



# al-Balaghi's Polemics: A Methodological Linguistic Study

## ١. Introduction

The Jewish-Christian missionary work is as old as the earlier news that called for the Prophet of Islam and his new awaited religion. This work takes different forms and techniques that should suit the spiritual environment of the age at which it is practiced. Since then, each age has its own different form of Christendom. It once had the form of the Church government with whatsoever a power and authority it has; it may take the form of humanitarian bodies such as the Red Cross; or it appear in a form of a Non-governmental Organisation (NGO) that claim serving humanity in a way or another; etc.

Generally, Crusaders of the Twentieth Century have their own manners of missionary work that secretly or publicly call for the modern principles of Christianity. Such manners cannot absolutely escape the notice of the aware rational person. For the achievement of their goals, the missionaries have realised the significance of language and the universal language of the world, the different methods and types of the art of argumentation in general and those of polemics in particular, and globalisation through the oneness of language, thought and ideology

The present paper represents an attempt to investigate three basic points:

١. Al-Balaaghi's art of argumentation and polemics in response to the Christian missionary works,
٢. His method and style of polemics in The School Trip
٣. The educational lessons behind such polemics and discussions .

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## ٢. Christian-Missionary Polemics

Holmes (٢٠٠٦: ٧٣) thinks that the word 'mission' is derived from Latin *mittere*, which means 'to send', though word *mittere* receives some special employment in the New Testament.

The missionary work is not something new. It goes back to the earlier ages of the Church. Keller (٢٠٠١: ١) reports that

In the West for nearly ١٠٠٠ years, the relationship of the Anglo-European Christian churches to the broader culture was a relationship known as "Christendom". The institutions of society 'Christianised' people, and stigmatised non-Christian belief and behavior.

### ٢,١ The Missionary Goals

A better understanding of the missionary goal may depend on two perspectives: the goal as it is drawn from the literature of the Christian missionary through books, pamphlets and internal educational information; and the goal as it is shown by the actual missions done by the evangelicals in the different parts of the world. According to their reliable literature, the missionaries seem to have an ultimate basic goal behind all their tasks. This goal is to win Muslims as converts; it is *to win the controversy with the Muslims*

*whatsoever the price is and by whatever available means.*

Therefore, the missionaries have their training on the various devices at highly institutionalised systems of missions all over the world. Below are some examples for the way the Christian missionary plan and work in order to achieve their aims:

### ٢,١,١ Christian Missions and Language Planning

Mühlhäusler and Mühlhäusler (٢٠٠٥: ١) highlight the important role of Christian missions in the development of language planning. They state that the South Seas Evangelical Mission, for instance, devised a simplified English as an artificial language, which is intermediate between Pidgin English and full Standard English, for their mission work in the south west Pacific. It is right that artificial languages have been devised, developed and introduced into societies in order to fulfill a range of political, economic and military needs. Yet, Large (١٩٨٥), in (ibid.), argues that the key attribute common to all artificial languages is that they are intended to be easier to learn than a second natural language. This feature may have been particularly relevant in the South Sea Evangelical Mission, where limited time and

resources were available for the instruction of the native citizens. In fact, "there are many examples of missionaries unifying and standardising a variety of local languages and dialects into a standard mission language" (Mühlhäusler and Mühlhäusler, ٢٠٠٥: ٥) <sup>(١)</sup>. This might give rise to the question about the one international language of the world, which is English nowadays.

### ٢,١,٢ NGOs as Missionary

Describing non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as missionary, Manji and O'Coill (٢٠٠٢: ١) state that development of NGOs has become an integral and necessary part of a system that claims to sacrifice respect for justice and rights. NGOs have taken the *missionary position* in aspects of service-delivery and running certain projects motivated by charity, pity and doing things for people. The change in the missionary tasks a change from missionaries 'of empire' to missionaries 'of development'. Among the majority of the rural population, "missionary groups exchange their spiritual wares for material support in education, health or other social services. In providing such services, they were also concerned with evangelising amongst the African population, discouraging

what they perceived as ignorance, idleness and moral degeneracy, and promoting their own vision of civilisation" (ibid.). The writers (ibid.: ١٣), however, give a word of caution for the better understanding of the relationship between Western NGOs and what they call *official aid agencies* in the ١٩٨٠s, as in the case with colonial organisations like MYWO (Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organisation) <sup>(٢)</sup>, as the product of some conscious conspiracy.

### ٢,٢ The Missionary Work

What is closely relevant to the present study is the type of characteristics and strategies of argumentation manipulated in the achievement of the missionary goals regardless of the nature of these goals.

Though the ultimate goal seems to be the same, the missionary discourse tends to rely on several bases related to various aspects of the nature of the missionaries' task. It, thus, may vary in characteristics, procedures, style, and techniques. There have always been systematic attempts to deal with the chief points at issue between Christianity and Islam. Such attempts have mostly been made in accordance with Oriental ideas <sup>(٣)</sup>.

Rice (١٩١٠) introduces a great deal of account on the topic not only

because he was one of the well-known missionaries in the East but also because he intends to systematise the missionary tasks through his efforts “to help the young missionary from the first to deal in the most sympathetic and effective manner with his Muhammadan [*sic*] brother, especially imparting religious instruction and engaging in discussion” (p. xliv). Rice's work represents one of the comprehensive researches that benefit much from both the writer's own personal experience as an evangelical and the available literature written on topic at his time. He makes use of the ideas and attitudes of his antecedents and contemporaries alike and quotes many references to support his work and to enhance his procedures.

Most of the Christian missionaries believe that they have their own reasons to work among the Muslims<sup>(4)</sup>. Rice (١٩١٠: xliv-v) states that “new labourers are constantly year by year taking up work among Muhammadans (*sic*), [they]...have to learn the *right principles of discussion and controversy* with those *subtle* opponents (emphasis added)”. Under the subtitle ‘The modern Crusader should be properly equipped’, he (ibid.: xlvi) suggests that it is necessary for the *Crusaders*

*of the Twentieth Century* to deal wisely and faithfully from the outset with those from whom they differ widely. So,

**it would be madness and folly to send the soldier or the doctor forth to meet an infinite variety of claims and circumstances, some of them possibly new and pre-viously unheard before, without suitable training and the proper supply of instrument and weapons. This is true of our spiritual warfare.**

Generally, the missionary work among Muslims depends upon *high selectivity* in audience, topics, situations and the associated social and psychological atmosphere, the person of the missionary himself, and in the type of argumentation. All such factors could be manipulated for the process of converting a Muslim into a Christian.

### ٢,٢,١ The Audience

In a Christian-Muslim mission, the Muslims represent the main audience in the different argumentation processes. The missionaries, therefore, believe that it is necessary to begin their work with a special attention to the character of the Muslim. Accordingly, they have closely studied the Muslim character in the light of the personal experience of the ‘Revered’ evangelical figures. Depending on writings and special viewpoints from different parts of the

world, a supposed-to-be-actual character-sketch of the Muslims in relation to both Islam and Christianity has been suggested by Rice (١٩١٠: ١-١٨). This represents the way Christian missionaries think of both Islam and the Muslims. Below is a summary of some of the main features of the Muslims as it is found in the missionary literature<sup>(٤)</sup>:

### ١. *Pride.*

Muslims, especially Turks and Arabs, are full of pride. This pride has been divided into "four parts- the *national* pride of those whose Sultans and Caliphs were renewed in conquest and government; the *religious* pride of the worshipper of one true God in the light of God's latest revelation to man; the *personal* pride of the strict ceremonialists; and the *family* pride of the descendants of the Begs chieftains" (ibid.: ٧). In the light of these types of pride, the Muslim personality has been analysed in a form of an orthodoxy Islamic system in which there is no spirit of free *inquiry* for fact simply because the Muslims have "nothing to inquire about" (ibid.).

### ٢. *Ignorance*

The majority of the Muslims have been described by the missionaries as ignorant and may meet what is meant by the following lines of verse:

**Whoever knows not, and knows not that he knows not**

**Will remain forever in compound ignorance. (ibid.: ٤)**

Muslims thus are described as men of prevailing ignorance not only in knowledge of Christianity but also in many cases that are equally applied to their religion as well. "In such minds the Christian teacher reports that he finds but little to displace...the ignorant Muhammadans of this description, when they accept the Gospel teaching, are not conscious of any incompatibility between it and the religion which they profess" (ibid.: ٥)

### ٣. *Bigotry*

The word bigotry here is not used in the sense of strength and steadfastness with which a believer or an opinion-holder of any creed rightly holds the religion or belief that he honestly considers true. Instead, it used to refer to the *blind* and *unreasoning* adherence to religion or belief and intolerance of everything and everybody that would raise a question about it. In this regard, Muslims have been described as having a special temper of mind that closes the eyes and shuts the ears to any claim for truth.

The claim the Muslim character is mostly full of pride, ignorant, and

bigotry is supported by many examples of Muslims in the world. Citing many such examples, the missionaries seem to build up their knowledge of Islam on the collection of *selective* data from the Muslims rather than Islam.

### ٢,٢,١,١ **Reclassifying the Audience**

For a better understanding of the audience the missionary may work among, the missionaries have reclassified Muslims into many categories according to their attitudes towards the 'Christian Faith' (ibid.: ٢٧-٨).

*First*, those whose daily 'bread' and social position depends upon Islam. These are the *Mullas* and the *divinity students*; most of them are prejudiced and fanatical

*Second*, there is the large class of those who are utterly ignorant even of their own religion and are easily moved by the first-named to oppose the Gospel. Citing Egypt Klein, Rice (١٩١٠: ٢٧) gives an example of "the commonest fallah [farmer who] feels himself far superior to the most learned Christian from a religious point of view, for he considers him a *mushrik* or idolater, worshiping three Gods and pretending that God was born of a woman".

*Third*, those who are intellectually convinced of the truth of the Christian religion, but through fear of hostility or persecution proceed no further, and remain *outwardly* Muslim.

*Fourth*, those who sincerely embrace Christianity but remain secret believers to the world at large, though perhaps known to be such by the inner circles of their own friends.

*Fifth*, those who are content to go their own way and do not wish to have their belief interfered with, and who are more or less strongly attached to Islam. Such people do not care to hear the Christian message and believe that there is nothing worth hearing outside the boundaries of their own religion, Islam.

*Sixth*, there are the genuine seekers of truth; they may be comparatively free from fanatical prejudice, especially in the mission schools and in villages and country districts, who are willing listeners to the life-history and the teaching of Jesus.

According to these types of audience, the outset in the missionary work must not be made at a venture. The type of addressed audience "must be fed with food convenient for them—milk for babies, and meat for those who are able to bear it" (ibid.: ٢٨).

### ٢,٢,٢ **The Missionary** <sup>(٦)</sup>

The missionary who is supposed to work among the Muslims is not arbitrarily chosen. There seems to be certain personal qualifications believed to be essential for the mission to be successful. Rice (١٩١٠: ١٩) thinks that the missionary should "possess firm conviction,...enthusiasm for a sacred cause, and the loyal devotion to his Master [he might mean Jesus the Christ]". Accordingly, it is necessary for the missionary to recognise the difficulty of the work in the Muslims field and overcome such difficulty by having his own plans and methods of working and influencing, in a word, of using their individual talents (ibid.).

This means, in brief, that the missionary should be well-trained<sup>(٧)</sup> and is required to:

١. carry the weight of influence and character and not be a colourless and savourless character. This suggests that he is prepared to believe that he is always positive, not neutral, and not a truth-seeker

٢. be a man with a message that he believes to be of supreme importance and which he earnestly and affectionately desires to bring to notice of the Muslims, This indicates that he is supposed to convey what he has and does not have any intention

or readiness to accept any of his counterpart's message.

٣. be natural and true to himself striving to an Oriental to the Oriental in tact, courtesy, and the appreciative insight. For him to be so, he needs to be in the endowment of a Christian scholar and gentleman and the gifts and zeal of an enthusiastic *soul-winner*. "He may give himself a free hand, and rest assured that the instinct and insight of the Oriental will not judge amiss" (ibid.: ٢١).

Quoting Bishop French's description of the type of men required for the proposed 'Cambridge Mission to Delhi', Rice (ibid.: ٢٤) states that "they must be qualified...for close and keen investigation of those particular wants of the people they have to deal with, which Christian is adapted to meet, and the special difficulties they find embracing it". Rice (ibid.), however, regrets that it is not always the case that the missionary receives the training required for the task of 'presenting the Truth to the Muslims' and of coping with them in argument. Instead, he (ibid.) thinks that the missionary is left to *pick up* such information as he can from the different opportunities he may have.

## ٢,٣ The Controversy with the Muslims



The procedure of conversion has put a heavy reliance on the morals and the manner in which the missionaries behave, work, and live among the Muslims. They seem to believe in the proverb 'actions speak louder than words'. Earnestness and seriousness, clearness and definiteness, tact and conciliation, courtesy and patience, holy walk and conversation and spiritual equipments are among the most important morals and manner required for the missionary work. These are the principles of their work.

In more than one place, the missionaries confess that the *controversy* with Muslims is secondary for many reasons. The basic reason is their dissatisfaction with argumentation and their need to avoid arguments. On his mission to the town of Shiraz, Henry Martyn confesses that he has "lost all hope of ever convincing Muslims by argument. The most *rational, learned, unprejudiced, charitable* men of the town cannot escape from the *delusion*. I know not what to do but to prey for them [emphasis added]" (in *ibid.*: ٨٠).

The contradiction in the appeal to convince the opponent by some other means rather than reason, rationality, knowledge, or objectivity is apparent

in this confession. Muslims, for them, are supposed to be convinced with the 'truth' in order to draw them out of the 'delusion of soul' regardless of the bases of proper argumentation. If not, it is necessary to study the best ways of answering the Muslims in arguments according to their own ideas; it is another way to devoid the argument and plot it to suit the way Muslims think just for the sake of *winning* the controversy.

### ٢,٣,١ Missional Rather than Traditional Church

Nowadays, the church in the West is charged as being not completely *missional* because it heavily relies on adapting and reformulating everything it does in worship, discipleship, community, and service. Instead of such evangelistic churches there seems a need for missional churches (Keller, ٢٠٠١: ١). He (*ibid.*) highlights the difference between the traditional church missionary and the supposed to be modern missionary through a comparison between what he calls 'Christendom' and the Missional Church.

The new missionary is suggested to take into consideration that:

○ There must be a difference between the language inside and outside the church. Biblical technical terms well-known inside the church

must be fully explained outside-church situations.

○ Stylised prayer language, unnecessary evangelical pious 'jargon', and archaic language that are designed to set a spiritual tone should be avoided.

○ The sentimental, pompous, 'inspirational' talk must be avoided. Instead, the missionary should engage the culture of his people with the gentle, self-deprecating but joyful irony that the gospel creates.

○ The missionary should address his whole neighborhood so that more and more of the neighborhood will find their way in or be eventually invited.

○ The themes of the missionary should cope with the spirit of the age. Thus, while the older themes of missions are concerned with the way a man becomes a good person who lives a decent merciful life, modern missions are focusing on themes of freedom from oppression, inclusion of others, and justice.

○ The modern missionary, accordingly, should 'think Christianly' about everything and work with Christian distinctiveness, i.e., through distinctively Christian vocations that lift up as real 'kingdom work'. This work would build a Christian community that is

ready to embody a 'counter-culture,' showing the world how radically different a Christian society is with regard to sex, money, and power.

### ٢,٣,٢ Types of Argument

The term 'argument' seems to be used in a different sense in the earlier missionary literature. It has been found that the missionaries are mostly aware of the 'rules' or evidence, qa'idah or dalil in Arabic, that could be used by the Muslims in reply to any mission. They represent the different types of argument that are the commonest in the Islamic conviction of thought and philosophy, in almost all the Islamic Schools of Thought, whether they are Shiites, Sunnites, or others (cf. ٣,٢,١,٢ below).

### ٢,٣,٣ Methods of Arguing

There are certain tactics that seem advisable to the missionary to follow in his arguments with the Muslims. Outlined below are the commonest methods by which the missionary tries to escape notice as trying to win the controversy, whatsoever the price is, against the Muslims.

١. Adducing proofs, i.e., putting forward examples and proofs.

٢. Denial of the conclusions or the fact on which these conclusions are based.

٣. assuming the correctness of the case on the other side in order to show that it leads to untenable conclusions and must, therefore, be wrong.

٤. Denial of the validity of arguments used on the other side on critical or logical grounds.

٥. The use of the exclusive method which is not a direct proof, but an indirect demonstration. It is based on opposing a proposition by successive examination of all the possible alternatives involved, all of which, except one, are shown to be inadmissible.

### ٢,٣,٤ Rules for Conducting Controversy

It is remarkable that experience is necessary for efficiency in argumentation. A man may theoretically know much about the rules of controversy; yet, he may not be able to observe them in practice or carry on a discussion with success. The art of controversy is believed to be the 'art of healing'. Head knowledge by itself is not enough, then, in either case without practical skills (ibid.: ١٢٧). A list of some general rules suggested for the missionary to follow in his mission by his masters are:

١. Do not be the first to bring forward your argument.

٢. Do not at once deny what you do not agree with.

٣. Exercise great care to say nothing that will vex or anger your adversary.

٤. Avoid vexing the *Mohammedans* [=Muslims] by any word or act...even

though it has no connection with the subject of the controversy.

٥. Avoid controversy with a man at first meeting.

٦. Difficult or unusual words or expressions should not be employed.

٧. Concerning brevity and prolixity of argument, pay regard to the individual you are dealing with.

٨. Different individuals require different treatment

### ٣. al-Balaghi's Missionary Polemics

According to the realisation and awareness of the aims and plans of the Christian missions, Muslims could mostly have been found as far as possible from this clamor. Hence, they could be classified into different groups:

١. The majority of the Muslims all over the world are unaware of, or more precisely do not know, the real danger of the Christian missions. Those Muslims have always been busy with their living and mostly do

not care about the consequences of such things.

٢. Another group of Muslims is aware of this danger and could realise its effect negatively or positively on their lives; yet they claim to be not responsible for revealing the missionary styles and not even ready to defend themselves against these styles.

٣. Another group is busy reading the Christian missionary works and is aware of the real danger of disrespecting Islam and its great figures; yet they are merely satisfied with a kind of murmuring and mumbling within themselves, covered with a serious fear that they could be heard by anyone.

٤. On the top of all these troops, there has been a class of Muslims who have indulged heart and soul in the anti-Christian missionary work. This group, however, has taken two different tendencies:

**A.** Those who are often trying to defend themselves with sound mind and body, as Muslims, against such missionary works. They spend their time disambiguating the unclear matters, explaining the falsified charges, and unfolding facts for most of those who do not really know Islam and real Muslims.

**B.** A master group which has realised all the Christian and anti-Muslim facts and, accordingly, has its own tendency in reaction. This group has its own authentic current of thought that aims at establishing "Muslim Missionary Work" as opposed to the Christian missionary one.

Among the prominent figures of this tendency is the subject of the present study: the most learned reverend Sheikh Muhammad Jawad al-Balaghi (١٢٨٢-١٣٥٢ A. H.) (God bless him).

### ٣,١ al-Balaghi's Missionary Goals

Evidently, Sheikh al-Balaghi's aim is two-fold:

١. to shed the lights on a vast number of claims, lies, and charges against the almighty Allah, His prophets and messengers, and Islam.

٢. to explicate the truth of Islam and real Muslims and disambiguate all the false ideas and thoughts that are haphazardly attached to the Islamic beliefs and principles.

### ٣,٢ The Controversy with the Christians

One of the most prominent Muslim-Christian missionary works of the time is al-Balaghi's three-volume al-Rihlatul-Madrassyah wal-Madrasatu

assaiyaratu fi Nahjil-Hudda [The School Trip and The School that Travels in the Right Path <sup>(A)</sup>]. The first Arabic edition of this book was issued in al-Najaf al-Ashraf in ١٣٤٧ A.H./١٩٢٨ A.D. and then was published in Beirut in ١٤١٤ A. H./١٩٩٣ A. D.

The School Trip is basically a reply to the Jewish and Christians. It contains suitable answers to many contemporary subjects, and other subjects like those dealing with soul and individual atom, wonder of mankind, and animal anatomy, philosophic studies such as spirit, body, resurrection of the body or spirit. Some subjects still depend on excavation and laboratory researches for better understanding.

In this book the most learned al-Balaghi uses a novel way of argumentation that attempts to clarify some distortions in the Old and New testaments of the Bible. He had inspired the Holy Quraan in reply the fallacies and charges of some missionaries who try to distort facts. Moreover, he tackles many issues that he believes they will illuminate the path of the true believers and show them the righteous way.

### ٣,٢,١ The School Trip

The School Trip reveals al-Balaghi's polemics, which is based on Socrato-

Platonic original way of question-and-answer in arguing <sup>(٩)</sup>. He puts the entire argument in a story-like or novel-like literary form based on a long dialogue among the different characters. Moreover, He makes a good mixture of the present and the past through using those characters. In his book, al-Balaghi proves to be genius and authentic in more than one respect. He creates a set of round characters in order to convey certain themes via a delicate modern way of arguing that is based on fixed principles. He, thus, exposes the earlier traditions of argumentation in a modern moderate style.

### ٣,٢,١,١ Characterization

al-Balaghi (١٩٩٣: ٩) confesses that he had imagined that he impersonated the character of Emmanuel (a Hebrew name that means 'God with us') son of Elizier (a Hebrew name that means 'God is help'). Meeting a priest who once came to visit him and his father, Emmanuel seizes the opportunity to light up his mentality far from any suspicion.

The trip begins with Emmanuel's different questions about many issues through different stops with the priest first and then with other characters. These characters appear within the

three volumes of the book in the following way:

- In the first part, Elizier, a muslim, attendants, and the sheikh from the Holy Najaf

- In the second and third parts, Sheikh Muhammad Ali, a doctor, Ramzi, and some traders and rich people.

To make the argument public, he makes each character has its own function in the whole dialogue. They seem to be intended to widen the audience of the argument, which is intended to meet the needs of all members of the society and whatsoever inquiry may happen to any of those members. Some characters represent the old generation, such as Elizier who sticks to what the ancestors dictated him (p. ١٥); some others stand for the new generation such as Ramzi who claims to be civilised and open-minded (p. ٣٠٣-٤). The Sheikh represents the Holy Quraan and Islam (ibid: ٢٤٢). The priest stands for the counterpart Christian point of view; the doctor represents the advocate of the academic materialistic side who attempts to base everything on sensual scientific facts (p. ٢٩٢). Traders and rich people are laymen who always complain from the effect of the foreign culture on their sons

and from the way those sons keep on busy with life far from the care of their religion and beliefs (p. ٣١٢).

The protagonist is Emmanuel who represents the free will of the young to use reason in order to reach the facts through the burden of proof and satisfaction. He believes that the best way of convincing is satisfaction in looking for the facts (p. ١٦)

### ٣,٢,١,٢ Themes

The way the participants exchange their roles in the dialogue seems so interesting that the readers may not feel bored with the way of asking and answering. This technique is used to help the readers go through the different themes and subject matters of the argument.

Introducing the translation of the School Trip, Safi (١٩٩٧: ١٦-٥٠) discusses the main themes of the Muslim-Christian controversy. He thinks that Muslims always focus on three essential points: Tawheed or the Divine Unity, distortion of the Holy Bible, the Morality and Infallibility of the Prophets.

In volume one, al-Balaghi concentrates on the distortions in the Old and New Testaments (Torah and the Bible) under different titles. Then towards the rest of the book, he shifts to talk about the misconceptions about Islam and the evidence for the

fact that reason, pure senses, natural sciences, and all universal phenomena come to agree with Islam to prove the righteous pillars and beliefs of this Heavenly religion.

### ٣,٢,١.٢ Methods of Arguing

Throughout his discussions on the tongues of his characters and the exposition of the different themes of the arguments he has, al-Balaghi has his own method of arguing. All in all, this method can be described as follows:

١. al-Balaghi's polemics is based on reason and takes reasoning as the shortest way to prove the various facts under discussions.

٢. His polemics heavily relies on the principle of self-compulsion, i.e., you are obliged according to what you oblige yourself to.

Talking about the Torah and The Doomsday, he leads his opponent to confess that it has been distorted (١٦٤):

Emmanuel: O my master!...I wonder why it [Torah] didn't mention the doomsday, the recompense, the punishment, even with a single word? It neither attracted the believers by the glorious life in the Last day, nor it threatened the sinners by the flames of the Hell...

The Priest: O Emmanuel! Do you think that God or Moses (His

prophet) may have neglected such an important subject in Torah, God's revelation?

Emmanuel: I remember that you, master, have mentioned before, that the New Testament has declared that Torah had neglected lots of things, even important subjects, and that the Gospel came to accomplish that loss.

The Priest: You must also remember that I have criticized Torah for neglecting an important matter like doomsday. You see, you forget too.

Elizier: How wonderful, my master! Don't you believe that Torah is God's revelation?

The Priest: I believe that Torah is God's revelation to His prophet Moses, but I am not obliged to believe that the book (which is now in our hands) is the same Torah that Moses had received from the Lord God...!

Elizier: Since many generations ago the Jews and the Christians, admitted that this book is the Torah of Moses. How can we disprove that? How?

٣. He tends to present enough burden of proof for the solidity of his standpoints. He uses the following types of proof:

١) The argument from the evidence of the senses , *Dalīl Hissī*

٢) The argument from reason, *Dalīl Aqli*

These two types are mostly identified by philosophers or Hukama'.

٣) The argument from tradition, *Dalīl Naqli*. This has most weight with the most learned men of religion and law in the Muslims, Fuqahaa' or Ulamaa'.

Accordingly, he (١٩٩٣: ٣٤٦) always calls for respecting the human mind and reason and glorifies the honour of science and the morals of the right way of thinking. He also condemns the crooked way of thinking via following bias and prejudice and the abyss of delusion and deception.

He proves to comprehend the Qur'anic style in argumentation as he always tries to avoid the harmful straightforward attacks of the opponent. He, for instance does not prefer to frankly state the fact the Torah and the Holy Bible have been much distorted. Instead, he calls for drawing the attention to these fact politely and with a delicate manner and to argue wisely and in the best style of preachment.

He intends to use this style to disambiguate and explain things in comparison with the most reasonable ones. He (١٩٩٣: ٩٢-٤), for instance, makes the following dialogue to show the contradiction between the prophecy of Aaron and his glorification of Allah and making the

Calf and the call for worshipping it instead of Allah:

Emmanuel: The Quran relates that the one who made the golden calf, and called the sons of Israel to worship it, is the Samaritan (*the Shimronite*), a grandson of Issachar son of Jacob while the Torah (Exodus ٣٢: ١-٦) says that it is Aaron who made the Calf and asked his people to worship it.

O, Shaikh! We know that Aaron is Moses brother (both are Levite, not descendants of Shimron son of Issachar). So can we harmonize between the Quranic information and that which Torah says?

Shaikh: I won't argue with you about your Torah and what it contains of omission and incorrectness. I tell you that if Aaron is Moses brother is the establisher of polytheism among the Israelite and the one who encouraged them to worship the calf he made - as you pretend - then could Allah <sup>(glory be to His Majesty)</sup> choose him to be His prophet and revealing the rules to him, once in accompany with Moses and other times alone, after the event of the Calf? How could Allah choose Aaron to be the first high priest of the Hebrews and the one who is responsible for the rules of God before and after the event of the Calf? Moreover, your Torah informs that in



the time when Aaron was busy in making the calf and calling the Sons of Israel to worship it, God was speaking to Moses ordering him to appoint his brother Aaron to be the first high priest, and to glorify him and make for him certain garments which shall be used in his new job, and many other attributes to be specified for Aaron as mentioned in your Torah. What do you have to say about that?

O, Emmanuel! Certainly the distance between the place where God was speaking to Moses and the place in which Aaron was making the calf and calling the people to worship it was not more than one or two miles. Now if you pretend that God <sup>(glory be to His Majesty)</sup> knew nothing about Aaron's deed, we shall ask, Then why did He (i.e., God) continued honouring Aaron even after He knew the event of the Calf? And if you said that, "God knew" that when He was speaking to Moses, we shall ask, "Then why did He insist on choosing Aaron as the first high priest, while he was busy in making an idol to compete against God"?

al-Balaghi resists the fanatic Christians and the Western cultural attack, and is a real representative of Islam who showed Islam's sublimity upon other religions and faiths until

he gets the Christian scientists and scholars' admiration and respect.

He contradicts the common tendency among the Christian Missionaries of the direct attacks to Islam and the Muslim figures, although the always claim that their missionary literature should be preservative and based on morals of good conduct (*cf.* ٢,٣ above). One of the selected topics that the Jewish-Christian missionary has addressed the simple laymen Muslims with is the superstition of *Gharaniq* (Cranes).

#### ٤. Conclusions

١. Each of the Christian missionaries and al-Balaghi has his own goals behind the missionary work. Commonly each aims at proving their religion to be the true one.

a. al-Balaghi aims to illuminate the inquirers with the kind of knowledge they seek and leave them to decide. He heavily relies on dialogue, argumentation, and the language of reason

b. The Christian missions aims to gain the Muslims as converts via whatever possible ways of deceit and crooked thinking. The missionaries confess that the *controversy* with Muslims is secondary due to their dissatisfaction with argumentation and their need to avoid arguments. Instead, they manipulate some other

means rather than the language of reason, i. e. argumentation, to reach their aims.

٢. To achieve their goals, the Christian missionaries plan much, train much, and follow certain rules before they work among the Muslims. They tend to select the topic and the audience then they decide the method they follow in arguing. This selectivity is not found in al-Balaghi's polemics. He intends to widen the audience of the argument that is intended to meet the needs of all members of the society and whatsoever inquiry may happen to any of those members. Talking about different topics, he addresses people of different social, economical, sex, age, and beliefs at different levels of mental abilities. He has no particular audience, no specific topic, and no fixed rules of argument except the principles of respecting the human mind and reason. Seeking the truth drives him the way that reason shows.

٣. Al-Balaaghi proves his standpoints in the fields of thought and belief that he furiously defends via whatsoever legitimate means at hand, though he has not received the amount of attention he deserves as a man of a leading missionary school in Islam and a man of great works in the field

of Islamic missionary.

٤. He teaches people:

- a) not to take for grant whatever we hear or read unless they examine it via reason,
- b) not to be easily cheated by the labels and apparently high sounding ideas and adopt them as such
- c) parents, teachers, and educators should teach theirs the best way of critical way of reasoning and respect their mental abilities

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#### Appendix (I): QUALIFICATIONS FOR MISSIONARY SERVICE

The General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) is the mission sending agency of the United Methodist Church. The United Methodist Church sees the need to respond to the needs of colleague churches, projects and institutions both here in the United States and in other countries. Therefore, we make missionary assignments primarily by request of partner churches, agencies, institutions and/or organizations.

• **Faith Confession:** All persons assigned as General Board of Global Ministries mission personnel must be

Christians. Although membership in the United Methodist Church or other Methodist Churches is not required for missionaries, it is recommended. Deaconesses and home missionaries must be members of The United Methodist Church since they are members of the annual conferences in which they actively serve. Familiarity with and commitment to the United Methodist **Discipline**, that is, its polity and its structures, are required.

• **Church Experience:** Leadership experience and mission service through congregations and annual conferences are desirable.

• **Clergy and Laity:** Lay persons as well as clergy can be assigned to mission service. Seminary training is necessary only when assigned as a pastor or seminary professor (persons assigned as pastors must be ordained clergy and be in good standing with an annual conference).

• **Assignments:** All mission personnel of the General Board of Global Ministries missionaries are assigned to locations where there are defined mission needs and where personnel is requested by local mission partners (Central Conferences, partner autonomous Methodist or united Churches). Missionaries do not initiate, create, nor design their own assignments. Deaconesses and home missionaries may serve in church related vocations or helping professions.

- **Terms:** Different programs require different terms of service. Missionary assignments do not require a lifetime commitment, although long term commitments are encouraged and anticipated. Missionaries typically serve three-year, renewable terms.
- **Education Requirements:** A bachelor degree is required as a minimum; however, educational requirements vary with each mission service category. If an applicant does not have an academic resume, necessary equivalent vocational and/or life experience can be considered.
- **Professional Credentials:** All professionals (clergy, physicians, educators) must have the appropriate credentials/licenses for their field in order to be commissioned as mission personnel.
- **Experience with Diversity:** Experience working with and serving persons of different racial-ethnic, socio-economic and cultural backgrounds is advisable.
- **Language:** Fluency in a language or languages other than English is an asset although not a requirement for application. Language study may be required for a particular assignment.

### List of Margins

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- (١) Another missionary with an interest in artificial languages was Revderd Brown, the first missionary operating in New Guinea. A survey of his personal papers suggests that he occupied himself with the study of Esperanto (ibid.: ٣).
  - (٢) MYWO is created in Kenya in ١٩٥٢, at the height of the State Emergency, and soon after its Maendeleo clubs were extended to villages throughout the Kikuyu homelands. The clubs were supported by an annual grant from the Government Department of Community Development. African women who joined the clubs were told to abandon their commitment to 'Mau Mau' or lose the "humanitarian" services the clubs provided.
  - (٣) The efforts of the Orientalists may represent a source for such ideas. This topic might be separately studied. For the Orientalists, see Said (١٩٩٤).
  - (٤) This should not suggest that the Christian missionary limits itself to the work among the Muslims. The work is international though it highly concentrates on Muslims.
  - (٥) It is necessary for every Muslim to ask himself after reading each of these points whether it is real or not.
  - (٦) See also *Qualifications for Missionary Service* of The General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM), Appendix (I)
  - (٧) This is one of the recommendations of the Lambeth Conference of ١٨٩٧ to consider and report on the subject of the 'Foreign Mission' among Muslims.
  - (٨) For brevity, The School Trip is used in this paper
  - (٩) For the development and types of polemics and argumentation, see Reishaan (٢٠٠٧).