

OUTLINE OF LECTURE 1

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JAN. 14TH INTRODUCTION: 'ADMITTED TRUTH 'AN OVERVIEW IN HISTORY
(window between this outline and the power-point no. 1)

1. Two Faiths Arose out of Judaism and emphasized:
 - A) One creator God;
 - B) Centrality of Divine Law;
 - C) God's Will known through His written Word;
 - D) Preeminent place of Prophets interpreting God's Word;

- 2a. Dialogue among Christians and Muslims
 - A) Definition of dialogue as reasoning for the sake of persuasion
 - (1) Acts 17:2 (Bible)
 - (2) Surah 16:125 (Qur'an)
 - B) Based on one of two aims:
 - (1) disputation based on winning argument;
 - (2) admitted truths based on gaining an adherent;
 - C) Represented by overlapping concentric circles
 - (1) area where circles overlap illustrative of admitted truths;
 - (2) area where circles diverge illustrative of difference;
 - D) . PIVOTAL TOPICS IN STUDYING ADMITTED TRUTHS;
 - (1) Sources of Revelation in Islam and Christianity;
 - (2) God's Essence, Nature, Attributes and Acts;
 - (3) God's Law;
 - (4) Humanity;
 - (5) Sin;
 - (6) Salvation;
 - (7) Prophets;
 - (8) Messiah/Jesus
 - (9) The End Times

- 2b. Early scholars engaged in Muslim and Christian dialogue (7th-10th centuries)
 - A) John of Damascus (675-749) dialogues in Damascus with 'Umar II Caliph (717-720)
 - B) Mar Timothy (727-823 dialogues in Baghdad with Caliph al-Mahdi~ (775-785)
 - C) Paul of Antioch (d.1180) writings in 'Risala' response 1 C. later by Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328)

3. Focus on the life and methods of dialogue of John of Damascus (675-763)
 - A) John's timeline
 - (1) John of Damascus was a theologian from the Eastern Church & born in Damascus;
 - (2) John's grandfather, Mansur b. Serguḡn, surrendered the city to the Arabs in 635.¹
 - (3) John worked in the treasury as an accountant for the Umayyads;
 - (4) After 'Umar II assumed power (717-720) John resigned his post in 724 to the monastery of Mar Sabas in Palestine for the rest of his life. Died in 752.

¹ Ibid.

3. Continued

B) John's writings

- (1) John's theoretical writings provided the foundation for dialectical theology
 - (a) *Dialectica, De Haeresibus* and *De Fide Orthodoxa* form a trilogy.
 - (b) for resolving differences in theology through reasoning.
- (2) John's practical writings provided the foundation for dialogue and admitted truths.
 - (a) '*Disputatio* (Disputations)' was a handbook for Christians holding dialogue with Muslims.²
 - (b) Employed truths admitted by both the Qur'an and the Bible in dialogue.
 - (c) Emphasized the Unity of God and that Christ is called God's Word and His Spirit (Surah 4:169) & John 1 of New Testament;

4. The life and methods in dialogue of Mar Timothy I (728-823)

A. Timeline of Mar Timothy I (728-823) Patriarch of the Nestorian Church from 780 CE to 823; Timothy moved from Ctesiphon to Baghdad to discuss with Caliph al-Mahdi~ (775-785)

B. Held dialogue on the following Christian topics:

- (1) Whether Jesus is God's Word;
- (2) Whether Bible is trustworthy according to the Qur'an;
- (3) How verses in the Qur'an about crucifixion resolved;
- (4) Whether Muslims and Christians are addressing same Deity;
- (5) If so, why do predicates about God differ? Cf. Sweetman, Pt. I, Vol. I, pp. 74-83.

C. Held dialogue the following Islamic topics:

- (1) the nature of evidence required to confirm a writing as of God and whether the Qur'an met those requirements according to the Bible;
- (2) the nature of evidence required to confirm a prophet of God and whether Md. met requirements according to the Bible;

5. The Crusades 11th-14th were mirrored by dialogue turning into disputation;

A. Pope Gregory VII wrote in his letter in 1076 to al-Nasir, a Muslim: "There is a charity which we owe to each other because we recognize and confess one sole God."³

B. His successor, Pope Urban II, called for a Crusade to re-take the Holy Land in 1095.

C. Apart from Paul of Antioch (1180 d) admitted truths were replaced by disputation.

D. On the Islamic side Ibn Hazm (994-1064) in his *Kitab al-fisal fi'l-milal wa'l-nihal*, (Book of Discernment between Confessions and Sects) attacked Christianity.

E. On the Christian side Dominican missionaries following arguments of Thomas Aquinas tried to show the weakness of Islamic arguments against Christian faith.

F. The Result of this New Polemic was logical dialectic mirrored the battle field;

² The *Disputatio* was later translated into Arabic from Greek and attributed to Abu Qurra. It was divided into two parts: *Disputatio Christiani et Saraceni* (Controversy of a Christian with a Muslim) and *Disputatio Saraceni et Christiani* (Controversy of a Muslim with a Christian). Cf. J. Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam* (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1972), p. 171ff.

³ Ibid.

6 A. Paul of Antioch's (1180 d) *Risalla* (20pgs) a bright light against the dark crusades expressing:

1. Muhammad sent to the Pagan Arab only, not to Christians, Suras:xii:2; xiv:4; 2:7.
2. The Qur'an praises Christians & their faith, Suras: iii:55;
3. The Qur'an confirms the authenticity of Christian Scriptures, Suras: iii:3; x:94; xlii:15.
4. The Qur'an praises monks and the Eucharist or Holy Communion, Suras: v:82; xxii:17;
5. The doctrine of the Trinity [in contrast to tri-theism] conforms to reason, the Bible and to the Qur'an, as is shown by the *Bismala*, and Suras: iv:171; xix:34.
6. The doctrine of the Trinity when rightly understood, is compatible with monotheism.
7. Christ came as the "Word of God", the best gift He could make to man, and as a result, his Law is perfect and cannot be abrogated.⁴

6 B. Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328) wrote a response to Paul's *Risalla* in four vols. of 1400 pages

7.0. Admitted Truth introduced by John D., restated by Timothy I & applied by Paul of Antioch

7.1 One of two objectives emerged: to prove one's position superior or gain an adherent;

7:2. One of two methods emerged: logical dialectic or admitted truths;

8.0 Location of dialogue shifted from Middle East to India due to:

1. Mongol invasion of the Middle East in the 13 Century;
2. Proscription of inter-faith relations during Ottoman rule in 16-19 C.

8.1. In 19th C. India, Dialogue using 'Admitted Truths' was rediscovered

1. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) wrote about truths in the Qur'an and Bible.
2. William Goldsack (1871-1957) authored many books like Christ in Islam notable for using admitted truths in the Qur'an and Bible.

8.2. AN EXAMPLE OF ADMITTED TRUTHS ABOUT JESUS IN THE QUR'AN AND IN THE BIBLE BY MICHAEL ATIYAH OF SYRIA (19TH CENTURY)

1. Jesus described as being in the blessed lineage of Jacob (Surah 2:46)
2. Jesus' was born of a virgin (Surah 3:44-47 & Surah 19:19-22)
3. Jesus described as *Masih* (Messiah) (Surah 3:44,45)
4. Jesus described as *Kalimat Allah* (God's Word) (Surah 4:169 & Surah 3:40)
5. Jesus described as *Ruh Allah* (Spirit of God) (Surah 4:169)
6. Jesus described as "The Honorable One" (Just Judge at the Last Day) (Surah 3:46)
7. Jesus described as 'The Sinless One' (Surah 19:20)
8. Jesus' work affirmed of God by Miracles (Surah 5:109, 110)
9. The Controversy surrounding Jesus' crucifixion compare Surah 4:156 with Surahs 3:47-50, Surah 19:34 & Surah 5:117)
10. The 'Honourable Intercessor' at the Last Day (Surah 3:46)

⁴ Gaudeul, *Encounters*, p. 168.