouched by Satan and he washes and cleanses us from our sins.

In Qur’an and the Bible, no other prophet, patriarch or priest is given the messianic title. The term Messiah originally derived from the Hebrew Language. It is translated into Arabic simply as *al-Masiih*.

What do Muslim and Christian scholars say about the Messiah.

⁴⁷⁰ www.alislam.org dictionary quran. Pdf taken on 26-09-2018.

⁴⁷¹ www.alislam.org dictionary quran. Pdf taken on 26-09-2018.

⁴⁷² Evan Donzel, et.al.(eds.), *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Vol.4, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978), 82.

⁴⁷³ Binod Peter Senapati, 49.

5.3.3. Muslim scholars' discussion on the Messiah

5.3.3.1. Al-Tabari

According to classical Sunni scholar al-Tabari, *al-Masih* means 'to touch'. For Tabari 'touch' means Jesus was touched by the Holy Spirit at his birth and he became pure and free from all evil. For Tabari Jesus is Messiah means he is pure and without sin.⁴⁷⁴

5.3.3.2. Zamakhshari

Another classical scholar of Islam, Zamakhshari states his view about Messiah. He opines that *masiha* is an honorable title given to Jesus and it is given to Jesus alone because Jesus is the blessed one as per Surah 19:31.⁴⁷⁵

5.3.3.3. Al-Razi

Al-Razi has listed ten (10) possible explanations for the term *al-masih*. Unlike Tabari, Razi presents Jesus as the subject of the action like one who touches and the one who moves around or travels around. Al-Razi's collection of ten explanations for the term *al-Masih* are: First one, Jesus is Messiah because he touches the sick and heals them; second, he moves all around the country as 'traveler'; third, Jesus is Messiah because he often laid his hand on orphans to bestow God's blessings upon them; the fourth, Jesus is Messiah as object of the verb, the one who is anointed and the one who is touched; the fifth, Jesus is named as messiah because he was pure and free from sin and evil; sixth, a person with flat feet is known in Arabic language as *mamsuh al-qadamaymor (masah)* and since this was the case with Jesus he is called as *al-Masih*; Seventh, as a prophet, Jesus was anointed with oil; eighth and ninth, Angel Gabriel covered Jesus with his wings at his birth to protect him from the touch of Satan; tenth, when Jesus came out of his mother's womb he had sacred oil on him. The final two interpretations are not based on the derivation of the word but simply aim to praise Jesus.

5.3.3.4. Al-Baydawi, al-Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir

We understand that Jesus as *al-Masih* means he is *al-malik*, the king and *al-Siddiq*, the righteous.⁴⁷⁶ Razi's first reason (touches the sick and heals) and the second reason is ('traveler')

⁴⁷⁴ al-Tabari, Vol. 5, 409.

⁴⁷⁵ Zamakhshari, Vol. 1, 558.

⁴⁷⁶ Binod Peter Senapati, 49-50.

mentioned by al-Baydawi (classical Islamic scholar) and refers to Jesus as *al-Masih*.⁴⁷⁷ Razi's first reason that Jesus touched the sick and healed them is given by the other two famous Islamic scholars like al-Qurtubi⁴⁷⁸ and Ibn Kathir.⁴⁷⁹

5.3.3.5. 'Allamah Tabatabai'

'Allamah Tabatabai' a modern Shi'a Islamic scholar, in his commentary, Al-Mizan, observes that Jesus is *al-Masīha* because he existed by the 'Divine command' called 'Be' and Jesus was born without the presence of the male parent. (3:47). *Īsā* (Jesus) was given the name because he was anointed with success and blessing or because he would cleanse sins. He was anointed with holy olive-oil with which the prophets were anointed,⁴⁸⁰ al-Razi also stated in his fifth and seventh explanation for the term *al-Masih*.

Further, Tabatabai claims Jesus is Messiah because the angel Gabriel wiped him with his wings at his birth and protected him from Satan. Jesus touched and healed the sick therefore he is known as Messiah. The term *masīh* was given to Jesus in the good news proclaimed by angel Gabriel to Maryam, as he quotes God: O Maryam! Surely Allāh gives you good news of a Word from Him whose name is al-Masīh, 'Īsā son of Maryam. (3:45)

This word is the Arabicised form of the Meshiha, which is found in the Old and the New Testaments. The original Hebrew *māshiah* became *mashīhā* in Aramaic; in Greek, this became *messiah*, the form now in common use.⁴⁸¹

Based on Surah 19:30-31, Tabatabai declared Jesus as a servant of God and blessed one.⁴⁸²

From the Islamic scholar's point of view, it is understood that the title Messiah given to Jesus, implies that he was pure and blessed, free from evil and specially anointed. The title was given only to Jesus because of the divine command of God and which was unique among mankind. It clearly demonstrates that the uniqueness of Jesus among mankind and emphasizes that he was blameless; no human being ever born on earth possessed such a nature.

⁴⁷⁷ Nasir al-Din al-Baydawi, Vol. 2, 17.

⁴⁷⁸ Imam Muhammad bin Ahmad Qurtubi, *Tafsir al-Qurtubi*, (Lahor: Ziaal Quran, n.d), Vol. 2, 611.

⁴⁷⁹ www.IbnKathirtafsir in English, pdf. Taken on 02-08-2018.

⁴⁸⁰ www.al-Mizan, 13. Taken on 19-09-2018.

⁴⁸¹ www.al-Mizan, 13. Taken on 19-09-2018.

⁴⁸² Ibid., 13-14.

Serious thought behind this and know why it is so? What does it mean to us as human beings? Jesus is the anointed one and free from evil. If this is what Muslim scholars believe, then why are they unable to admit the uniqueness of Jesus?

Some deliberately set aside the real meaning of it and cover it with some other nominal meaning. This shows their self-interest and attempts to keep people away from focusing on the true meaning.

5.3.4. Christian Scholars' discussion on the Messiah

Some Christian scholars too, who have done some in-depth research on Christian-Muslim relations. Among them, Parrinder is one, a noted scholar.

5.3.4.1. Geoffrey Parrinder⁴⁸³

He is a noted scholar who proved the term Messiah is derived from Hebrew but it was known in the north and south Arabia in pre-Islamic times. Parrinder wrote that there is no Qur'anic etymological explanation of the word *al-Masih*. There is a positive and negative perspective of Jesus in the Qur'an based on Surah 4:171 and 5:75.⁴⁸⁴

Surah 4:171 "O People of the Scripture! Do not exaggerate in your religion nor utter aught concerning Allah save the truth. The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only a messenger of Allah, and His word which He conveyed unto Mary, and a spirit from Him. So believe in Allah and His messengers, and say not "Three" – Cease! (it is) better for you – Allah is only One God. (Pickthal). Far is it removed from His transcendent majesty that he should have a son. His is all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. And Allah is sufficient as Defender.

Surah 5:75 "The Messiah, son of Mary, was no other than a messenger, messengers (the like of whom) had passed away before him. And his mother was a saintly woman. And they both used to eat (earthly) food. See how we make the revelations clear for them, and see how they are turned away!

The word *messiah* is translated into Greek as *Christos* which means Christ the anointed one. Parrinder aptly remarks that there is no explanation offered for the title Messiah, and it is applied to Jesus at all periods of his life from birth to exaltation.

⁴⁸³ (1910-2005).

⁴⁸⁴ Geoffrey Parrinder, 30-31.

The above two Surahs presents both perspectives negative side in the defense of the unity and transcendence of God and on the positive side, it places the Messiah in the succession of messengers and prophets of past, in fact as succeeding the Old Testament prophecy. The term Messiah is not used in 4:172 neither for defaming him as a servant of God nor the angels dishonor his servanthood. In 4:157, it is said in his defense against the Jews: “We slew the Messiah Jesus son of Mary, Allah’s messenger – They slew him not nor crucified, but it appeared so unto them.”⁴⁸⁵

Parrinder mentioned that the Classical Islamic scholars Zamakhshari and Baydawi admitted that the term Messiah was a foreign word, and later they expressed that *al-Masih* was the surname of Jesus, a title of honors like *al-Siddiq*, the ‘truthful’, a surname of Abu Bakr the first Caliph. The Hebrew meaning of the term Messiah as the ‘anointed’, one used for kings of Israel and then for the coming of Christ, was known to Islamic commentators who they tried to show how Jesus was anointed in this sense.

Zamakhshari in his commentary says that Messiah means blessed one and this title was used exclusively for Jesus. Most of the Islamic scholars presented the term Messiah in a positive sense.

Al-Razi used the meaning of the verb *Masih* as ‘to travel’ because Jesus traveled much or went on pilgrimage. Later Jesus became the model for Muslim pilgrims and mystics. The theologian and mystic al-Ghazali said ‘Take Jesus as your pattern’.⁴⁸⁶

Ahmad is applied this concept of the wandering Jesus to their belief that he traveled eastward as far as Kashmir.⁴⁸⁷ Parrinder rightly pointed that later Islam spoke of the Messiah ‘Peace be upon him’ and in the popular Muslim usage, the name of Messiah is prefixed the end with the word al-Sayyid, ‘the lord’, which is a mark of honor.

The title al-Sayyid is used particularly for Muhammad and his descendants, but also some great people. In the *City of Wrong*, a study of Jerusalem on Good Friday from an orthodox Muslim point of view, the title ‘the Lord Christ’ is regularly used.⁴⁸⁸

Though the term *Al-Masih* is mentioned eleven (11) times in Qur’an, there is no single meaning uttered in the entire Qur’an. As per its root meaning in the Hebrew language is ‘anointed one’. In the Old Testament, the ceremony of anointing was meant for Kings, Priests,

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid.,

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid., 33

⁴⁸⁷ Parrinder, 34.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid.,

and Prophets who were selected by God alone. In Qur'an, the term Messiah is used for Jesus alone. Though the meaning of the term Messiah is not mentioned in the Qur'an it is understood the divinity of Jesus is not disclosed.

5.4. Surah 3:49 'Jesus, the Performer of Miracles' (*Mujezahkarnewala*).

As per the miracles of Jesus is a concern we find two main passages from the Qur'an. One is Surah 3:49 and another one is Surah 5:110. For exegesis purpose, the researcher is taking passages from Surah 3:49. Since both are in a similar way.

Surah 3:49

وَرَسُولًا إِلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنِّي قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِآيَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ أَنِّي أَخْلُقُ لَكُمْ مِّنَ الطِّينِ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ فَأَنْفُخُ فِيهِ فَيَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَأُبْرِئُ الْأَكْمَةَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ وَأُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَأَنْبِئُكُمْ بِمَا تَأْكُلُونَ وَمَا تَدَّخِرُونَ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ

And [make him] a messenger to the Children of Israel, [who will say], 'Indeed I have come to you with a sign from your Lord in that I design for you from clay [that which is] like the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird by permission of Allah . And I cure the blind and the leper, and I give life to the dead – by permission of Allah. And I inform you of what you eat and what you store in your houses. Indeed that is a sign for you, if you are believers. Surah 3:49.

Surah 5:110

إِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ اذْكُرْ نِعْمَتِي عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَتِكَ إِذْ أَبَدْتُكَ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ تُكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ فِي الْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلًا ۗ وَإِذْ عَلَّمْتُكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَالتَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ ۗ وَإِذْ تَخْلُقُ مِنَ الطِّينِ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ بِإِذْنِي فَتَنْفُخُ فِيهَا فَتَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِي ۗ وَتُبْرِئُ الْأَكْمَةَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ بِإِذْنِي ۗ وَإِذْ تُخْرِجُ الْمَوْتَىٰ بِإِذْنِي ۗ وَإِذْ كَفَفْتُ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَنْكَ إِذْ جِئْتَهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ إِنْ هَٰذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ

[The Day] when Allah will say, "O Jesus, Son of Mary, remember My favor upon you and upon your mother when I supported you with the Pure Spirit and you spoke to the people in the cradle and in maturity; and [remember] when I taught you writing and wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel; and when you designed from clay [what was] like the form of a bird with My permission, then you breathed into it, and it became a bird with My permission; and you healed the blind and the leper with My permission; and when you brought forth the dead with My permission; and when I restrained the Children

of Israel from [killing] you when you came to them with clear proofs and those who disbelieved among them said, "This is not but obvious magic." Quran 5:110.

The miracle passages we are taking first i.e. 3:49 which occurs in the course of the angelic annunciation to Mary and the second passage 5:110 is very similar but this time it is retrospective. It is part of what God said to Jesus after raising him into His presence.

In these two Surahs miracle of giving life to birds and raising the dead which have attracted the writer's attention than other miracles such as healing the blind and leper. These two major miracles are related to giving life. Among these two lives giving to humans is most appropriate as far as the biblical account of Jesus' miracles is concerned. Giving life to a bird is not found in the Bible.

In these two Surahs, Jesus performed several miracles apart from creating birds from clay and raising the dead to life. The researcher devotes exclusively to the issue of Jesus giving life to the dead.

The miracle passages of the above two verses can be seen in brief as follows:

(3:49 b).

...Lo! I create for you from clay something resembling the form of birds and I blow into it and it becomes birds by God's leave. And I heal the blind from birth and the leper and I bring the dead to life by God's leave.

[*'anniii 'akhlulakum-minat-tiinika-hay- 'atit-tayri fa- 'antukhufihi fa-yakuunutayram-bi- 'iznillaahWa 'ubri-ul- 'akmahawa'abrasawa 'uh-yil-mawtaa bi- 'iznillaah...*]

(5:110 e)

...and when you created from clay something resembling the form of birds by My leave and when you blow into it and it became birds by My leave and you healed the blind from the birth and the leper by My leave and brought forth the dead by My leave...

[*'waiztakh-luquminat-tinika-hay-hay- 'atit-tayri bi- inzniifatanlukhufiiaafatakuunutayram-bi- 'izniawatubri- 'ul- 'akmahawal- 'abrasabiznii. Wa 'iztukhrijul-maw-taa bi- 'iznii']*

In these two passages (3:49 and 5:110) three appropriate words can be identified to claim the divinity of Jesus: ‘creating’ خلق (*Khalaqa*) ‘blowing’ نفخ (*nafakha*) and ‘clay’ طين (*tin*). For doing exegesis researcher is taking exclusively these three words ‘creating’ (*Khalaqa*) ‘blowing’ (*nafakha*) and ‘clay’ (*tin*) in order to claim the divinity of Jesus.

5.4.1. The background and context

The background of this Surah mentioned in the above section Surah 3:49 b

5.4.1.1. Analysis and Explanation on verb (*Khalaqa*) ‘creating’

The twelfth word of verse (3:49) is an imperfect verb (مضارع فعل). The verb is first person singular and is in the indicative mood (مرفوع). The verb's trilateral root is *khā lām qāf* (خ ل ق). verb – 1st person singular imperfect verb أَخْلُقُ *akhluqu* means (I) create.

Jesus’ miracles in Qur’an in the version of Pickthal and Yusuf Ali on the term ‘creating’ *khalaqa* used differently.

Surah 3:49, (I fashion (Pickthal, p.66) I make (Yusuf Ali, p.135) for you out of clay the likeness of a bird.. . . .

Between these two words ‘fashion’ used by Pickthal and ‘make’, used by Yusuf Ali is closer to Arabic term خلق (*Khalaqa*) which means ‘creating’

In this passage it is mentioned that Jesus created a bird with clay and gave life by blowing into it. In this passage important Arabic words are خلق *khalaqa*, نفخ *nafakha*, الطين *tin*. For example, the verb خلق *khalaqa* (‘creating’) exclusively used where God created Adam (6:2, 23:12, 37:11, 38:76), the same verb *khalaqa* was used while Jesus was creating the bird (3:49, 5:110). Another important Arabic verb نفخ *nafakha* which God used for ‘blowing’ to give life to Adam, (15:29, 32:9, 38:72) and into Mary when she conceived. (21:91, 66:12) the same verb *nafakha* was used by Jesus while Jesus was blowing into a clay bird to give life.⁴⁸⁹ If one carefully read the passages the same Arabic words are used in the creation account. In this study, Robinson gives the evidence to say that Jesus is not just a man but is also divine.⁴⁹⁰

⁴⁸⁹ Neal Robinson, *Christ in Islam and Christianity*, (New York: State University of New York, 1991), 143.

⁴⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 144.

5.4.1.2. Analysis and Explanation on Arabic term فَانْفُخُ (*fanafakha*) means (And-I) 'breath'.

The eighteenth word of verse (3:49) is divided into 2 morphological segments. A conjunction and verb. The prefixed conjunction *fa* is usually translated as "and". The imperfect verb (مضارع فعل) is the first person singular and is in the indicative mood (مرفوع). The verb's trilateral root is *nūn fā khā* (ن ف خ).

CONJ – prefixed conjunction *fa* (and)

V – 1st person singular imperfect verb

5.4.1.3. Analysis and Explanation on Arabic term الطِّينِ (*tin*) means clay.

The fifteenth word of verse (3:49) is a masculine noun and is in the genitive case (مجرور). The noun's trilateral root is *tā yā nūn* (ن ي ط).

N – Genitive masculine noun.

Most of the Islamic scholars ignored important terms and words in the creation accounts of God and Jesus and just used the phrase 'by the permission of God' (بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ) or by God's leave or by the support of God Jesus performed miracles. They ignore terms that compare the basic verbal and noun forms of words like Jesus 'creating' (*Khalaqa*) birds with 'clay' (*tin*), and 'blowing' (*nafakha*) into birds and God Creating (*Khalaqa*) Adam with dust (*tin*), and blowing (*nafakha*) His Spirit into Adam.(15:29; 32:9; 38:72). Neal Robinson mentions that none of the classical scholars consulted link Jesus' blowing into the bird with God's blowing His Spirit into Man.⁴⁹¹

5.4.1.4. Analysis of the Arabic term بِإِذْنِ (*bi-idh'ni* "by the permission") and its explanation

The 22nd word of verse (3:49) is divided into 2 morphological segments. A preposition and a noun. The prefixed preposition *bi* is usually translated as "with" or "by". The noun is masculine and is in the genitive case (مجرور). The noun's trilateral root is *hamza dhāl nūn* (أ ذ ن). Together the segments form a preposition phrase known as *jār wa majrūr* (جار ومجرور جار).

p – prefixed preposition *bi* (by)

n – genitive masculine noun (permission)

⁴⁹¹ Neol Robinson, 145

5.4.2. Muslim scholars' discussion on the miracles

5.4.2.1. Al-Baydawi

Regarding his comments on the miracle work of Jesus, al-Baydawi refers to Surah 3:87. He commented on the Arabic word *aiyadna-hu* (أَيِّدْنَاهُ) (we (God) support him). Because of God's support, Jesus performed miracles. Crowds of people came to get healed by Jesus. Jesus prayed for those who were unable to come to him for healing and they were also healed by the prayer offered by Jesus.⁴⁹² He referred to the important verb (*akhluqu*, أَخْلُقُ) and the phrase 'by the permission of God alone.' Baydawi's observation that the phrase 'born-blind' '*akmaha*' (الْأَكْمَه) as people who were affected with an eye infection, and were healed by Jesus is appreciable⁴⁹³ but he missed the verb *akhluqu*, أَخْلُقُ.⁴⁹⁴

5.4.2.2. Ibn Kathir

He tries to elucidate his view by taking into account many scholars' views on verse 3:49. The miracles of Jesus similar to as those performed by other prophets such as *Musa* (Moses) and Mohammad. *Musa* performed miracles as per the requirement of that particular time. By doing so he earned the admiration of the people who saw those miracles, accepted Islam and became the believers of Allah. As far as the miracle of Qur'an is concerned, it was revealed to Prophet Muhammad and confirmed to the people as the Word of God so that man (human) or *Jinn* (Satan) even if they try to create another equivalent to Qur'an they cannot do so because the Qur'an is the Word of God. To show the power of the Almighty God to the people of that period, Jesus performed the miracles. According to Ibn Kathir Jesus' miracles were equivalent to the miracles performed by the other prophets like Moses and Prophet Muhammad.⁴⁹⁵ Ibn Kathir cited the *hadith* but he did not exegete Qur'anic verb *akhluqu*, أَخْلُقُ.⁴⁹⁶

5.4.2.3. Al-Qurtubi⁴⁹⁷ Jalaluddin⁴⁹⁸ and Ayatollah (Shi'a scholar)⁴⁹⁹

These three scholars agree that all the miracles performed by Jesus were by the permission of God or by God's leave and they too missed in exegete the Qur'anic verb *akhluqu*, أَخْلُقُ.

⁴⁹² Al-Baydawi, Vol 2, 18.

⁴⁹³ Al-Baydawi, Vol. 2, 18.

⁴⁹⁴ Neol Robinson, 145

⁴⁹⁵ www. Online pdf. Taken on 02-08-2018.

⁴⁹⁶ Neal Robinson, Christ in Islam and Christianity, 145.

⁴⁹⁷ al-Qurtubi.

⁴⁹⁸ www.alislam.org/JalaluddinTafsir in English. Taken on 13-08-2018.

⁴⁹⁹ Ayatollah Nasir MakaremShirazi, *Tafsir -e-namoona.*, Vol. 1, 330-333.

5.4.2.4. ‘Allamah Tabataba’i

He believed the creative word of God i.e. ‘Be’, and by the support of the Holy Spirit (*ayyadnahu bi-ruuhil-qudus*, أَيَّدَنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ 2:87) Jesus healed the sick and raised the dead.⁵⁰⁰ But he is also not discussed in the verb *akhluqu*, أَخْلَقَ.

5.4.2.5. Al-Tabari

In the miracles’ performance of Jesus Tabari just mentioned that with the permission of God (بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ), Jesus created birds and gave life and with the permission of God Jesus healed the blind and the leper and gave life to the dead. In 3:49 Tabari a word ‘bat’ is used of a bird. He wrote since the youth asked Jesus to create a bird which was the toughest among all the bird species, Jesus created the bat.⁵⁰¹ Tabari explains the meaning of the Arabic word for a bird (*tayr*) as a tough bird as ‘bat’ but he did not compare the verbal form of ‘creating’ (أَخْلَقَ), with the verbal form used in 3:49 in relation to Jesus’ creation account.⁵⁰²

5.4.2.6. Zamakhshari

He was a classical Islamic scholar uses the Arabic word *ayyadnahu* (أَيَّدَنَاهُ 2:87) (we support him) and expressed his view that with the support of God Jesus was able to perform all his miracles. Jesus gave life to a clay bird and healed the blind and the leper with the support of God. He brought life to the dead with the support of God.⁵⁰³ Zamakhshari has not taken the risk of comparing the creation account of Jesus with the creation account of God on looking into a verbal form of ‘creating’ (أَخْلَقَ). Instead, Zamakhshari polishes the verb (*akhluqu*, أَخْلَقَ) with the other verb *qaddara* قَدَّرَ which generally means ‘determine’ or ‘make in proportion’. He defines ‘creating’ (*Khalaq*) as ‘the bringing of a thing into being by proportioning it and making it regular’ (*‘l-shay’a ‘ala taqdirinwa-istiwa’in*). He cites another verbal form ‘to fashion a sandal’ (*khalafa ‘l-na’ala*) to support his stand.⁵⁰⁴

5.4.2.7. Al-Razi

He was also a classical Islamic scholar refers to the miracle or miraculous work of Jesus in 3:49. Al-Razi explained that Jesus performed the miracles by the permission of God. He

⁵⁰⁰ al-mizan.org

⁵⁰¹ Al-Tabari, Vol. 5, 420-425

⁵⁰² Neal Robinson, *Christ in Islam and Christianity*, (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), 145.

⁵⁰³ Zamakhshari, vol. 2, 312.

⁵⁰⁴ Neal Robinson, 145

repeats the phrase; ‘by the permission of God’ Jesus performed miracles.⁵⁰⁵ Razi alone ventured to exegete the verb خلق *khalaqa*. Razi’s treatment of the verb *khalaqa* is much more general. He states the verb *khalaqa* has the meaning of *taqdir* (determining, measuring), *taswiya* (arranging, making regular) and *taswir* (fashioning, representing). He provides several non-Qur’anic expressions including the one cited by Zamakhshari. He also uses evidence from pre-Islamic poetry such as the words of Zuhayr b. Abi Sulma in his tribute of Harim Ibn Sinan where the verb ‘measured’ is as follows:

“You indeed cut what you have measured (*Khalaqta*). Some of the people measure (*yakhluqu*) then does not cut.”⁵⁰⁶

5.4.2.8. Ibn ‘Arabi

In the context of Jesus performing miracles Ibn ‘Arabi states that Jesus played a part in healing the sick and raising the dead. Jesus’ role was blowing into the clay bird and it became a living bird. Ibn ‘Arabi affirms through the permission of God the sick were healed and dead were raised and clay bird became a living bird but that occurred only because of Jesus’ breath and touch.⁵⁰⁷

5.4.3. Christian scholars disson on the miracles

5.4.3.1. Geoffrey Parrinder⁵⁰⁸

He was a renowned Christian scholar, he wrote that Muslims came in closer contact with Christians and they incorporated stories from the Bible and legend and recorded Jesus’ healing the sick, raising the dead, walking on the water, and making loaves appear out of the ground.⁵⁰⁹ He further says that Muslim commentators traditionally accepted this miracle story as a fact but modern Muslim writers such as M. ‘Ali take the miracle work of Jesus rationally and interpret and try to minimize the miraculous elements in the Qur’an as much as possible. For instance, M. ‘Ali says that Jesus healed the spiritual life of people but not the healing of the body. ‘Ali interprets the word ‘bird’ (*tayr*) as meaning a brave or spiritual man. Jesus ‘by breathing a spirit into mortals made them rise above those who are low upon the earth.’ M. ‘Ali’s rational view on the healing of Jesus is only a spiritual one but not bodily healing even among the sick

⁵⁰⁵ Al-Razi, Vol. 8, 61-63

⁵⁰⁶ Neal Robinson, 145.

⁵⁰⁷ Muhy I-D-Din Ibn-‘Arabi, *The wisdom of the Prophets*, (Gloucestershire: Beshara Publications, 1975), 70.

⁵⁰⁸ (1910 – 2005)

⁵⁰⁹ Geoffrey Parrinder, *Jesus in the Qur’an*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1965), 85.

people. But a study on *Miracle and the New psychology* done in 1922, declared that the healing miracles of Jesus was not merely of the spirit, but was of both soul and body.⁵¹⁰

5.4.3.2. Neal Robinson

Another renowned Christian scholar explains that the Qur'an gives the evidence to trace the divinity of Jesus as follows:

First evidence is God is spoken of as 'the best of creation (*ahsanu 'l-khlaqqin*), (23:14...So blessed be Allah, the best of Creators!), Since human beings cannot be creators in the sense of 'causing to be' (*takwin*) and 'originating' (*ibada*) the word 'creator' (*khaliq*) should here be interpreted in terms of 'determining' and 'arranging'. Second, there are three *ayas* (verses) where *Khalaqa* and its derivatives are applied to lying (29:17 '...and ye only invent a lie...'; 26:137 and 38:7). Razi suggests that this is because the liar determines and fashions a falsehood in his imagination. Third, there is the evidence of the two *ayas* in which Jesus is the subject of the verb. Finally, there is the Qur'anic assertion that God 'determined (*khalaqa*) for you all that is in the earth' (2:29). Razi argues that the perfect tense of *khalaqa* indicates God's activity in the past. Yet it is nonsense to suppose that everything that is on the earth at present had already been 'created' by God if what is meant by this is that he had already brought it into being and originated it. The meaning must be rather that He 'determined' or 'predetermined' (*qaddara*) everything.⁵¹¹

In comparing Jesus' blowing into the birds with God's blowing His spirit into Man, Razi assumes that Jesus' breath was in some way special. What he says in the context of 3:49 is tantalizingly brief and ambiguous. He remarks that some theologians claim that this *aya* (verse) indicates that the spirit is a fine substance like the wind and is thus presented as breath. There is a debate whether it is permissible to say that God endowed Jesus' breathe with particular effectiveness so that when he blew into things it caused them to come to life. He presents the alternative view, namely that God created a life by His own power at the moment when Jesus blew. In support of this, he quotes two *ayas* from the Qur'an. First, God is described as '[He] who created (*khalaqa*) death and life' (67:2). Second, when Abraham was involved in a dispute he said, 'My Lord is he who gives life and causes death' (2:258). Abraham's argument would have been worthless if this were true of anyone else. So far Razi's position is perfectly clear but Razi does not stop at this point. He adds that according to the Qur'an Jesus was begotten solely

⁵¹⁰ Ibid., 85-86.

⁵¹¹ Ibid.,

by Gabriel's blowing into Mary and that therefore since Gabriel is a pure spirit and a purely spiritual being, it, of course, follows that Jesus' breath was life and spirit.⁵¹² In view of this it seems likely that the Qur'anic revelations about Jesus' miracles and the interpretations of the classical Islamic scholars were intended as a corrective to Christian teaching.⁵¹³

This parallelism has never been explained by Muslims except to use it to perversely claim the Bible is corrupted. They argue that the original Bible contained the apocryphal story of Jesus making and animating clay birds and that the Qur'an was merely correcting a wrongful exclusion of the apocryphal.

This is erroneous as the *Sira* (biography of Prophet Muhammad) tells how Muhammad, far from receiving these stories from Allah (via the angel Gabriel), heard it from three Christians. Saifullah and Azmy of Islamic-awareness.

Those who talked to Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, were Abu Haritha Ibn `Alqama, Al-`Aqib `Abdul-Masih and Al-Ayham al-Sa`id). They were Christians according to the faith of the king with differences between them; they say: He is Allah, and say: He is Son of Allah, and say: He is the third of three (i.e., part of Trinity) and these are the claims of Christianity. (They use as evidence for their claim that He is Allah the argument that he raised the dead, cured the sick, created from clay bird-like structure then breathed into it to make it a (living) bird.)

All this was by the leave of Allah, the Praiseworthy the Exalted (to appoint him as a sign for men) (19:21). They argue that he is Son of Allah by saying he had no known father and spoke in infancy which is something never done by any human being. They use as evidence for their claim that He is the third of three (i.e., part of Trinity) the argument that Allah says: We did, We commanded, We created and We judged (i.e., by using the plural for Himself), and whereas if He was one, He would say: I did, I judged, I commanded and I created; but it is He, Jesus and Maryam. The Qur'an was revealed addressing all these arguments."⁵¹⁴

The parallelism between the Qur'an's 'Jesus animating clay birds' and the apocryphal infancy gospels is strong, suggesting that Allah was not the author of the Qur'an, nor is he the God of the Christians. There are various reasons why these apocryphal gospels are not included

⁵¹² Ibid., 145-146.

⁵¹³ Ibid., 144

⁵¹⁴ Abu Muhammad `Abd al-Malik Ibn Hisham al-Ma`afiri, *Al-Sirah Al-Nabawiyah*, 1998, Volume II, Dar al-Hadith: Cairo (Egypt), 181-182.

in the canon; the First Gospel of the Infancy is a comparatively late work while the Second Gospel of the Infancy (actually a fragment of the Gospel of Thomas) is a famous forgery. Both these Apocrypha contain verses that contradict the canonical Gospels.⁵¹⁵

Muslims in general and Islamic scholars, in particular, have not revealed anything on these miracle passages especially on the two verbs *khalaqa*, (create) and *nafakha* (blowing).

Though there are various Muslim traditions that ascribe to Jesus' performing miracles, such as healing the sick and raising the dead yet it is obvious that the Qur'an states that Jesus is no more than a human being and that he is a prophet like all other prophets. Islam assumes that Christians are trying to elevate Jesus as God. A deeper study of these texts provides clarity on the divinity of Jesus Christ.

From Christian apologists and polemicists perspective these miracles of Jesus, suggest divine prerogatives.⁵¹⁶ His argument in favour of Jesus' miracles is: First, the verb used here to denote Jesus' 'creating' is *khalaqa*, a verb which the Qur'an reserves almost exclusively for God's activity.⁵¹⁷ Second, is the substance which Jesus employed was 'clay' (*tin*), the very substance from which, according to the Qur'an, God created Man.⁵¹⁸ Third, the verb *nafakha* is used to indicate Jesus' 'blowing' into the birds is used elsewhere for God's blowing his Spirit into Man at the creation⁵¹⁹ and into Mary when she conceived.⁵²⁰ In these miracle passages (3:49, 5:110), a phrase used "by the permission of God." The Arabic word for by the permission of God used as بِإِذْنٍ (*bi-idh'ni*):

Many Muslims take the advantage of this phrase 'by the permission of God (بِإِذْنٍ (*bi-idh'ni*), to minimize the divinity of Jesus and declares that Jesus performed these miracles not by his own power but by the permission of God by ignoring the same term *Khlaqa* which God used

⁵¹⁵ Ibid.,

⁵¹⁶ There is evidence that they did so already during the lifetime of the Prophet – see below. In the modern period of this line of argument has rarely been pursued. It is, however, found in a work done by Denise Masson: rien ne s'opposee definitive d'après le Coran, à ce que Jésus soit considéré comme le Verbe éternel; il est comparé avec Adam qui a cet être, mérite le respect des anges; il est doué du pouvoir de créer, de faire des miracles, de connaître ce qui est caché [D. Mission, *Le Coran et la révélation judéo-chrétienne: études comparées* (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1959), 213.]

⁵¹⁷ See in conclusion at the end of this section.

⁵¹⁸ Qur'an 6:2; 7:12; 17:61; 23:12; 28:38; 32:7; 37:11; 38:71 and 38:76. The only other occurrence of the word *tin* is at 51:33.

⁵¹⁹ Qur'an 15:29; 32:9; and 38:72.

⁵²⁰ Qur'an 21:91 and 66:12.

for the creation of Adam. English translation for the Arabic word خلق (*Khlaqa*) different commentator used different words to miscalculate the divine power of Jesus.

These miracles were performed only by the Will of God, had he not willed them to occur, they could never come to be. God explicitly states this in the Quran, saying that they were:

"...by the permission of God" (Quran 3:49; 5:110)

Although Muslims cannot confirm it, the Bible, records⁵²¹ that Jesus at times never performed miracles. When Jesus tried to heal a blind man, he healed him in two stages. (Mark 8: 22-26). In another instance, Jesus or the other prophet performed miracles only by Will of God Almighty.

Neal Robinson stressed that Jesus performed the miracles 'by my permission' by citing Cragg's explanation for this issue. Kenneth Cragg implied it is found even in the New Testament that whatever Jesus said and did was by the divine authority and permission.⁵²¹

Robinson clarified that the miracle of giving life to birds are the sources from which Muhammad derived his information from apocryphal writings as some Christian historians have discovered through their research.⁵²² He refers to the canonical gospels that mention three people whom Jesus raised from the dead: Jairus' daughter, (Luke 8:49-55) the widow of Nain's son, (Luke 7:11-15) and Lazarus. (John 11:43-44). The Gospels do not mention the miracle of the birds. The closest pre-Islamic parallel to this is found in apocryphal writing known as *The Infancy Story of Thomas*, which he cited from E. Hennecke source given below:

When this boy Jesus was five years old he was playing at the ford a brook, and he gathered together into pools the water that flowed by, and made it at once clean, and commanded it by his word alone. He made soft clay and fashioned from it twelve sparrows. And it was the Sabbath when he did this, and there were also many other children playing with him. Now when a certain Jew saw what Jesus was doing in his play on the Sabbath he at once went and told his father Joseph: 'See, your child is at the brook, and has taken clay and fashioned twelve birds and has profaned the Sabbath.' And when Joseph came to the place and saw [it], he cried out to him, saying: 'Why do you do on the Sabbath what ought not to be done?' But Jesus clapped his hands and cried to the sparrows: 'Off with you!' And the sparrows took flight and went away chirping.⁵²³

⁵²¹ K. Cragg, (1985), 33f.

⁵²² Neal Robinson, *Christ in Islam and Christianity*, (New York: State University of New York, 1991), 143.

⁵²³ E. Hennecke, vol. 1, 392f.

Neal Robinson by citing the above story from *The Infancy Story of Thomas*, also shows how it is different from the miracle of birds mentioned in the Qur'an. *The Infancy Story of Thomas* which is mentioned as follows:

The parallel between Qur'an and *The Infancy Story of Thomas* is not exact. In the Qur'an Jesus creates birds; here he creates twelve sparrows. In the Quran he blows into them; here he claps his hands and issues an oral command. Nevertheless, it is striking that, in the Qur'an as in *The Infancy Story of Thomas*, two distinct stages are imagined: Jesus' fashioning the birds from clay and his bringing them to life. Moreover the second Qur'anic version somewhat puzzlingly mentions God's permission in connection with both stages. This makes admirable sense if on the basis of *The Infancy Story of Thomas* we assume that the fashioning of the birds involved an infringement of the Sabbath.⁵²⁴

By observing the material on the miracle work of Jesus, Robinson opines that Qur'anic revelations are meant for correcting Christian teachings. Further, he concludes on the phrase God's leave equates with Prophet Muhammad receiving Qur'an also by God's leave:

In view of this, it seems likely that the Qur'anic revelations about Jesus' miracles were intended as a corrective to Christian teaching. The Quran does not deny that Jesus performed the miracles which the Christians attributed to him but it puts them in perspective by stressing that they were performed by God's leave, that is to say, they are not proofs of his divinity.⁵²⁵

Further light is thrown on this phrase when the miracles are considered in the context of Muhammad's own prophetic ministry. According to the Qur'an the revelations which Muhammad received were likewise brought down to him by God's leave (2:97). Moreover, like Jesus' miracles, these revelations are described as signs (2:110).⁵²⁶

Conclusion

The title 'Jesus is the Holy Spirit' demonstrates very clearly that the Qur'an does admit or declares its meaning Jesus as a unique person. The few Muslim commentators' interpretations lead astray from its true meaning. On the other hand, many Muslim scholars do admit that Jesus is free from evil and a Spirit from God. But they are unwilling to emphasize Jesus' divine nature.

⁵²⁴ Neal Robinson, 143-144.

⁵²⁵ Ibid., 144

⁵²⁶ Ibid.,

In Qur'an, the title 'word of God' used as 'a word from Him' and 'His word' used interchangeably. The significance of this phrase 'a word from Him' (*kalimatim-minhu* 3:45 b) is God's word only as per Surah 4:171 says '...and His word (*wakalimatuhu*).

The words do not just come out of the mouth but from the Intelligent Mind of God. Qur'an clearly mentions 'word from Him'; 'His word' means it is from the intelligent Mind of God.

Surah 4:171 says that Jesus is His word means Jesus is God's word. This title Jesus as 'word from Him' and Jesus as 'His word' is derived from the Qur'an and no other human and prophets received this title except Jesus. He existed from the beginning with God.

The concept of the pre-existence of Jesus: Jesus was With Allah (God) as His Word since the Beginning of Allah (God).

In general, the name reflects the life of a person. The name also projects the fame, recognition, reputation of a person among the people. Since the title Messiah was given to Jesus, it is very much evident that Jesus is unique among mankind. If Muslim scholars do agree that he was free from evil and specially anointed, then Jesus is divine and had a divine mission

Most of the Islamic scholars have not taken important to Arabic words such as *khalaqa*, *tin*, and *nafakha* to explain their actual meaning and to connect with other passages where the same Arabic words are used. For example, the word *khalaqa* ('creating') exclusively used for God's activity, the same word *khalaqa* is used while Jesus creating the bird. Another important Arabic word *nafakha* which God used for 'blowing' to give life to Adam, the same verb *nafakha* is used while Jesus was blowing into clay bird to give life. This aspect of exegetical study most of the Islamic scholars missed perhaps to minimise the divinity of Jesus.

Jesus, giving life is a major aspect of divine identity that is mentioned in Qur'an but it is referred to God. The ultimate aim of most of the Islamic scholars is to degrade the status of Jesus.

CHAPTER SIX

COMMON GROUND FOR DIALOGUE

Introduction

Throughout the world one can see that there is true collaboration and even a kind of involvement between Muslim and Christian minorities in trying to go beyond their historical misunderstanding and working together for the promoting integrity, harmony, justice and peace.

Here in this study also one can observe the existence of tensions and misunderstanding between Christians and Muslims because of non-essential issues and factors. Realizing these stumbling blocks, Ann Cooper has rightly pointed out that “Christianity and Islam have produced great civilizations of which their members are proud, but they resulted in quite different ways of life. Throughout the history of these religions this has caused misunderstanding, prejudices, and even conflict.”⁵²⁷ When seeking an interaction and continue dialogue, both Christians and Muslims should recognize that in terms on the history of the crusades and of colonial imperialism, they are on a level playing field. There is no need for either side to be unnecessarily apologetic or overly triumphal.

Therefore, it is important for the Christians who attempt to dialogue with the Muslim to be aware of some of the events and issues involved in the history of contact between Christianity and Islam. These issues and events have shaped how Christians have viewed Muslims and how Muslims have considered Christians through history and continue in the same attitude and atmosphere even today. So the researcher has taken up dialogical approach for a better understanding of the study.

Dialogical approach refers to cooperative, constructive, and positive interaction between people of different religious traditions, spiritual or humanistic beliefs, at both the individual and institutional levels. It is based on mutual trust, promoting communal harmony and peaceful living. Jesus is understood and considered an important place in Islam. As the researcher intends to study the Islamic understanding of Jesus, the dialogical approach plays an important role to bring some unity and harmony in the understanding of the present research work.

⁵²⁷ Binod Peter Senapati, *Christian-Muslim Dialogue: A Retrospect and Prospects*, in “Allahabad Theological Journal, (ed.), Sam P.Mathew, 2016, Vol. 6, 125.

The term dialogue comes from the Greek word *Dialogos* which simply means ‘to speak across’: *dia* means across, and *legein* means to speak. It is an honest effort to share meaning with some others. The other meaning for dialogue is ‘to discuss’, ‘to investigate’. Basically, dialogue takes place when there are differences of opinion between two faith groups to talk about it and come to a common understanding so to live without misunderstanding for peaceful coexistence.

6.1. Dialogue in the Bible

The Bible is a book of dialogue. It deals with the ongoing dialogue between God and his creation since its beginning. This dialogical story does not stop with the Bible but falls over to the present, future and reaches out to the end of history culminating in the *Eschaton*. The dialogue between God and the creation became incarnate and tangible in human history when God sent his Word: Logos) in the form of his beloved son, Jesus Christ. This word incarnate that enlightens every human being came down in utter humility into the world and became flesh and dwelt among us. In him, the divine-human dialogue is fully demonstrated. Jesus Christ is dialogue in the flesh.

6.1.1. Dialogue in the Old Testament

In order to communicate His messages to the people, God used selected messengers such as Moses, Job, Samuel, Isaiah, and Jeremiah. One of the dialogical and intimate encounters of this kind that we come across in the Bible is in Exodus 33:11. The Lord speaks to Moses' face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. This encounter is pervaded with a spirit of friendship and intimacy. It involves talking face to face. This intimacy confirms that such a conversation could not be a monologue in which Moses was only a listener. This must have been two-way traffic with mutual questioning and discussions. Another example found in Numbers 22-29 in the most interesting circumstances is when Balaam is being goaded by Balak, the king of Moab, to curse the people of Israel. God initiates a dialogue with Balaam and speaks to him through strange ways in order to make a mouthpiece of the Lord. This dialogic encounter also reflects the intimacy of conversation between God and his prophet.

The book of Job is par excellence, one of the greatest and oldest dialogical narratives in the Bible. The clearly developed dialogic pattern of the book of Job with its prologue, speeches, and epilogues, plus the cycle of dialogue within the speeches themselves, show that this is a

theological interpretation of catastrophic events in the personal life of a God-fearing man. From beginning to the end of the dialogue the author is intent on answering one nagging question: What is the meaning of faith? All through the dialogue, God is being entreated to answer Job's repeated demand for a direct explanation of his sufferings, not by a justification of his actions, or by an immediate solution, but by the revelation of the Lord himself in wisdom and power. This would suffice for Job. He sees that God is what he is, there has to be a solution, and in this alone Job is satisfied.

There is a mini-dialogue within this crucial divine-human conversation. The intensity of the dialogue can be gauged from the following exchange of conversation among the dialogue partners.⁵²⁸ "Behold, I open my mouth; the tongue in my mouth speaks. My words declare the uprightness of my heart... Answer me, if you can; set your words in order before me; take a stand" (Job 33:2-5). "God speaks in one way, and in two, though man does not perceive it. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls upon men, while they slumber on their beds, then he opens the ears of men and terrifies them with a warning..." (Job 33:14-16).

There is also the serene and pleasant type of divine-human dialogue through song, music, poetry, both sad and exultant, in the Bible. The Psalmist harps that only the one who speaks truth from one's heart and who does not slander with his tongue can stand up to face God and has the courage and audacity to engage God in dialogue (Psalms 15:2-3). According to the Psalmist, in the Bible, the Lord of dialogue does not keep silent. He speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting (Psalm 50:1-3).

In the book of Proverbs, words of exhortation and wisdom always begin "Hear, my son your father's instruction" or the teaching of the mother (prov. 31:1). In keeping with dialogical integrity truthful and right speech is highly extolled (Prov. 12:18 and 16:13).

The prophets in the biblical times were constantly in dialogic fellowship with God. Of this dialogical prophetic tradition, Isaiah is a fine example. Isa 7:1-17 describes a dialogue between the Lord and King Ahaz. The prophet is engaged in a dialogue with the Lord who calls, "Come now, and let us reason together" (Isa.1:18). Reasoning together is always dialogic. The Lord touched the mouth of Jeremiah and put the right words in his mouth (Jer. 1:9). Prophet Ezekiel was active during the Exile in Babylonia. (Ezek. 42:48).

⁵²⁸ Singh, *Biblical Insights on Interfaith Dialogue*. 4.

In such dialogical predicaments, God's prophet had a crucial role to play. One such significant role in dialogue was carried out by prophet Jeremiah, whose anguish with God and his people was occasioned by the recurring apostasy of the house of Judah who failed to learn from experience. It is a blatantly start type of dialogue also. God conveys through his prophet that he is the Lord of vengeance (Jer. 51:34-58) and even his onetime servant Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, would not be spared punishment. The Lord says: "None of my words will be delayed any longer, but the word which I speak will be performed" (Ezek. 12:28). Another prophet of the Old Testament who had a decisive role in dialogic communication between the Lord and his people was Amos whose message is largely a cry for justice. The dialogue on the Lord's side has taken a fierce form. "From Zion, the Lord's voice, like the roar of a lion, will be heard in judgment" (Amos 3:8).

6.1.2. Dialogue in the New Testament

The ongoing Divine dialogue is fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ who is the dialogue in flesh. There is an, even more, searching and probing dialogue between Jesus Christ and his intimate circle of disciples- "Who do men say that the Son of Man is?" (Matt.16:13; Mar 8:27). The dialogue was equally probing from the disciples' side, "Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign when these things are all to be accomplished!" Mark 13:30. The centre of the dialogical drama of the New Testament is Jesus Christ himself who is between God the Father and the creation, the people, the disciples, the crowds, the multitude, the Pharisees, the Romans and the Jewish nation itself. During a dialogue at the temple between Jesus and the Jews, he clearly declared "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me" (John 7:16). "For I have not spoken on my own authority, the Father who sent me has himself given me commandment what to say and what to speak." In a similar position, our guide in dialogue is the Holy Spirit. "The Holy Spirit will teach you in that hour what you ought to say" (Luke 12:12). One of the best examples of dialogue in the New Testament is Jesus having a dialogue with a Samaritan woman. Jesus began His dialogue by saying "give me a drink" (John 4:7) to reveal Himself as Messiah to Samaritan woman and in turn to the entire village.

One can find a good example of dialogical discourses in the ministry of St. Paul in the book of the Acts of the Apostles. During Paul's second missionary journey while he was waiting for his compatriots at Athens, he visited the Jews at the local synagogue and argued with them and with the devout persons. It is recorded that he argued in the market place every day with

those who chanced to be there. He engaged even the Epicurean and the Stoic philosophers who met him. Dialogical discourses of this kind were a common tradition of the intelligentsia of that city. All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived in that great city spent their time in “telling or hearing” something new (Acts 17:21). There must have been open dialogue meetings and discussions in a friendly and sportive spirit. Paul used this practice of dialogue and of course he made use of the occasion to share the gospel also.

6.2. Dialogue in the Qur’an

In Qur’an God spoke with Prophet Muhammad to reveal his will for the present, past and future happenings. Islam arose in a milieu where Christianity and Judaism were also present. Naturally, people who became Muslims at that time were aware of many figures, saints and prophets that were part of Jewish and Christian heritage, such as Abraham. Islam's view of itself is that it is a continuation of these earlier religions. It recognized them, sought to engage with their adherents and even referred to them as part of the same family of religions (*ahl al-kitab*). This is the context in which one must locate Islam’s position on dialogue. Islam has been dialogical from its very inception. There have been and are differences between people, and the Qur’anic formula is to see the differences and diversity of peoples as strength, rather than as a problem.⁵²⁹

The ideology of the “other” usually divides human groups into “them” and “us”, where “them” seems quite different from “us”. This is a false dichotomy. Even though Islam acknowledges differences, it gives the most positive spin on it by calling it mercy from God. In other words, differences and diversity are seen as a blessing, rather than as a problem. So in the Qur’an, Surah 30:22 says, “And one of His spins is the creation of heavens and the earth and the diversity of your languages and your colors; most surely there are signs in this for the learned.” The Qur’an further states that God constituted human beings into communities and nations so as to enable them to recognize one another and, in fact, to learn from one another. This is a very strong suggestion that people should engage with each other in most respectful ways to learn about one another and one another’s faith traditions. The aim is common: to arrive at or to get

⁵²⁹ Irfan A. Omar, ‘Qur’an Upholds Plurality as the Will of God’, in *Seeking communion*, ed. Joseph Victor Edwin S.J, (Hyderabad: ISPcK/HMI publication,), 1-2. (Irfan A. Omar is a professor of Islam and world Religions, specialized in Islamic thought, with a focus on inter-religious connections between Islam and other religions).

better at being human and living righteously. Each person, whatever his or her faith, can help himself or herself as well as others in becoming a better person.⁵³⁰

Prof. Mahmood Ayoub, a Lebanese-American scholar of Islam and interfaith dialogue, mentioned in many of his speeches and writings that diversity is a “divinely instituted law” of our world and no one can change this even if we tried our best to. The Qur’an says this in several places: “Had your Lord willed, He would have made humankind one single community” (see verses of Surah.11:118-19; 16:93; 42:8). Therefore, the differences between people are there so that each human being will see “us” in “them” and “them” in “us”, so to speak. In a way, diversity is humanity’s best measure of itself because it allows one to keep things in perspective. Once the realization occurs that in fundamental terms “they” are no different from “us”, the particularities of each become less significant and the common core of being human can be appreciated. This appreciation is understood in the Qur’an as a sort of competition to do good work. Thus the Qur’an asserts:

“For each, there is a direction to which he (or she) turns; vie therefore with one another in the performance of good works. Wherever you may be, God shall bring you altogether (on the Day of Judgment); surely God has power over all things (Surah 2:148). Similarly, (Surah 5:48) also emphasizes the diversity of faiths and communities as strength and invites them to “compete with each other in goodness.”

Another verse repeats the message:

“O humankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other, (not that you may despise each other. Verily, the most honored of you in the sight of God is (one who is) most righteous” (Surah. 49:13).

To answer which religion is true, Qur’an says to its reader to take the task of cultivating and practicing humility towards God with utmost seriousness. This is done through pilgrimage, prayer, fasting, etc., and also by showing kindness towards people, which is the product of humility. This allows the believer to give oneself and shows resources with others. This message is made plain in numerous Qur’anic verses. If one understands the Qur’anic message to be one of

⁵³⁰ Ibid., 2.

superiority over other religions, it becomes even more imperative that a believer in the Qur'an would follow the central teachings of the Qur'an, which is basically asking one to be humble on earth, which would make the belief in superiority somewhat necessary. The Qur'an (e.g. Surah 22:69) it is stated that: "God will judge on the day of resurrection on matters that you [people of different religions] differ."

Based on numerous verses in the Qur'an which speak of our responsibility, one can say that for each believer and for each human being (no matter what their religion) the task is to live righteously, which includes refraining from judging others and their religions. There is an open invitation in the Qur'an for a peaceful living together by discussing the differences among the Christians and Muslims. Qur'an says:

There shall be no compulsion in religion: true guidance has become distinct from error. Whoever refuses to be led by Satan and believes in God has grasped the strong handhold that will never break. (Surah 2:256) peaceful coexistence is affirmed (Surah 106:1-6). At the same time the people of the book are urged to "come to a common Word" on the understanding of the unity of God (*tawhid*) and worship (e.g. Surah 3:64, 4:171, 5:82 and 29:46). While the Qur'an provides a framework for Muslim' understanding of Christians and Christianity.

Both Islam and Christianity are believed to be "missionary" religions. The question applies equally to both. Numerous Christian scholars and practitioners have promoted interfaith dialogue while remaining true to their Christian faith. Some of them believe that there is no conflict between mission and dialogue. Here one has to refer to the interpretation of the sacred scripture to discern what it means by the word "mission". Does it mean scoring points with other faiths over who gets more converts? Or does it mean practicing one's faith in the best way one can? If "mission" means to "live our faith" in an exemplary way, then I think that dialogue should be part of that life. Hence, there is no contradiction between "mission" and "dialogue".

Da'wah and dialogue are not mutually contradictory, as explained above. *Da'wah* in the Qur'an is not the same as the notion of "mission" as understood by many Christians. Again, in both religions, these terms can be interpreted inclusively or exclusively. Even among Muslims, there are different ways in which they understand the notion of *da'wah*. One of the most plausible is to share one's faith with others. Conversion is not up to us - that is a matter of the

heart, and only God has control over hearts. Therefore, one can share one's faith and still engage in respectful dialogue.⁵³¹

The key is, to be honest, and clear about one's intentions with those whom one engages. If I attend an interfaith dialogue with a person of another faith but in my heart I am convinced (even if I did not say it out loud) that this other person is going to Hell and I must save him or her by converting to my faith, then I am not engaging in dialogue but, rather, in deceit. Interfaith dialogue requires one to be present and to listen and to learn from the other. This does not mean one has to change one's own religion or even to agree with the other person. Dialogue only requires two things for each dialogue partner: to respect each other and to listen to each other. This way, each person gets the same respect and the same opportunity to present his or her view of faith.

Even the Qur'an says that conversion is not our business; we can only tell others about the teachings of the Qur'an. But one would have to first know and also put into practice in one's own life what the Qur'an teaches in order to tell others about it in a convincing way. If one practices what the Qur'an teaches, one would be less worried about others' "incorrect" practice and more interested in being ethical and respectful towards them. *Da'wah* is thus not anti-ethical to dialogue if one understands it so be primarily witnessing through one's own example.⁵³²

6.3. Christian Ecumenical Responses to People of other Faiths

Christian scholars and leaders have taken these critical responses of Non-Christian faiths into their serious consideration, and have begun to think positively and to respond relevantly. In other words, non-Christian responses and criticisms have enlightened Christian Missionaries particularly to rethink about their missionary attitudes towards other faiths.⁵³³ From the beginning of the twentieth century, the Church has focused on Christian ecumenical concerns towards other faiths. Among the Protestants and Roman Catholics, the approaches towards other faith took positively and came out with new strategies to work among non-Christians.

6.3.1. Protestant contributions

The Protestant Scholars discussed sincerely and seriously in international Missionary Conferences and World Council of Churches all through the twentieth century: Fifth World

⁵³¹ Ibid., 4

⁵³² Ibid., 5.

⁵³³ T.Swami Raju, *Christian responses to Plurality of Religion*, (Bangalore: BTESSC/SATHRI, 2006), 70.

Council of Churches: Nairobi, 1975. The general theme of this assembly was on "Seeking Community" The Common Search of People of Various Faiths, Cultures, and Ideologies."

The guideline on dialogue is as follows:

- Dialogue should normally be planned together.
- Recognition of religio-cultural diversity of their local situation
- Churches should seek ways in which Christians can enter into dialogue with others.
- Partner should free to define themselves.
- Dialogue should generate educational efforts in the community.
- Dialogue is vital when participants share their lives together
- Dialogue should be pursued by sharing in common enterprises in the community.
- Partners in dialogue should be aware of their ideological commitments and cultural loyalties.
- A dialogue will raise the question of sharing in celebrations, rituals, worship and meditation.
- Whenever possible, dialogue should be planned and undertaken ecumenically.
- Planning will necessitate regional and local guidelines.
- Dialogue can be helped by participation in world inter-religious meetings and organisations.⁵³⁴

The question of Christian relation to people of other faiths was discussed to a considerable extent in the conference of CWME: Commission on World Mission and Evangelism⁵³⁵ held at San Antonio in 1989 and the report of this discussion was recorded in the section entitled "Witness among People of Other Living Faiths." The report gives further clarification on "witness and dialogue" as follows:

"We recognize that both witness and dialogue presuppose two-way relationships. We affirm that witness does not preclude dialogue but invite it, and that dialogue does not preclude witness but extends and deepens it. Dialogue has its own place and integrity and is neither opposed to nor incompatible with witness or proclamation. We do not water down our commitment if we engage in dialogue."⁵³⁶

⁵³⁴ Quoted from A. Haque, *Mission and dialogue in the New Millennium*, Delhi: ISPCK, 1999, 18.

⁵³⁵ *Ibid.*, 88.

⁵³⁶ David Gill (ed.), *Gathered for Life: Official Report, VI Assembly, WCC, Vancouver, Canada, 4th July – 10 the August, 1983*, Grand Rapids: Wm. B.Eerdmans, 1983, 40.

The above observations emphasize the need and importance of Christian witness in a multi-faith context. The ecumenical concerns of Protestant Churches regarding Christian relations with the people of the faiths started from World Missionary Conference of 1910 paving the way for the development of more positive thinking about other religion improving Christian relations with non-Christians. Protestant Churches under the guidance of the World council of Churches started a dialogue with other improving better relation positively. Therefore, the ecumenical movement of the 20th century contributed much to the development of Christian relations with other people and now in the 21st century, Christians have to put all these positive ecumenical concerns in our day-to-day practice by respecting others' faith and religious experiences. The World council of Churches opines that “All through the 20th century we have had an extensive and excellent theoretical and theological framework for improving better relations with different faiths, but now we need to keep it in practical life too.”⁵³⁷

6.3.2. Roman Catholic contributions

The authorized standpoint of Catholics on the question of others religion has passed through various stages. Though there was a negative attitude towards other faiths, Catholics indeed contributed much to the development of a positive attitude towards people of other faiths, perhaps, the Vatican II Council. In fact, this council is a turning point in Catholic circles in terms of its tone and concerns by opening doors for positive thinking towards world religions. The papers presented and circulated in this council have avoided using negative terms towards other faiths such as 'heathen,' 'pagan,' 'superstitious,' 'idolatry,' 'or 'error' and have maintained a clear positive tone in dealing with non-Christian religions of the world.⁵³⁸

Mission and evangelism, as per the Catholic concern, were understood primarily as preaching the gospel and planting the church.” Therefore, conversion became the primary goal of the mission, which ultimately led to the establishment of churches. However, the first clear Council of India in 1950 at Bangalore and approved by Pope Pius XII in 1951, i.e., “we acknowledge indeed that there is truth and goodness outside the Christian religion, for God has not left the nations without a witness to Himself, and the human soul is naturally drawn towards the one true God.”⁵³⁹ This kind of positive approach led to the Vatican II Council for further

⁵³⁷ T.Swami Raju, *Christian responses to Plurality of Religion*, 2006, 88-89.

⁵³⁸ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁵³⁹ J. Neuner and J. Dupius (ed.), 272.

discussion on the issue of non-Christian religions and makes a constructive contribution to a pluralistic perspective.

6.3.2. 1. Vatican II

The Vatican II in the history of the Catholic Church, which brought drastic changes in thinking and perspective of the Catholics. Pope John XXIII called for this council on 25th January 1959 and after four years of preparations; this council was inaugurated on October 11th, 1962 with 2540 delegates who had voting rights. The main aim of this council was indicated by the word *aggiornamento* meaning, “refurbishing” or “updating the Church.” The Council concluded on December 9th, 1965 after four successive sessions were held at different times. Pope John XXIII died on June 3rd 1963 and Pope Paul VI succeeded him and opened the second session of the Council. Both the Popes were instrumental in developing a positive outlook and openness to other religions. Most influential thinkers and scholars of this Council were, perhaps, Karl Rahner and Hans Kung, who directed the attention of the delegates with positive thinking towards the question of people of other faiths. Let us refer to one of the important documents related to the question of religious pluralism and Christian witness in a multi-faith context.⁵⁴⁰

6.3.2.2. *Nostra Aetate*

The *Nostra Aetate* meaning "our times," was promulgated the October 28th, 1965. It deals with non-Christian religions. It is, indeed, the “Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to non-Christian Religions. “This document opens a way to the positive attitude towards the people of other faiths. It expresses special concern for common humanity and fellowship of all human beings and traces the essential unity of the human race as based on the fact that all human beings have faith in God as their creator and have also as their ultimate goal. Respecting other religions, this document very clearly mentions its positive stand towards other faiths that, “The Catholic Church rejects nothing, which is true and holy in these religions. She looks with sincere respect upon those ways of conduct and life, those rules and teachings...⁵⁴¹ By recognizing values of other religions particularly of Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism, this document created then a positive and more sympathetic understanding about non-Christians among Catholics.

⁵⁴⁰ T. Swami Rju, *Christian responses to Plurality of Religion*, 2006, 91.

⁵⁴¹ “Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to non-Christian Religions.” *The Documents of Vatican II*, edited by Walter M. Abbot, (New York: American Press, 1966), 660f.

6.4. Christian-Muslim Relations in India: A Critical Survey

Recently, from March 28-30, 1979, the first Catholic All-India Consultation on Dialogue with Muslims took place in Cathedral House at Agra. It had been convened by the Dialogue Commission of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (C.B.C.I). Dr. Bhajjan, the then Director of Henry Martyn Institute (H.M.I), the renowned Protestant pioneer Institute of Islamic Studies in India, together with two of his colleagues, were present, Archbishop Dominic Athaide of Agra, who hosted the Consultation, rightly called it "a milestone in the history of the church of India.

It is good to assess critically Christian-Muslim relations in India in the light of the world at large. However, a mere enumeration of select activities and events in this field would hardly be satisfying. The wider and deeper issues at stake, as well as the specifically Indian predicament of the Christian-Muslim encounter, need to be elucidated. In the Republic of India the vast Hindu majority together with the Muslim, Sikh, Christian and other smaller minorities, are called to strive, all together, for a better future within the democratic, secular framework provided for by the Constitution of January 1950.

6.4.1. Islam in Post-partition India

Islam in India finds itself- especially after the Independence of 1947, in a peculiar, if not unique situation. Like other Indians, Indian Muslims are predominantly rural people.⁵⁴² The partition of the Indian sub-continent in 1947, brought about by the Muslims themselves, proved an event that can hardly be overestimated in its consequences. It brought about the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and later, in 1971, led to the birth of a third nation on the Indian sub-continent, the People's Republic of Bangladesh. As the same time, the partition of 1947 drastically, decreased Muslim weight in politics and other areas of social life within the Indian Republic. A total of at least six million Muslims migrated from India to Pakistan.

Excepting those hailing from East Punjab, about eighty percent, a high percentage of the emigrants originated from urban areas, comprising the bulk of the Muslim bourgeoisie who with all their forward-looking potential had been in the forefront of the Muslim League movement in undivided India. It was that movement and its two-nation ideology that brought about partition. The Muslims of India after partition became, moreover, suspect in the eyes of the majority

⁵⁴² N.A Siddiqui, *Population Geography of Muslims of India*, (New Delhi: S. Chand, 1976), *Passim*.

community, especially when prominent Indian Muslims, were switching their allegiance to Pakistan right into the 1950s. This, in turn, has resulted in the re-emergence of a largely inward-looking leadership with pietistic learning and in the weakening of the open-minded dynamic forces. Yet, claiming the allegiance of 14.23% of the total Indian population, the Muslims are still far more numerous than any other minority group and they have inherited an indigenous “thousand-year tradition of imposing dimensions” in all walks of life.⁵⁴³ The most characteristic feature of the Indian Muslims position, “the fundament feature of their own current development”, as W.C. Smith puts it, ‘is the fact that they share citizenship in the new (secular) republic with an immense number of other people.’⁵⁴⁴ On the religious level, they are called to reconcile their faith with modernity. The inevitable fact that they have to share political power with others, to live with others as equals in democratic participation, presents an unprecedented challenge to them. “It raises the deepest issues both of the meaning of man’s being and of social morality. It raises the deepest issue of the significance of revelation, truth and the relation to other people’s faith.”⁵⁴⁵

More concretely, the Indian Muslims are asked today “to what degree and in what forms and with what ideological bases” they will “set themselves to working for the welfare of the whole Indian community? How will they visualize the material and spiritual welfare of Indian Islam as integrated with the activity and loyalty of the non-Muslim Indian?”⁵⁴⁶ The challenge may well seem overwhelming, especially to a community recently drained of so much of its intellectual leadership. But, in the end, the problems of Indian Islam do not differ essentially from those facing the whole Islamic group today, namely, how to live as an important religious minority within the secular world of today in brotherhood with those of those forms of faith.

6.4.2. Christianity in post-partition India

Compared to the Muslims, the Christians in India form a much smaller minority. They make up only about two points three percent of the total population and thus number approximately twenty-eight million today. (2011 census). They are even less evenly spread over the country than the Muslims. They are concentrated in the Southern States, especially in Kerala and Goa, and reach higher numbers in some of the larger urban centers (e.g. Bombay, Madras,

⁵⁴³ Ibid., 262.

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid., 264.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid., 289.

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid., 290.

Poona, Hyderabad, and Calcutta), as well as in tribal areas like, for instance, those of North-Eastern India.

The Indian Christians as a community were hardly affected by partition. Whereas most of them had not participated actively in the struggle for independence, they did not oppose it actively either. As compared with the Muslims, there was less of a problem for them in accepting the democratic and secular character of the Indian Republic as outlined in the Constitution. In areas of old Christian settlement, like Europe and the United States, Christian thought already for a considerable time had tried to come to terms with the concept and reality of democracy, of secularism and the like. The secular Constitution, therefore, was not alien to Christian experience and thought about large, both Protestant and Catholic.

Furthermore, the status of being a minority is not in itself as problematic for a group of Christians as it is for a group of Muslims. The history of Christianity especially that of its formative period of the first three hundred years, provides an accepted model of the dynamic Christian life of faith in a community without the support of a “Christian” political structure or state. As is well-known, the case of Islam is totally different. The decision for the Medinan state and its initial development belong to the formative and normative periods of early Islamic history.

The main endeavour of Indian Christianity in the decades since Independence has been to strengthen its sense of community, its coherence, and identity. To this end it has tried to shed the traces of its colonial and foreign dependence, to indigenize Church personnel, to Indianize Christian life, expression and thought, to strengthen the community by educational and social services and to witness to Jesus Christ not only by the word of preaching but by service, especially in the educational, medical and social field. Significant new membership of the Church has been won during these decades among the tribals, the Harijans and Hindu low-caste people.

The powerful Protestant missionary movement during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries had led to conversions from Islam. In many Protestant Churches, therefore, we find to this day a substantial element of Urdu culture and the cherishing of other important elements of the great Indian Muslim heritage. The Catholic Church in India, after the end of the Jesuit

Muslim at the Mughal court,⁵⁴⁷ had no such tradition of a determined evangelical outreach to Islam. Catholic missionary activity and thinking during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were predominantly concerned either in the tradition of Robert de Nobili (1577-1656) with conversions from upper-caste Hinduism, or from the scheduled Hindu castes and the *Adivasi* populations.

6.4.3.1. Forerunners of Christian-Muslim Dialogue

The Jesuits at the Mughal court: The overall tradition of Christian-Muslim relations in India has certainly not been characterized by the attitude and outlook described in the previous paragraphs. The European missionaries carried into India all the ignorance and prejudice regarding Islam that has prevailed throughout the centuries in Europe.⁵⁴⁸ Some Protestant missionaries have detected an affinity between scripture-centered, iconoclastic and puritanical Islam and the original impetus of the Reformation. They, therefore, approached Islam with some respects. Post Tridentine, largely south-European Catholic missionaries, in contrast, if open to positive religious values outside Christianity at all, would rather be inclined towards Hinduism and its world of ritual and symbol.

Edward Maclagan and Arnulf Camps⁵⁴⁹ have acquainted us with the facts of Jesuit presence at the Mughal court from 1579 A.D onwards till the end of the 17th century. What element of dialogue can we discover in the broad sweep of the Jesuits at the Mughal court for about a century? Clearly, the first missions had no idea of dialogue at all: they had one clear objective, known to friend and foe alike- convert the emperor and, through him, the people. In all their discussions their whole purpose was to discredit everything Islamic, thinking that thereby the Emperor and others would be forced to submit to the superiority of Christianity. Once, in a discussion with Fr. Montserrat, Abul Fazl (1551-1602)⁵⁵⁰ maintained that there was spiritual nourishment in the Qur'an, but the priest would not agree. Having failed in their objective, the fathers gradually turned their attention to providing spiritual succor for the few Christians at the court, running schools and making a few converts here and there, mainly among the ordinary

⁵⁴⁷ The activities of the Jesuits were not confined to the court. Cf. Arnulf Camps, *Jerome Xavier S.J. and the Muslim of the Moghul Empire. Controversial Works and Missionary Activity*, (Schoneck-Beckenried: Nouvelle Revue de Science Missionnaire, 1957), 251-252.

⁵⁴⁸ Cf. Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West*, (Edinburgh: Uni. Press, 1960), *Passim*.

⁵⁴⁹ *The Jesuits and the Great Moghul*, (London: Burns and Oates, 1932), A. Camps,

⁵⁵⁰ Akbhar's favourite Secretary and Wazir, the celebrated author of *Akbarnama and A'ini Akbari and of model collection of letters Maktubat-I 'Allami*

people. On the Muslim side, the divines were of the same mentality as the priests, but Akbar and Abul Fazl, in particular, showed openness to a discussion which would reflect no small credit on a modern proponent of dialogue.

Strangely enough, the Jesuits at the Mughal court did end up writing an extremely important chapter in the history of religious dialogue in India, for that was precisely what circumstances thrust upon the fathers there. We see this beautifully illustrated by the deep friendship that existed between Fr. Busi and the eldest son of Shah Jehan, Dara Shikoh and which provided a matrix for fruitful dialogue. It seems to me that more detailed research into the activities of the Jesuits actually stationed at the court during these years would highlight the fact that this relationship was illustrative of what was normal, not exceptional.⁵⁵¹

6.4.3. 2. Henry Martyn (1781- 1812).

Henry Martyn, the pioneer Protestant missionary among the Muslims of India and Iran, became famous for his “Controversial Tracts,”⁵⁵² prepared for the disputations with Muslim divines. Yet, his overall approach to Muslims was much broader than is evinced by the tracts. He had strong reservations as to the aptness of disputations and controversies for conveying the Christian message. At best, he thought, they would arouse a spirit of inquiry. By contrast, he felt that personal talks with a small circle of interested Muslims produced what he called “mutually responsive notes”. He saw it as his main endeavour to share the religious experience of the forgiveness and peace attained through Christ. He purposely set out to appreciate whatever was best in his Muslim acquaintances and ascribe such to the activity of God. He stressed the need to direct attention to the Sacred Scriptures of Islam and Christianity themselves rather than to later, scholastic elaborations and insisted on the need for fostering lasting friendship with the enquirer. Finally, he stressed the centrality of God’s work in the souls of men and consequent reverence and respect for souls.

6.4.3.3. G.C. Pfander (1803-1865) and G.A. Lefroy (1854-1919)

A little later, there appeared on the Indian scene a man of great influence on the manner of Christian witness to the Muslims: Carl Gottlieb Pfander (1803-1865), the author of the widely

⁵⁵¹ In this and previous two paragraphs I either follow closely or quote from notes provided to me by Paul Jackson S.J. on “Christo- Muslim Dialogue in India”.

⁵⁵² Cf. Samuel Lee, *Controversial Tracts Christianity and Mohammedanism*, (Cambridge: Deighton andsons, 1824),

distributed, controversial work *Mizan-al-Haqq* (The Balance of Truth). The public debates between him and Muslim scholars and the literature they produced set the tone for decades. These debates sowed the seed of enmity and hatred in the hearts of Indian Muslims and they started to suspect the missionary efforts of the Christians as a plot to destroy Islam in India. Dr. S. Bhajan describes the legacy of this approach thus: “Muslims do not know Christians have been preaching to them for the last hundred and fifty years. They are also aware of the fact that many Muslims have been converted to Christianity. They think that Christian missionaries from the West came to destroy the religion of Islam and help the foreign powers, especially the British, to conquer and subjugate India. Indian missionaries preaching to Muslims are considered paid workers of the foreign missionaries and incapable of studying and understanding Islam. The image of an Indian Padre in the mind of a Muslim has been that of an arrogant, ignorant, deceitful, and number one enemy of Islam.”⁵⁵³

It must not be forgotten, however, that already in the nineteenth century a number of Protestant missionaries came to adopt a quite different attitude. The Anglican Bishop of Lahore, George A Lefroy (1854-1919) of the Cambridge Brotherhood in Delhi, for example, detected and wished to explore the positive religious message of Islam: its witness in its very social and political structure to “the knowledge of God which gives strength to human society.” The older controversial literature he qualified as “very hard indeed, as though intended to confuse the enemy rather than to win a disguised friend.”

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, in fact, the growth of liberal thought produced a reversal of the aggressive attitude of missionaries. A new awareness of Eastern religions, the growth of humanistic and agnostic thought in Europe, and the changing relationship of Britain to her colonies affected a profound change in missionary attitudes.

6.4.3.4. Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-1898)

The great reformer of nineteenth-century India, Sayyid Ahmad Khan, merits a special place in the pre-history of Muslim-Christian Dialogue. In an age poisoned by Imperial domination and fierce religious controversy and, in fact, from some years before the upheaval of

⁵⁵³ *The Bulletin of the Christian Institute of Islamic Studies*, Vol 1, no.4, (Oct- Dec. 1978), 39-40.

1857 onwards, he practiced and advocated friendship with Christians, openness to each other's cultural heritage, and a sympathetic approach in scholarly studies of each other.⁵⁵⁴

In *Tabyin al-kalam*, the unique fragmentary commentary on the Bible in three parts (Introductory discourses, Commentary on Genesis 1-11 and Matthew 1-5) published in the early 1860's, Sayyid Ahmad Khan tried to demonstrate against contrary views both of Christian and Muslim controversialists that the present-day Scriptures of Jews and Christians can and must be viewed by Muslims positively, as witnessing to *tawhid*, the chief message of all authentic Scriptures. The biblical Scriptures are not totally corrupted and therefore have not to be rejected entirely. Through them, God has reiterated *tawhid* throughout the ages, and they continue to be relevant to Muslims if only read critically, that is, influenced by the distortions of an erroneous Christian interpretation and in the light of the Qur'an's unambiguous message of *tawhid*.

Although largely rejected as unorthodox at the time, Sayyid Ahmad Khan's general attitude and many of his insights have made a considerable impact on later Indian Muslim generations.

6.4.3.5. Catholic pioneer: Fr. Victor Courtois S.J. (1907-1960)

After the closure of the Jesuit mission at the Mughal Court, the Catholic Church did not take any thought-out and concerted missionary initiative among Muslims in India. Ignorance and prejudice regarding Islam and Muslims prevailed. In the South- until this century the predominant area of Catholic missionary presence- Tippu Sultan's (1749-1799) policies towards Christian communities in the Carnatic (as well as certain excesses during the Mappila rebellion earlier in our century) did much to establish in the Catholic mind there the image of the fanatic, intolerant and cruel Muslim.⁵⁵⁵

Yet, one remarkable exception must be noted here- the work, and idea of Fr.Victor Courtois S.J., Calcutta. Up to the time of Vatican II, V. Courtois has been the only Catholic in India to propagate consistently the need for an apostolate among Muslims and, as part of an overall vision, to evolve a concept of the methods to be used, and attitudes to be used, and attitudes to be fostered.

⁵⁵⁴ For detailed account cf. C.W. Troll, *Sayyid Ahmad Khan, A Reinterpretation of Muslim Theology*, (New Delhi: Vikas, 1978), 58-99.

⁵⁵⁵ A dispassionate study of this short phase of Christian-Muslim relation-ship in southern India, trying to separate fact from legend, has yet to be written.

V. Courtois saw it as his foremost task to make the Indian Church aware of the Muslim dimension of its apostolic mission. From September 1946 until his death on December 1960, he edited and wrote, almost single-handedly, the *Notes on Islam*, A Bulletin information about Islam with special reference to India. The subtitle constantly read thus: A Help to A Better Appraisal of Islamic Culture. The Notes first appeared bi-monthly, then, from 1953 onwards, quarterly. Their foremost objective was to acquaint the reader with “what Islam is, whence it comes and whither it goes...to present the religion of the Quran as objectively as possible, its beliefs, its evolution.”⁵⁵⁶ The Notes deliberately strove “to remain expository and abstain from polemics,”⁵⁵⁷ ... “to avoid,” in other words, “all unpleasant controversy....” “Enlightened knowledge must need take away the sharp sting of prejudice and open the way to more sympathy and regard.”⁵⁵⁸

V. Courtois looked with admiration at the great Ramon Lull (1232-1315) who “studied Islam trying always to discover not what divides but what unites. It is the spirit which must be revived today, a spirit of intellectual fairness and charity. Prejudices, indeed, against one another are still common among Christians and among Muslims Untrue and grossly distorted statements disparaging the others’ religious belief or practice are still found in books of recent dates or heard in conversations in Christendom as well as in the world of Islam.”⁵⁵⁹

Commenting upon a detailed “Curriculum of Islamic studies” for Christian seminaries, which he had proposed in his *Notes*, V. Courtois remarked: Insistence should always be made not on what separates Christians from Muslims but on what may bring them closer to each other and to the heart of Christ. We study them not as enemies but as brothers. To study we shall add much prayer.” “The discrete fruit of mutual understanding and knowledge,” Fr.Courtois was convinced, “must need be mutual friendship.”⁵⁶⁰

A sustained effort is needed towards “a friendly exchange of views with the idea of bringing about mutual understanding and concord.” This, however, must not be confused with “the tendency of some well-intentioned speakers to slip over difficult problems: to ignore the differences between Islam and Christianity is not to solve them, nor is it a step towards better

⁵⁵⁶ *Notes on Islam*, Dec. 1957, 129.

⁵⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, July- August, 1948, 77

⁵⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, January, 1952, 1.

⁵⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, June 1955, 49.

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, November, 1957, 113.

mutual understanding. These difficulties must be faced squarely in order to be understood and appreciated.”⁵⁶¹

The mainspring for V. Courtois’ call for a wider ecumenism between the religions, and especially Christians and Muslims, lay in a clear perception of what unites all men most deeply: the common Fatherhood of God, which in turn he saw as the basis for the brotherhood of all men. He also stressed much the Heart of Christ as the center of the hearts of men and the fulfillment of their deepest and best aspiration.⁵⁶²

First pages of the Notes a remarkable openness to “riches of those (Muslim) hearts.” This openness leads V. Courtois to wish “that in them we may recognize the features of our Heavenly Father and love them as brothers. Were they better known, they would surely be better loved, and where there is love there is God. Ubi Caritas et Amor ibi Deus est”.⁵⁶³

The concept of the periodical Notes on Islam, the choice of articles and the selection of the news reported and analysed in it, make it clear that its editor perceived Islam as the international spiritual and social-political reality it remains to this day. He did not succumb to the temptation to stress one or the other side of the overall reality of Islam disproportionately, at all cost of other important aspects. He, further, had a keen perception of the living and dynamic character of Islam and “the profound revolution which is slowly changing the Muslims’ Weltanschauung.”⁵⁶⁴

The revival of Islam which V. Courtois witnessed and reported, in his eyes, gave the lie to all those who only recently declared Islam to be caught up on an irreversible process of disintegration. Islam had been thought wrongly to be dead. “A true Muslim Renaissance has begun.”⁵⁶⁵ V. Courtois kept strictly to the repeatedly stated objective of the Notes: to contribute to a better appraisal of Islamic Culture. Simultaneously he worked, reflected and wrote to promote a better knowledge of Christ and his teaching among Muslims. But he kept his work outside the sphere of the Notes.

However, the Notes did the report about Christian Muslim “conversation,” that is, the beginnings of what has now developed into a world-wide dialogue movement. He advocated Muslim-Christian cooperation and reported about its earliest beginnings.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid.,

⁵⁶² Ibid., September, 1946, 1.

⁵⁶³ Ibid.,

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid., March, 1959, no. 1.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid., March 1951, 17.

The Notes on Islam succeeded well. They gained international recognition and were increasingly read by Muslims, especially in India and Pakistan. They must be regarded as one important prophetic voice that brought the Catholic Church to the great landmark in Christian-Muslim relations, the declaration *Nostra Aetate* of Vatican Council II. With his untimely death, this unique voice of the Indian Church fell into abrupt silence.

6.4.4. The Henry Martyn Institute and the Dialogue Approach

6.4.4.1. Earlier history

In contrast to the lone effort of Victor Courtois on the Catholic side, the Protestant Churches in India can look back to a great continuing tradition of outreach to Muslims, from the beginnings of Serampore College at the end of the 18th century and Henry Martyn onwards. This outreach is characterized by an approach that aimed primarily at conversion and Church expansion.⁵⁶⁶

Here we are interested to see when and to what effect the specifically dialogical approach entered Protestant missionary thinking and practice. To this end, we have to look at the Henry Martyn Institute (named until the end of 1959 Henry Martyn School) of Islamic studies. Its publication, the quarterly *Bulletin of Christian Institutes of Islamic Studies*, mirrors best the spirit and development of Protestant missionary thinking vis-à-vis Muslims in India. The *Bulletin's* history goes back to the year 1911 when, under the inspiration and leadership of Dr. Samuel M. Zwemer (1867-1952), the "Lucknow Conference on behalf of the Muslim world" was held. The Conference proposed the setting up of centers of study of Islam in different regions of the Islamic world. In India, an All-India Missionaries to Muslims League was founded, with its *New and Notes*, a Newsletter published occasionally for private circulation. Discussions for setting up a centre of Islamic studies in India were started only in the late 1920s (by the National Christian Council Executive). This led to the founding of the Henry Martyn School in Lahore I 1930. Its object was the training of missionaries and national evangelists for work among Muslims. The School in Lahore took over the Newsletter and continued to publish it quarterly under its old name "News and Notes." "News and Notes" was first published as The

⁵⁶⁶ Cf. I.L.Vender Werff, 27ff.

Bulletin of the Henry Martyn School of Islamic Studies which by then had moved its headquarters to Aligarh.⁵⁶⁷

6.4.4.2. The beginnings of the dialogical approach

Going through the back numbers of the Bulletin, first breaking in of the ideas of the then-nascent international dialogue movement is clearly noticeable in the late 1950s. Dr. Kenneth Cragg, during his visit to India late in the year 1958, made a strong and lasting impression. He lectured extensively and also actively took part in deliberations on the future of H.M.I.⁵⁶⁸ The Editorial of the April-June 1959 issue pointed out the new situation created by the new means of rapid international communication, in other words, by international exchanges of ecumenical leaders creating an “evangelistic ecumenicity.” The then editor, Rev. Ian H. Douglas, introduced for the first time in the Bulletin the concept of dialogue: “Even if Christian-Muslim meeting on the world-wide level is a long way off, there is real hope of true dialogue here and there at the highest intellectual level. And the preparation of Christians in study conferences under able leadership increases the possibilities.”⁵⁶⁹ But together with this and answering “an even greater need... is that of encouraging meeting between its [the Church’s] ordinary members and their Muslim neighbours. If the results of the high-level conference can filter down to affect Christian-Muslim relationships at the grassroots level, the gain will be great indeed.”⁵⁷⁰ I.H. Douglas defined the purpose of H.M.I. “to assist the Church to realize and fulfill its evangelistic obligation to Muslims by fostering among Christians an adequate and sympathetic understanding of Islam.”⁵⁷¹

Both in the Bulletin and in Religion and Society, the Bulletin of the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, Bangalore, we notice from around 1959/1960 onwards an opening to the dialogue approach and willingness to a radical reappraisal of traditional approaches. Kenneth Cragg’s *The Call of the Minaret*, first published in 1956, found an echo in both Journals. Rev. John B. Carman, in a review article “Cragg’s Call to understanding,” asked whether Cragg’s “humble invitation to a great invitation” can be broadened, or at least repeated,

⁵⁶⁷ The Henry Martyn School of Islamic Studies became the Henry Martyn Institute in 1959. Now it is in Hyderabad, Shivrampally, and grown up to International level. The present Director of this Institution is Dr. Samuel T. Packium.

⁵⁶⁸ Cf. *The Bulletin H.M.I., October-December, 1958, 18-20.*

⁵⁶⁹ *The Bulletin H.M.I., April-June 1959, 2.*

⁵⁷⁰ *Ibid.,*

⁵⁷¹ *Ibid.,*

to summon Christians to such a meeting with Hindus and Buddhists.⁵⁷² In the same article, we notice new stress on the need for openness to the presence of Christ's word in the non-Christian traditions even before the advent of the Gospel. "As we try here in India to present the universal Christ in a way which will be relevant to both Muslim and Hindu, we do so in the confidence that he who has given us the Word to proclaim is the same Divine Word who has already prepared, and continues to prepare, the way for his coming in this land and among this people."⁵⁷³

We also notice in the early 1960s, for the first time in the Bulletin, articles inculcating the need for a better understanding of central Muslim concerns and a deliberate abstaining from disparaging "comparisons." Now, the Bulletin also began to open its pages to Catholic thought and reflection on Islam and Christian-Muslim encounter. Finally, from 1966 onwards, prominent Muslims began to write in the pages of the Bulletin.⁵⁷⁴

It goes to the credit of Dr. Sam Bhajjan, the then present Director of H.M.I., himself a notable Urdu poet and writer with a deep knowledge of Sufism and of the Persian Literary tradition, to have stressed in the pages of the Bulletin and elsewhere the paramount importance of Urdu language and literature as a meeting place for Muslims and Christians in India. From 1963 onwards he introduced in the Bulletin the important section "From the Urdu Press." In 1967, he and Dr. G.Adelpi, Lucknow, started the Urdu Quarterly Huma which ever since has reached a great number of Muslims, especially those brought up exclusively in the traditional type of education. The correspondence pages of Huma carry on a dialogue on a scholastic level with a numerous and most important section of the Muslim community, the *ulama*, and the Urdu-knowing Muslims. Each issue of Huma states clearly on the final page the seven "aims and objectives" of the Journal:

- To create among Christians the taste for a serious study of Islam.
- To provide Urdu knowing evangelists with material that can help them in the friendly exchange of ideas with their Muslim friends.
- To publish articles that may help Christians to acquaint themselves with Muslim beliefs and help Muslims to acquaint themselves with Christian beliefs.

⁵⁷² *The Bulletin H.M.I.*, July-September, 1959, 26.

⁵⁷³ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁵⁷⁴ Eg. SyedAbdul Latif, "Faith and action", April 1966, 3-12.

- To awaken the desire among the Christian and Muslim minority to adopt a sympathetic and friendly attitude and to foster mutual understanding in religious and social questions.
- Notwithstanding a number of fundamental differences between Christian and Muslim scholars, to prepare the way for formal dialogue and exchange of views in a regular manner.
- To invite Christian and Muslim scholars to write and publish in the pages of *Huma* research articles about religious aspects of Islam and Christianity.
- To publish translations of books concerning Islam and Christianity that are highly respected in both religious communities.

Huma reserves twenty to twenty-five pages in each issue for Muslim writers. Many Muslims who were at the beginning reluctant to contribute articles for a Christian paper gradually started writing for *Huma*. This has boosted the sale of it among the Urdu-knowing Muslims. This dialogue through the exchange of articles on common concerns has been regularly going on through *Huma* on one side and various Urdu papers on the other.

6.4.4.3. The work towards and in Dialogue.

The Henry Martyn Institute with its headquarters in the centre of the capital of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad, (Now in Telangana state) with a fulltime staff of three to four persons, in collaboration with its various regional secretaries, pursues a number of activities that are essential preparation for dialogue or directly involve it.

- Courses on Islam are organized in theological colleges and seminaries. From 1966 onwards Catholic institutions were included in the programme. A Catholic Indian scholar of Islam, Fr. Andreas D'Souza O.F.M. Cap, became a member of the staff several years ago.
- Area committees have been organizing Training Institutes in various part of India to assist the local congregations and church leaders to understand their Muslim neighbours more fully and to relate to them more effectively in a Christian spirit.
- Summer Schools have been offering an Introduction to Islam (Since 1978, the Catholic JAMI group offers a summer course in Urdu and basics in Islam in

collaboration with the H.M.I). In all these programmes (1-3), Muslim scholars and teachers are involved actively, (4) An elementary correspondence course on Islam as well as courses on Christianity are offered in both English and Urdu.

As early as 1963, H.M.I. sincerely started talking about formal Christian-Muslim dialogue. The main stimulus was a concern for deteriorating communal harmony and peace in India and Pakistan. Muslims were invited to start a dialogue with Christians on issues common to both communities. After some hesitation, a handful of Muslim intellectuals, mostly professors educated on western lines, showed interest. Although there was not much enthusiasm shown by the churches, many teachers in theological colleges and seminaries encouraged the H.M.I staff to start such a movement. The hesitation on the part of the *ulama* was that they thought the Christian invitation to Muslims for dialogue was just another method of the Christians to proselytize Muslims. One Muslim paper wrote a strongly-worded editorial, warning Muslims of the dangers involved in starting a dialogue with Christians. It termed the efforts of the H.M.I. for dialogue as a “new trap of the old trappers.”

Finally, a first three-day dialogue meeting on the question of “faith and works” was organized in Nagpur in 1966. It was sponsored jointly by the Indian Institute of Islamic Studies (founded in 1963 in New Delhi) by H.M.I., then stationed in Jabalpur (Madhya Pradesh) and was attended by twenty Muslim and Christian scholars. Some Muslim participants wrote favourable comments in Muslim papers, advocating a better understanding between Muslims and Christians. The ice was broken once and for all.

After this first dialogue several dialogues on the same pattern were organized in subsequent years, some of them together with Muslim institutions such as the Jamia Nizamiyyah in Hyderabad and the Indian Institute of Islamic Studies in New Delhi. The topics chose were: Religion in the Modern Age; Man, His Nature, and Destiny;⁵⁷⁵ Salvation; God and Secularity; Social Justice; Woman in Great Religions. Some of the meetings were held bi-lingually, in English and Urdu, the one on Social Justice completely in Urdu.

The H.M.I. and its Bulletin has never worked out a defined, unified view or policy of how to approach Muslims. Hence a certain tension has remained characteristic of the Bulletin, between an evangelization-proclamation approach at the one and a truly dialogical approach at the other end of the spectrum. Dr. S. Bhajjan writes: “The H.M.I. does not recommend or favour

⁵⁷⁵ Most of the papers of this Seminar published in *Religion and Society*, (Bangaluru,), Vol. 20, no.3, Sep.1973.

any particular approach. We of the Institute are free to present any approach and discuss any kind of dialogue. However, we have some guidelines that we try to put before our listeners:

- We emphasize that, when Christians and Muslims meet in dialogue, we do not meet as enemies to defeat each other. We must say of the bitter rivalries in the past centuries that in many ways the only final solution is to forget them.
- Our meeting is not a more sophisticated form of the old polemical debates.
- We are not meeting as rival debating teams, athletics in place of military engagement. This is not a case of a Muslim team and a Christian team but a meeting of people, some of whom are Muslims and some Christians.
- Nor are we seeking any propaganda advantage.
- Nor do we gloss over real difficulties. True friendship exists only where there are mutual understanding and the willingness to face the difficulties without fighting. Christian and Muslims are woefully ignorant with regard to each other and therefore the keeping open of communications is all-important objective.⁵⁷⁶

6.4.5. Catholic Initiatives

6.4.5.1. Catholic awakening to dialogue with Muslims in India

As late as 1975, Fr, Albert Nambiaparambil C.M.I., the Secretary of the C.B.C.I Commission for Dialogue, in a survey article on “Dialogue in India; a Challenge to redeem hope,” had this to say on the dialogue of Catholics with Muslims: “This entire field remains almost totally unexplored. By and large, a cloud of ignorance and suspicion continues to prevail.”⁵⁷⁷

The overall effort made by the Catholic Church in India to examine seriously its response to Vatican II (closure to 1965), culminated in the holding of the All-India Seminar held in Bangalore in 1969. The seminar achieved a breakthrough as to the recognition by the Church of India of the need to enter on a large scale into dialogue with the great Indian religious traditions. The following areas were singled out for special concern:

- change in our attitude towards other religions and education towards this on various levels;

⁵⁷⁶ *Bulletin, H.M.I*, Vol. 1, no ,4. (Oct.-Dec. 1978), 49-50.

⁵⁷⁷ *Vidya jyoti, journal of Theological Reflection*, Vol.39, (1975), 122.

- demand for a theology of dialogue;
- need for experts for training in dialogue, for research and the promotion of dialogue on the scholastic level and for advising the Christian community at large;
- setting up centres for dialogue;
- Production of suitable literature;
- developing the Christian ecumenical dimension of this work;
- Co-operation with non-Christians in the secular field.⁵⁷⁸

With regard to the Muslims, the report of the general workshop on dialogue and evangelization shows awareness of the need to initiate dialogue with the Muslims of India. It urged “that scholars be set aside to study the Muslim religion social life and culture in India, hoping by this means to come to a better understanding of this great people.”⁵⁷⁹ Clearly, the first step the Indian Church had to take was that of getting to know its Muslim neighbors- no easy task when one considers the rich, multi-faceted nature of Indian Islam.

After an interval of another four years- as a follow up of an International Theological Conference of Nagpur of 1971- the All-India Consultation on Evangelization (Patna, Oct. 1973) marked a further important step forward. It set up special worship (n. III-2) “Evangelization and dialogue with Muslims.” For the first time, a group devoted to approaching Muslims came together. Fr. J. Wijngaards of the Mill Hill Fathers presented (in absentia) a perhaps somewhat too ambitious but nevertheless truly prophetic plan concerning a future Catholic apostolic outreach to the Muslims.

The resolutions of the group were basic. The need was stressed for courses, especially in seminaries, on Islam and on the approach to Muslim and Islam. The founding of a Catholic Institute to provide such courses were recommended. Finally, a note of caution was sounded against as Indianization “that tended to be exclusively Hinduization.” These resolutions, however, we’re bound to remain on paper as long as the whole Church in India did not have more than one person officially set aside for this work.

The Research Seminar on non-biblical Scriptures held in Bangalore in 1974, again organized a special workshop on Islam. Its report is remarkable in that it expresses the conviction that Islam has a positive religious message, of special significance for the Christian Church in

⁵⁷⁸ Cf. *all-India Seminar: Church in India Today, Bangalore, 1969*, (New Delhi: C.B.C.I., 1969), 342-343.

⁵⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 334-335.

India: "The self-communication of God--- is partially recorded in the Quran which is acknowledged by Muslims as normative in Islam. Therefore, there are traces of divine influence in it. In some sense, Islam in India may even be said to have been entrusted with the continuation of the O.T. task of conveying its experiences of the transcendence and majesty of God, shown so distinctively in the deep sense of reverence for God by Muslims in their prayer life. We Christians have something to learn from this attitude which may lead us to a new awareness of God's greatness and power."⁵⁸⁰

6.4.5.2. The work and approach of the Dialogue Commission of the C.B.C.I.

From January 1973 onwards the Dialogue Commission of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (C.B.C.I) in the person of its full-time Secretary, Fr. Albert Nambiaparambil, has vigorously worked to prepare the Catholic community on all levels for dialogue. It took its inspiration from Pope Paul VI's address delivered in Bombay in 1964, on the occasion of the Eucharistic Congress. "We must meet not only as tourists but as pilgrims who set out to find God, not in buildings of stone but on human hearts. Man must meet man, nation meet nation, as brothers and sisters, as children of God. In this mutual understanding and friendship, in this sacred communion, we must also begin to work together to build a common future of the human race---such a union --- must be built on a common love that embraces all and has its roots in God who is love."⁵⁸¹

Realizing "that a good deal should both be done and undone if a dialogue worth the name is to be carried on between Christians and Muslims,' the Commission has been organizing with the help of the H.M.I., numerous three day courses in different parts of the country, covering the basic tenets of Islam, areas of misunderstanding, of convergence, etc. Wherever possible, participants in the courses visited mosques during their prayertime. These courses were meant for all the Churches, and participants were from various Churches. Muslims took active part in these courses, as teachers and witnesses to their faith.

The so-called 'get-togethers' on dialogue bring together participants, delegates from different dioceses of a region for two or three days to study the nature, scope, demands, difficulties, risks and concrete possibilities of inter-religious dialogue in the particular region. They try to relate the call to proclaim the Gospel to the call to be dialogue-pilgrims on earth.

⁵⁸⁰ D.S. Amaoparvadass (ed.), *Research Seminar on Non-Biblical Scriptures*, (Bangalore: NBCLC, 1974), 620.

⁵⁸¹ Neuner-Dupuis, *The Christian Faith*, (Bangalore: T.P.I., 1973), no. 1032.

They hear leaders of other religions expound their own ways of life or their own religion as a way of life, share their feelings and hear the opinions of Christians."⁵⁸²

In the 'live-togethers', "Christians and followers of other religions come together in prayer, meditation and shared reflections. They share the same life-style, share the costs of the occasion. They discuss topics of common concern. Much time is spent in prayer, songs, and bhajans (i.e. religious songs in the Indian tradition)... the topics are personal and the emphasis is always to keep it at that level."⁵⁸³

The first multi-lateral 'Live-Together' was held at Aligarh, the seat of the famous Muslim University, from October 25th to 27th, 1974. Of the thirty-three, Participants, thirteen were Muslims. The initial plan of having a bi-lateral (Muslim-Christian) live-together was altered on the suggestion of Muslim friends into holding it on a multi-lateral basis. The Muslims felt that this would help to foster better communal harmony. Aligarh is a very sensitive spot in India and has been repeatedly the scene of bitter communal riots.

A. Nambiarparambil reported at the time: "The experience of dialogue ran into three days, through seven sessions. Each session began with a prayer and ended with prayers, said by participants from each religion. The topic proposed for shared reflection and prayer was: "what does my religion mean to me?" "challenges to my religion"; "my religion and social concern"; "Prayer in my life"; "the hope that is in me"; 'steps to foster unity, understanding, and collaboration among religions.

"Some Salient features which characterized the meeting are worth recording here. There was on the part of all a return to their own religious tradition and inheritance to draw light, inspiration, and motivation for social concern, for hope, for meeting the challenges of the day. There was -as in previous bi-lateral live-together - a conscious effort to focus on those elements which are common and unite the various religious traditions and to go beyond the divisive separating factors. It took some time, in fact, to realize that the differentiating elements too can and must contribute to mutual enrichment. Towards the end of the meeting, the participants have moved away from the reflex of self-defense, the focus slowly shifted to the terrible gap that exists in all of us between theory and practice, to a heart-searching concession of common guilt. There were, perhaps, the richest moments of the live-together. Preoccupation with the self has given way to a common awakening of religious experience. Again, while at the early stage of the

⁵⁸² Ibid., 255-256.

⁵⁸³ Ibid., 256.

dialogue some seemed to conceive the aim set before us as the search for a universal religion, slowly moved to the realization that dialogue must spring from each partner's deep commitment to his own tradition- an attitude to be constantly maintained even at the cost of disagreement on dividing factors.”⁵⁸⁴

Aligarh had kept the bold initiative alive. The local branch of the Inter-Faith Association, founded by Archbishop D. Athaide of Agra on February 1979, brought forty Hindus, Muslims, Jains, and Christians together for a spiritual weekend. This most recent dialogue meeting was different from the other dialogues organized by the Association at Aligarh till now. The purpose of it was common prayer and meditation, while the previous ones were more of discussion and talks. The whole weekend was an experience and prayer and reflection. The organizing committee had held several preparatory meetings with the believers of the different faiths and discussed with them the common forms of prayer that would be acceptable to all. As a result, it was agreed that during the prayer sessions of the weekend, no object would be used to represent God, no language sacred to a particular tradition would be used for the singing of bhajans and no names for God which were unacceptable to any particular group of participants (e.g. OM) would be used in prayer and *bhajans*.

Participants, both Hindu, and Muslim, who were interviewed for feedback, said that in no way did they feel that their faith was compromised by this spiritual weekend. All found it an enriching and new experience and spontaneously decided to have such prayer meetings more often. The Aligarh dialogue meetings as an example. Numerous other ongoing activities of the same kind could be quoted, e.g. Fr. Leo D'Souza's multi-lateral meetings in Lucknow, the capital of U.P., Fr. Aelred Pereira's activities in multi-religious sharings in Bombay, again a place of high Muslim concentration, Br. Cyriac's inter-religious meetings in Hyderabad, the fortnightly prayer-services for people of all religions in Ahirvad dialogue centre, and in Dharmaram Centre for World Religions in Bangalore and so on.

It is on the basis of such initiatives of the past ten years or so that the C.B.C.I Commission on Dialogue, with the help of the staff members of Vidyajyoti Institute of Religious Studies in Delhi, was able to publish the *Guide-lines for Inter-religious Dialogue*.⁵⁸⁵ They provide, besides a historical note, theological perspectives, and pastoral guidelines, fairly

⁵⁸⁴ Dialogue in India, A challenge to Redeem Hope”, In *Vidyajyoti, Journal of Theological Reflection*, Vol.49, (1975), 112-113.

⁵⁸⁵ (66, Varanasi Contonment, U.P., India, 1977).

detailed information on dialogue activities in India, i.e., a list of Centres, Ashrams, Groups, and Movements. Later this year the commission is going to publish Indian re-edition of the Guidelines for a Dialogue between Muslims and Christians of the Secretariat for Non-Christians in Rome, with an additional chapter on the Muslims of India and points to be kept in mind when engaging in dialogue with them.

On being asked, many of the persons actively engaged in initiating multi-lateral dialogue in India admit that, on the whole, a sizeable and regular Muslim participation has not been forthcoming. They attribute this partly to lack of interest or to hesitation on the Muslim side but even more to a lack of sympathetic knowledge, contact and sensitivity towards Muslims and their religious tradition among themselves. Many Ashrams and Dialogue Centres are built, furnished and run in such a way as to make it difficult for Muslims to feel at home there. Wherever, on the other hand, informed sympathy and sensitivity towards Muslims existed, Muslims have responded positively.

6.4.6. Muslim Initiatives.

6.4.6.1. Islam and the Modern Age Society

Sayyid Ahmad Khan's outstanding contribution is very important. The I.I.I.S from the year of its foundation in 1963 onwards continuously has cooperated with the H.M.I. in organizing dialogue meeting. The Islam and the Modern Age Society, founded by the late Dr. Abid Husayn (d. 1978) in 1970, likewise has been keeping up a strong commitment to dialogue on the intellectual level. The Quarterly of the Society, in its first issue (May 1970), introduced itself as the organ of a group of "persons in the East and the West who---are in search for a philosophy of life calculated to reconcile the conflict between individualism and collectivism and between material and moral values," who aim at "a new synthesis of reason and revelation." It continued: "They feel it be the most pressing need of the modern age and a challenge to all the great religions to find, in their respective ways, and if possible, in co-operation with one another, to work out such a synthesis,"⁵⁸⁶ (sic!) Under number four, the programme of the Society includes 'Discussions of the way in which Islam and other religions can co-operate to meet the challenge of the growing skepticism and unbelief throughout the world.'⁵⁸⁷ Motivated by such preoccupations, the Society has organized a number of important

⁵⁸⁶ *Islam and the Modern Age*, vol. 1, no. 1, (May 1970), 7-8.

⁵⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

national and international seminars, e.g. the Seminar on Inter-religious Understanding (Oct. 17-20, 1971, New Delhi).⁵⁸⁸ The Muslim Consultation Broumana/Lebanon (July 11-18, 1972) and produced a detailed report of it. Recently, the Society has furthermore brought out seven monographs on major World Religions in the World Religions Series. Three of these works are written by Christian authors. They deal with Christianity itself or with a Christian vision of inter-religious dialogue and co-operation in the One world of today. (Leroy S. Rouner, *The Discovery of Humankind*; Charles P. Price, *The Principles of Christian Faith and Practice*; Charles W. Swain, *People of the Earth. Trans-traditional Dialogue in Christian Perspective*). Unfortunately, with the death of the two outstanding promoters of its ideas and ideals, Dr. K.G. Saiyidain (1904-71) and Dr. Abid Hussain, the activities of the Society have come to a virtual standstill. But the present Secretary, Dr. Nisar Ahmed Faruqi, is committed to reviving fully the Society's activities, especially regarding inter-religious dialogue.

6.4.6.2. The Tughluqabad Seminar on Mosque and Church

Not long after its transfer to the new magnificent campus on the outskirts of Southern New Delhi, the I.I.S., hosted in Oct 1978 a meeting of twelve Muslims and twelve Christians hailing from various parts of India. The aim was to explore, in the light of the message of the Bible and Quran, the possibilities of a common commitment to harmony and reconciliation, not only between Muslims and Christians but also among all religions and ideological groups in India. This Seminar, 'Mosque and Church their contribution to inter-religious harmony and reconciliation,' was organized jointly by I.I.S., by H.M.I and by the Dialogue Commission of the C.B.C.I. The Seminar highlighted the new awareness of the community dimension of dialogue. International meetings sponsored by the W.C.C., like the one in Hongkong in January 1975 earlier, had delineated 'the theological bases for Muslim-Christian relations and for the relations of both with all neighboring relations and ideologies.'⁵⁸⁹ At the same time, it marked out in a concrete way "areas of common concern in social and political contexts."⁵⁹⁰

Two key papers by prominent Muslim participants merit special mention here because of their pleading from a decidedly Muslim point of view for accepting and promoting inter-religious dialogue, especially with Christians. Syed Vahiduddin, former Head of the Department

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid., Vol. 3, no.1.

⁵⁸⁹ Cf. the report of the Seminar by C.W. Troll in *Vidyajyoti*, Vol.43, (1979), 16-24.

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid., 122.

of Philosophy at Delhi University, pointed out the Qur'anic basis for inter-religious dialogue as advocated today; the Islamic temper and ethos that transcends historical, Institutional Islam and in fact does not cease to challenge and call into self-questioning; further, 'Qur'anic humanism" that follows directly from the way the Qur'an views man's dignity, grounded in his being foremost and essentially related, by the act of creation, to the God of mercy, S. Vahiduddin stressed that in their common reference to transcendence, Muslims and Christians (and even those who fight for the cause of Allah without knowing that they are fighting for His cause) can and must – in the sense of Surah.3:52- pursue a common endeavor.

Professor Ziaul Hasan Faruqi, the Principal of Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, in his paper made a strong plea for the need for religious communities to open up to one another in dialogue and to thoroughly revise traditional attitudes and teachings. We have to choose either to learn to live as members of a world-community composed of various cultures or not to live at all. We have to learn to live as partners, to develop a “mutual appreciation of each other’s heritage based on the conviction of equality of all as human beings in the eyes of God.” In simple words: We have to meet each other looking into each other’s eyes and with open hearts.⁵⁹¹

To bring about this change of attitude and outlook, Z.H. Faruqi envisages action on both the intellectual and on the practical plane. On the former, the first step should be to acquire a good and objective knowledge of various religious traditions. A second step should be to revise thoroughly our traditional exclusivistic attitude. The original spirit of our respective religious tradition must be allowed by us to assert itself as against the primary of particular dogmas, rituals, and ceremonies. “Without a new theological approach to include all the world religious heritage of mankind and to find a respectable place for all religions in one’s religious consciousness, the dream of inter-religious harmony will ever remain unrealized”...

The third step must be an ever-increasing dialogue between adherents of the world religions, Dialogues is here seen as the efforts “to establish a religious relationship with a person of another faith.” In the context of world religions, it means to listen to each other’s experience of their respective religious traditions and to share in deeper union of mutual openness, even where irreducible differences remain in perception and expression.

A shared action, according to Z.H. Faruqi, should be built on the common perspective of what is- Qur'anically speaking- *ma'ruf*, that is, good, beautiful, just and the like. If the *ma'ruf* is

⁵⁹¹ Quotations here refer to the cyclostyled papers of the Seminar. They have been published in *Studies of Islam* (New Delhi: I.I.I.S).

one and the same for all mankind, then nothing should bar us from uniting and working together for just social order, against all kinds of injustices, social, economic and political, from co-operating in doing things that make life good and beautiful.

It clearly emerges from this Seminar that certain initiatives have to be taken now, many of them by way of concerted action. Both the Christians and Muslims at the Seminar felt that much needs to be done in the field of teaching, especially in those institutions where the leaders of the communities are formed, such as seminaries, *madrasas*, and institutes of Islamic or Christian studies. A number of Christian faculties of theology and philosophy and seminaries have recently started to institute basic courses on Islam and on Muslim life in India as part of their normal curriculum, too, room should be made for the traditional syllabus of *madrasas* provides here and there for information and discussion of the elements of the Christian faith, but all this within the framework and outlook of traditional Islamic thinking.

The need was felt, furthermore, to collaborate in working out basic text-books and anthologies on Christianity and Islam for use in higher religious Muslim and Christian educational institutions. It should become normal to invite Muslim lecturers to Christian institutions for participating in teaching on Islam and vice versa.

Apart from the crucial work of introducing these changes in the training of our respective religious leaders, there is a wide area of initiatives to be taken on the local level. The participants of the Tughluqabad Seminar experienced during the three days of living together much mutual cordiality and frank conversation. The final session culminated spontaneously in common silent prayer. At this point, when the participants were about to disperse, it seemed to us that a new starting point had been reached. There is very much need for this and similar groups to meet again and again and then to spread this attitude and way of proceeding on the local level.

The Seminar, in its final session, in fact, proposed the setting up of a small permanent Muslim-Christian Committee,

- acting as a watchdog over inter-community relations and as a possible court of appeal in case of conflicts;
- promoting and planning further meetings of this kind and spreading relevant mutual information via the media;

- fostering the teaching of Islam in Christian Institutions of religious learning and vice versa, and to check, in a scholarly manner any educational material as to its fairness in dealing with matters pertaining to either Christianity or Islam;
- to initiate and foster theological thinking about central questions touching the faith and ethical teaching of both religions.

Unfortunately, this committee was not set up. The Church-Mosque Seminar somehow did not have the determination to translate its insights into practical and effective terms, The proposals, however, are so obviously an expression of real needs that they are bound to find realization soon, in one way or another. This, at least, is our firm hope.

6.4.7. The Agra Consultation in March 1979 and the task ahead

The Consultation on Dialogue with Muslims in Agra of March 1979. Which we mentioned in the Introduction, was the first representative Catholic meeting of its kind in India. Two years earlier, a group of Jesuits working among Muslims in India had constituted itself as JAMI group. In spring 1977, it started a cyclostyled quarterly bulletin, the Jami Notes, and has held several general meetings in order to clarify its vision of Christian-Muslim relations in India today and in order to foster unity and support among its members.

In Agra, the newly constituted group named itself C.M.R.I. (Christian Muslim Relations in India). It elected a committee of six which in turn, elected as its Secretary for the coming two years, Fr. Terence Farias, a research scholar in the sociology of religion at Aligarh University. The patron of C.M.R.I is the Archbishop of Agra, Most Rev. D.Athaide, for many years an active promoter of Christian-Muslim dialogue in his diocese and beyond. The following main areas of concern emerged from the discussions at Agra:

(a) Formation: To this day corporate self-centredness, ignorance and prejudice are effectively at work in the Catholic communities. The first task, therefore, is to form men and women who can help the Church leaders and the congregations to put into practice in everyday life the outlook and attitudes towards Muslims which are demanded by the Vatican II Declaration *Nostra Aetate*. The C.M.R.I., Committee decided to give priority in the coming few years to the work of organizing, together with H.M.I and with Muslim friends, formation programmes on Islam. Mainly in three directions: training institutes on the diocesan level, courses on Islam in seminaries and special programmes on Islam for women religious.

(b) Information: A quarterly publication on the line of JAMI notes will be published by C.M.R.I., under a name yet to be chosen. An effort will be made to introduce gradually more news and information regarding Christian-Muslim relations in the religious and secular Press, on Radio and TV and to produce audio-visual aids for the work of information.

(c) Theological reflection: Progress in this field depends first of all on persons being available in institutes of higher religious teaching and research who have a deep knowledge of both Islam and Christianity, based on a first-hand study of the ancient and recent sources and in living contact with leading representatives of both traditions. Several young Catholic priests are engaged at the moment in advanced special studies of Islam, in India and abroad. Hopefully, young Muslim scholars will come forward to enter into a thorough study of Christianity. The orthodox Muslim religious leaders (*ulama*) have yet to be touched by the dialogue movement. One major practical difficulty is the language barrier. Which of the Christian partners is fluent in Urdu? Few, except some Protestant ministers. Very few *Ulama* know English well enough to lead theological conversations in it. In some of the southern regions, the situation is of course different.

In the meantime, an ongoing religious dialogue on an academic level is gradually being initiated in places like Delhi where Christian and Muslim institutions concerned with religious training and research live in relative proximity. This dialogue promises to be especially fruitful in those areas of thought where the classical theologies meet with empirical research, in the fields, for instance, of the psychology of religion and so on.⁵⁹²

The catholic communities in India need the enrichment which a deep and prolonged encounter with Indian Islam will certainly effect in various areas of its life. For instance in the area of Co-operation in social action, (uplift of women in the slum area of Hyderabad is already in processes) and Multi-lateral and bilateral prayer meetings and live-together

6.4.8. The conflict between Muslims and Christians in Kerala.

There was no much conflict between Muslims and Christians in India except the following incident occurred in Kerala in 2010:

⁵⁹² It is unfortunate that hitherto the secular character of the Indian Constitution has been interpreted generally in such a way as to exclude the study of religions and of theology from the State Universities as well as of India.

By the report of Vishal Arora August 6, 2010, Christian-Muslim Relations Turn Bitter in Kerala India, New Delhi (RNS) Tensions between Christians and Muslims in India's Kerala state have reached the boiling point over allegations of widespread coerced conversions to Islam.

Kerala's communist Chief Minister, V.S. Achuthanandan, accused an Islamist opposition party of conspiring to turn Kerala into a Muslim-dominated state.

Youngsters are being given money and are being lured to convert to Islam, he told reporters at a news conference. Opposition parties accused the government of playing the Hindu card ahead of local elections.⁵⁹³

Muslims and Christian minorities in India generally enjoy good relations and see each other as fellow victims of alleged persecution by right-wing Hindu groups. Kerala's population of 31.8 million is 56 percent Hindu, 24 percent Muslim and 19 percent Christian.

The chief minister's statement came after alleged members of the Islamist party Popular Front of India (PFI) cut off a Christian professor's hand on July 4 in the central district of Kottayam. India's National Investigation Agency is investigating the role of PFI in terrorism.

According to local daily Mangalam, a PFI-backed Taliban-styled Shariah court "one of 14 reported Islamic courts in Kerala" had ordered the punishment against Professor T.J. Joseph for allegedly insulting the Prophet Muhammad in a paper.

Six weeks earlier, four people were killed and 38 injured when police fired at rioting Christian and Muslim mobs that were hurling bombs at each other in Kerala's capital city, Thiruvananthapuram.⁵⁹⁴

The hostilities have reportedly led some Catholic parishes to boycott local Muslim-owned shops, while others are meeting with Muslim leaders to try to stabilize relations between the two faiths. Tensions in Kerala first flared last September when two female students at a Christian college alleged that Muslim men from PFI lured them into marriage and later converted them to Islam. The Kerala Catholic Bishops Council charged that around 4,500 Christian girls had been targeted. A Hindu group, Hindu Janajagruti Samiti, claimed that 30,000 girls had been converted to Islam in neighboring Karnataka state "terming the ploy as Love Jihad."⁵⁹⁵

⁵⁹³ Vishal Arora August 6, 2010, (Accessed on 28/08/2019 at 11:28 pm).

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid.,

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid.,

6.5. Interfaith Dialogue and Islam

We live in an age of information - an age of knowledge explosion, where everyone craves to know more about everything, including religion. The result is that people are far better and deeply informed on the subject of religion than ever before. At the same time, we live in a world of differences of multi-religious, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic societies. To remove the differences, people fight among themselves not realizing that differences cannot be removed. A reformer has rightly said that nature abhors uniformity. This means that 'difference' is a part of nature and it exists in every aspect of life including religion. What we need to do is simply learn the 'art of difference management' rather than the art of difference elimination. For, who has the power to remove differences?⁵⁹⁶

How do we manage differences? In ancient times people used to take a confrontational approaches whenever differences arose. They knew only one way to settle disputes, and that was war. The emergence and adoption of democracy introduced the culture of peace. Interfaith dialogue is a conversation in which two or more parties seek to express their views accurately on faith and religion, consciously listening respectfully to their counterparts.

6.5.1. Muslim-Christian witness

Ever since the second half of the twentieth century organised dialogue have found their way at local, religion and international levels. The meetings vary significantly in their organisation, focus, and venues as well as in the composition of participants, Several motivates have propelled the contemporary dialogue moment, including desires to foster understanding, stimulate, communication, correct stereotypes, resolves specific problem of mutual concern, explore similarities and differences and to facilitate means of witness and cooperation. The pragmatic need for better understanding and cooperation among adherents of Christianity and Islam are particularly sensitive. Together with Christians and Muslims comprise almost half the world's population, their interaction thereby having a profound consequence for both communities and the rest of the world.

We should also understand that difference is not a curse, but rather blessings. History shows that differences of options lead to dialogue, and dialogue results in intellectual

⁵⁹⁶ Farida Khanam, 'Interfaith Dialogue and Islam', in *Interfaith Spirituality, The power of Confluence*, (ed. Ambrogio Bongiovanni) (New Delhi: ISPCCK, 2014), 62.

development, a boon for everyone concerned. The difference of opinion also leads to higher thinking, which is the sole key to human progress. In the present realm of religion, differences are managed only through meaningful and positive 'interfaith dialogue' between people of world religions. The aim of the dialogue is to seek peaceful solutions to controversial matters in spite of prevailing differences. There may be differences in religion and culture, but there is absolutely no difference or discrimination made between people in term of respect and honour.⁵⁹⁷

6.5.2. Interfaith dialogue

In Islam, constructive dialogue is not only permitted it is commendable. The Qur'an reads, " Say, People of the book, let us come to the word common to us that we shall worship none but God and that we shall associate no partner with Him and none of shall take others, besides God, for lords" (Surah 3:64)

The dynamics of interfaith encounter between Muslims and Hindus, Muslims and Jews and Muslims and Christians differ; their historical relationships, as well as their major theological, social, and political concerns, very markedly. Contemporary initiatives in Muslim-Christian dialogue can be understood best in the larger context which can be established by a brief overview of dominant themes in Muslim Christian convene.

There shall be no compulsion in religion: true guidance has become distinct from error. Whoever refuses to be led by Satan and believes in God has grasped the strong handhold that will never break. (Surah 2:256) peaceful coexistence is affirmed (Surah 106:1-6). At the same time the people of the book are urged to "come to a common Word" on the understanding of the unity of God (*tawhid*) and worship (e.g. Surah 3:64, 4:171, 5:82 and 29:46). While the Quran provides a framework for Muslim' understanding of Christians and Christianity, political, economic, and social considerations have shaped the encounter in each setting.

Asghar Ali Engineer a profound Islamic scholar says that Mohammad also opens for discussing with Christian to clarify the religious matters. Asghar says:

“We are lacking such tolerance today even in the 21st century. The Prophet recognised the fact that for genuine faith, freedom of conscience is absolutely necessary. Without such freedom, no one can freely choose one's faith. Coercion in matters of faith is

⁵⁹⁷ Ibid,

contradiction in terms. This doctrine of freedom of faith was practiced by the Prophet and has also been mentioned in the revealed text.”⁵⁹⁸

6.5.3. The contribution of WCC⁵⁹⁹ and CMCU⁶⁰⁰ Understanding

The personal experiences of Christian missionaries with Muslims and other people of faith led many missionaries to re-assess their pre-suppositions; Participants in the 20th century World Missionary conferences (Edinburgh in 1910, Jerusalem in 1928, and Tambaram, Indian in 1938) wrestled with questions of witness and service in the midst of religious diversity. These conferences stimulated debate and paved the way for ecumenical efforts at interfaith understanding under the auspices of the World Council of Churches (WCC founded in 1948, BY the 1980's and 1990's) the other international organisations developed formal and informal programmes for Muslims-Christian dialogue. The Muslim World League, The World Muslim Congress, and the Middle East Council of Churches are a notable example of such efforts.

The Centre for Muslim Christian Understanding (CMCU) was founded at Georgetown University in 1993. Through research, publications, academic and community programmes, the centre seeks to improve relations between the Muslims world and the West as well as enhance understanding of Muslims in the West. In 2005, the CMCU received a sizeable financial donation from Prince Al Walid bin Talal of Saudi Arabia in order to strengthen and expand its many programmes: its full name is now Prince al Walid bin Talal centre for Muslims Christian Understanding.

These efforts have borne fruit, at least partially, For instance, a Christian church has appeared once again in Ben Ghazi (Libya) and a mosque was built in Rome for the first time in recent history. Indian is a country where pluralism is a way of life, Indian Christians were, therefore, more appreciative of other cultures and faith communities. In India and the Philippines, Christian institutions have studied Islam and pursued dialogue programme for decades. These academic programmes stimulated particular initiatives by the churches and Muslim organisations.

⁵⁹⁸ Asghar Ali Engineer, Islam, Inter, Islam, and Intra-Faith Dialogue,(Islam and Modern Age, Jan.2005), 1-6

⁵⁹⁹ World Council of Churches

⁶⁰⁰ Centre for Muslim Christian

6.5.4. Interfaith dialogue in the light of the Qur'an and *Hadith*.

Dialogue between Muslims and Christians is today more urgent than ever before. The methodology of that dialogue is also explained in the Qur'an. "Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and fair exhortation and reasons with them in a way that is best,"(Surah 16:125). The dialogue should not appear to be between rivals, but should instead take a scientific course.

The Qur'an makes this quite explicit:

"Good and evil are not alike. Repel evil with that which is best, then he between whom and you was enmity will become as if he were a warm friend" (Surah 41:34)

This verse of the Qur'an tells us that no one is the enemy; everyone is potentially a friend because we are all born with the same nature.

From this Qur'anic principle, we learn that the beginning of any dialogue should not be marked by any sign of frustration about the possible outcome. The right approach is to display a hopeful attitude and at the very outset to suppress any tone which would suggest low expectations of success. A prerequisite for any constructive dialogue is that both communities should not learn about each other through a source that is unsympathetic critical or even hostile they should rather try to formulate an honest idea as to how the other faith is seen in its own authentic scriptures and as practiced by those who are truly committed to it. This need is even more significant in the case of Muslim-Christian dialogue. Muslim regards the term Islam, not as an innovation that came in the seventh century, C.E, with the advent of the Prophet Muhammad, but as the basic mission of all the Prophets throughout history.⁶⁰¹

The dialogue finds its most perfect expression in the Qur'an. When God reveals His word through the Prophets God is engaging humans in a process of discovery whereby they learn that there would not otherwise know and, in revealing his word to humans.⁶⁰² The very first verse of the Qur'an gives us the concept of Dialogue with other communities. Fourteen Hundred years ago the Prophet of Islam held in Medina a three-religion conference in modern terminology, trialogue-to exchange views on religious issues.

The Qur'an praises the sincerity of the people of the book in these words: Among the people of the book there are some who common if you entrust them with the heap of gold, will return it to you. (Surah 3:75). It is interesting to know that the first person who acknowledged

⁶⁰¹ Farida Khanam, 'Interfaith Dialogue and Islam', in *Interfaith Spirituality, The power of Confluence*, 67.

⁶⁰² Thomas Michel S.J., Said Nursi's Views on Muslim-Christian Understanding, Sanayi Cad, Bilge, Istanbul Turkey, 2005, 8.

the Prophet Muhammad with glad tidings was Bahira, a Christian monk who recognized and informed his uncle on way to Syria that he would be the future Prophet. Again, at the time of the first revelation, the first man who acknowledged and confirmed him that the Angel who approached him was Gabriel and the message which he received was from the same source as of the Christ'.⁶⁰³ The man was Waraqa bin Nawfal, who had embraced Christianity in the pre-Islamic period and use to write the Bible in Hebrew.

In Islam, the formula for social peace, social harmony, and inter-faith dialogue are based on peaceful co-existence as has been given in the following verse of the Quran:

"To you be your way. And to me be mine."(Surah 109:6)

In other words, the principle of dialogue given by Islam is, "Follow one and respect all" or the method of 'mutual respect'. As per the teachings of Islam, while respecting others, we have to welcome differences wholeheartedly without any reservation. It is hatred that has to be eliminated, and no difference of opinion. People may have their differences in belief, religion, culture, etc., but while following the religion, they have to have mutual respect for others and discover a common bond between them, which shows them all to be human beings.

The following is another relevant verse:

"Revile not those whom they call upon wrongfully besides God, lest they revile God in their ignorance." (Surah 6:109)

We gather from this verse of the Qur'an that, when dialogue takes place between two parties on a controversial subject, it is essential that an amicable atmosphere is maintained. Another principle of dialogue is supported by the tradition of the Prophet of Islam concerning the *via media* arrived at in drawing of the *Hudaibiya* Peace Treaty. This treaty was signed after long negotiations between the Prophet of Islam and the Quraysh. It is a matter of historical record that the conclusion of this treaty was possible because the Prophet unilaterally accepted the conditions laid down by the Quraysh. In practical matters, Islam advocates flexibility to the ultimate possible extent.

We learn from a number of examples throughout Islamic history that Islam not only lays down principles for dialogue but also gives practical demonstrations. In the Makkkan period of his mission, the Prophet of Islam repeatedly practiced the principle of dialogue. For instance, once the Quryash sent their leader, Utbaibn-Rabiyya, as their representative to the Prophet of Islam so

⁶⁰³ Farida Khanam, 'Interfaith Dialogue and Islam', in *Interfaith Spirituality, The power of Confluence*, 67.

that an atmosphere of peace might have arrived at true negotiation on the subject of mutual differences. The traditions tell us that the Prophet heard Utba out patiently and with full attention. Similarly, at the invitation of his uncle, Abu-Talib, representatives of the Quaraysh gathered at the Prophet's home and held negotiations there peacefully on controversial matters.

The famous Turkish Scholar, Said Nursi throws light on the Christian-Muslims relationship in these words:

“It is even recorded in authentic traditions of the Prophet that at the end of time the truly pious among the Christians will unite with the People of the Qur'an and fight their common enemy, irreligion. And at this time, too, the people of religion and truth need to unite sincerely not only with their own brothers and fellow believers, but also with the truly pious and spiritual ones, the Christians, temporarily from the discussion and debate of points of difference in order to combat their joint enemy-aggressive atheism.”⁶⁰⁴

6.5.5. The broad-minded view of Inter-religious dialogue

The truth is that "interreligious dialogue" is not now limited to specific meetings held in the field of religion. It has rather assumed the form of a vast historical process-spontaneous, ongoing and perhaps never fully recorded. Negotiation in controversial matters is in tune with the spirit of the age, permeating all walks of life.

Probably the most significant result of this historical process is that after a long and arduous intellectual struggle, religious intolerance has been universally rejected and has been replaced with complete religious freedom. Under auspices of the United Nations, all the nations of the world have signed the universal declaration of human rights which safeguards this very freedom. In accordance with the declaration, religious freedom had been accepted as the natural birthright of all human beings. As opposed to practices in ancient times, no one has the inherent right to persecute anyone in the name on religion. This is the change which has confined the sphere of religion. This is the change which has confined the sphere of religious difference to peaceful negotiation.

It is a fact that finding a common ground in secular matters is comparatively easy, for nothing is held as sacred in secularism. On the contrary, everything acquires a sacred character in religion making the task of finding a basis for agreement in religious matters all the more difficult. Nevertheless, we must continue our efforts peacefully despite all difficulties and irrespective of the results.

⁶⁰⁴ Said Nursi, Risala-e Nur, Book: The flashes, The Twentieth Flashes, On Sincerity, 204.

6.5.6. Dialogue and *DAWAH*

Dialogue, or peaceful negotiation, is the path prescribed by Islam. Islam is based on the principle of *DAWAH*, which is another name for peaceful negotiation. Violence is totally forbidden in Islam. There is only one exception to this ban and that is when it is engaged in self-defiance. This can take place only at the time of the external invasion, and such action is the prerogative of an established government. Non-governmental organizations have no right to wage a war in the name of justice, or even in self-defense. There are numerous examples related to the golden age of the Prophet and his companions that support the practice of dialogue in terms of bilateral negotiation as an established principle in Islam.⁶⁰⁵

It becomes clear from the above discussion that the method of Islam is that of peaceful dialogue. The Qur'an tells us that the way of peace is the best way (Surah 4:128). There is another verse, which tells us that the way of negotiation and arbitration should be adopted in controversial matters (Surah 4:35). There is a tradition to this effect:

“Do not desire or seek confrontation with the enemy, but rather ask for peace from God.”⁶⁰⁶

The objective of Islam is to bring about divine revolution, to invite people to the Worship of God, to strive for a society in which spiritual, ethical, and human values are cherished, Islam advocates an atmosphere where peace, tolerance, love, and well-wishing is the order of the day - where controversies are resolved without the use violence. This world can be established only through peaceful dialogue. The truth is that Islam is based on monotheism, with regard to God; and on peaceful dialogue, with regard to methodology. This is the essence of Islamic teaching.⁶⁰⁷

6.6. An understanding of Common Ground for Dialogue

For the Christian–Muslim relation it is mandatory to select few common titles found in the Qur'an like ‘Jesus born to Virgin Mary, (Surah 19:16-22 and Surah 3:45-47), Jesus is pure and Holy, (Surah 19:19) Jesus, the descendant of the family of Abraham, (Genesis 26:4 and Deuteronomy 7:6 and In Surah 2: 47 and Surah 29:27). Jesus, the Honorable in this World and in

⁶⁰⁵ Farida Khanam, ‘Interfaith Dialogue and Islam’, in *Interfaith Spirituality, The power of Confluence*, (ed. Ambrogio Bongiovanni) (New Delhi: ISPCK, 2014), 70.

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid.,

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid., 71.

the hereafter' (Surah 3:45) to discuss and to clarify the miss understandings to build a bridge of cordial friendship, mutual respect, and trust.

The prime attributes of Jesus found in both Sunni *hadith* and Shi'a *hadith* are Jesus' purity,⁶⁰⁸ Jesus as ascetic⁶⁰⁹, Jesus as love⁶¹⁰, Jesus as Word of God⁶¹¹, the sanctification of Jesus⁶¹² and the humbleness of Jesus.⁶¹³ A great Sufi poet Ibn al 'Arabi also expressed his view on the humbleness of Jesus. He denotes that the humility of Jesus⁶¹⁴ was such that his community was commanded that they should pay the poll-tax completely, humbling themselves, that if anyone of them were struck on one cheek, he should also turn the other, and that he should not hit back or seek revenge. This nature of humility is one of the key aspects to engage in soft functioning of dialogue between Muslims and Christians and in turns this effort to shape the society where people can live in religious harmony, peace, and tolerance.

The most elevated titles spoken about Jesus are a purity of Jesus and Jesus as God and son of God which are found in Muslim stories and Sufi sayings. In Sufi sayings, Ibnal 'Arabi a great Sufi master, in his study discovered Jesus as Holy Spirit by citing the miracles performed by Jesus. He professes that though the miracles were occurred by the permission of God it is Jesus' breath which transformed a clay bird into alive.⁶¹⁵ In the exegesis of the miracle passage 3:45, it is clearly explained that Jesus is divine. The Arabic words خلق *khalaqa* ('creating') and نفخ *nafakha* ('blowing') used in the creation account of God and Jesus were the same. The word *khalaqa* ('creating') exclusively used for God's activity, (Surah 23:12, 37:11, 38:76) the same word *khalaqa* is used while Jesus creating the bird (Surah 3:49).

Another important Arabic word *nafakha* which God used for 'blowing' to give life to Adam, (15:29, 32:9, 38:72) the same verb *nafakha* is used while Jesus was blowing into clay bird to give life.(Surah 3:49). This aspect of exegetical study most of the Islamic scholars missed perhaps to minimise the divinity of Jesus.⁶¹⁶ Another famous Sufi, called Rumi also

⁶⁰⁸ Sahih al-Bukhari, *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Trans.MuhammadMuhsin Khan (New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 1984), 426.

⁶⁰⁹ Muhammaed 'Ata ur-Rahim, *Jesus A Prophet of Islam*, (New Delhi: Idara Isha'at-EDiniyat, 2009), 269

⁶¹⁰ Tafsir Al-Imam al-'Askari, 498.

⁶¹¹ Sahih al-Bukhari, *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Trans.MuhammadMuhsin Khan (New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 1984), 429.

⁶¹² Jami 'al-Akhbar, 21.

⁶¹³ 'Aatur-Rahim, 223.

⁶¹⁴ Ibnal-'Arabi, *The Bezels of Wisdom*, 177.

⁶¹⁵ Ibid., 174-175.

⁶¹⁶ Neal Robinson, *Christ in Islam and Christianity*, (New York: State University of New York, 1991), 143.

acknowledged that Jesus as divine. He portrays Jesus as an absolutely extraordinary individual, embodying perfect humanity in being absorbed in essential unity with the divine.⁶¹⁷

6.6.1. Tolerance and mutual understanding

In general few of the Islamic scholars like Mahmoud Ayoub and ‘Ashaq Hussain⁶¹⁸ are open to participating in dialogue with other faith people, especially with Christians. Mahmoud Ayoub is one among the many Muslim scholars who advise such attitude on this aspect that, “Mutual acceptance of others religious traditions as a divine inspired faith.”⁶¹⁹ In other words to have a successful dialogue, there should be tolerance and mutual understanding of divine inspiration in both the faith community. Ayoub further states that as you accept that the religion is divine inspired faith then one should acknowledge and accept each other to be friendly and fellow-pilgrims for establishing secure and sound relationship between these two groups.⁶²⁰ John Paul II also says that when both, different religious faith groups meet in dialogue God’s presence will be present in their midst.⁶²¹ So one who engages in dialogue he/she should feel something like spending time in the presence of God so both the groups need to be aware that to have dialogue with unbiased and positive attitude to establish successful channels for the harmony and peace in the society.

Paul Varo Martinsion says dialogue is public reasoning that arises by virtue of interrogation.⁶²² He further says that in dialogue there would be simple acceptance or outright rejection and complex questions will arise for further clarification. Both need to put-off differences aside and participate in dialogue without any bias.⁶²³ Martinsion further says that dialogue as a relation and interaction between people can become a means for promoting cooperation, mutual respect, and tolerance towards the members of other communities. Dialogue offers to achieve practical goals. It offers and opens up new possibilities and responsibilities for

⁶¹⁷ *Mathnawai* I 500-504. King, 1990, 86.

⁶¹⁸ Ashaq Hussain, “The Qur’anic and Prophetic Model of Inter-Religious dialogue”, in *Journal of the Henry Martyn Institute*, Hyderabad: Vol. 35, January-June, 2016, 28.

⁶¹⁹ Mahmoud Ayoub, *A Muslim view of Christianity*, (New Delhi: Logos Press, 2009), 66.

⁶²⁰ *Ibid.*,

⁶²¹ John Paul II, at Madras, 1986.

⁶²² Paul Varo Martinsion, “Dialogue and Evangelization” in, *Word and World*, Vol. XVI, 1996, 180.

⁶²³ *Ibid.*,

living together, the responsibility to overcome barriers, common commitment to reconstruct community and ways of working together.⁶²⁴

6.6.2. Friendship and genuine pilgrims

As a human being by being in true friendship very many goals can be achieved. We all know that hatred and division lead us nowhere but to destruction and chaos. While looking at the relationship between these two communities down through the century, it is very much evident in the scenario. Hence the researcher feels that as per the Mahmoud Ayoub's understanding the important aspect of the dialogue is 'friendship' and 'genuine pilgrims', which suggest equal respect and acceptance. One may think of superiority and again such thought always led to the failure of discussing something which is of utmost importance for both. This is what reflects past dialogical practices.

And this idea is well expressed by a Muslim scholar, Mohmoud Ayoub, that it is a need for mutual recognition and acceptance for our fruitful spiritual life.⁶²⁵ If there is no peace among the religious group there will be no peace in the society and in the world.⁶²⁶ So he further proposes to keep this thought as a long-range goal to achieve the quest for social and political justice, theological harmony, and spiritual progress on the way to God, who is their ultimate goal. He further proposes a second and third goal which is as followed:

“The second goal for interreligious dialogue is the noble effort that demands the genuine and sincere respect of the faith of the other, including their beliefs, ethical principles, social values, and political aspirations. The third goal of Christian Muslim dialogue is the acceptance by both Christians and Muslims or the other as an equal partner and not an opponent in dialogue. Both should be dignified and equal in the claim for religious authenticity.”⁶²⁷

The friendship and 'genuine pilgrims' is well appreciated and acknowledged. When one begins by giving more respect to others, it always draws to a strong bond of relationship. Further, it helps to open up and be a true seeker in dialogue.

⁶²⁴ Ibid., 483.

⁶²⁵ Mahmoud Ayoub, 68.

⁶²⁶ Hans Kung and Karl Josef Kuschel, ed., *A Global Ethic* (London: SCM Press, 1993), 26.

⁶²⁷ Ibid.,

6.6.3. Avoiding mission consciousness

It is quite obvious that having mission consciousness always presupposes that one's religion is superior. The missionary (*da'wah*) concepts are very much rooted in both the scriptures, but while one engages in dialogue it is always better not to stress on that aspect of the mission of conversion but rather stick to reach the goal of one community of Abrahamic faith. And that is why in order to enter into dialogue such kind of attitude will be of no use but rather widens the gap between communities. At the same time we are not compromising but going into dialogue with genuine heart and understanding. We all know that at the end truth prevails. Hence let us just share and leave everything to God, He knows better.

6.6.4. Priority of listening

We are living in an age where everybody wants to prove something to others, everybody is eager to stress once point while ignoring the views of other, everybody is hurry to say more and more and loud as if they only know everything, and whatever they know is an end itself. Such kind of attitude is very much in existence. No matter what we know about certain things, let us be humble enough while sharing it with others without any prejudice. This is one aspect of life, however, important it is, but the humanitarian aspect is much more important because action speaks louder than words. So let us act out what we know for peaceful brotherhood.

It is mandatory in dialogue that each one can inculcate the habit of listening and learning from each other's faiths.⁶²⁸ One needs to keep aside all the prejudice and all positive and negative things of both the faiths while they engage in dialogue.⁶²⁹

6.6.5. Religious tolerance

The utmost need of the hour in the contemporary world is religious tolerance. The religious tolerance between Muslims and Christians in India is inward expressions than the outward. In other words, both Christians and Muslims in India talk and think that let us live together but never giving thought bearing with each other's differences. The Muslim's book, the

⁶²⁸ Ibid., 66-67.

⁶²⁹ Ibid., 67.

Qur'an, is the only book after the *Torah* (Law)⁶³⁰ and the *Injil* (Gospel)⁶³¹ which gives Jesus the most important status. Islam is the only one of the great non-Christian religions which gives a place to Christ in their book, and yet it is also the only one of non-Christian religions which denies His deity, His atonement, and His supreme place as Lord of all in its sacred literature. In none of the other sacred books of the East is Christ mentioned, the Qur'an alone gives Him a place but does it by displacing him.⁶³² Why? This is so? Might be Jesus was degraded to the human level than to divine level in Islam. Jesus is higher than angel and lower than God. In Christianity Jesus is believed as divine. In this situation the religious tolerance is needed between the two religions when they differ on the core faith of both religions. Vincent Sekhar, S. J., says, in fact, the diversity of religions is God's gift to us. The diversity in the various scriptures and cultures and traditions need to be taken as gratitude and the power and presence of the Spirit of God. "The Spirit blows where it will." (John 3:8). When we open ourselves in dialogue to others, we open ourselves to God; we listen to God's dialogue with humanity;⁶³³ through the genuine interreligious relationship we acknowledge, preserve and promote the Spirit-given values found in other religions.⁶³⁴

6.7. Guidelines for Dialogue

- Interreligious dialogue is free, open, exchange among people of different religious transitions.
- It is primarily a sharing of religious experiences, perceptions, beliefs, and values in an atmosphere of trust and mutual reverence.
- Partners in the dialogue are committed to their respective faiths yet respectfully welcome in sharing, to promotes dialogue.
- Authentic Muslim- Christian dialogue is in itself a religious experience. Since it is God that both communities have come to listen to and encounter. By receiving from each

⁶³⁰ James S.Moon, *Introduction to Islam*, (Hyderabad: HMI, 1993), 53.

⁶³¹ Ibid.,

⁶³² Samuel M.Zwemer, *The Muslem Christ*, (Oliphant's, 1912), 7.

⁶³³ Vincent Sekhar, S.J, *Quest for Harmony,an Anthology of Religions in Dialogu*, (Bangalore: Claretian Publications, 2002), 166.

⁶³⁴ "Inherited Traditions of faith and inculturation" *Sixth Colloquium of Bishops and Theologianas* (14-17, March 2000, NBCLC,Bangalore) Report (VJTR), Volume 64, No. 6, June 2000, 454.

other, each experiences healing and growth because a new bridge has been built, facilitating the flow of values and insights.

- Dialogue must be open-ended. Both Muslims and Christians must be receptive to the insights of the dialogue partners.
- A stimulating and friendly dialogue results in the experience of change and growth.
- The dynamics of the dialogue must be honoured. Both the communities have to overcome the diffidence that can arise from a fear of one's own faith being exposed to the eyes of the partner. Vulnerability should be accepted as a prerequisite.

6.8. Motivating Factors

- Various factors have ushered in Muslim-Christian dialogue.
- First, the growing realisation that the world is becoming pluri-cultural, multi-religious.
- Second, close contact between people because of modern means of communication. Third, Islam and Christianity, both religions are a missionary in nature. Finally, inculturation calls for a healthy dialogue with the religious-cultural traditions and values of the people of the world.
- Worldwide missionary contact and study of the religions of the world have made dialogue necessary.
- Churches that had been inward-looking for centuries because of rationalism, liberalism and other challenges have begun to re-enter society.
- Modern religious and secular movements have increasingly acknowledged the values of other religions and accepted dialogue as a modern biblical scholarship that undertook parallel research into the nature of the many claims of revelation in religions has contributed to considerable to an affirmation of the role of religions in the history of salvation.

6.9. Conditions for a fruitful dialogue

In dialogue, the understanding is that “each partner listens to God speaking in a self-communication questioning his fellow believers”.⁶³⁵ Due to the comprehensive nature of religion

⁶³⁵ Angelo Fernandez, *Experience of Dialogue*, (Gujrat: Gujrat Sahitya Prakashan, 1994), 76.

and ideology, we are led from a dialogue on one level to the others.⁶³⁶ S.J. Samartha's view on successful dialogue are six, need to be taken into consideration here⁶³⁷: one an attitude of commitment to one's own faith with an openness to others should be fostered; second, is the necessity to avoid superficial consensus in dialogue; third, dialogue should attempt to go beyond the level of academic discussions in building mutual trust among the participants; fourth in dialogues attention should be given to worship and the devotional aspects of religion rather than doctrines and dogmas; fifth, the participants should work to establish common human concern, promote action on those concerns and work for peace in specific situations; and sixth, dialogues should study fundamental questions in the religious dimensions of life. When these factors are considered the dialogues become effective.

Inter-faith dialogue is not a dialogue between religions, but a dialogue between believers of different religious traditions because of everyone shares in his or her own name as a member rather than as a representative of his or her community.⁶³⁸ In fact the dialogue begins where people who are related by living or working together face certain common problems which urgently need to be solved, and who are convinced that a solution can only be meaningful as long as it is found together and mutually accepted. In this respect dialogue can be understood as a way of solving conflicts.⁶³⁹ Here an emphasis needs to be made again that in dialogue one learns to see and understand the other, as one sees and understand him/herself. Without dialogue it is impossible to check whether the images one entertains of the other corresponds to reality or merely reflects the person's own imagination and judgment.⁶⁴⁰

6.10. Possibility and outcome of dialogue

Dialogue should be understood more broadly than verbal engagement. It is a way of life: an open attitude toward others, seeking to reach out and to welcome people, including those who are different or even antagonistic. Understood this way, Christian-Muslim dialogue is run into three levels, like Jesus' dialogue with the Samaritan woman (John 4:1-26).

⁶³⁶ Leonard Swidler, "A Dialogue on Dialogue," in *Death or Dialogue*, Paul K. Knitter, et. al., (London: S.C.M. Press, 1990), 62.

⁶³⁷ *Ibid.*, 84-85.

⁶³⁸ Olaf Schumann, "Some Reflection on the Meaning and Aims of Interfaith Dialogue," in *Dialogue and beyond: Christian and Muslims together on the way*, SigardVon Sicard and Ingo Wulfhorst, eds., *LWf studies*, 01/2003, (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 2003), 13.

⁶³⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁶⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 16.

First, Christians and Muslims meet each other as human beings, with common needs and aspirations, joys and sorrows, hopes and struggles.

Second, they meet as monotheistic believers, sharing many beliefs and ethical values, despite the differing understanding of these. Finally, Christians and Muslims claim to be God's witnesses.

An integral part of the dialogue is removing the huge misunderstandings we have about each other's faith, so bearing witness. A fruitful dialogue is measured by its outcomes: a better understanding of each other's faith and of one's own. It should also lead to better relationships between the two communities, strengthening their social commitment. Dialogue is also an excellent school for tolerance.⁶⁴¹

Dialogue is part of the living relationship between people of different faiths and ideologies as they share in the life of a community.⁶⁴² Therefore one of the necessary tasks of the Church is to acknowledge this fact, consider its possibilities and problems and draw out its implications for the life and witness of the Church in a pluralistic society like India. About Christian witness to other living faith people mentioned in the guidelines of WCC.⁶⁴³ Dialogue is an interaction between two faiths and to become a means for promoting co-operation, mutual respect, and tolerance towards the members of other communities. It also offers and opens up new possibility to overcome barriers, common commitments to reconstruct community and ways and ways of working together.⁶⁴⁴

Dialogue helps us overcome our ignorance, our narrow-mindedness, our self-centeredness, our passion, and our spiritual pride. Though both the community comes from one origin, the origin of Abrahamic faith there is two great differences between Islam and Christianity. They are one doctrine of Trinity in Christianity and Islamic Monotheism (*Tawhid*); and second the person of Jesus as God. (John 1:1, 3) who became flesh (John 1:14) in Christianity and in Islam Jesus is just word from God but not God. As per two great scholars Ibn 'Arabi and Meister Eckhart and their work contributed to making clear these differences between Christians and Muslims is worth mention here.⁶⁴⁵

⁶⁴¹ Ibid.,

⁶⁴² S.J Samartha, *Courage for Dialogue*, (Geneva: W.C.C., 1981), 11.

⁶⁴³ David J. Bosch, *Transforming mission: A Paradigm Shift in Missiology*, (New York: Orbis Book, 1991), 483.

⁶⁴⁴ Ibid.,

⁶⁴⁵ Binod Peter Senapati, *Christian-Muslim Dialogue: A Retrospect and Prospects*, in "Allahabad Theological Journal, (ed.), Sam P.Mathew, 2016, Vol. 6, 109-116.

Intentional, structured meetings between Muslims and Christians are generally termed “Muslim-Christian dialogue.” Interfaith dialogue is a conversation in which two or more parties seek to express their views accurately and to listen respectfully to their counterparts. Since the second half of the twentieth century, organized dialogue meetings have reproduced at the local, regional, and international levels. The meetings vary significantly in their organization, focus, and venue, as well as in the composition of participants. Several motives have pressed on the contemporary dialogue movement. These include desires to foster understanding, to stimulate communication, to correct stereotypes, to work on specific problems of mutual concern, to explore similarities and differences, and to facilitate means of witness and cooperation. The pragmatic need for better understanding and cooperation among adherents in the world's two largest communities of faith—Christianity, and Islam—are particularly acute. Together with Christians and Muslims comprise almost half the world's population, so the way in which they relate is bound to have profound consequences for both communities and for the world.⁶⁴⁶

Conclusion

It is true that there are real religious differences between Muslims and Christians that cannot be ignored or downplayed. At the heart of the disagreement is what God requires someone to achieve salvation in the next life. These disagreements, nevertheless, do not stop Muslims and Christians from living together in peace and cooperating on mutually beneficial activities for the betterment of humankind.

In the observation of what dialogue has contributed to the coming of the communities together for a common cause, one would with hope agree and anticipate that Christian and Muslim Dialogue is a powerful channel to build a new society and new world of understanding, religious tolerance, peace, and harmony where people live together in justice in spite of their religious and cultural diversities.

⁶⁴⁶ *Issues in Christian-Muslim Relations*, (Accessed on 12/09/2019, at 5:33 am).

CONCLUSION

Islam and Christianity are two living faiths which claim to have a mission to the whole of humanity. Scriptures of both faiths present the titles of Jesus and they appear to be similar like Jesus the Word of God, Jesus the Holy Spirit, Jesus the Messiah but are different in its understanding.

The researcher has tried to focus the possibilities, problems and prospects of dialogue between Muslims and Christians in this study. There have been isolated moments of dialogue between Muslims and Christians over the centuries, but it is only few decades one can talk of a movement of inter-faith dialogue that aims at understanding between the different traditions of faith.

It is pertinent that the faith community should leave the attitude of converting the other. There is nothing wrong to discuss similarities and differences. When seeking interaction and continue the dialogue, both Christians and Muslims should recognize that in terms of the history of the Crusades and of Colonial imperialism, both on a level playing field. There is no need for either side to be unnecessarily apologetic or overly triumphal.

There is true collaboration and even a kind of involvement between Muslim and Christian minorities in trying to go beyond their historical misunderstanding and working together for the promoting integrity, harmony, justice and peace. The existence of tensions and misunderstanding between Christians and Muslims because of non-essential issues and factors. Christianity and Islam have produced great civilizations of which their members are proud, but they resulted in quite different ways of life.

It is important for the Christians who attempt to dialogue with the Muslim to be aware of some of the events and issues involved in the history of contact between Christianity and Islam. These issues and events have shaped how Christians have viewed Muslims and how Muslims have considered Christians through history and continue in the same attitude and atmosphere even today. So the researcher has taken up dialogical approach for a better understanding of the study.

Dialogical approach refers to cooperative, constructive, and positive interaction between people of different religious traditions, spiritual or humanistic beliefs, at both the individual and

institutional levels. It is based on mutual trust, promoting communal harmony and peaceful living. Jesus is understood and considered an important place in Islam. As the researcher intends to study the Islamic understanding of Jesus, the dialogical approach plays an important role to bring some unity and harmony in the understanding of the present research work.

Dialogue means is nothing but a deliberate effort to engage genuinely and respectfully with each other; willingness to listen and understand; a readiness to learn and be challenged; a desire to relate to, communicate with and be understood by one another. In Christian-Muslim dialogue, the focus is the Christian and Muslim faiths and their implications for individuals and communities in this life and the next. In present days the term dialogue became a buzz common word. Sometimes the word dialogue is used for debate which leads to a false direction. Dialogue is based on the principle of live-and let live, of mutual respect. In this way, dialogue produces peace and harmony while debate produces hatred and distrust.

Christian-Muslim dialogue often takes the form of apologetics for at least two reasons. *Firstly*, Christianity and Islam make conflicting truth claims about God's revelation, which for Christians reached its climax in Jesus Christ, and for Muslims, in the Qur'an. *Secondly*, Islam acknowledges Christianity as a God-given religion; at the same time, it rejects the core of the gospel (the divinity of Christ, his crucifixion, and resurrection). Christian apologetics is about giving a "defense" of the Christian faith. Dialogue is primarily a meeting point between the people of different faiths to discuss for harmonious living. Dialogue has its own place and integrity and is neither opposed to nor incompatible with witness and proclamation. We do not water down our commitment if we engage in dialogue; as a matter of fact, dialogue between people of different faiths is spurious unless it proceeds from the acceptance and expression of faith commitment...In dialogue we are invited to listen in openness to the possibility that the God we know in Jesus Christ may encounter us also in the lives of our neighbors of other faiths.

It is fact that for a successful dialogue, it is needed to be taken into consideration here an attitude of commitment to one's own faith with an openness to others, to avoid superficial consensus in dialogue; to go beyond the level of academic discussions in building mutual trust among the participants; to worship and the devotional aspects of religion rather than doctrines and dogmas; to establish common human concern, promote action on those concerns and work for peace in specific situations; to study fundamental questions in the religious dimensions of life.

Dialogue is a way of life: an open attitude toward others, seeking to reach out and to welcome people, with common needs and aspirations, joys and sorrows, hopes and struggles. They meet as monotheistic believers, sharing many beliefs and ethical values, despite the differing understanding of these. Christians and Muslims claim to be God's witnesses. It is part of the living relationship between people of different faiths and ideologies as they share in the life of a community. Therefore one of the necessary tasks of the Church is to acknowledge this fact, consider its possibilities and problems and draw out its implications for the life and witness of the Church in a pluralistic society like India. It is an interaction between two faiths and to become a means for promoting co-operation, mutual respect, and tolerance towards the members of other communities. It also offers and opens up new possibility to overcome barriers, common commitments to reconstruct community and ways and ways of working together.

Christians and Muslims can also share spiritual insights, sometimes hand-in-hand in the face of common threats or in struggling together towards shared social and political goals. There are places in the world today where such interchange is part of the day-to-day experience of Christians and Muslims. In the process each gains new insights about the God, whom they worship and discovers fresh resources which help them become more humane, more sensitive to the needs of others and more obedient to God's will for all creation, thus fulfilling the purpose for which God has created humankind. Ultimately, this exchange and mutual transformation could lead to the enrichment of the whole human family.

Jesus is a link between Islam and Christianity. Jesus is exalted in the Qur'an. Jesus is known as the Word of God, Spirit of God, Al-Masih, the performer of miracles, enables us to understand these concepts both from Christian and Islamic perspectives and help the two communities to shed their misconceptions, mistrust mutual suspicion in order to build a harmonious community. Both in the Bible and Qur'an Jesus is described as the Word of God, that is, the *Kalimatullah*. Whether it is taken in its actual Biblical form or Qur'anic expression, "a word from God" and "God's word," two things are strikingly and abundantly clear. Jesus himself in his actual person is the Word, Spirit, Messiah, and healer and the source, origin and the fountainhead of the Word is God.

The issues about the crucifixion of Jesus, the Qur'an offers no explanation of this concept. Nevertheless, the very title, *Kalimatullah* ascribes Jesus a unique place in Qur'an,

which is in line with the Christian understanding of the Son of God. And this may be mutually acceptable concept serves as a meeting point for these communities to come together for the welfare of the society. The discussion on the interpretation will continue. Whether it 'a word from God' or 'the word from God'. The researcher thinks God does not contradict in his sayings; it is the self-interest of people for upholding one's view and degrading others. This issue was discussed in detail and one fact came out very clearly that he is word from God. What does that mean? Is such term applied to any human being? And questions like, from where did the word come? Is it part of him or apart from him? Very serious thought should be taken into consideration. It is not the question of superiority or domination but of genuine search for one's spiritual benefit.

The characteristics and personalities of Jesus mentioned positively in Qur'an and *hadith* need to be explained to the common Muslims so that they will be aware of the facts and truths of Jesus and not misunderstand. An attempt must be made to discuss with orthodox Muslims and *imams* and dialogue among them and bring clarity to Jesus' personality based in Qur'an and *hadith* to the common Muslims.

In mystical circles, Jesus is seen as the perfect human being, who in his life attained a very close relationship with God. Many Muslims have been deeply offended by the negative way in which Christians, in the past and present, have spoken and written about their prophet. There is a danger that Christian ideas or concepts are projected into the Qur'an when the Qur'an uses words like "Messiah," "Word of God "and" Spirit of God" in relation to Jesus. These words are used in a context different from the biblical context. They do not carry the same meaning in both contexts.

In Qur'an Jesus gets the honor and respect as in *hadith* and Sufi sayings. In *hadith* Jesus is portrayed mostly as an ascetic prophet, holy, as the Word of God, as the Messiah and love of God. Incorporating these images of Christ in our minds and applying a proper methodology to practice dialogue in such a way that harmony and peace prevails in each community. In Sufi sayings, it is evident that the ascetic life of Jesus became a prime source for their spiritual life. The ascetic life of Sufi is the best model that can be adopted by the evangelical Christians and the orthodox Muslims. History says Islam in India spread much with the Sufi movement without practicing the concept of winning others. They renounced the worldly life and spent much time

contemplating on Almighty God. Thus there is no conflict with other faith groups and they spread their faith in India and the world.

To engage in dialogue is to share one's own views and opinion of faith and practices through which each needs to gain healthy interactions and mutual understanding. If anyone is convinced it is a different issue. The dialogue between Muslims and Christians should be fair, respecting each other's beliefs and practices. One's life of his/her faith practice in day today life situations and exhibiting the scriptural values to the society is the utmost essential need of the hour than religious conversion.

There are unending efforts and initiatives both from Christian and Muslim to make dialogue between them as a channel for cooperation on matters of mutual interest. Dialogue is a unique opportunity for two religious communities based on Abrahamic faith and a written text. It provides opportunities and occasions for sharing and listening that leads to mutual understanding. It seeks to proceed in a spirit of honest, open and frank exchange that leads to overcoming of centuries-old animosity, rivalry, and competitiveness in terms of the superiority of one's own faith. Dialogue is also a way of life where the partners of dialogue recognize the similarities and differences of one another's cultural and religious sentiments and feelings.

Looking at the understanding of Jesus in Islam, one can understand that there is some proper understanding between the Christians and Muslims. The researcher tried to analyse that dialogical approach aims at mutual understanding. In the case of Christian-Muslim dialogue, this involves understanding a Muslim as a Muslim and Christian as a Christian. It seeks to explore ones respective faiths, coming to know one as Muslims or as Christians believe and hold valued, what one practice as people of prayer and spiritual discipline, how to live a life and role of religion moral guidance in that living, the way one hold the sacred books, the life that lived should be considered as people of faith. That mutual exploration does not proceed in a spirit of debate or even of apology. It seeks to proceed in a spirit of dialogue of honest, open and frank exchange that leads to mutual understanding.

In order to explain clearly to Muslim friends on the titles of Jesus in the Qur'an and in the Bible the researcher proposed Inter-faith religious dialogue with certain guidelines highlighted in

chapter six. This is an attempt to bring Muslims and Christians together to have solidarity and develop trust with each other to live peacefully.

The researcher finds that it is so important for the Christians who attempt to dialogue with the Muslims, in the retrospection of what dialogue has contributed to the coming of the communities together for a common cause, one would with hope agree and anticipate that Christian and Muslim dialogue is a powerful channel to build a new society and new world of understanding, religious tolerance, peace and harmony where people live together in justice in spite of their religious and cultural differences.

Findings

- The understanding of Jesus in Islam as the Word of God, Messiah, and prophet is well understood and it is very similar as it is believed to have from Abrahamic origin. But there are some understanding of Jesus in Islam is differs to Christianity. Therefore, the researcher finds inter-faith dialogue is very essential and important.
- Dialogical approach significantly improves one's own understanding of the "other". While one can learn a significant amount about another religion from books, talking to people who practice that religion about what others believe, what others do and how others feel about it transforms one's knowledge and more importantly the understanding.
- A paradoxical benefit of engaging in interfaith dialogue is that it helps to understand Islam much better. One must have been brought up practicing the religion but that is not the same as studying it in depth to find out how it addresses fundamental issues. This study finds a significant amount of research on the Qur'an and the *hadith* when preparing for formal interfaith dialogue discussions. It is found as essential to put forward propositions which are firmly grounded in the texts rather than being at risk of simply conveying the assumptions about what Islam says. This research is found extensively illuminating.
- It helps the people with whom one can talk to understand Islam. Most Christians know few, if any, Muslims. Their experience of dealing with Muslims is limited to situations such as the workplace where you never talk in any depth about your religion, what you practice and how you feel about it.

- Taking part in interfaith dialogue, one help Christians to understand that Muslims are intelligent, sympathetic people who can discuss their differences with members of other religions while remaining completely confident in their own Islam.
- Further investigation is necessary about Jesus as God in the writings of Ibn Kathir's, book *Stories of the Prophets*.

Recommendations

- To organize structured training programs in interfaith at all levels
- To encourage people to learn about the history of the country and acknowledge the contributions of each religious and ethnic group in the development of the country.
- To learn to respect and encourage religious leaders to dialogue.
- To guard against the tendency to defend own personal convictions at any cost.
- To respect for the sentiments and a conviction of the other community and not to put any preconditions which would interfere with honest dialogues.
- To maintain the integrity of dialogue by not compromising or with any ulterior motives.
- To dialogue is not to be apologetic and the innate desire to defend one's own beliefs and practice should be checked.
- To respect the diversity and not to have feeling of superiority with space for Self - Criticism.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Books

- Ahluwalia, Shashi. (eds). *Living faiths in Modern India*, Delhi: Indian Publishers Distributors, 1992.
- Alam, Mohammad Badre. *Nuzul -E -Isa', Descension of Jesus Christ*, Delhi: Dini Book Dep., 1978.
- Al-Bukhari, Sahih. *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Trans. Muhammad Muhsin Khan New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, Vol. IV, 1984.
- Aleaz, K. P. *Theology of Religions*, Calcutta: Moumita Publishers & Distributers, 1988.
- _____. *Dimension of Indian Religions, Study, Experience and Interaction* Calcutta: Punthi Pustak, 1995.
- Ali, Michael Nazir. *Frontiers in Muslim-Christian Encounter*, 1987.
- Ali, Michael Nazir. *Frontiers in Muslim – Christian Encounter*. UK: Oxford Regmum Books, 1991.
- Amaladoss, Michael. *Walking Together: The Practice of Inter-Religious Dialogue*, Jesuit Theological Forum Reflections, no. 7, Anand: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1992.
- _____. *Faith, Culture and Inter-Religious Dialogue*, Ideas for Action Series, no. 2 Delhi: Indian Social Institute, 1985.
- Amaoparvadass, D.S. *Research Seminar on Non-Biblical Scriptures*, Bangalore: NBCLC, 1974.
- Amjad Ali, Charles. *Theological and Historical Relationality behind Christian-Muslim Relations*, Madras: CLS, 1992.
- Anderson, Gerald H. *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, USA: New Jersey, 1999.
- Anderson, J.N.D. *Christianity and Comparative Religion*. Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity, 1970.

- ‘Arabi, Muhy I-D-Din Ibn. *The wisdom of the Prophets*, Gloucestershire: Beshara Publications, 1975.
- Ariarajah, Wesley. *The Bible and People of Other Faiths*, Geneva: WCC, 1993.
- _____. *Religious Plurality and Its Challenge to Christian Theology: World Faiths Insight*, London: 1988.
- Ataur-Rahim. *Muhammad, Jesus Prophet of Islam*, London: Ta-Ha Publishers, 1977.
- Ayoub, Mahmoud. *A Muslim view of Christianity, essays on dialogue*, New Delhi: Logos Press, 2007.
- _____. *The Qur’an and Its Interpreters*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984.
- Baagi, H.M. *Muslim Christian Dialogue*, New Delhi: Islamic Book Service, 2002.
- Baillie, John. *The Sense of the Presence of God*, Scribner, 1962.
- Barth, Karl. *Evangelical Theology*, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans publishing
- Basetti-Sani, Giulio. *The Koran in the Light of Christ –A Christian Interpretation of the Sacred Book of Islam*, Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1977.
- Bassham, R.C. *Mission Theology: 1948-1975 Year of Worldwide Creative Tension – Ecumenical, Evangelical and Roman Catholic*, Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1979.
- Beaumont, Mark. *Christology in Dialogue with Muslims: A Critical Analysis of Christian Presentations of Christ for Muslims from the Ninth and Twentieth Centuries*. Cumbria: Paternoster, 2005.
- Beyerhaus, Peter. *Bangkok 73: The Beginning or end of World Mission?* Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974.
- _____. *Missions: Which Way? Humanization or Redemption*, Margaret Clarkson (Trans), Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971.
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *The Cost of Discipleship*, trans. by Reginald H. Fuller New York: Macmillan, 1959.

- Boquet, A. C. *The Christian Faith and Non-Christian Religions*. London: SCM Press, 1958.
- Borrmans, Maurice. *Guidelines for Dialogue between Christians and Muslims*. Translated by Marston Speight. New York: Paulist Press 1990.
- Bosch, David J. *Transforming Mission: A Paradigm Shift in Missiology*. New York: Orbis Books, 1991.
- Boyd, R.H.S., *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*, Revised and Reprinted, Delhi: ISPCK, 1989.
- Braswell, George W. *Islam: Its Prophet, Peoples, Politics, and Power*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996.
- Brown, Daniel, S. Jr. *A Communicative Perspective on Interfaith Dialogue: Living Within the Abrahamic Traditions*. Plymouth – UK: Lexington Books, 2013.
- Brown S.E. *Seeking an Open Society (Inter-Faith relations and Dialogue in Sudan Today)*, Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 1997.
- Brown, Raymond. E. *The Virginal Conception and Bodily Resurrection of Jesus*. New York: Paulist Press, 1973.
- _____. *An Introduction to New Testament Christology*. New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1994.
- Bryant, M. Darrol. *Muslim-Christian Dialogue: Promise and Problems*. Minnesota: Paragon House 1998.
- Burridge, A. R. *Jesus Now and Then*. London: Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, 2004.
- Cairns, E. E. *Christianity through the Centuries. A History of the Christian Church*. Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984.
- Campbell, J. *The Hero with a thousand faces*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949.
- _____. *The Mask of God in IV, Vols, Primitive Mythology, Oriental Mythology, Accidental Mythology, Creative Mythology*, New York: Viking, 1968.

- Campo, Juan, E. *Encyclopedia of Islam*. New York: Info. Base Publishing, 2009.
- _____. *The Truth, the Way, and the Life: Christian Commentary on the Three Holy Mantras of Srivaisnava*. Louvain: Peeters, 2008.
- _____. *Beyond Compare: St. Francis de Sales and Sri Vedanta Desika on Loving Surrender to God*. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2008.
- _____. *Comparative Theology: Deep Learning across Religious Borders*. West Sussex - UK: Wiley & Blackwell Publishing Corporation, 2010.
- _____. *The New Comparative Theology: Interreligious Insights for the New Generation*. New York: T & T Clark International, 2010.
- Carson, D. A. *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism*, (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 1996).
- Cather wood, C. *Christians, Muslims and Islamic Rage: What is going on and why it happened*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004.
- Chandran, D. S. Devanesan. *Preparation for Dialogue: A Collection of Essays on Hinduism and Christianity in New India* Bangalore: CISRS, 1964.
- Clendenin, David B. *Many Gods, Many Lords*, Michigan: Baker Books, 1994.
- Clooney, Francis, X. *The Truth, the Way and the Life: Christian Commentary on the Three Holy Mantras of Srivaisnava*. Louvain: Peeters, 2008
- _____. *Beyond Compare: St. Francis de Sales and Sri Vedanta Desika on Loving Surrender to God*. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2008.
- _____. *Comparative Theology: Deep Learning across Religious Borders*. West Sussex - UK: Wiley & Blackwell Publishing Corporation, 2010.
- _____. *The New Comparative Theology: Interreligious Insights for the New Generation*. New York: T & T Clark International, 2010.
- _____. *Theology After Vedanta: An Experiment in Comparative Theology*. State New York: University of New York Press: Albany, 1993.

- Comp, Stuart E. Brown. *Meeting in Faith*, Geneva: WCC Publication, 1989.
- Conway, E. *The anonymous Christian-A Relativised Christianity?*, 1993.
- Cooper, Anne. *Ishmael My Brother: A Christian Introduction to Islam. 2nd ed.* UK: Turn bridge Wells, Monarch Publication 1993.
- _____. *The Impossibility of Interreligious Dialogue.* New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2008.
- Corbin, C. H. *Kitab al Muzai*, Tehran: Islamic Study Centre, 1961.
- _____. *Trilogieismaelieenne* Tehran: Islamic Study Centre, 1961.
- Corduan, Winfried. *A Tapestry of Faiths: The Common Threads Between Christianity and World Religions.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002.
- Coward, Harold G. *Religious Pluralism and the World Religions*, Madras: The Dr. Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras, 1983.
- _____. *Pluralism*, New York: Orbis Books, 1985.
- Cragg, Kenneth R. *Troubled by Truth.* Durham: Pentland, 1992.
- _____. *To Meet and to Greet: Faith with Faith.* London: Epworth, 1992.
- Cullmann, Oscar. *The Christology of the New Testament*, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959.
- _____. *The Earliest Christian Confessions*, trans. by J.K.S. Reid London: Lutterworth, 1943.
- D'Costa, Gavin. *Theology and Religious Pluralism: The Challenge of Other Religions*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986.
- _____. *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered* New York: Orbis Books, 1990.
- _____. *The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 2000.

- Daniel, Norman. *Islam and the West*, Edinburgh: Uni. Press, *Passim* 1960.
- David, Edward F. (eds.). *The Modern Theologian: An Introduction to Christian Theology in the Twentieth Century*, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 1997.
- Dawe Donald and John B. Carman (eds.). *Christian faith in a Religiously Plural World*, New York: Orbis Books, 1978.
- Davie, Grace. *Religion in Britain since 1945: Believing Without Belonging* Oxford: Blackwell, 1994.
- Demarest, Bruce A. *A general and Special Revelation* in Clerke & Winter 1991.
- Desai, Mehboob. *Islam and non-violence*, Delhi: Gyan Publication, 2009.
- Denny, Frederick M. *An Introduction to ISLAM* (2nd Ed), (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1994).
- Deshmukh, Ibrahimkhan O. *The Gospel and Islam*. Mumbai: GLS Publishing, 1995.
- Dewick, E. C. *The Christian Attitude to Other Religions*, Cambridge University Press: 1953.
- Dodd, C.H. *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1936.
- Dunn, James D.G. *Jesus' Call to Discipleship*, Understanding Jesus Today Series, ed. by Howard Clark Kee Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Dupuis, S.J., Jacques. *Jesus Christ at the Encounter of World Religions*, New York: Orbis, 1991.
- Dupuis , Neuner. *The Christian Faith*, Banglore: T.P.I., 1973.
- Durkheim, Emil. *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, London: Allen and Unwin, 1976.
- Edwards, David. Et.al. *Evangelical Essentials: A Liberal Evangelical Dialogue*, Downers Grove: IVP, 1988.
- Ehrman, Bart D. *Did Jesus Exist? The Historical Argument for Jesus of Nazareth* New York: Harper Collins, 2012.

- Eliade, Mircea. *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, London/New York: Sheed and Ward, 1958.
- _____ . *Images and Symbols, Studies in Religious Symbolism*, London/New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961.
- _____ . *A History of Religious Ideas Vol.I* London: Collins, 1979.
- _____ . *The Sacred and the Profane. The Nature of Religion*, New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1959.
- Eliade, Mircea, (ed.). *The Encyclopedia of Religion*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987.
- Eller, Vernard. *The Simple Life: The Christian Stance Toward Possessions* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1973.
- Engineer, Asghar Ali. *Communal Riots in Post-Independence India*. Hyderabad: Sangam Books, 1991.
- _____ . *A Living Faith, My quest for peace, Harmony and Social Change*, New Delhi: Orient Black Swan, 2011.
- _____ . *Muslim Minority*, New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 1998.
- Evans, R. F. *One and Holy: The Church in Latin Patristic Theology*, London: SPCK, 1972.
- Farah, Ceaser E. *Islam*. 6thed. New York: Baron's Educational Series, 2000.
- Farmer, H. H. *Towards Belief in God*, London: SCM Press, 1942.
- Farquhar, J.N. *The Crown of Hinduism*, London: Oxford University Press, 1913.
- Fernando, Ajith. *The Christian's Attitude toward World Religions*, Tyndale: Wheaton, 1987.
- _____ . *The Christian Attitude Towards World Religions*, (Mumbai: GLS Publications, 2000
- Ferenando, Ajith. *Relating to People of Other Faiths*, Mumbai: GLS Publishing, 1977.

- Fernando, Angelo. *Experience of Dialogue*. Gujarat: Gujarat Sahitya Prakasham, 1994.
- Frick, Heinrich. *The Gospel, Christianity and Other Religions*, London: Oxford, 1938.
- Funk, Robert W. (eds.) *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus*, New York: Scribner, 1993.
- Gandhi, Mahatma. *Fellowship of Faiths and Unity of Religions*, Ed. By Abdul Majid Khan, Madras: GA Natesananda Co., 1944.
- _____. *The Message of Jesus Christ*, Bombay: 1990.
- Giddens, Anthony. *The Consequences of Modernity*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990.
- _____. *Sociology*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989.
- Gillis, Chester. *Pluralism: A New Paradigm for Theology* Louvain/Grand Rapids, Michigan: Peters Press/William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993.
- Gilchrist, John. *Christ in Islam and Christianity*, Villach: Light of Life, 1975.
- _____. *The Textual History of the Qur'an and the Bible*, Villach: Light of Life, 1981.
- _____. *The Titles of Jesus in the Quran and the Bible*. Christianity and Islam Series, No.5, London: SCM Press, 2001.
- Griffiths, Paul J. *Christianity Through Non-Christian Eyes*, Fifth Printing New York: Orbis Books, 1998.
- _____. *Christianity Through Non-Christian Eyes*, Fifth Printing New York: Orbis Books, 1998.
- _____. *Christianity through non-Christian eyes*, Maryknol: Orbis Books, 1998.
- Grillmeier, Aloys. *Christ in Christian Tradition, Vol. 1, From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon*, trans. John Bowden, Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975.
- Habermas, Gary R. *The Risen Jesus and Future Hope*, Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003.
- _____. *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus* Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2004.

- _____ . "Resurrection Claims in Non-Christian Religions," *Religious Studies*, Vol. 25, 1989.
- Haight, Roger. *Meeting Jesus Again for the First time: the Historical Jesus and the Heart of Contemporary Faith*, HarperSanFrancisco, 1994.
- Hallencreutz, Carl F. *Dialogue and Community: Ecumenical Issues in Inter-Religious Relationships*, Studia Missionalia Upsaliensia XXXI Uppsala: Swedish Institute of Missionary Research, Geneva: WCC, 1977.
- Hexham, Irving. *Understanding World Religions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011.
- _____ . *Concise Dictionary of Religion*. [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993.
- Hick, John. *Philosophy of Religion*, Second Edition New Delhi: Prentice- Hall of India, 1979.
- _____ . *A Christians Theology of Religions: The Rainbow of Faiths*, Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995.
- Hick, John, et al. *Christianity and other Religions* Great Britain: Fount Paperbacks, 1980.
- Hick, J. & P. F. Knitter. *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1987.
- Holm, J. *The Study of Religions*, London: Sheldom Press, 1977.
- Hurtado, Larry W. *How on Earth Did Jesus Become a God? Historical Questions about Earliest Devotion to Jesus* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005.
- _____ . *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003.
- Guillaume, A. (ed.). *The life of Muhammad. A Translation of Ibn Ishaq's Siral Rasul Allah*. Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Hahn, Ernest. *Jesus in Islam: A Christian View*, Hyderabad: Henry Martyn Institute, 1982.

- Hick, John. *Disputed Questions in Theology and the Philosophy of Religion*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983.
- Ibn ‘Arabi, Muhy I-D-Din. *The wisdom of the Prophets*, Gloucestershire: Beshara Publications, 1975.
- Ibn, Kathir. *Stories of the Prophets*, New Delhi: Islamic Book Service, New York: Cosimo Classics, 2013.
- Ipgrave, M. *The Road Ahead: A Christian-Muslim Dialogue*, London, Church House, 2002.
- Jacob, Sijo. *Religious Pluralism and the finality of Christ-Christological Reflections from Lesslie Newbiggin*, New Delhi: Christian World Imprints, 2016.
- Jadeed, Iskander. *Cross in the Gospel and the Koran*, Rikon: The Good Way, n.d.,
- James, M. Phillips, eds. *Towards the 21st Century in Christian Mission*. Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publication, 1993.
- Jefferey, Arthur. *Foreign Vocabulary of the Quran*. Baroda: Baroda Sahitya Prakashan, 1938.
- Jones, Lewis Bevan. *Christianity Explained to Muslims*. Calcutta: YMCA, 1938.
- _____.
- _____.
- _____.
- _____.
- Joseph, John. *Muslim Christian Relations and Inter - Christian Rivalries in the Middle East*, New York: State University of New York Press, 1983.
- Kersten, Holger. *Jesus lived in India*, London: Great Britain, 1994.
- Khalidi, Tarif. *The Muslim Jesus*, London: Harvard University Press, 2001.
- Khan, Maulana W. *Non-Violence and Peace-Building*, Noida: Good word Books, 2017.
- Kitagawa. J et al.(eds.). *The History of Religions, Essays on the Problem of Understanding*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1967.

- Klostermaier, K. K. *Hindu-Christian Dialogue: Its Religious and Cultural Implications*, Varanasi: 1992.
- Knitter, Paul F. *No Other Name? A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes Toward the World Religions*, Maryknoll : Orbis Books, 1985.
- _____. *Jesus and the Other Names: Christian Mission and Global Responsibility*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996.
- _____. *Introducing Theologies of Religions*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002
- _____. “Five Theses on the Uniqueness of Jesus” in *The Uniqueness of Jesus A dialogue with Paul F. Knitter*, ed. By Leonard Swidler and Paul Mojzes, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1997.
- _____. *Jesus and the other names. Christian Mission and Global Responsibility* Oxford: One World, 1996.
- _____. *One Earth Many Religions. Multifaith Dialogue & Global Responsibility* MaryKnoll: Orbis Books, 1995.
- Komoszewski, J. *Reinventing Jesus: What the Da Vinci Code and other Novel Speculations Don't Tell You* Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2006.
- Kung, Hans eds. *A Global Ethic*. London: SCM Press, 1993.
- Lalrinawma, V. S. *Major Faith Traditions of India*, Delhi: ISPCK, 2007.
- Lapidus, Ira M. *A History of Islamic Societies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1988.
- Lawson, Todd. *The Crucifixion, and the Qur'an*, New York: One World, 2011.
- Leirvik, Oddbjorn. *Images of Jesus Christ in Islam*, Uppsala: Swedish Missionary Research, 1999.
- Luckmann, Thomas. *The Invisible Religion*, New York: McMillan, 1971.
- Mahmoud. *A Muslim View of Christianity*, ed., Irfan A. Omar, New Delhi: Logos Press, 2009.

- Marshal, M. T. *No Salvation outside the Church? A Critical Inquiry*, Edwin Mellen Press, 1993.
- Marxsen, Willi. *The Beginning of Christology: A Study in its Problems*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969.
- Masi, Abd-al. *Why is it difficult for a Muslim to be a Christian*, Villach: Light of Life, n.d.,
- Masih, Abd Al. *The Great Deception: How Muhammad tried to win the Christian for Islam*. Villach-Austria: Light of Life, 1995.
- _____. *Who is the Spirit from Allah in Islam? A critical Analysis of Relevant Qura'an passages as Compared to the Gospel*. Villach-Austria: Light of Life, 1998.
- _____. *Holy War in Islam*, Villach: Light of Life, n.d.,
- _____. *Who is the Spirit from Allah in Islam*. Austria: Light of Life, 1997.
- Mathew, Joseph (eds.). *Dimensions of Mission in India*. (Bombay: St. Paul Publications, 1995).
- Maududi, Sayyid Abul Ala. *Towards Understanding Islam*. New Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islamic Publication, 1996.
- McDermott, Gerald R. *Can Evangelicals Learn from World Religions? Jesus, Revelation, and Religious Traditions*, Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 2000.
- _____. *Jonathan Edwards Confronts the Gods: Christian Theology, Enlightenment Religion and Non-Christian Faiths*, New York: Yale University Press, 1989.
- Merad, M. Ali. *Christ in the Qur'an*, 1968.
- Miller, William A. *A Christian's Response to Islam*. Phillips burg: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub. Co., 1976.
- Minz, Nirmal. *Mahatma Gandhi and Hindu-Christian Dialogue*, Madras: CLS, 1970.
- Mohammed, Ovey N. *Muslim – Christian Relations: Past, Present, Future*. New York, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1999.

- Moon, S, James and Douglas, Ian H. *Introduction to Islam*, Hyderabad: Henry Martyn Institute, 1993.
- Moncarry, Chawkat. *The Prophet and the Messiah*. Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 2001.
- Muhammad, Maulivi, Ali. *Muhammad and Christ*, Madras: ISPCK, 1921.
 _____ . *Muhammad and Christ*, Lahore: Ahmadiyah Anjuman-I-Ishaat-I-Islam, 1921.
- Muslim, Imam. *Sahih Muslim*, Trans. Abdul Hamid Siddiqi, Lahore: SH. Muhammad Ashraf, Vol. IV, 1976.
- Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. *Jesus through the eyes of Islam*, 1981.
- Needham R. *The Comparative Study of Religions*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1958.
- Neibuhr, H. R. *Christ and Culture*, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952
- Neil, Stephen. *Christian Faith and Other Faiths* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970.
- Netland, Harold A. *Dissonant Voices: Religious Pluralism and the Question of Truth*, Eerdmans/Apollos, 1991.
 _____ . *Encountering Religious Pluralism: The Challenge to Christian Faith & Mission*, IVP: 2001.
- Newbigin, Lesslie. *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989.
 _____ . *The Finality of Christ* London: SCM Press, 1969.
 _____ . *Trinitarian Faith and Today's Mission*, New York :V. Knox, 1964
 _____ . *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, London: ISPCK, 1989.
 _____ . *The Open secret: Sketches for a Missionary Theology*, London: SPCK, 1987.
- Nigosian, S.A. *World Religions: A Historical Approach*, Third ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2000.
- Nolan, Albert. *Jesus Before Christianity*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1978.

- Nehring, Andreas, (ed.). *Fundamentalism and Secularism*. Chennai: Gurukul Summer Institute, 1984.
- Nickel, Gordon D. *Peaceable Witness Among Muslims*. Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1999.
- Ogden, Schubert. *The Point of Christology* New York: Harper and Row, 1982.
- Omar, Irfan A. *A Muslim View of Christianity*, New Delhi: logos press, 2010.
- Panikkar, Raimond. *Salvation in Christ: Concreteness and Universality, the Super name*, California: Santa Barbara, 1972.
- _____ . *The Interreligious Dialogue*, Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 1984.
- _____ . *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism: Towards and Ecumenical Christophany*, revised and enlarged ed., London: Dartio, Longman & Todd, 1981.
- _____ . *Unknown Christ of Hinduism* Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 1981.
- _____ . *The Trinity and the World Religions*, Madras: CLS, 1970
- _____ . *The Trinity and the Religious Experience of Man: Icon-Person-Mystery*, New York: Orbis Books, and London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1973.
- Parrinder, Geoffrey. *Jesus in Qur'an*, London: Faber and Faber, 1965.
- _____ . *Worship in the World's religions*, London: Faber and Faber, 1961.
- Pathil, Kuncheria CMI, *Religious Pluralism* Delhi: ISPCK, 1991.
- Pattazzoni, Raffaele. *Essays on the History of Religions*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1954.
- Paul, Sulthan Muhammed. *Why I Became a Christian*, Rikon: The Good Way, n.d.,
- Phillip, T. V. *Christianity and Religious Pluralism*, Bangalore: The United Theological College, 1988.

- Race, Alan. *Christians and Religious Pluralism*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983.
- Pickthal, M. M. *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*, New Delhi: Islamic Book Service, 1992.
- Rahner, Karl. *Foundations of Christian Faith*, tran. William Dych, New York: Seabury Press, 1978.
- _____. *Theological Investigations*, 23 vols. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1996.
- _____. "God's Transcendence and Concern for the Future," *Theological Investigations*, Vol.20
- _____. "Anonymous Christianity and the Missionary task of the Church," *Theological Investigations*, vol. 12, 1974.
- _____. "Christianity and the Non-Christian Religions," *Theological investigations*, vol.5.
- _____. *Foundations of Christian Faith*, tran. William Dych, New York: Seabury Press, 1978.
- _____. *The Love of Jesus and the Love of Neighbour*, New York: Crossroad, 1983.
- Raju, T. Swami. *Christian Responses to Plurality of Religion*, Bangalore: BTESSC/SATHRI, 2006.
- Rao, Bandi Sreenivas. *Christ in the Qur'an and Bible (who He crucified?)* Eluru: Bandi Brothers, 1975.
- Rao, Sreenivasa. (ed.). *Inter-faith Dialogue and World Community*, Chennai: CLS, 1991. 1, 1970.
- Ratiq, Emmanuel Luther. *Jesus Contact & conflict between Christians and Muslims*, Sweden: IKBS International, 1999.
- Robert, Afayori. *Christology in Christian-Muslim dialogue: the hermeneutics of interreligious dialogue for the promotion of common value*, Scotland: University of Edinburgh, 2015.
- Robinson, Neal. *Christ in Islam and Christianity*, New York: State University of New York, 1991.
- Robson, J. *Christian Islam*. London: SCM Press, 1969.

- Rousseau, Richard. *Christianity and Islam: The Struggling Dialogue*. Montrose, PA: Ridge Row Press, 1985.
- Samad, Ulfat Azizus. *A Comparative Study of Christianity & Islam*, New Delhi: Adam Publishers & Distributors, 2007.
- Samartha, S. J. *Christian-Muslim Dialogue*. Geneva: WCC, 1973.
- _____. *One Christ – Many Religions toward a Revised Christology*, (New York: Orbis, Books, 1991,
- _____. *Christian-Muslim Dialogue: Papers Presented at the Broumana Consultation, July 1972*. Geneva: WCC, 1973.
- _____. *Towards World Community*. Geneva: WCC, 1975.
- _____. *Faith in the Midst of Faiths*. Geneva: WCC, 1977.
- _____. *Courage for Dialogue*. Geneva: WCC, 1981.
- _____. *Towards World community*. Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1975.
- Sack, Gold. *Christ in Islam*, Madras: CLS, 1905.
- Samuel P. Huntington. *The Clash of Civilization and the Remarking of World Order*. London: Touchstone Books, 1996.
- Sardar, Ziaud. *Introducing Muhammad*. New York: Totem Books, 1994.
- Schumann, Olaf. *Jesus the Messiah in Muslim Thought*, Delhi: ISPCK / HMI, 2002.
- _____. *An-Nawawis Forty Hadith*, Trans., Ezzeddin Ibrahim and Denys Johnson-Davies, New Delhi: Islamic Book Services, 2002.
- Seale, M.S. *Muslim Theology*, London: SCM Press, 1964.
- Sekhar, S.J, Vincent. *Quest for Harmony An Anthology of Religions in Dialogue*, Bangalore: Claretian Publications, 2002.
- Sells, Michael. *Mystical Languages of Unsayings*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994.
- Selvanayagam, Israel. *Relating to the People of Other Faiths: Insights from Bible*, Tiruvalla: Joints Publications, 2004.

- Senapati, Binod Peter. *Jesus the Kalimatullah: A Christian –Muslim Relation*. Delhi: ISPCK, 2009.
- Shad, Abdur Rehman. *From Adam to Muhammad*, New Delhi: Islamic Book Service, 1998.
- Shafaat, Ahmad. *The Gospel According to Islam*, 1979.
- Sharpe, E. J. *Understanding Religion*, London: Duckworth, 1983.
- Shenk, C. E. *Who do you say that I am?* PA, Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1997.
- _____ . *Who do you say I am?*, PA, Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1997.
- Singh, D. Emmanue, et al. *Approaches, Foundations, Issues and Models of Inter-faith Relations*, Delhi: ISPCK, 2001
- Sheard, Robert B. *Inter-Religious Dialogue in the Catholic Church since Vatican II: a Historical and Theological Study*. Lewiston: The Edwin Mallen Press, 1987.
- Siddiqui, N.A. *Population Geography of Muslims of India*. New Delhi: Chand Publication, 1976.
- Smith, W. C. *Islam in Modern History*. New York: The New American Library.
- _____ . *Worldviews: Cross Cultural Explorations of Human Beliefs*, New York: Scribner's, 1983.
- _____ . *Towards a World Theology*, Philadelphia: Westminster, 198.
- _____ . *Faith and Belief*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979.
- _____ . *Questions of Religious Truth*, New York: Scribner, 1967.
- _____ . *Meaning and End of Religion*, New York: Mentor, 1964.
- _____ . *Religious Diversity*, New York: Harper and Row, 1976.
- _____ . *of World Literature*, 1959.
- Sookhdeo, Patrick. *Islam the Challenge to the Church*, Pewsey, Wiltshire: Isaac Publishing (UK), 2006.
- Stacey, Vivienne. *Henry Martyn*. Hyderabad: Henry Martyn Institute of Islamic Studies. 1980.

- Steenbrink, Karel. *The Jesus Verses of The Qur'an*, Hyderabad: Henry Martyn Institute, 2011.
- Thomas Michel S.J. *Muslim-Christian Understanding*, Sanayi Cad, Bilge, Istanbul Turkey, 2005.
- Thomas, M.M. *The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance*, London: SCM Press Ltd, 1969.
- _____. *Some Theological Dialogues*, Indian Christian Thought Series, no. 14 Maras: CLS, 1977.
- _____. *Risking Christ for Christy's Sake: Towards an Ecumenical Theology of Pluralism*, Geneva: WCC Publications, 1987.
- _____. *Parivarthananthinte Daivasanstham (Theology of Social Change)* Tiruvalla: Theological Literature Council, 1982.
- _____. *New Creation in Christ*, Delhi: ISPCK, 1976.
- _____. *The Confusion Called Conversion* New Delhi: TRACI, 1986.
- Tirkey, Christopher Augustus Bixel. *Religion, Primal Religions*, Delhi: ISPCK, 2005.
- Troll, C.W. *Sayyid Ahmad Khan, A Reinterpretation of Muslim Theology*, New Delhi: Vikas, 1978.
- Von Denffer. *A Dialogue between Christians and Muslims, Part One: A Survey*, Nairobi: Islamic Foundation, 1980.
- Wardenburg, Jacques. *Reflections on the Study of Religion*, The Hague: Mouton, 1978
- Watt, William Montgomery. *Muslim-Christian Encounters: Perceptions and Misperceptions*, London and New York: Routledge, 1991.
- Werff, L. L. Vander. *Christian Mission to Muslims*. South Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1977.
- Wilson, Frederick R. ed. *The San Antonio Report*. Geneva: WCC, 1990.
- Zafar, Muhammad Jawed. *Christo-Islamic theologies*, Delhi: Adam Publishers, 1994.
- Zebiri, Kate. *Muslims and Christians Face to Face*, 1997

Zaehner, R.C. *At Sunday Times*. London: 1959.

Zwemer, Samuel. M. *The Moslem Christ*. London and Edinburgh, 1912.

_____. *The Muslem Christ*, Oliphant's, 1912.

2. Articles in Books

Arthur Jeffery. "The Qur'an as Scripture", in *The Muslim World*. Vol.41, 1950.

Bruck, M. Von "Identifying Constructively Our Interreligious Moment," in L. Swidler, and p. Mojzes, (eds.), *The uniqueness of Jesus- a Dialogue with Paul F. Knitter*, 1997.

Chenchiah, P. "The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World: A Review of Dr. Kraemer's Book," appendix to *Rethinking Christianity in India*, ed. D. M. Devasahayam, A. N. Sudarisanam, Madras: A. N. Sudarisanam, 1938.

Cobb John. Jr., "The Meaning of Pluralism for Christian self understanding "in *Religious Pluralism* ed. By Leroy S. Rouner, Norte Dame: University of Norte Dame Press, 1984.

Cornille, Catherine. "Conditions for the Possibility of Interreligious Dialogue on God" in *The Concept of God in Global Dialogue*. Jeanrond and Lande (ed.). Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2005.

Cuttat, Jacques-Albert. *The Encounter of Religions: A Dialogue between the West and the Orient with an Essay on the Prayer of Jesus*, trans. Pierre de Fontnouvelle with Evis McGrew, Paris: Desclee Company, 1960.

Dodd, C.H. "The Primitive Catechism and the Sayings of Jesus," in *New Testament Essays: Studies in Memory of Thomas Walter Manson, 1893-1958*, edited by A.J.B. Higgins Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959.

D'Costa,Gavin. "Extra ecclesiam nulla salus," in *Religious Pluralism and Unbelief*, I. Hamnett (ed.), London: The Colston Research Society, 1990.

_____. "Theology of Religions," in ed. David F. Ford, *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology in the Twentieth Century, Volume III*, Blackwell: 1989.

- Hick, John. "Five Misgivings," in L. Swidler, and p. Mojzes, (eds.), *The uniqueness of Jesus- a Dialogue with Paul F. Knitter*, 1997.
- _____. "Religious Pluralism", in Mercia Eliade (ed.) *The Encyclopedia of Religion*. Vol. 12 New York: MacMillan Publishing company, 1987
- _____. "Jesus and the World Religions", cited in John Hick (ed.), *The Myth of God Incarnate*, London: SCM Press, 1977.
- _____. 'The Non-Absoluteness of Christianity', *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness: Towards a Pluralistic Theology of Religions*, (ed.), John Hick and Paul F. Knitter, New York, Orbis books, 1987.
- _____. "A Pluralist View," in eds. Dennis L. Okholm & Timothy R. Phillips, *More Than One Way? Four Views on Salvation in a Pluralistic World*, Zondervan: 1995.
- Karim, Fazul ul- . "An English translation of *Imam Gazzali's Ihya Ulum-id-din*," Lahore: Sind Sager Academy, n.d.
- Khanam, Farida. "Interfaith Dialogue and Islam," in *Interfaith Spirituality, The Power of Confluence*, (ed. Ambrogio Bongiovanni) New Delhi: ISPCK, 2014.
- _____. "Christian-Muslim Dialogue," in *Dialogue in a Pluralistic World*, (ed.). Ambrogiovanni...,New Delhi: ISPCK, 2013.
- Lewis, B. "Isa" in *The Encyclopadia of Islam*, Vol. IV, ed. E. Van Donzel, and Ch. Pellat, Netherlands: E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1978.
- Massey, James. "A Case of Sikh-Christian Dialogue," in *The Challenge of Dialogue: papers and Resolutions of the Dialogue Working Group Meeting, Casablanca/Moroco, 19-28 June 1989*, Geneva: WCC, 1989.
- Newbigin, Lesslie. "The Christian Faith and the World Religions" in Geoffrey Wainwright (ed.), *Keeping the Faith*, London: SPCK, 1989.
- Norton, Peter B. *The New Encyclopedia Britannica, and Vol.4. 14th* (ed.), Chicago: American Library Association, 1929.

- Nyce, Dorothy Yoder. "Seeing is believing." in *Studies in inter-Religious Dialogue*. Henk Vroom, ed. Netherlands: 2004.
- Pannenberg, Wolfhart. "Religious Pluralism and Conflicting Truth Claims: The Problem of a Theology of the World Religions," in ed. Gavin D'Costa, *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered: The Myth of a Pluralistic Theology of Religions*, Orbis: 1990.
- Patrick Hughes, Thomas. "Jesus Christ" in *Dictionary of Islam*, London: W.H. Allen and Co. limited, 1885, 229.
- Puthiadam, Ignatius. "Diversity of Religions in the Context of Pluralism and Indian Christian Life and Reflection," in *Theologizing in India: Selection of Papers Presented at the Seminar Held in Poona on October 26-30, 1978*, (eds.), M. Amaladoss, T. K. John and G. Gispert-Sauch, Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 1981.
- Race, Alan. "'Exclusive' 'Inclusive' 'Pluralistic' in relation to other religions" in J. H. Whittaker, *Matter of Faith and Matter of principle Religious Truth Claims and Their Logic*, San Antonio, 1981.
- Samartha, S. J. "Dialogue in a Religiously Plural World," in Israel Selvanayagam (ed.), *The Multi-faith Context of India*, Bangalore: BTESSC, 1993.
- _____ . "The Lordship of Jesus Christ and Religious Pluralism," in *Christ's Lordship and Religious Pluralism*, ed. Gerald H. Anderson and Thomas F. Stransky, New York: Orbis, 1981.
- _____ . "Dialogue in a Religiously Plural Society," *The Multi-Faith Context of India- Resources and Challenges for Christians*, (ed.), Israel Selvanayagam, Bangalore: The Board for Theological text Books Program of South Asia, n.d., p.1
- _____ . "The Cross and the Rainbow. Christ in a multi-religious Culture" in *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness*, ed. By John Hick and Paul F. Knitter MaryKnoll: Orbis Books, 1985.
- Robinson, Neal. "Jesus" in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*, eds., Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Brill: Koninklijke, 2003), Vol.3, 8.
- Selvanayagam, Israel. "Inter-Faith Dialogue: Some Programme Models", in *A Dialogue on Dialogue; Reflections on Inter- faith encounters*, (Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1995), 164-172.
- Senapati, Binod Peter "Christian-Muslim Dialogue: A Retrospect and Prospects" in

Allahabad Theological Journal, Vol. 6, 2016, 98-126.

- Singh, David Emmanuel. "Jesus, 'the Living Wali'?" in *Jesus and the Resurrection, Reflections of Christians from Islamic contexts, A Revisionist Reading of Surah, 18:60-8*, 2014.
- Singh, G.R. *Biblical Insights on Interfaith Dialogue*, (Bangalore: The Board for Theological Text-book Programme of South Asia, ed. Israel Selvanayagam, 1995.
- Slomp, Jan. "Hendrik Kraemer and Dialogue" in *Approaches, Foundations, Issues and Models of Inter-faith Relations*, Delhi: ISPCK, 2002.
- Song, Choan-seng. "The Decisiveness of Christ," in *What Asian Christians are Thinking*, ed Douglas J. Elwood
- Tiwari, Ravi. "Approaches to the study of Religion," in *Methodological Issues in Theological Discipline*, (ed.) Bangalore: SATHRI, 2002.
- Waldenfels H., "Mission and Interreligious Dialogue: what is at stake?" in P. Mojzes, and Swidler (ed.), *Christian Mission and Interreligious Dialogue*, 1990.

3. Articles in Journals

- Akinola, P. "The Christians raised their heads", Anglican Communion News Service Bulletin 2379, 6. March 2001.
- Aleaz, K. P. "Religious Pluralism and Christian Witness: A Biblical-Theological Analysis," *Bangalore Theological Forum* 21-22, December 1989-march 1990
- _____ . "Place of Religions in Theological Education", *Sanskritu* Vol. 3, Nos. 1& 2, 1990.
- _____ . "Pluralistic Inclusivism: A Viable Indian Theology of Religions," *Asia Journal of Theology* 12, no. 2 (October 1998), 268.
- Ali, Syed. "Relations between the Peoples-the Muslim Attitude-An analysis", *Inter-faith dialogue and World Community*, ed., CH. Sreenivasa Rao, Madras: C.L.S, 1991, 97-107.

- Amaladoss, Michael. "New Wine and Old Bottles," *Vidyajyoti* 55 January 1991.
- _____. "Text and Context: the Place of Non-Biblical Readings in the Liturgy," in *Research Seminar on Non-Biblical Scriptures*, (ed.), D. S. Amalorpavadass, Bangalore: NBCLC, 1975.
- Amar, Djaballah. "Jesus in Islam", in *the Southern Baptist Journal of Theology*. vol. 8, No. 1, Spring, 2004.
- Amjad Ali, Christine. "Developing Christian Theology in the Context of Islam: A Report of the Silver Jubilee Seminar held at the Christian Study centre," Rawalpindi, Pakistan November 22-27, 1993. Rawalpindi: Christian Study Centre, 1996.
- Anand, Subash. "Universally Uniquely Universal," *Vidyajyoti* 55, July 1991.
- Ariaraja, S.W., *Bangkok, Assembly 1973: Minuts and Report of the CWME of the WCC, December 31, 1972, 1972 and January 9-12, 1973, Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1973.*
- Askari, Hasan. "The Dialogical Relationship between Christianity and Islam", in the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*. Vol. 8, 1972.
- Ayoub, M. Mahmoud. "Towards An Islamic Christology: An Image of Jesus in Early Shi'i Muslim literature" in *The Muslim World*, vol. LXVI, No. 3, July 1976, 163-188.
- Bhajan, Sam V. 'Muslim-Christian Dialogue in India', *NCC Review*, Vol. CVII, No. 9, October 1987.
- _____. "Muslims and Christians in an Indian Context-The Question of Dialogue" in *New Approaches to Inter-faith Dialogue*, (ed.), Dayanandan Francis, Sweden: The Church of Sweden Mission, 1980.
- Bhowmick, P. K. "Cultural continuity in social economic change: A Study in Religious complexes in the rural setting". *Journal of Social and Economic Studies* Vol. 5, No. 2, 1977.
- Burman, B. K. Roy. "Structure of the sacred Ritual Terracottas", *Man in India*, Vol. 54, No. 1, 1974.
- Byron L.Haines and *Christians and Muslims Together, An Exploration by*

- Presbyterians*, Philadelphia, Geneva Press, 1987.
- Calverley, Edwin, E. "The Cross and Islam," in *The Muslim World* vol. XXVII No.2. 1937.
- Canaan, T. "Muhammeden Saints and Sanctuaries in Palestine," in *Journal of the Palestine*, Oriental Sanctuaries. Iv/1-2, 1924,
- Cavanagh, R. R. 'Religion as a field of Study', in T. W. Hall (ed.) *Introduction to the Study of Religion*, New York: Harper and Row, 1978.
- Chandran, J. Russel. "Plurality of Religious Faiths and Living in Community", *Inter-faith dialogue and World Community*, ed., CH. Sreenivasa Rao, Madras: C.L.S, 1991, 159-168.
- Clooney, Francis, X.
 _____.
 _____.
 _____.
- "When Religions Become Context" in *Theology Today*, 47 (1990),
- "Current Theology: Comparative Theology: A Review of Recent Book (1989- 1995)" in *Theological Studies* 56 (1995), 521-550
- "Passionate Comparison: The Intensification of Affect in Interreligious Reading of Hindu and Christian Texts", in *Harvard Theological Review* 98 (2005), 367-390.
- "Current Theology: Comparative Theology: A Review of Recent Book (1989- 1995)" in *Theological Studies* 56 (1995).
- Cooper, Anne. "Conditions for the Possibility of Interreligious Dialogue on God" in *The Concept of God in Global Dialogue*. Jeanrond and Lande (ed.). Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2005.
- Cornill, Caherine. "Meaning and Truth in Dialogue between Religions" in Depoortere, Frederick and Magdalen Lambkin, Magdalene (eds.). *The Question of Theological Truth. Philosophical and Interreligious Perspectives*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2012, 137- 156.
- D'Souza, Andreas. "Jesus in Ibn'Arabi' Fusus al Hikam" in *The Bulletin of Christian Institutes of Islamic studies*, Vol. 6, No.1-2, Jan-June 1983, 28-54. And M.Chodkiewiz, *Le sceau des saints*, (Translated into English as *Seal of the Saints: Prophethood and Sainthood in the Doctrin of Ibn 'Arabi*, trans. L.Sherrard (Cambridge, Islamic Texts Society, 1993.
- D'Souza, Andreas. "Reconciliation in Practice, Indian Experience." In *Religion Conflict and Reconciliation*. Jerald D. Gort et al, (eds.), Amsterdam/New York: 2002.

- Edwin, Victor, S.J. Hyderabad: ISPCK/HMI publication, 1-2.
- Engineer, Asghar Ali ‘. Islam, Inter and Intra-faith Dialogue,’ (*Islam and Modern Age*, Jan. 2005), 1-6.
- Evers, George. “Trends and Developments in the field of Inter-religious Dialogue.” in *Studies in Inter religious Dialogue*. Henk Vroom, (ed.), Netherlands: Free University, 2003.
- Gifford, P. “Africa Shall Be Saved”. An Appraisal of Reinhard Bonnke’s Pan-African Crusade’, in *Journal of Religion in Africa* 17.1, 63-92.
- Gilchrist, John. “The Titles of Jesus in the Quran and the Bible”, in *Christianity and Islam Series*, No.5, London: SCM Press, 2001.
- Gill, David., (ed.). *Gathered for Life: Official Report. VI Assembly, WCC, Vancouver, Canada, 24July-10August 1983*. Michigan: Grand Rapids, 1983.
- Glaser, I. “Beyond the dialogue v evangelism dichotomy”, in *The Faith to Faith Newsletter*, No 2, 1-2, 1999.
- Hakim, Souad. “The Spirit and the Son of the Spirit: a reading of Jesus (‘Isa) according to Ibn’Arabi”, *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn ‘Arabi Society*, Vol. XXXI, 2002, 1-28.
- Hallencreutz, Carl F. *Dialogue and Community: Ecumenical Issues in Inter-Religious Relationships*, Studia Missionalia Upsaliensia XXXI (Uppsala: Swedish Institute of Missionary Research, Geneva: WCC, 1977),
- Hammer, R. J “Pluralism, Religious” in *Concise Dictionary of the Christian World Mission*, S. Neill (ed.) Nashville, Abingdon, 488-489, 1971.
- Haq, Mushir Ul. “The universal aspects of Islam”, in *Towards World Community*, Geneva: World Council of Churches, ed, S.J. Samartha, 1975.
- Haque, Serajul. “Islam and world community”, in *Towards World Community*, Geneva: World Council of Churches, ed, S.J. Samartha, 1975.
- Hedlund, Roger E. *Roots of the Great Debate in Mission: Mission in Historical and Theological Perspective*. Bangalore: TBT, 1993.
- Henry, Hamid. “The Dialogue of Civilizations Peace Building Beyond Religious Bigotry: A Christian Perspective.” in *Building Spirituality and Culture of Peace*. Josef Purnama Widyatmadja, (ed.), Hong Kong: Program Area of Faith, Mission and Unity, 2004.

- Hussain, ‘Ashaq. “The Qur’anic and Prophetic Model of Inter-Religious dialogue’, in *Journal of the Henry Martyn Institute*, Hyderabad: Vol. 35, No.1, January-June, 2016, 28-38.
- Irudayaraj, J. X. “From the ‘Fulfillment-View’ to the ‘Sacramental approach’,” *Jeevadhara* 1, May-June 1971.
- Kee, Howard Clark. *What Can We Know about Jesus? Understanding Jesus Today* Series ed. by Howard Clark Kee Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Khanam, Farida. ‘Interfaith Dialogue and Islam’, in *Interfaith Spirituality, The Power of Confluence*, (ed. Ambrogio Bongiovanni), New Delhi: ISPCK, 2014, 62-71.
- _____. “Christian Muslim dialogue”, in *Dialogue in a Pluralistic World*, Delhi: ISPCK, 2013.
- Kitagawa, J. M. “The Making of a Historian of Religions”, *Journal of the American Academy of Religions*, Vol.36. 1986.
- Knitter, Paul, F. “Spirituality and Liberation: A Buddhist-Christian Conversation” (With Masao Abe). *Horizons*, 1987.
- Kuschel, Hans Kung and Karl Josef, (ed.). *A Global Ethic* London: SCM Press, 1993, 26.
- Mathew, Sam P. “Jesus’ attitude towards people of other faiths in the Gospel of Luke,” in K. David Udayakumar (ed.), *Gurukul Journal of Theological Studies, Vol.XII No. 1&2*, Chennai: GLTCRI, 2003.
- Michel S.J., Thomas and Nursi Said’s. *Views on Muslim-Christian Understanding*, Sanayi Cad, Bilge, Istanbul Turkey, 2005, 8.
- Muhammad, Abu `Abd. al-Malik Ibn Hisham al-Ma`afiri, Al-Sirah Al-Nabawiyah. Volume II, Dar al-Hadith: Cairo (Egypt), 1998, 181-182.
- Mura, Osamu. “No Development without Peace,” in *Dharma World*, Vol. 10, February 1983.
- Netland, Harold. “Application: Mission in a Pluralistic World.” In *Edward Roman and Harold Netland*, eds. *Christianity and the Religions: A Biblical Theology of World Religions*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1995.

- Omar, Irfan A. 'Qur'an Upholds Plurality as the Will of God', in *Seeking Communion*, ed. Joseph Victor. (n.d).
- Panikkar, Raimond. "The Cosmotheandric Intuition," in *Jeevadhara* 14, January 1984.
- Panikkar, R. "In Christ There is Neither Hindu nor Christian: Perspectives on Hindu-Christian Dialogue," in *Religious Issues and Interreligious Dialogues*, ed. C. Wei-hsun Fu and G. E. Spiegler, New York: Greenwood Press, 1989.
- Panikkar, R. & I. Stephens, "Is Jesus Christ unique? Dialogue between Ian and Ray" *Theoria to Theory* I, January 1967.
- Pieris, Aloysius. "An Asian Paradigm: Inter-Religious Dialogue and Theology of Religions," *The Month* 26, April 1993.
- Prabhu, G. Sores. *The Indian Church Challenged by Pluralism and Dialogue*, in Sedos, Vol.26.
- Putz, J. "The Meaning of Christianity (continued)," *The Clergy Monthly* 9 May 1946.
- Reingard Bonnke's. "Mission to Africa, and His 1991 Nairobi Crusade", In *New Dimensions in African Christianity*, P. Gifford (ed.), Nairobi: All Africa Conference of Churches, 157-182, 1992.
- Robert. Stein, "Jesus Christ," in the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, (ed.), By Walter A. Elwell Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2001.
- Robinson, Neal. "Jesus" in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*, (ed.), Jane Dammen Mc Auliff, Brill: Koninklijke, Vol. 3, 2003.
- _____. "Isa" in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, (eds). E. Van Donzel, B. Lewis, Ch. Pellat, Leiden: E.J. Brill, Vol. IV, 1978.
- _____. , "Isa" in *Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam*, (eds)., H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1961.
- Runia, Klaas. "Why Christianity of all religions?" in *Evangelical Review of Theology*, 22:3, 1998.
- Samartha, S. J. Dialogue as a continuing Concern, *Religion and Society*, Vol.

XVIII, No. 1 March, 1971.

- _____. "Dialogue as a Continuing Christian Concern." In Gerald H. Anderson, (ed). *Mission Trends*. New York: Paulist Press, October 1978.
- Schumann, Olaf. "Some Reflection on the Meaning and Aims of Interfaith Dialogue." in *Dialogue and Beyond: Christian and Muslims Together on the Way. LWF Studies*. Sigard Von Sicard and Ingo Wulfhorst. eds. Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 2003.
- Senapati, Binod Peter "Christian-Muslim Dialogue: A Retrospect and Prospects" in *Journal of the Henry Martyn Institute*, vol.36, No. 1, Jan-July 2017, 37-57.
- Sharpe, Eric J. "Christ the Fulfiller," *Bangalore Theological Forum* 3, no. 1 1969.
- Singh, Ram. "The Contribution of Religion to the Harmony – Conflict Process," in *Interfaith Dialogue and World Community*. Sreenivasa Rao, (ed.), Madras: CLS, 1991.
- Thomas, M.M. "Significance of Marxist and Barthian Insights for a Theology of Religion," *Religion and Society* 21 December 1947.
- _____. "Divine Incarnation," *National Christian Council Review* 98, 1973.
- _____. "A Reply," *Religion and Society* 23 September 1976.
- _____. "Gospel and History in India," *Religion and Society* 12 December 1965.
- Troll, C.W. *Vidyajyoti*, New Delhi, Vol.43, (1979), 16-24.
- Wilfred, Felix. "Some Tentative Reflections on the Language of Christian Uniqueness: An Indian Perspective," *Vidyajyoti*, 57, November 1993.
- _____. "Dialogue gasping for Breath? Towards New Frontiers in Inter-Religious Dialogue," *Vidyajyoti* 51, October 1987.
- _____. "Some Tentative Reflections on the Language of Christian Uniqueness: An Indian Perspective," *Vidyajyoti*, 57, November 1993.

4. Commentaries/ Dictionaries

Abū Ja'far Muhammad ibn Jarīr Al-Tabarī. *Jāmi' al-Bayān 'a Ta'wīl Āy al-Qur'ān*.

Afifi, Abul Ala'. *Al-Ta Liqat Ala Fusus Al-Hikam*.

Commentary on the Bezels of Wisdom, Vol.2, Teheran: Al Zahra Pub. 1987.

Ali, Yusuf. A. *The Holy Quran, Text, Translation and Commentary*. New Revised Edition. Brentwood Maryland: Amana Corporation 1989.

Shakir (ed.) Cairo Dār al-Ma'ārif,. *The Commentary on the Qur'an* by Abū Ja'far Muhammad ibn Jarīr Al-Tabarī. English translation by J. Cooper, Vol.1.Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Noldeke. *Gaschichte des Qoran*, Zweite Auflage, bearbeitet von Fr. Schwally, Part 1, 173ff.

Hans Wehr, *Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic; Arabic-English Dictionary*, ed., J. Milton Cowan. New York: Spoken language Services, 1976.

Wehr, H. *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*. London: Allen and Unwin, 1971.

5. Websites

Bearman P.; Th. Bianquis; C.E. Bosworth; E. van Donzel; W.P. Heinrichs, 'Imrān". *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2nd ed.). Brill. eds. (2012). (Accessed on 24/08/2019 at 7:18 am.)

Dalal'il al-Imamah, 2, 238.

Dialogue, (Accessed on 28/08/2019, at 6:04 am)

<http://www.irshad.org>

<http://www.ntslibrary.com>

<http://www.irshad.org>

<https://davidiqbalkarim.wordpress.com/tag/ruhullah/>

[https:// en.wikipedis.org](https://en.wikipedis.org)

Ikhtisas. 1, 355.

Islamic mythology, (Accessed on 29/08/2019 at 2:24 pm).

Jami ‘al-Akhbar, 21.

Jesus in Qur’an, (Accessed on 27/07/2018, at 9:05 pm).

Kafi, 1,175, 3.

Kharaj’ij Wal al-Jara’ih, 2, 899.

Masiha, (Accessed on 24/05/2018 at 8:30 am).

Muslim Objections Refuted Jesus and The Bird Explanation From wikiislam.net.

Tafsir al-Imam al-‘Askari, 498.

Tahdhib, 6,84,3.

Trinity in Pre-Islamic period (Accessed on 24/08/2019 at 5:35 pm).

Vishal Arora August 6, 2010, (Accessed on 28/08/2019 at 11:28 pm).

www. alislam.org, taken on 26-10-201

www. Bihar 14, 202,14.

6. Dissertations

Robert, Afayori.

“Christology in Christian-Muslim dialogue: the hermeneutics of interreligious dialogue for the promotion of common value”, Scotland: University of Edinburgh, 2015.

Shih-Ching, Judy Tao.

Holy Spirit in the Qur’an, An assessment from a Christian Perspective. Stellenbosch: University of Stellenbosch, 2006.