

## Christian-Muslim interaction in the Prophet's *Sīrah* and its impact on peaceful co-existence with special reference to the Christians of Najrān

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### Abstract

“Studying the prophet Muhammad's (peace be on him) history, one comes across several instances when there was Christian-Muslim interaction. Examples begin with the first Muslim migration towards the Christian territory – Abyssinia and ends with sending Muslim preachers to Christian tribes, Prophetic treaties, letters to Christian governors and Emperors and dialogue with delegations like the Christians of Najrān.

The paper will start with a brief introduction of the historical presence of Eastern Christianity with different denominations in the Arabian Peninsula, who had covered the areas of Internal Arab, Bahrain, ‘Ammān, Yemen and Iraq. It will discuss the nature of early Christian-Muslim interactions with them briefly with special reference to the Christians of Najran because it was the first ever regular interaction between Muslims and Christians. Therefore, this incident has an academic and historic importance; we will explore who were these people- their religious or political status? What brought them to the table of dialogue with Muslims? What issues they had in their minds to discuss with the Holy Prophet? During the discussion, what kind of attitude they showed and how the Holy Prophet and His companions responded to that? Why they signed a peace treaty? What were the clauses of the treaty? Had it an impact on peaceful co-existence? Which model of dialogue can we extract from these events? At end, the paper will present the opinions of some prominent western Christian scholars and historians of

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Islam to see how this incident has been narrated in Christian sources. And will conclude with asserting the best pluralistic approach that has ever been practiced by the founder of any religion. Both the classical Islamic and contemporary Christian sources have been consulted.”

## Introduction

The eastern half of the Roman Empire was called Byzantine Empire. In the Byzantine Empire, the successor began to identify it quite specifically as a Christian state and the state power was used against who dared to dissent from this view. After 312AD, the Christianity continued spreading beyond the Roman frontiers to the Western Europe and Eastern Asia. The Nestorian Christians of Persia spread it across Asia.<sup>1</sup>

According to Dr. Muhammad Hamidullah, Rome covered the areas of Egypt, Abyssinia, north Arab and the boundaries close to Palestine, while the Persia covered the areas of Iraq, internal Arab, Bahrain, ‘Ammān and Yemen.<sup>2</sup> Jews were in medina while Yemen was the region of Nestorian Christians who participated in burgeoning Islamic civilization and undertook the translation of Greek, Persian and Indian heritages.<sup>3</sup>

The following sects of Eastern Christianity were existed around Arabia; Monophysits, Jacobites were in Abyssinia, orthodox were in Syria, Copts in Egypt, Iraq and Palestine and Nestorians in Yemen and the regions close to Persia.<sup>4</sup>

Nestorians stress the independence of the divine and human natures of Christ and, in effect, suggest that they are two persons loosely united. When supporters of Nestorius gathered at the theological school of Edessa, it was closed by imperial order in 489, and a vigorous Nestorian remnant migrated to Persia.<sup>5</sup>

Monophysites believe that Christ had but one nature, which was condemned by the fourth ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (451AD). The following sects are classified as Monophysites; Jacobites, Copts, Abyssinians, Armenians, Maronites.<sup>6</sup>

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1 Hugh Goddard, *Christians & Muslims: From Double Standards to Mutual Understanding* (UK: Curzon press, 1995), p: 132-134.

2 Muhammad Ḥamidullāh, *Rasūl e Akram Ki Seyāsi zindagī* (Karachi: Dārul Ishā't, 1961), p: 134.

3 Kate Zebiri, *Muslims & Christians: Face to Face* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1997), p: 23.

4 Axel Moberg, *The Book of the Himyarites* (trns. from Syrian), (Gorgias Press: 2012), p.24-63.

5Nestorian, *Encyclopædia Britannica* (online) retrieved on 26 July, 2015.

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/409819/Nestorian>

6*Christian Classic Ethereal library* (online) retrieved on 26 July, 2015.

Its further detail can be found in a Syriac work *The Book of the Himyarites* written by the Patriarch Ignatius Aphram Barsoum in Syriac. It narrates the Traditions of the expansion of Christianity into Arabia and the interactions of Christians with Jews and Muslim.<sup>1</sup>

## 7<sup>th</sup> century: Islam's interaction with Eastern Christianity

At the time of first revelation from Allah at His age of 40, He discussed the matter of Gabriel to Warqah ibn Noufal, a Nestorian priest well aware of the Holy Bible. He interpreted it as He (PBUH) would be chosen for Prophet Hood.

The first migration of early Muslims was towards Abyssinia, a Monophysite state. After spending a little time over there, they returned back but the hardships increased until they were forced to leave Makkah again and migrated to the same country Abyssinia for its ruler Nigos was known as a Just ruler. In front of the king *Najāshī* (Nigos), Hadrat Ja'far Tayyār presented the Qur'anic view about the sacredness of Mary and Jesus Christ which matched to his belief. At last the Muslims left their home city forever and emigrated to *Yesrib* (Medina).<sup>2</sup>

At that time there were two super powers of Rome and Persia, In 06<sup>th</sup> Hijrah. There broke out a war between them that lasted for months. The Persians were defeated but as a result of lengthy war both the empires lost their military powers. It was a time when the Holy Prophet wrote letters to both the emperors; Heraclius-the Coptic Christian and Pervez, after returning from *Hudybiyyah Treaty* in 06 Hijrah.<sup>3</sup> On the same day, He also wrote a letter to the Egyptian Monophysite Priest *Maqūqas*. All letters were written after the Treaty of Hudebiyah and their number was 225 as found out by Dr. Hamidullah.<sup>4</sup>

There occurred an encounter with a Christian tribe Banū Ghassān. they were paying tax to the Romans. The Holy Prophet sent a messenger to the Christian

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<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/creeds1.v.xi.html>

1 It presents the fragmentary Syriac text with an English translation. This history of the mountainous region in southeastern Asia Minor called Tur Abdin. This first insider-history of Tur Abdin has been unavailable to non-Semitic readers. It is of a great interest to historians of Arabia, scholars of eastern Christianity and hagiography, and Syriac scholars. It is an essential resource for studying the official doctrine of the Church of the East from the fifth to eighth centuries, contains the Syriac texts and polemical writings against the Jews

2 Muhammad Hamidullah, *'Ahd e nabavi k Medān e Jang*(Rawalpindi: 'Ilmi Markaz, 1998), p: 23-25.

3 Muhammad Hamidullaāh, *Rasūl e Akram Ki Seyāsi zindagi*(Karachi: Daārul Ishaā't, 1961), p: 134.

4 Muhammad Hamidullah, *Deu Ce mont Cever la Diplo Maci Musliman* (Paris: 1935), vol: 2, p: 10. sited in *'Ahd e nabavi k Medān e Jang* by Hamidullah.

governor of Palestine and invited him to embrace Islam. While passing through the area of Ghassan, Shurjel Ibn 'Amr killed the ambassador being considered a spy. Killing of any ambassador in international law is crime. The Ghassanid leader (Shurjel Ibn 'Amr) neither excused for his crime nor tried to control the disturbing situation. As a result battle of Mūtah broke out and the expedition of Tabūk in the next year of 9<sup>th</sup> Hijrah, in which thirty thousand Muslim soldiers took part, was an extension of the battle of Mūtah.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Hijrah is considered the *Year of Delegations*. Atleast 70 delegations are on record to have visited the Holy Prophet in this one year. Patriarch, Bishops and priests from Najran came this year.

While exploring the Hadith, Sirah and history books, one reaches to the following kinds of Christian-Muslim interaction;

- 1- Social nature: The initial interactions were of individual nature, like the social interaction of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) with individual Christians.
- 2- Political nature: writing letters to the Christian governors and Emperors, signing treaties with them.
- 3- Religious nature: The theological interactions, like the Christian delegations, sending Muslim preachers to Christian tribes.

The maximum debates fall in socio-political nature then in religious one. In the following paragraphs a brief introduction of all them is presented because paper's main focus is only *Najran Delegation*.

## Najran Delegation- 10<sup>th</sup> Hijrah

The incident of *Najran Delegation* is considered the first regular dialogue between Muslim and Christians. Najran was a district or town in the northern Yemen and to some others in southern Najd and was occupied by the Romans. Najran was the first place in Arabia where Christianity took its roots. According to *Encyclopedia of Islam*, They were Monophysite Christians who believed that Jesus Christ has only one nature - the son of Mary, although He has the divine attributes.<sup>1</sup> The Holy Qur'ān has mentioned a village name *Al-Ukhūd*, which is, according to some Muslim commentators, a village of Najran.<sup>2</sup>

In 6<sup>th</sup> Hijrah, when the Holy Prophet (SAW) wrote letters to all the emperors, a letter also was written to the Christians of Najran. Dr. Hamidullah has

1 Najran, *Urdu Dā'ira e M'ārif e Islāmiyah* (Lahore: Danish gāh e Punjab, 1989) vol:22,p:136.

2 Al-Burūj, 84:04.

collected such ten letters to Najran Bishops, in the chapter *Holy Prophet's invitation to the Bishops/priests of Najran*. Four were written by the Prophet and the others by four Caliphs.<sup>1</sup> The chief priest consulted all clergies who suggested sending a delegation to the Prophet for detailed discussion about the new arising religion in the region because Muslims had started expanding boundaries of their rule day by day.

That's why, the 10<sup>th</sup> Hijrah, is titled as the *Year of Delegations*(Aam al-Wufud) among early Muslim historians. Ibn Sa'd narrated that 44 delegations reached only from Yemen, beginning from 2, 3 individuals to 150 people.

According to Imam Muslim and Ibn Sa'd, they were 14 people all together.<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir says that they were sixty horsemen, including fourteen of their chiefs who made decisions.<sup>3</sup> Some of them were prominent figures like the Chief Bishop Abul-Haris ibn Alqamah, the group leader Abdul Messiah Aaqib and travelling guide Al-Syyed. They resided in Masjid al-Nabvi and offered prayers inside the Masjid facing towards the East- the Bait ul Maqdas, according to Christian faith.<sup>4</sup> The Holy Prophet first refused to talk them because they were wearing dresses with golden shades. After changing with simple dress as like of monks, He listened to them. The first day passed without reaching to any agreed upon point despite having detailed debate and discussion from both side scholars. So on next day, after receiving revelation from Allah, the Prophet challenged them for *Mubahalalah*. But they surrendered and gave up polemical stance.<sup>5</sup> According to Imam Abu Bakar al-Jassaas, all Muslim historians and Seerah writers are agreed on that they refused from Mubahalalah saying,

“We are looking such pious faces as if they curse us, neither Christianity nor Christians will remain on this planet. They will be destroyed forever.”<sup>6, 7</sup>

So they desired peace deal with Muslims. The Holy Prophet extended the hands of friendship and a treaty was signed whose detail is coming later.

## Its narration in *Sihah Sittah*: an overview

1 Muhammad Hamidullaah, *Majmū'at al-Wathāiq al-Seyāsiyyah*(Berut: Dār al-ishā'at, 1969),p:139-152.

2 Muslim, Ibn al-Hajjāj, *Sahīh al-Muslim*(Riyad: Dar al Salam, 2005), vol:2, p:156.

3Ibn kathir, Hafiz Abu al-fida Ismail, Emmad-ud- Din, , *Tafsir Ibn kathir* ( Darussalam; Riyadh, 2003), Vol.2. , P.178.

4 Ibn Sa'd, *al-Tabaqat* ( Karachi : Nafees Academy, 1982) vol: 2, pp: 134-135.

5 Ibid, p: 134.

6 Bukhāri, Muhammad bin Ismā'īl, *al-Jām' al-Ṣaḥīḥ, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhāri*, Qissat ahl Najran (Riyad: Dar al Salam, 2005) hadith no.4029.

7Al-Jassaas, Abu Bakr, *Ahkaam al-Qur'an* (Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah: Berut), vol.2,p.18.

Primarily it is an historical event. So its detail cannot be found in the Holy Qu'an. Its only sources are the Hadith and Sirah books and among them, the most authentic ones are *Sihah Sittah* (6 most authentic Hadith Books). As far as these concerned, they have not asserted the event with maximum detail except little information and sometimes this information is in repeated form (*Mukarrar*). Even though we have to present a survey of the Traditions (Riwayaat);

- Bukhari: has a chapter on Najran without mentioning the conditions of treaty.<sup>1</sup>
- Muslim: has very short note of two lines.
- Abu Dawūd: is the first book that asserted all the conditions of the treaty. He also narrated that the second caliph, Hadrat Umar ordered all the Christians to leave Najran.<sup>2</sup>
- Tirmizī: has no any mention.
- Nasāī: shows it's another aspect that the Holy Prophet refused to talk with them for one of them wore a golden ring which was prohibited for male in Islam. After throughing it out, He listened to them.
- Ibn Mājah: narrates it in only two lines.
- Musnad Imam Ahmad: includes a little bit detail as compare with others. Imam added an important tradition here that the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) ordered Hadrat Ali to kick them out when he would be handed over the charge to run government.<sup>3</sup>

## Major Themes of discussion

The Islamic classical literature does not present a complete picture of the topics or matters discussed except a glimpse of those theological issues. It is only the Holy Qur'an narrates the faith related topics which are found in the verses of Surah Āl-'Imrān;

*"The similitude of Jesus before Allah is as that of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him: "Be". And he was. The Truth (comes) from Allah alone; so be not of those who doubt. If any one disputes in this matter with thee, now after (full) knowledge Hath come to thee, say: "Come! let us gather together,- our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves: Then let us earnestly pray, and invoke the curse of Allah on those who lie!"*

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1 Bukhāri, Qissat ahl Najran. Hadith no. 4029.

2 Abu Dawūd, *Sunan Abi Dawūd*, Bab Fi Ikhrāj al-yahūd, hadith no.2638.

3 Imām Ahmad, Musnad Imām Ahmad, *Musnad Abdullah ibn Mas'ūd* (Reyad: Jeddah, 2005), Hadith no.625.

4 Āl-'Imrān, 3: 59-61.

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Imam Abu Bakar al-Jassas comments that;

1. The Christians were asking the Islamic viewpoint about Jesus Christ. Whether he was born by normal way of birth or created without father? The Qur'n answered it was a miraculous birth without father. They denied accepting. So the first and preferred question by them was about *Dogma*, according to the Christian theology.
2. Then they claimed Jesus Christ not a human being but God. The Qur'an replied by saying that the similitude of Jesus before Allah is as that of Adam. They again refused to accept it. So the second question was related to the different natures of Jesus Christ which is a bone of contention between Eastern and Western church.
3. The third issue was to prove the truth of their viewpoints. The Prophet (peace be upon him) and his companions presented textual and historical witnesses from the Holy Bible; Old Testament and New Testament as well as the rational arguments, but they again disagreed to that. Then the Holy Qur'an claims that they are telling a lie and hesitating to commit the Truth. The only way remains, is to invoke God's curse. So let's make difference by doing *Mubalahah*. They again refused to do so.

## Clauses of the Peace Treaty

The agreed provisions of the treaty were as follows;

Imam Bukhari writes,

“The protection of God and the guarantee of the Prophet Muhammad, extends on Najran and neighborhood, that is to say on their goods, their people, the practice of their worship, their absent and present, their families and their sanctuaries, and all that large and small, is in their possession. There will be no Muslim interference in Christian Mission (Da'wah). They will be free in worshipping. Signs of Christianity like crusade and pictures will not be removed. They will not be subjected to compulsory military service. There will be no attack from Muslims until they fulfill the terms of the treaty. As a reward of all these facilities, they have to pay an annual tax which is less than *'ushar*(tenth part of production) levied on

Muslims. It was written as two thousand *Hullah*. The treaty will be dismissed if you eat interest (Riba/Sood).<sup>1</sup>

Ibn Sa'd added,

“All of you will enjoy your previous religious, social and political positions. No bishop will be moved of his Episcopal seat, no monk of his monastery, no priest of his cure, no humiliation will weigh on them. If Muslim army attacks Yemen, the Najran will provide 30 horses,30 camels,30 pierces and 30 covers to help their Muslim facilitators. You will not be converted to Islam forcefully. All you are in the shelter of Allah and His Prophet.”<sup>2</sup>

Al-Balazri added,

“They are free from the penalties obliged before this treaty. If they put their cases in Muslim courts they will be treated with justice. Their religion will not be discriminated.”<sup>3</sup>

Al-Tabari wrote only one line note with two names of Seyyed and Aaqib.<sup>4</sup>

Abu Sufyan Ibn Harb, Aqra' ibn Haabis, Mugheerah Ibn Shubah were among the witnesses.

After the treaty was signed, Hadrat Abū 'Ubaidah (R.A) was appointed to collect treaty's goods. So he returned back after collecting. Later on Hadrat 'Ali (R.A) was handed over the affairs of Najran.<sup>5</sup>

## Its impact on peaceful co-existence

It was the first *minority rights pact* that highlighted the Prophet's ideals of tolerance, patience and politeness towards the non-Muslim minorities. Although the Christians were the third large enemy of Muslims, the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) treated them fairly and politely despite having full command and control. The peace

1 Abū dāwūd, *Sunan Abī dāwūd*, bab Fi Akhz al-jizyah (Riyad: Dar al Salam, 2005), hadith no.2638.

2 Ibn Sa'd, *al-Tabaqat* (Karachi: Nafees Academy, 1982) vol: 2, p: 134.

3 Al-Balazri, *Futuh al-Buldan* (Egypt: 1319 Hijrah), p: 72.

4 Al-Tabri, Muhammad Ibn Jareer, *Tarikh al-Umam Wa al-Mamluk* (Nafees Academy; Karachi,2004)

5Bukhāri, p:183.



treaty secured their coming generations for a long time as we read that they came in the age of first Caliph-Hazrat Abu Bakr to renew it and he renewed whole heartedly respecting the Holy Prophet's agreement. Likewise, every Caliph renewed it without any alteration or additional terms except the second caliph Hazrat Omar (R.A) who, because of breaking the treaty by eating Interest (Riba) put them out of Arabian frontier with the following explanation,

“What the Holy Prophet and First Caliph have assured of their lives and assets, it will be acted upon same as. They are free to settle anywhere outside the Arabian frontier. The governors of Syria or Iraq will accommodate them whole heartedly. They will not be persecuted at all.”<sup>1</sup>

After leaving Najran, they established a new city named New Najran at two days distance from Kūfah.<sup>2</sup> But they were able to return back in the time of the third and fourth caliphs. However, when Hadrat 'Usman (R.A) took charge, the Christians complained of their problems and asked for renewal of the treaty. Hadrat 'Usman renewed it. When he passed away, the fourth caliph Hadrat Ali (R.A) also abided by the treaty.

## Delegation of Najran in contemporary Christian sources

The Christians scholars have not described this famous incident and we could not find its detail in Christian sources. There are only few scholars narrate this very incident briefly but there are some others who generally analyse the Muslim's interaction with Eastern Christianity objecting that they were not main stream Christians. Among them, The Big name is Montgomery Watt and HughGoddard.

Hugh Goddard, a famous writer of Christian-Muslim interaction's history has described some information about the Incident of Najran;

“The delegation of Najran's Christians is a very important incident in the Muslim and Christian history, The Christians of Najran came to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and met him in good environment. They asked some questions to the Prophet and the Prophet also asked some questions from the leaders of the delegation. It was a kind of debate and a dialogue between Muslims and Christians. And after that they agreed upon an agreement. It was the first regular interlink

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1 Ibn Sa'd, *al-Tabaqat* (Karachi: Nafees Academy, 1982) vol: 2, p: 135.

2 Najran, *Urdu Dā'ra e M'ārif e Islāmiyah*, (Lahore:Danish Gah e Punjab)vol: 22, p:135.

between Muslim and Christians in the history and it can also become a basis for modern Muslim Christian dialogue and relationship." <sup>1</sup>

According to another Christian scholar, "Christianity entered Arabia at an early time. The apostle Paul had already spent sometime in the Peninsula, attended two synods of Arabian Christians in which fourteen Bishops were present. The Pre-Islamic Christians were mainly Con-Teghlides and among the Nabataeans and the Harithides of Najran."

He further says that in a purposely limited context, the following points should be noted in Najran event;

"The prayer of Christian delegation was in the Mosque of the Prophet (PBUH). The Prophet does not hesitate to enter into a deep religious conversation with the Christian leaders. The Prophet (PBUH) listened to the points of view of the Christians of the Najran. The Christians of Najran were connected to the Orthodox Church." <sup>2</sup>

Generally talking about these interactions, they say that the early Muslim encounters took place with marginal Christian sects. The most famous among them is Montgomery Watt. He has objections to the Muslim interpretation of this issue. He mentions that Islam never encountered the mainstream Christians. Islam needs to have more accurate knowledge to adopt a positive approach. <sup>3</sup>

Another Christian scholar is of the view that the Muslim conquerors encountered a divided Christendom, and some Christians, particularly the Copts in Egypt had reason to prefer their new masters to their Byzantine oppressors.<sup>4</sup> As Byzantine Empire had the faith that was identified later in reformation age as 'Catholic Faith' so the annexed Egyptian areas had to follow the official Christian creed,<sup>5</sup> which they did not want to. So they welcomed the Muslim rule.

Hugh Goddard in his book *Muslim Perceptions of Christianity* explains the Divinity of Jesus saying, 'Initially this Qur'anic rejection of Sonship was almost certainly a rejection of polytheistic Meccan ideas, rather than Christian ones, and

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1Goddard, Hugh, *A history of Christian-Muslim relations* (London; University Press), P.41

2Slomp, Jan, The Meeting of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) with Christians from Najran, *Al-Mushir* (Rawalpindi; CSC, 1976), Vol. 18:3, pp: 227-234.

3Watt, William Montgomery, *Muslim-Christian Encounters; perceptions and misperceptions* (USA: Routledge Revivals, 1991), p:15.

4 Kate Zebiri, *Muslims & Christians: Face to Face* (Oxford: One world Publications, 1997), p: 23.

5Bohdan A. Struminsky, *Old Ruthenian printed books and manuscripts* (USA: the University of Virginia, 1980), p: 20.

the problem is thus that even if subsequently statements like this have been taken to refer to Christianity, this may not have been their primary intention or thrust.<sup>1</sup> For detailed description we can consult the article, “Early Muslim-Christian dialogue: a closer look at major themes of the theological encounter”.<sup>2</sup>

In my poor opinion, it is a bitter reality that the official Christianity did not accept the Coptic Christians as their religious brothers. Rather they did not leave any stone unturned to persecute them for decades even kicked them out of Christianity by an official order in the council of Chalcedon (451AD) until Islam reached them.<sup>3</sup>

The Muslims interacted the following sects of Eastern Christianity; Nestorians, Monophysites- Jacobites, Copts, Abyssinians, Armenians, Maronites who had covered the areas of Egypt, Abyssinia, Bahrain, Syria, Yemen, Iraq and Iran which is a huge part of this populated Earth. As christians’ view, although that was not the official Christianity even then they made a history in the development of Church and Christian sciences. Their contribution is substantial for the early growing Church. Irrespective their official status among Roman Christians, they were considered Christians in the eyes of Muslims. So the Muslim interaction with them will be considered as important as any official Christian sect.

## Model of Dialogue and its contemporary application

The whole story of the delegation provides us the basic principles and ethics which guarantee the peaceful plurality and which are already serving as the primary rules in contemporary dialogue movement. These can serve as a proto-type for those who want to engage in Interreligious even intra-religious dialogue.

Let’s have a look at the prophetic Model of dialogue. Looking back at the whole incident thoroughly, one can easily reach to these basic and essential principles of dialogue;

1. At first, we should behave friendly with non Muslims like exchanging gifts as the Holy Prophet did it.
2. We should understand and respect their religion, culture and current circumstances as the Quran gives a great number of honourable titles to

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1Hugh Goddard, *Muslim Perceptions of Christianity* (UK: Curzon press, 1996), p: 12.

2 Mun'im A. Sirry, Early Muslim-Christian dialogue: a closer look at major themes of the theological encounter, *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol: 16, No: 4, (October, 2005), pp: 361-376.

3Alfred J. Butler, *The Arab conquest of Egypt and the last thirty years of Roman Dominion* (Oxford university press; 1978), p.168.

Jesus then to any other figure of the past. He is a sign, a mercy, a witness and an example.<sup>1</sup>

3. We should start from commonalities not the differences. For example, Tauhid, The Book, Prophet -Hood, Miracles, prayer, Jesus Christ, Mary, Revelation and Ethical values etc. Muslim and Christians find these values in their Scriptures. An example from the Holy Bible; “And the scribe said unto him, 'well Master thou has said the truth: for there is One God; and there is none other but He”<sup>2</sup>
4. We should adopt the rational way of presenting ourselves as.
5. Debate should be covered with logical arguments, historical facts and present day examples.
6. We should avoid the polemic stance and imposing attitude.
7. If all the issues remain disagreed even then there is a common ground for peaceful living; ethical ground, social issues, basic human rights...etc.
8. Then it will result in fruitful pluralistic change that guarantees the peaceful co-existence for pluralistic societies of the world. And there will be peace on earth.

## Concluding Remarks

From the incident of Najran we may conclude that although the theological discussions were more or less designed to prove the superiority of one religion over another, the dialogue was very constructive and meaningful. We must keep in mind that both Islam and Christianity have evolved in a wide variety of contexts so that we should not conceive of them as monolithic. If we put this theological interaction into the modern context, each of these two religious communities seems to be dominated by what we may call ‘an exclusive approach’. Now, there is the inevitable demand to take one step further and that is a pluralist approach which is the core and essence of Najran Delegation. So we can suggest the modern interfaith movements to revise their issues, dimensions and priorities to broaden the scope of dialogue’s efforts.

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<sup>1</sup>Parrinder, Geoffrey, *Jesus in the Quran* (London; Faber Publisher, 1965), P.16.

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