

**Leonard Swidler and Ismail al Faruqi on Deep and Meta-religious Dialogue:**

**A Comparative Study**



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## **Abstract:**

The role of religion and interreligious dialogue has been prominently felt in the twentieth century at various levels and forums. The contributions of Leonard Swidler (1929- ) a Catholic theologian and Ismail Raji al Faruqi (1921-1986) a Muslim theologian are distinct in this regard. The present research has been conducted to examine the approaches of both scholars to view the impact they created in the field of interreligious dialogue. Their thought development for dialogue in the light of Marya Schechtman's theory of personal identity depicts their intellectual survival, concern and moral responsibility for the study of religion, interreligious dialogue and the role of Abrahamic faiths for peace, cooperation and harmony in the world. The critical analysis under the framework of comparison of Deep and Meta-religious dialogue of Swidler and al Faruqi respectively shows that both of them have introduced their unique ways to conduct interreligious dialogue. The conceptual and relational analysis of their approaches shows that both of them almost worked in the same scenario when study of religion and interreligious dialogue became academic disciplines and they taught concurrently at Temple University of Pennsylvania which was one of the pioneer institutions to hire the teaching faculty of critical thinkers to teach their own religious traditions. The evaluation of their theoretical and practical aspects of interreligious dialogue presents that emphasizing its need on the one hand they introduced their distinct approaches for interreligious dialogue for all while on the other hand they participated in the dialogical movement as the representatives of their own religions; Christianity and Islam highlighting the role of both religions for effective dialogue. Swidler's global ethic and al Faruqi's rational principles of Meta-religion were the most criticized elements in their approaches for some of the limitations while Swidler's Deep dialogue along with its ten principles and al Faruqi's overall engagement in interreligious dialogue are the most appreciated ones. The critique on their approaches opens the new horizons of work while the appreciations in this regard depict the successful dimension for interreligious dialogue.

## Introduction:

The need for interreligious dialogue has been increasing rapidly since the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Many forms and meanings have been given to this terminology by declaring various kinds of objectives for it and sometimes those objectives are neither met nor considered fruitful. But generally it is along with its synonymous terms like interfaith and ecumenical dialogue<sup>1</sup> considered a constructive conversation for mutual understanding among the followers of various religious traditions and ideologies.<sup>2</sup>

The first formal gathering for dialogue among Eastern and Western religious and spiritual representatives in the modern age can be traced back to 1893 when the parliament of world religions was held under the world Columbian Exposition at Chicago. Since the twentieth century the individuals, institutions and organizations at various levels and forums have been working for dialogue like International Association for Religious Freedom IARF<sup>3</sup>, International Fellowship of Reconciliation IFOR<sup>4</sup>, The Council of Christians and Jews CCJ<sup>5</sup> and The World Congress of Faiths WCF<sup>6</sup> et cetera.

Catholic Christianity's stance toward dialogue prominently appeared in the Second Vatican Council especially with its Declaration of *Nostra Aetate* in 1965<sup>7</sup>, and likewise, World Council

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<sup>1</sup> Although sometimes the terms interfaith, inter-religious and ecumenical dialogues are used separately as dialogue among the followers of Abrahamic faiths, among the followers of other religions like Hinduism, Buddhism and among different denominations of Christianity respectively. The Archdiocese of Chicago Office of Ecumenical and Interfaith Affairs, "Interfaith Dialogue: Encyclopedia, Science News & Research Reviews" accessed August 18, 2023 <http://academmic-accelerator.com/encyclopedia/interfaith-dialogue>

<sup>2</sup> Some scholars suggest that the word *interfaith dialogue* being a narrow term in its totality and through its parts inter, faith, dia and logos should be replaced with *spiritual interaction* because it excludes intra and a-religious dialogue while because of dia it ignores individuals, moreover it's not a conversation between two people only and it's not a word or logos. Suwanda H. J. Sugunasiri, "'Spiritual Interaction,' Not 'Interfaith Dialogue': A Buddhist Contribution", *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 16 (1996): 144-145.

<sup>3</sup> It is working since 1900 among various liberal and free religions. "IARF- International association for Religious Freedom" updated May 27, 2024, <https://iarf.net>

<sup>4</sup> It was founded in 1914 against the horrors of First World War in Europe to promote peace and non-violence. It has many affiliations, groups and branches in 40 countries over the world. "IFOR" accessed July 26, 2024, <http://www.ifor.org>

<sup>5</sup> It was created in 1942 in UK to develop the understanding and cooperation between Jews and Christians. "CCJ" accessed July 26, 2024, <http://ccj.org.uk>

<sup>6</sup> It is a UK based organization but works internationally for the development of dialogue and peace among diverse religions of the world. "World Congress of Faiths" accessed July 26, 2024, <http://worldfaiths.org>

<sup>7</sup> "Nostra Aetate" updated December 24, 2018 [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vatii\\_decl\\_19651028\\_nostra-aetate\\_en](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vatii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en)

of Churches WCC (an umbrella organization of many Protestant and Orthodox Churches) created a unit of Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies in 1971<sup>8</sup>.

An open letter ACW (A Common Word between Us and You) from Muslim Scholars and Intellectuals (almost from all major denominations and schools of thought) to the Pope Benedict XVI and other Christian authorities was sent in 2006 as a response to the pope's lecture about faith and reason which showed criticism on some of the teachings of Islam. It was expanded as the message of Islam in 2007 and the Muslim Scholars not only clarified the true teachings of Islam but also provided the basis for future dialogue between Islam and Christianity which was highly appreciated by Christian and Muslim World.<sup>9</sup>

Most of the theologians, philosophers and religious leaders like Arvind Sharma<sup>10</sup>, Donald K. Swearer<sup>11</sup>, TuWeiming<sup>12</sup>, Reuven Firestone<sup>13</sup>, Hans Küng<sup>14</sup> and Seyyed Hossein Nasr<sup>15</sup> agree to feel the need of interfaith dialogue in today's pluralistic world through their distinct suggested ways to make it fruitful.<sup>16</sup>

As the members of the world's two major religions Christianity and Islam, the work and efforts of the scholars like Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran<sup>17</sup>, Paul Mojzes<sup>18</sup> and Seyyed Hasan Askari<sup>19</sup> have been contributing a large share for dialogue among various religions of the world. The

<sup>8</sup> "Dialogue with People of Living Faiths – Brill" accessed May 04, 2019 [https://brill.com/fileasset/downloads\\_products/31740\\_Brochure.pdf](https://brill.com/fileasset/downloads_products/31740_Brochure.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> "Introduction to A Common Word Between Us and You | A Common ..." accessed May 12, 2019 <https://www.acommonword.com/introduction-to-a-common-word-between-us-and-you/>

<sup>10</sup> "Arvind Sharma | McGill University - Academia.edu" accessed May 12, 2019 <http://mcgill.academia.edu/ArvindSharma/CurriculumVitae>

<sup>11</sup> "Donald K Swearer - Swarthmore College" accessed May 16, 2019 <http://www.swarthmore.edu/Humanities/dswearer1/>

<sup>12</sup> "Biography | TuWeiming (杜维明)" accessed May 20, 2019 <http://tuweiming.net/about-tu/biography/>

<sup>13</sup> "Reuven Firestone - Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion" accessed May 20, 2019 <http://huc.edu/directory/reuven-firestone>

<sup>14</sup> Hans Küng - Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, accessed May 17, 2019 <https://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/people/hans-Küng>

<sup>15</sup> Dan Cohn Sherbok, "Introduction" in *Interfaith Theology: A Reader*, ed. Dan Cohn Sherbok, (Oxford: One world Publications, 2001), 13.

<sup>16</sup> All of these scholars work to promote the dialogue through their teaching, publications and participation at different forums since the middle of 20th century.

<sup>17</sup> He (1943-2018) was the president of the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious dialogue. "TAURAN Card. Jean-Louis" accessed August 14, 2023 <http://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/...>

<sup>18</sup> He (1936-) is co-editor of the journal of Ecumenical studies and chair of the department of religious studies Rosemount College, Panesalvaniya. "Dr. Paul Mojzes-Global Peace Foundation" updated December 15, 2022 <http://globalpeace.org/speaker/dr.paul.mojzes/>

<sup>19</sup> He was an Indian Muslim scholar. "Professor Syed Hasan Askari Distinguished Historian & Eminent Scholar (1901-1990)" accessed on August 14, 2023 <http://www.professorsyedhasanaskari.com/biography/>

work of two prominent scholars; Leonard Swidler and Ismail Raji al Faruqi is distinct in this regard. Both of them have seen and participated in the development of interfaith dialogue at various levels. They have not only presented their ideas theoretically but also offered the practical implementations of those ideas through their active participation in different projects, seminars and conferences and through their contributions to various institutions and organizations in this regard. After observing the circumstances for dialogue they came up with their own strategies to make it effective. The present research work is an attempt to know that how far both of them became successful.

Swidler (1929- ) a Catholic scholar has been working on dialogue since 1957 to create a sense of understanding among the people of different religions and ideologies by giving space to everyone. Along with his teaching and publishing career, he is the co-founder and editor of the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* (1964) and founder of the Dialogue Institute (1978). He emphasizes that the understanding and good will among the people of the world can be spread through conducting an effective dialogue. He has been struggling for decades, not only to develop a clear understanding of dialogue among the people of different religions, spiritualities and ideologies but to promote the practical dimensions for it. In 90's he modified the term Dialogue to Deep-Dialogue to make it more explicit for the changing scenario of the world.

Swidler's Deep-Dialogue is a cluster of four independently related elements of DCEC; 1. Deep-Dialogue encompasses four H's of Head, Hand and Heart leading towards Holiness that are cognitive, ethical and spiritual cooperation to live a whole social life in harmony. 2. Critical Thinking comprised of three W questions of What, Whence and Whither for making a positive decision after collecting and analyzing the data. 3. Emotional Intelligence by understanding oneself and the other to make them appropriately related to each other. 4. Competitive-Cooperation is the appropriate resultant action of the previous three elements. So, in his view DCEC is a "circle of perception-thought-decision-action"<sup>20</sup>. Since the fifties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century he has been working at various levels to promote his ideas to make dialogue successful as in his book "Dialogue for Interreligious Study: Strategies for the Transformation of Culture-Shaping Institutions" he lays out the theoretical explanation and possible implementation of DCEC. He

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<sup>20</sup> Leonard Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study: Strategies for the Transformation of Culture-Shaping Institutions* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 42.



introduces various documents, programs and courses comprised of exercises designed for training the leaders in various fields and practitioners of dialogue in seminars and workshops. For the implications of DCEC he suggested to inculcate it to “whole child” education, Law and Ethics. His ten rules of dialogue known as Dialogue Decalogue gained the worldwide popularity.

His contemporary Ismail Raji al Faruqi (1921-1986) was a Palestinian American Muslim scholar of 20th century who spent his life working for study of religion and to build a peaceful interaction among the followers of different religions especially the Abrahamic faiths by actively expressing his thought through teaching, publishing and participating in the study of other religions and dialogue among them. In 60's and 70's of the twentieth century he was one of the main western Muslim representatives with many Christian organizations and councils like Vatican II and WCC.

Al Faruqi based his dialogue on rational, philosophical and ethical principles of comparative and Meta-region. He formulated a dialogical pattern declaring it applicable for academic and active participant level.

Declaring the approaches of his fellow comparative religionists for the study and analysis of religion limited ones al Faruqi presented his own approach by focusing on the technique of epoché<sup>21</sup> to understand religion because in his view religions are the life-facts which can only be apprehended by suspension of judgment. Further he suggests five principles to understand religions (1.absence of self-contradiction, 2. persistence with cumulative human knowledge, 3. coherence of revealed truth with religious experience of humans, 4. correspondence of truths with reality and 5.uplifting man to ethically higher value) to make them the systems. His six principles of Meta-religion provide a framework for the analysis of religions. These principles provide a relationship between two realms of being; ideal and actual by declaring relevance of ideal as a compulsion for the actual and keeping actual as good and malleable he then associates the perfection of the universe with human beings. Derived from these two kinds of principles his

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<sup>21</sup> He explained it as “to get out of oneself and, putting oneself as it were entirely in parenthesis, to exercise by means of the imagination a leap into the religious factum in question.” Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi, *Christian Ethics: A Historical and Systematic Analysis of its Dominant Ideas*, (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1967), 4. The origin of the term can be traced in Greek Philosophy where as “suspension of judgement” it was observed by non-dogmatic Skeptics to show noninvolvement to an insoluble “problem of knowledge” to get “peace of mind”. The term is applied by Edmund Husserl; 20<sup>th</sup> century founder of phenomenology as a technique to highlight the consciousness to put all beliefs in brackets to focus on the things to be understood. The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Epochē,” updated July 20, 1998 <http://www.britannica.com/topics/epoche>

dialogue is comprised of six points that explain that the participants in a dialogue should be ready for critique, there should be internal and external coherence along with correspondence with reality, the conversation should be free from canonical figurization and ethical questions should be preferred to the theological ones.

Swidler and al Faruqi both have emphasized religion and its study because these two factors play a vital role in dialogue. Swidler along with ideologies and spiritualities ponders much light on religion by focusing on its various characteristics and acknowledging its role and relevance to the modern world while al Faruqi's main focus can be seen on the study of religion where he extends this term from study to evaluation of the religions under study. He examines the ancient and contemporary approaches to study religion and considers phenomenology or history of religion the most effective one by stressing on its third aspect of judgment and evaluation because he thinks that merely study the religions to only know their characteristics is not enough. So the researcher should also try to evaluate and analyze the religions under study.

Their efforts in the development of dialogue also reflect their own religions' perspective in two dimensions; dialogue and their interaction with the followers of other religions on behalf of Christianity and Islam. Both of them put their efforts to create dialogue among the followers of the Abrahamic faiths theoretically and practically. Similarly they tried to present their religions in connection for dialogue with the followers of other religions and ideologies. In fact they tried to reach and appeal the whole humanity via their dialogue. Swidler emphasized clarifications of some terms, beliefs and concepts of Christianity especially the Catholic Christianity to conduct its effective dialogue with other denominations of his religion and along with Judaism and Islam to other religions and ideologies of the world as well while al Faruqi derived rational principles to conduct Islam's dialogue with other religions of the world. He observed the world by establishing Islam's relations with others through Islamic perspective.

The initiatives of both Swidler and al Faruqi for dialogue are viewed critically and gained a little criticism along with much appreciation. The role of organizations and institutes they founded, the views of their students, colleagues and friends and the impact of their works and thoughts on individuals, groups and organizations or institutes reflect their works and efforts for dialogue.

### **Research Problem:**

The present research work is different from the prior evaluation of the work of both scholars; Swidler and al Faruqi as it is the comparison of their efforts for dialogue with its distinct features. The prior evaluations emphasized either their individual efforts (like River Adams' book about Swidler and Charles D. Fletcher's thesis on al Faruqi) or the brief comparison of their selected concepts (like Maha Saad's thesis on trialogue of Swidler and al Faruqi). Their long term association with dialogue and work for its development in same scenario yet with different religious background along with the theological, rational, ethical, pluralistic and apologetic glimpses appealed the researcher to compare the efforts of these two scholars. Both of them experienced the emergence of dialogue as a need of time by various intellectuals and institutions since the second half of twentieth century. On behalf of their religious traditions they introduced the dialogue in the academic study of religion especially at Temple University Philadelphia. The terms and lines they adopted for dialogue widened its scope; Swidler's Deep-Dialogue exceeded the level of ecumenical and extended to interreligious and inter-ideological dialogue while al Faruqi's dialogue based on the principles of Meta-religion and comparative religion not only focused on Abrahmic faiths but also made it applicable to other religions as well. On a broad scale their terms and assumptions for dialogue like human based language of Swidler and *Din al-fitra* of al Faruqi included the whole humanity to develop a sense of understanding and cooperation to build a peaceful global world. They not only presented dialogue in their unique styles but also shared many similar yet different aspects of it.

### **Research Questions:**

1. How did Swidler and al Faruqi contribute to the foundations of dialogue through their Deep and Meta-religious dialogue respectively?
2. What are the guidelines and methodology expressed in the Deep and Meta-religious dialogue?
3. What is the reception of the dialogical approaches of Swidler and al Faruqi?

### **Significance of the Study:**

Interfaith dialogue is very important in today's scenario where the utmost need has been emerged to understand and respect the religious beliefs and practices of others to cooperate well but sometimes the appropriate results are not achieved. The present research has explored that Swidler and al Faruqi did not only address the limitations that deprive the dialogue to become successful but they also provided the practical solutions for it. This research work on the one

hand sketches the tireless and lifelong efforts of both scholars not only to express a sense of motivation but in addition it illustrates the useful aspects of dialogue while on the other hand the objections on their approaches and their limitations lead to find new directions that can help to make dialogue more applicable.

### **Literature Review:**

The evaluation of the works and efforts of Swidler and al Faruqi in the form of analytical assessments, reviews and critical responses range from strong critical analysis to compassionate presentations. A few examples in this regard depict it clearly.

Maha Saad <sup>22</sup> compared the contributions of Swidler and al Faruqi for dialogue among the followers of Judaism, Christianity and Islam by highlighting the similar and different aspects of their methodologies in this regard. The research explored the tireless theoretical and practical efforts of both scholars through dialogue by which Swidler focussed on understanding the others while al Faruqi took it as a mission and da'wah to bring others toward the truth of al-Tawheed. This thesis is the most relevant to the present work as it presented a brief comparison of the contributions of both scholars regarding dialogue with its focus on the Abrahamic faiths while the present research work focused on the analytical comparison of their overall work on dialogue. Saad's work discussed some of the core concepts regarding dialogue from the selected writings while the present work presented an analytical comparison of the core concepts of overall dialogical approaches of both scholars by taking maximum available sources. Moreover the thought development of both scholars for dialogue had been presented by Marya Schechtman's theory in the present research work to explore how they moved to dialogue and how they contributed to its foundations. River Adams (A Jewish converted Christian and colleague of Swidler)<sup>23</sup> highlighted various aspects of Swidler's life in the form of conversational interviews, his historical memories, the views of his colleagues, friends and students who got guidelines and help from him. In her book the writer presented Swidler as a theologian and historian by focusing on his interests, works and views. This overall sketch of Swidler's life along with its focus on other aspects and tendencies of his thought illustrated that

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<sup>22</sup>Maha Saad Elnashar, *Dialogue of the Abrahamic Religions: A Comparative Study between the Perspectives of Ismail R. Al-Faruqi (1921-1986) and Leonard J. Swidler (1929)* ( Doha: Hamad Bin Khalifa University, 2018) , updated on January 12, 2022 <http://ibir.api.hbku.edu.qa>

<sup>23</sup> River Adams, *There Must Be You: Leonard Swidler's Journey to Faith and Dialogue*, (Eugene: Resource Publications, 2014)

how the approach for interfaith dialogue developed in his thought. It provides a comprehensive view of Swidler's overall strategy of dialogue reflecting its various insights. Julia Sheetz along with her fellows<sup>24</sup> presented an analysis of Swidler's work on dialogue placing it in historical and theoretical context. The authors (associated to the dialogue Institute) examined his work to see its effectiveness for the present changing scenario and future global interfaith activism. They pointed to some critiques and responses to them by reformulating Swidler's ten principles of dialogue and seven stages of transformation to derive guidelines and further principles for interreligious peace and tolerance in the changing global scenario. Sallie B. King placed his objections on the global ethic presented by Swidler.<sup>25</sup> He declared that Swidler's document of global ethic as a Christian document could not be taken on a global level. He suggested that the view of the scholars from all over the world should be taken from the very beginning instead of presenting the prepared document by an individual to them because only in that way it could represent the world community. Zara Zoofaghari also examined Swidler's global ethic.<sup>26</sup> She analyzed Swidler's theoretical foundations and the principles of global ethic presented in his second declaration. She acknowledged Swidler's foundations like effective and deep dialogue and religion's role for a global ethic but declared it ineffectively expressed due to his focus on Universal Declaration of Human Rights making it limited. The work of al Faruqi to develop his view of Islam's relation with and role towards other faiths during his overall intellectual life being a western Muslim scholar was critically viewed by Charles D. Fletcher<sup>27</sup>. He elaborated al Faruqi's thought development throughout his life by the application of personal identity theory. Fletcher examined al Faruqi's approach for the study of religion in its theoretical and practical context by evaluating the efforts and contribution made by al Faruqi for the establishment of understanding and interaction of Islam with other faiths especially Judaism and Christianity. In the theoretical context he stated objections on some of the terms used by al Faruqi like rationalism, Arabism, some of his views of Judaism and Christianity and some of the principles

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<sup>24</sup> Julia Sheetz-Willard, et al, "Interreligious Dialogue Reconsidered: Learning from and Responding to Critique and Change," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 47, no. 2 (Spring 2012)

<sup>25</sup> Sallie B. King, "It's a Long Way to a Global Ethic: A Response to Leonard Swidler," *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 15 (1995) <https://doi.org/10.2307/1390045>.

<sup>26</sup> Zara, Zoofaghari, Ali Arshad Riahy, Gholam hossein Tavakoli and shahab-Al-Din Zoofaghari. "A Critical Study of Leonard Swidler's Ideas of Global Ethics." *The quarterly Journal of Philosophical Investigations, University of Tabriz*, 16, no. 38 (April 2022)

<sup>27</sup> Charles D. Fletcher, Isma'il al Faruqi (1921-1986) and Inter-Faith dialogue: The man, The Scholar, The Participant, (Montreal: McGill University Press, 2008)

for comparative study of religion and interfaith dialogue. In the practical context he focused that al Faruqi should ponder more light on the nature and use of mission. Finally he regards that through his passion and commitment al Faruqi presented good example for Muslim dialogical participants with his theoretical tools which he actively applied in his discourse with followers of other faiths. Overall it was a critical analysis of al Faruqi's work and thoughts as a man, a scholar and participant in dialogue by viewing both positive and negative aspects in it. This dissertation is relevant to the present research through its focus on al Faruqi's contribution to dialogue and his life development towards it. Later on in 2015 Fletcher compiled his work into a book.<sup>28</sup> Abdulkader Tayob (one of al Faruqi's students)<sup>29</sup> presented a critical evaluation of al Faruqi's approach to the study and evaluation of religions. He elaborated that al Faruqi was successful to provide a distinctive approach for the study of religion as it was free from the general shortcomings the approaches he and others criticized had, yet his approach could not avoid being apologetic for Islamic Theology. Fatmir Shehu<sup>30</sup> acknowledged and elaborated al Faruqi's principles of Comparative and Meta-religion in relation to his methodology for the study of Christianity. Sumaiya Ahmed<sup>31</sup> also acknowledged al Faruqi's themes of dialogue, its principles and role of Islam in the development and implementation of interfaith dialogue taken mainly from two chapters of al Faruqi's *Islam and Other Faiths* (a collection of essays compiled by Ataullah Siddiqui). T. I. Bjoernaas<sup>32</sup> compared Karl Rahner's concepts of *Vorgriff* and al Faruqi's concept of *Fitrah*. He concluded that despite the differences both scholars hold that living in his/her religious paradigm every human being is open to God's revelation and to accept the truth. Similarly Eric R. Dye compared the works of Isma'il R. al Faruqi and Corlenius Van Til<sup>33</sup> and considered al Faruqi's approach to be apologetic especially his principles of Meta-religion as advocating only for Islam. Dye criticized al Faruqi's claim of rationality and theology free Meta-religion considering it similar to his Meta religion of Islam. Zuriati Bt Muhd Rashid

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<sup>28</sup> Charles D. Fletcher, *Muslim-Christian Engagement in the Twentieth Century: The Principles of Inter-Faith Dialogue and the work of Ismail al Faruqi*, (London; I.B. Tauris, 2015)

<sup>29</sup> Abdulkader Tayob, "Al Faruqi between the History of Religions and Islamic Theology" *Numen* 06, no. 02 (2013)

<sup>30</sup> Fatmir Shehu, "Investigating Ismā'il Rājī al-Fārūqī's Methodology in the Study of Christianity through Selected Textual Analysis from His Christian Ethics", *Intellectual Discourse* 31, no. 1 (2023)

<sup>31</sup> Sumaiya Ahmed, "Inter-faith Dialogue: Perspective of Isma'il Raji Al Faruqi's *Islam and Other Faiths*," *Islam and Muslim Societies: A Social Science Journal* 13, No. 2 (2020)

<sup>32</sup> Therese Ignacio Bjoernaas, "Christian Muslim dialogue Karl Rahner and Ismail al Faruqi on universal salvation," *Studies in Interreligious dialogue* 27, no.1, (January 2017) DOI:[10.2143/SID.27.1.3275091](https://doi.org/10.2143/SID.27.1.3275091)

<sup>33</sup> Eric R. Dye, *The Apologetic Methods of Isma'il R. Al Faruqi and Corlenius Van Til*. (London: School of Oriental and African Studies; University of London, 2000)

and Dr. Engku Ahmad Zaki discussed<sup>34</sup> al Faruqi's approach for the study and evaluation of religion through his principles and appreciated his efforts introducing Islamic Studies at American institutions, initiating interreligious dialogue and presenting a rational approach for the study of religion in response to modern Western approaches. Mohd Sharif and Ahmad Sabri elaborated al Faruqi's concept of Din Al-Fitrah<sup>35</sup>( recognition of truth is found in the innate nature of every human being and in this way everyone by birth has a tendency of realizing and accepting the truth which may be hindered by various factors and circumstances ) in comparison with the views of other scholars declaring that he cannot be said of religious pluralist as he denied that truth is found in all religions instead he was of the view that all the religions originated from truth, their origin was same but with the passage of time all of them except Islam deviated from the right path and lost their origin due to historical journey.

### **Methodology:**

In this research work a mix method approach has been followed. Under the comparative framework Marya Schechtman's theory has been applied to discover how and why Swidler and al Faruqi developed their approaches of dialogue. Their contribution has been viewed by applying the conceptual and relational content analysis for similar, different, theoretical and practical aspects of their work on dialogue, its validity, importance, contribution, limitation and rejoinder towards it has been viewed. Both intellectuals coined their specific terms to make the dialogue acceptable and applicable on a wide scale for the betterment of humanity. The present work provides the qualitative study of the effectiveness of their notions and terms in the area of dialogue, the contribution of their approaches and reception of their views have been viewed.

### **Organization of the Study:**

The present research is comprised of four chapters. First chapter sketches the lives of both scholars with relation to their work on dialogue and in this regard Marya Schechtman's theory of personal identity has been applied with its focus on four features; survival, self-interested concern, compensation and moral responsibility. It provides a link to better understand their

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<sup>34</sup> Zuriati Bt Mohd Rashid, Dr. Engku Ahmad Zaki Engku Alwi, "Al Faruqi and his views on Comparative Religions", *Journal of Business and Social Science* 1, no.1. (2010)

<sup>35</sup> Mohd Sharif and Ahmad Sabri, "Din Al-Fitrah According to al Faruqi and His Understanding about Religious Pluralism," *International journal of Academic research in Business and social Sciences* 8, no. 3 (March 2018)  
DOI:10.6007/IJARBS/v8-i3/3991

approaches explained in proceeding chapters. Second chapter presents a general overview of their approaches of dialogue while the third chapter specifically focuses on the role of Swidler and al Faruqi on behalf of their religions; Christianity and Islam for Deep and Meta-religious dialogue; first for the development of trialogue (dialogue among the Abrahamic faiths) and secondly for interaction of both the religions with other religions and ideologies. The last chapter presents the critical analysis of their approaches. It focuses on the impact of their views and works on others along with the objections and criticism they faced.

**Limitations:**

It is evident from literature review that many areas of their dialogue have been highlighted by different scholars, in the present research work the focus has been kept on their dialogue with comparative perspective and too much detail has been avoided to omit repetition.

**Chapter 1:**



## Development of Deep and Meta - religious Dialogue in the Thought of Swidler and al Faruqi

Factors from innate nature of a person as well as the circumstances he/she lives in determine and reflect various tenets of his/her personality like interests, goals, desires and decisions or stances et cetera. Besides the apparent interests of a person, his autobiography and biography also reflect his personality. This chapter provides the personality sketches of Swidler and al Faruqi reflecting these various kinds of aspects that can be helpful to understand their life developments toward their approaches of Deep and Meta-religious dialogue.

River Adams explaining about Swidler's experience of interreligious encounters states that it is

“the revelations of faith, reason, and love that made him who he is.”<sup>36</sup>

Julia Sheetz-Willard explains,

“He has been willing to be fully who he is—modern, Catholic, American—and yet has sought to make himself fully available for dialogue with religious and ideological others.”<sup>37</sup>

Swidler is very positive about and polite with whom he encounters. He says,

“I love my students ...I love those who are somehow speaking or reaching out to me,”<sup>38</sup>

It is the generous nature of Swidler that Paul Mojzes holds,

“He makes it impossible to fight with him. He is so flexible that he absorbs aggression and hostility.”<sup>39</sup>

He himself says,

“when I see so much given to me, and not just physically. I have a much more optimistic outlook than many other people; that's a gift.”

He acknowledges various gifts he received along with faith like loving mother, good friends who support him, enjoyable childhood, good health along with thinking and working brain and education. He says, “I feel the need to give back whatever I can...”<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Adams, *There Must Be You*, xiv.

<sup>37</sup> Julia Sheetz-Willard, et al., “Interreligious Dialogue Reconsidered: Learning from and Responding to Critique and Change,” 254.

<sup>38</sup> Adams, *There Must Be You*, 164.

<sup>39</sup> Adams, *There Must Be You*, 256.

<sup>40</sup> Adams, *There Must Be You*, 48.

According to al Faruqi various elements like empire, tribe, blood relations, religion or ideology all are relevant to man but he cannot be defined in any of these terms rather,

“It is his vision of reality, his philosophy of life, his perceptions of the world and history that ought to define and identify him.”<sup>41</sup>

One of al Faruqi’s friends explained about his personality,

“He was always cheerful and upbeat, totally cooperative in any department enterprise, and ever ready for intelligent corridor conversation on any topics of current interest. He was, at the same time, generous with his time in the guidance of college and graduate students...He held no grudges or ill feelings toward opponents in argument. He was emotionally a very mature man.”<sup>42</sup>

Marya Schechtman<sup>43</sup>’s personal identity theory<sup>44</sup> especially its four features<sup>45</sup> can be helpful to understand the life developments of both scholars which helped them reach their Deep and Meta-religious dialogue. In this regard the life developments of both scholars can be explained in two ways; first there are overviews of their lives and secondly their lives are viewed in connection of four features of Schechtman’s personal identity theory.

### 1.1 Life Sketches of Swidler and al Faruqi:

Schechtman in her person life view (PLV), explains that a person’s life is comprised of three elements; first are individual attributes which are physical and psychological capacities, secondly there are interests and activities of daily life of a person to determine his/her nature,

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<sup>41</sup> Ismail Raji Al Faruqi, *The Hijrah: The Necessity of its Iqamat or Vergegenwärtigung*, (Islamabad: National Hijra Council, 1985), 72.

<sup>42</sup> Gerard S. Sloyan, “A Memoir of a Good Friend Most Foully Murdered” in *Islam and Knowledge: Al Faruqi’s Concept of Religion in Islamic Thought, Essays in Honor of Isma’il Al Faruqi*, ed. Imtiyaz Yusuf ( New York: I.B Tauris & Co. Ltd , 2012),46.

<sup>43</sup> She is a philosophy professor at university of Illinois, Chicago and also a member at laboratory of Integrative Neuroscience. “Marya Schechtman, PhD LAS Distinguished Professor philosophy” accessed January 30, 2024 <http://phil.uic.edu/profiles/schechtman-marya>

<sup>44</sup> This theory she stated in her 1986 book “the Self Constitution” while after associating some practical dimensions to it she restated it in her 2014 work “Staying Alive”. For the present research work both are consulted.

<sup>45</sup> Her theory with the four features of existence is preferred because it addresses and deals the characterization question of a person’s identity that seems to be applicable to understand the development of thoughts of both scholars.

characteristics and preferences and thirdly there are cultural and social infrastructures of personhood that shape characters of individuals in the context of institutions and sets of practices prevailing in a society. Moreover these three types of elements cannot be separated but only in an artificial way as they are interlinked and overlapped.<sup>46</sup>

The sketches of Swidler and al Faruqi provide an overall view of their life journeys comprised of various phases with respect to important events in accordance to the three elements of Schechtman's PLV.

A look on their academic life along with the circumstances for dialogue in their time can provide a convincing reason for their focus and involvement in dialogue.

### **1.1.1 Academic Life:**

#### **Swidler's Life Sketch:**

Leonard Swidler (1929- ) a Catholic scholar was born in Sioux City, Iowa<sup>47</sup> to a Jewish Father and Christian mother. From his childhood he has been very sensible and careful about events and people associated to his life. He has proved himself to be responsible and serious for life matters. All this is evident from his autobiographical reflections and from the views of the people who know him.

#### **i- Education, Honors, Grants and Fellowships:**

He got his early education from different Christian schools. At college first he chose chemical engineering then he switched his discipline to study religion.

He studied philosophy for his B.A at St. Norbert College, Wisconsin for four years 1946-50. Then he joined the Norbertine Order and from the beginning he was committed to become an intellectual and a saint. He has achieved his first goal while he seems to be working on the second one. His main interest was in theology and philosophy. Besides these two he studied history for his master's and PhD degrees. For two years he studied theology at St. Norbert's Seminary from 1950 to 1952 and completed it at St. Paul's Seminary from 1952 to 1954. He

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<sup>46</sup> Marya Schechtman, *Staying Alive, Personal Identity, Practical Concerns, and the Unity of a Life*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 112-113 and 115.

<sup>47</sup> Leonard Swidler, "A Life in Dialogue: Autobiographical Reflections, personal notes, 2010", 7. accessed February 19, 2020 [http://astro.temple.edu/~swidler/autobiographical\\_fragments.htm](http://astro.temple.edu/~swidler/autobiographical_fragments.htm)

earned his master's degree from Marquette University in 1955 and his PhD from the University of Wisconsin in 1961 both in history and philosophy. He received a grant from German government and from 1957 to 1960 he lived in Tübingen and Munich for his dissertation. He has a Licentiate in Sacred Theology from the University of Tübingen. His two honorary doctorates are from LaSalle University and St. Norbert's College.<sup>48</sup>

## **ii- Teaching:**

Since 1955 he has been assisting and teaching the subjects of his specialization and interest. In 1960 he got a teaching position at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh.

He has worked as professor of Catholic thought and Interreligious dialogue at Temple University from 1966 to 2022. He joined Temple University at the time when it became a state-related university in 1966 as it was declared by the Dialogue Institute that "its becoming a public university was the main reason he came! Once he joined the faculty here, the college began teaching religion "from the inside as well as from the outside," according to Dr. Swidler. The professor says it was an approach no other university in the world attempted before Temple."<sup>49</sup> When he was offered to teach at Temple he demanded that other Catholics and the followers of other religions should also be called there to join, although it was a new idea and he was not expected it to be accepted but it was implemented.<sup>50</sup>

He has been teaching as a visiting professor in many universities of the world and authored more than 200 articles and 75 books.

## **iii- Research Fields/Areas:**

River Adams says,

"All the work he's ever done---on church reform, Christology, or feminism, in teaching and organizing---is, for him, about dialogue. About what dialogue is and what it means."<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Swidler, "A Life in Dialogue," 1-22. "Abbreviated Curriculum Vitae for Leonard Swidler," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, University of Pennsylvania Press 50, 1 (Winter 2015): 182-189.

<sup>49</sup> "Our Founder" Dialogue- Institute, accessed September 16, 2023, <http://dialogueinstitute.org/our-founder>

<sup>50</sup> Adams, *There Must Be You*, 187.

<sup>51</sup> Adams, *There Must Be You*, 36.

Besides dialogue there are two major areas of his work: reforms for the rights of Christians especially Catholics and feminism.

#### **a- Christian Reforms:**

His long time association with Catholics shows his concern that he is practically acting on his principle of dialogue that change and growth does not only occur between the dialogue partners but it also happens through them within their own communities. His efforts for his own Catholic community are visible through his writings and practical stances.

He is the founder of the Association for the Rights of Catholics in the Church (ARCC) and served as its past president for a long time since 1980.<sup>52</sup> He met one of the great theologians of his time Hans Küng in 1962 and worked with him as well. When in 1979 the holy office issued a Declaration against Hans Küng that he would no longer be considered a catholic theologian, Swidler along with other catholic theologians took great stand against this decision. He said, “We decided to fight Rome with Roman tactics”<sup>53</sup>. He was one of those who tirelessly played their role to organize the people against that decision, subsequently the ARCC was founded and Swidler along with some other theologians developed 32 rights for the Catholics under ARCC. After his continuous efforts he along with James Biechler<sup>54</sup> drafted a “Proposed Constitution for the Catholic Church.”<sup>55</sup>

#### **b- Feminism:**

River Adams when asked Swidler about his pursuits, “he named dialogue first and feminism second.”<sup>56</sup> He produced a book ‘Women in Judaism’ in which he described the inferior status of women given to them in Rabbinic Judaism and also in later Christianity and other religions. His work on Feminism can be seen from his book ‘Jesus was a Feminist’<sup>57</sup> in which he explained that how Jesus used to treat his male and female disciples alike while in society women were treated as inferior to men. Another book is ‘Biblical Affirmation of Women’. He from the very

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<sup>52</sup> “Leonard Swidler- Curriculum Vitae” Square Space, updated December 14, 2019, <http://static1.squarespace.com>

<sup>53</sup> Swidler, “A Life in Dialogue,” 43.

<sup>54</sup> He was a married priest and a former doctoral student of Swidler.

<sup>55</sup> Swidler, “A Life in Dialogue,” 43.

<sup>56</sup> Adams, *There Must Be You*, 109.

<sup>57</sup> In 1971 it was an article which later on published in 2007 in the form of a book. In this book he acknowledged the efforts women had done.

beginning observed the efforts and struggle his mother used to do for their livelihood as his father faced great difficulties to find proper job and had to do different types of work to join his mother in financial support for the family. Another woman whose efforts he had seen was his wife Arlene Anderson. He is of the view that women should also be paid for their struggle equal to men but has seen discrimination<sup>58</sup> in this regard. It seems that his work on feminism is the effort by which he wants to make it clear that women should also be given the due respect and status they deserve in the society. His wife was a feminist and he says, “I was always a male auxiliary support to Andie<sup>59</sup>’s efforts”.<sup>60</sup> It can be evidently seen especially when he along with his wife edited a book about ordination of women at the time when church was strongly against it.

### **Al Faruqi’s life Sketch:**

His thoughts and works are interconnected to his life challenges and experiences. His life in perspective of his thought development can be viewed in the following sections:

#### **i- Early life in Palestine:**

He was born at Jaffa, Palestine in 1921 and got his early education from his father (Abd al-Huda al Faruqi who was a Qadi in Sharia Court) and from a local mosque. From 1926 to 1936 he studied at French Dominican College (St. Joseph) and got his higher school diploma. At that time he was fluent in Arabic and French. Next year he got admission in the College of Arts and Sciences at the American University in Beirut where he studied English and completed his BA in 1941 with a major in philosophy. In 1945 he became a district magistrate at Galilee under British mandate.<sup>61</sup>

#### **ii- Self narrative of al Faruqi:**

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<sup>58</sup> He recalls that many a time his wife was not given the equal status to men although her efforts were equal to them. Adams, *There Must Be You*, 110-111.

<sup>59</sup> He used to call his wife by this name while she used to call him *Len* instead of his nickname *Leo* given to him by his family.

<sup>60</sup> Adams, *There Must Be You*, 112.

<sup>61</sup> John L. Esposito and John O. Voll, *Makers of Contemporary Islam*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 23.

He wrote a brief narrative at the request of a friend some days before his murder. It shows his efforts to promote the teachings and understanding of Islam in American universities and in the minds of Muslim students as well. He wrote,

“... After I obtained my doctorate in western philosophy, I became aware of the state of my ignorance and remoteness from the Islamic legacy. So I retreated and entered al-Azhar University to learn anew, but with a very fast intensive special programme as if I was doing another doctorate in the three years that I was spending at the quarters of al-Azhar. Thereafter I worked as a Professor of Islamic Studies at various universities. My involvement in the Islamic students’ movement in the US had helped create the development of a new outlook, that is, to cultivate and develop Islam in the U.S. apart from training the Muslim youth in Islamic activities and deepening their Islamic vision. This is the activity in which I am still engaged.

Ismā‘īl Rājī al-Fārūqī  
1 May 1986.”<sup>62</sup>

### iii- **Education in USA:**

As it is evident from his autobiography that after Israel’s occupation of that region he had to leave his homeland and his family moved to Beirut while he decided to go to United States to continue his studies. In 1949 he got his Master’s degree in philosophy from Indiana University. For further studies he joined Harvard University in 1950. At that time he was facing financial problems and had to withdraw for some time. For his efforts he was awarded the master degree in philosophy in 1951. He worked as a translator for the American Council of Learned Societies. Then he worked as a building contractor and showed his skills successfully but left this work to return to the academic life again. He got admission in PhD at Indiana University and graduated in 1952. In the same year he developed his theory of ‘Arabism’.<sup>63</sup>

### iv- **Deep Study of the Abrahamic Faiths:**

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<sup>62</sup> Ismail Raji al Faruqi, “Self-portrait,” *Impact International* 16, no. 11 (13-26 June, 1986): 6. reproduced in Isma‘il al Faruqi, *The Path of Dawah in the West* (London: Islamic Mission, 1986), 3.

<sup>63</sup> Esposito and Voll, *Makers of Contemporary Islam*, 23-24.

His Arabism can be understood as consciousness, reality and a set of values. It should not be mixed or confused with Arab nationalism limited to a nation or the physical boundaries rather it is central to the whole Muslim ummah and the non-Muslim Arabs. The detail of his Arabism can be seen in his 1962 book ‘Urubah and Religion’.

Although Islam remained a part of his study since his childhood as during a discussion after his paper in 1980 he said that he had a fifty nine years experience to study Islam<sup>64</sup>, after his PhD he moved to Egypt for two reasons; i- as he himself mentioned in his narrative that after studying western philosophy he wanted to study Islam deeply in a new way. ii- He found there was a scarcity of employment in his field. So, he sought out opportunities for post-doctoral studies. He received a Rockefeller Foundation fellowship to study Islam and Islamic intellectual history at Al-Azhar University in Cairo from 1954-1958.

In 1958 Wilfred Cantwell Smith<sup>65</sup> invited him to study at McGill University's Institute of Islamic Studies for one year. He spent that time as a Research Associate involved in lecturing and studying along with working on his theory of Arabism. This time period was extended to two more years and he continued his work. It was also the time when he was doing research on his development of 'Christian Ethics'<sup>66</sup>.

#### v- **Teaching and Research:**

During his time at McGill, he became close friends with Fazlur Rahman who was teaching over there. When Dr. Rahman accepted a position at the Central Institute of Islamic Research (CIIR), newly created by the Pakistani government, Faruqi was also offered a two years appointment by the director Dr. Ishtiaq Hussain Qureshi. Thus, from 1961-1963 al Faruqi served as Professor of Islamic Studies in Karachi, Pakistan and was involved in the development of the Institute's journal, *Islamic Studies*. During this period, he was invited to Egypt where he represented his department through a number of lectures on Islam's relation to Nationalism, the history of religion and comparative religion. In 1963 he felt that the institute is not going toward the achievement for its purpose, he became dissatisfied with the performance of the institute, resigned from his position and moved back to the United States where he taught at three prominent institutions; he was offered a one-year appointment for the academic year 1963-1964

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<sup>64</sup> It was a discussion session after his paper "The Role of Islam in Global Inter-Religious Dependence" in *Islam and Other Faiths*, 102.

<sup>65</sup> He (1916-2000) was an active scholar of pluralism and comparative religion who researched on Islam in detail during his stay in British India and Canada. He established Islamic Studies Institute at McGill University. Gustav Niebuhr, "Wilfred C. Smith Dies at 83; Scholar of Religious Pluralism" published in New York Times, February 11, 2000, <https://www.nytimes.com/2000/02/11/us/wilfred-c...>

<sup>66</sup> It is a treatise on Christianity. He in the introduction of this book explains that he has written it being a member of the world religio-cultural community and not being a Muslim. He clarifies that his purpose is to bring the unique study of Christianity in the view of the world without any biasness from Christians or in favour of Muslims rather it is a rational analysis of Christianity.



as visiting professor of History of Religion at the University of Chicago's Divinity school. The next year he became an associate professor at Syracuse University's department of Religion where he taught Islamic Studies and the History of Religion until 1968. Finally in 1968 he accepted the rank of full-professor of Islamics and History of Religion at Temple University. This position continued till his death in 1986.<sup>67</sup>

#### **vi- Impact of His views:**

His commitment to revive and reform the Muslim Ummah flourished and developed during his research at McGill and at the Institute for Islamic Research in Pakistan while his stay at Temple University proved helpful for the implementation of his tasks.

During al Faruqi's years at the Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill University the dean of divinity School S.B. Frost<sup>68</sup> said about him,

“He became a man of two worlds, intelligently at ease in both and at peace with neither.”<sup>69</sup>

Voll and Esposito declared,

“This grappling with his two worlds was no doubt responsible for the writing of *Urubah* and *Christian Ethics*. Arabism, Islam, and Western Christian culture were Faruqi's religious, historical, and cultural baggage.”<sup>70</sup>

Khurshid Ahmed's view about Faruqi was,

“Brother al Faruqi's intellectual, spiritual, and ideological journey that began as a 'Muslim Arabist' had made its transition to his role as an 'Islamist Arab.' His stay in America and his encounters with the tentacles of West's 'Islamophobia' had contributed greatly towards this change... Brother Isma'il al Faruqi's stay in Canada and America gave him an opportunity to rethink his position and to rediscover his real identity... During the last two decades of his life he made seminal contributions as an Islamic scholar, a respected teacher, a great da'ya and a true ambassador of Islam.”<sup>71</sup>

#### **1.1.2 Journey towards Dialogue:**

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<sup>67</sup> Esposito and Voll, *Makers of Contemporary Islam*, 23-24.

<sup>68</sup> Stanley Brice Frost (1913- 2013) was a professor, historian and administrator who served more than fifty years at McGill University. McGill Reporter Staff “Stanely B. Frost” published July 30, 2013, McGill Reporter <https://reporter.mcgill.ca/stanely-b-frost>

<sup>69</sup> The two worlds are the east and the west. Esposito and Voll, *Makers of Contemporary Islam*, 37.

<sup>70</sup> Esposito and Voll, *Makers of Contemporary Islam*, 37.

<sup>71</sup> Khurshid Ahmad, “Isma'il Al Faruqi: As I Knew Him” in *Islam and Knowledge*, 22-23.

The circumstances in which a person lives have a great impact on his/her personality and thoughts. A person's keen interests in and lifelong efforts for a goal or purpose become his/her personality traits and determine the direction of his/her journey or life targets. Swidler and al Faruqi experienced a reasonable time period to set their journeys toward dialogue. Belonging to two different religious denominations they both emphasized the importance of dialogue by suggesting their distinct rules to make it fruitful in the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> and upcoming 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Both of them developed their own specific models to make dialogue more effective and successful. Swidler developed his ten principles for dialogue in context of modernity and likewise al Faruqi not satisfied with the nature of dialogue conducted in the modern age developed a set of principles for dialogue to make it effective.

Religious interaction/conflicts and financial crises played their role developing the thoughts of and setting the goals for Swidler and al Faruqi. Both of them grew with a tendency of learning<sup>72</sup>. They grew in religious backgrounds and their own religions played a vital role shaping their personalities.<sup>73</sup>

Both of them observed the world experiencing the effects and aftereffects of World War II and there was a need for peace. They not only experienced the era of development of dialogue but played their role for it to become an academic discipline.

The efforts of both; Swidler and al Faruqi for dialogue express their search for their selves. River Adams in her book explains that anti-Semitism, war and religion all led Swidler to his life's cause; dialogue through a long journey he spent in search of his place in the world.<sup>74</sup>

Living in America and then teaching at Temple University provided them creative opportunity to be a part of the dialogical movement of their time. Their academic life led them to work on dialogue at international level.

### **Swidler's Journey :**

Swidler was familiar with the interreligious encounter from his childhood especially the Christian Jewish encounter<sup>75</sup> because his mother and father belonged to Christianity and

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<sup>72</sup>Since his college years Swidler had two goals for his life, to become an intellectual or a saint. He in his interview to Adams told her that, "I was born with a brain that can make use of it." Adams, *There Must Be You*, xxi and 48. Al Faruqi after getting his early education from his father continued his studies through various institutions.

<sup>73</sup> Many a times Swidler in his reflections, autobiography and history of his intellectual journey explains his attachment and concern for his religion whereas al Faruqi views the interaction of various religions in Islamic perspective.

<sup>74</sup> Adams, *There Must Be You*, xxii.

Judaism. Later on his father converted to Christianity. He was familiar with anti-Semitism although rarely experienced in the society he lived.<sup>76</sup>

Attachment to, and interest in religion throughout his life played a vital role to shape and mold his intellectual life toward dialogue. He mentions in his autobiography,

“By the time I was coming to the end of my college years I was very deeply involved in a reformed kind of Catholicism.”<sup>77</sup>

Swidler’s lifelong journey toward dialogue began during his academic life when he was introduced to the conflicts between Catholic and Protestants and he became active in ecumenical dialogue in 1957 by working on Una Sancta movement. When he agreed to join Temple University, it was the only institution in his region to offer the religious study programs on different religions by the professors who belonged to those religions. When Swidler started his work on dialogue people were generally not fully aware of its importance and role in the prevailing world scenario. He was one of the pioneers who introduced the term uniquely and played their prominent role in making it as a discipline in academic life.

His development of the Journal of ecumenical studies along with his wife was a unique and much needed and appreciated effort of the time in 1964. His establishment of dialogue institute and work for it shows his permanent concern for dialogue. His three time world tours especially his 1983’s sabbatical interviewing many renowned intellectuals from east to west and observing the world religions and ideologies widened his experience of dialogue.

Since 50’s he has been working on intra religious dialogue (his dissertation on Una Sancta movement of Germany) that turned to be interreligious dialogue in 60’s (his journal of ecumenical studies after one year of its launching in 1965 became a forum for dialogue among various religions) and even inter-ideological dialogue (it is evident especially in 90’s when he promoted the term deep dialogue) to promote the goodwill and develop good relations not only among the members of his own community but to create an overall sense of cooperation and peace for all the humans. As he says,

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<sup>75</sup>Swidler recalls the arguments between his mother’s elder sister (a devoted Christian) and his father. He clearly remembers that once she told his father that she strongly agreed with father Charles Coughlin (a priest of Detroit) who was in favor of the persecution of Jews. Swidler, “A Life in Dialogue,” 2-3.

<sup>76</sup> Swidler remembers a story his father told him about his grandfather that once he was passing by a Ukrainian peasant’s house, a lad came out and kept shouting ‘dirty Jew’, dirty Jew’ for some time until his bare feet couldn’t bear to stand in cold snow, so he ran to his house while Swidler’s grandfather calmly listened to him and then moved away. Swidler, “A Life in Dialogue,” 5.

<sup>77</sup> Swidler, “A life in Dialogue,” 15.

“ I started out as a Catholic Christian, but experience with other ways of understanding and living life came along to me, and I gradually moved to this more, let’s call it, “basically dialogic stance”, because I want to speak to all people not just fellow Christians.”<sup>78</sup>

He is the founder and president of Dialogue Institute: Interreligious, Intercultural, International since 1978 and co-founder and director of Global Dialogue Institute since 1993.<sup>79</sup>

River Adam says,

“He has spent his life developing, promoting, and leading interreligious dialogue.” ... “dialogue, faith, and intellectual are the same thing in his life.”<sup>80</sup>

Swidler declares that in the modern era there are both; clashes or conflicts among the civilizations and dialogue is also developing among them. He holds, “I want to argue not only that dialogue is beginning to win, that, in fact, we are at a “Tipping Point”—but also that, because victory is by no means guaranteed, I wish to contribute to dialogue’s victory, as I have been endeavoring to do for over half a century. I invite all who read my words or hear my voice to join in this desperately vital struggle.”<sup>81</sup>

### **Swidler’s efforts viewed by those who know him:**

John B. Cobb appreciated Swidler’s Dialogue on Dialogue by stating,

“I particularly rejoice that Swidler does not insist on a pre-established common ground as a basis for dialogue. On the contrary, he recognizes complementarity as an alternative mode in which religions can be related. He properly recognizes that there may also be contradictions, while warning us against too quickly treating differences in that way.”<sup>82</sup>

On his retirement from Temple University his colleagues and students who belong to different religions and institutions of the world expressed their thoughts about his efforts. Some of the examples are as follows<sup>83</sup>:

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<sup>78</sup> Adams, *There Must Be You*, 6-7.

<sup>79</sup> “Leonard Swidler- Curriculum Vitae”

<sup>80</sup> Adams, *There Must Be You*, xxi.

<sup>81</sup> Leonard Swidler, The ‘Dialogue of Civilizations’ at the tipping point: the ‘Dialogosphere,’ *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 50, no.1, (Winter 2015): 1.

<sup>82</sup> John B. Cobb, Jr. “Response I” in *Death or Dialogue?: from the age of monologue to the age of dialogue*, Leonard Swidler, (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990), 80.

<sup>83</sup> “Leonard Swidler’s Legacy; celebrating 56 years of academic scholarship and global dialogue at Temple University and beyond...” accessed February 2, 2024 <http://dialogueinstitute.org/leonard-swidler-retirement>

Racelle Weiman said,

“Len is unique in his tenacity and unwavering dedication to the very idea of diverse understanding of faith and faith communities. As a trailblazer, he was not just a pioneer in inter and intra faith dialogue, he was a catalyst for many others, launching nurturing and sustaining sparks of his work globally. He was an inspiration to me, and to multitudes, creating a movement.”<sup>84</sup>

Ahmad Rafiq said,

“I took his classes on inter-religious dialogue and joined some of his program in Dialogues Institute where I found the dialogue is his breath. He embodies dialogue in his life in which I learnt the inseparability of theory and real life, ideas and practice, as well as dream, hope, and optimism.”<sup>85</sup>

Malahat Veliyeva said,

“I was fascinated by his professionalism, deep respect to all religions and representatives of those religions, humanism and mentorship skills. His excessive desire to enlighten people in the religious field, his intention to establish interfaith dialogue and unite people preaching different religions under the umbrella of simple principles of dialoguing is so important for humankind. Prof. Len is a scholar of a large scale; I think he belongs to the world and the world needs him.”<sup>86</sup>

Rebecca Alpert told,

“As a teacher, he has a unique vision. He inspires his students to do their best by his openness to their ideas and imaginings. His incredible generosity of spirit, and his willingness to see the potential in every student makes Leonard Swidler a great teacher and a great model for those of us who have followed in his footsteps in the study of religion.”<sup>87</sup>

Prince El Hassan bin Talal appreciated his work in these words,

“With the world increasingly shrinking and interconnecting, moving from an “Age of Monologue” to an “Age of Dialogue,” which I refer to as the “Swidler-age,” is as important as ever. Dr Swidler served as a mentor and an inspiration for us all. It is to him that we owe much gratitude for the progress made in interfaith dialogue and solidarity.”<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Racelle Weiman from Center for Judaic, Holocaust, and Peace Studies, Appalachian State, Appalachian State university

<sup>85</sup> Ahmad Rafiq, Senior Lecturer at State Islamic University Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

<sup>86</sup> Malahat Veliyeva, Assistant Professor at Azerbaijan University of Languages

<sup>87</sup> Rebecca Alpert, Professor of Religion Emerita at Temple University

<sup>88</sup> Message of Appreciation from His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal, Kingdom of Jordan

Simon Yin said,

“With his deeds, he fully exemplifies his teaching that dialogue is highly important and shows us how to conduct a dialogue in a proper way effectively and efficiently with head, heart, and hands.”<sup>89</sup>

### **Al Faruq’s Journey:**

Al Faruqi experienced the effects of colonialism and then exile in his motherland; Palestine. He mostly lived among the people of Abrahamic faith. His religion had a key role for his deep study of religion and especially Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Through his deep study and interaction with the followers of those religions he moved toward dialogue and especially the trialogue where his main interest area was interaction between Christianity and Islam. He had the view that a religion should be taught by its adherents. In this regard Muddathir Abd al-Rahim explained that al Faruqi strongly

“opposed to the anthropomorphic approach with which comparative religion was (and continues to be) taught in most Western universities. He was profoundly convinced that there must be faith, belief, and commitment if the inner meaning of Islam – or indeed of any religion – is to be properly understood and explained. It is for this reason also that he deplored the fact that Islam in the West is predominantly taught by non-Muslims, while Christianity and Judaism are taught by adherents of these faiths.”<sup>90</sup>

It seems that Temple University’s distinct way of teaching any religion by its adherents was a reason al Faruqi taught there as mentioned by Abd al-Rahim, The multi-religious character of the department in terms of both teachers and programs created a markedly rich and lively academic environment which I felt was particularly valuable as it seemed to favor the growth and development of interreligious dialogue and inter-civilizational understanding. In that context, Islam had, for many years, continued to be ably and brilliantly taught at Temple by two outstanding, and in many ways complementary, specialists in Islamic and comparative religious studies: Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Isma‘il Raji al Faruqi.<sup>91</sup>

Islamic identity and responsibility of da’wah are the keen factors behind his tendency of dialogue. He views that a Muslim whether a temporary student or a permanent resident of the West; Europe or North America can only justify his hijrah if he possesses the Islamic values and

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<sup>89</sup> Simon Yin, PhD, Dialogue Institute SUSI Scholar Alumna 2017

<sup>90</sup> Muddathir Abd al-Rahim, “Reminiscences of Al Faruqi, Factors that Shaped his Personality, and Some Observations on Terminology” in *Islam and Knowledge*, 48.

<sup>91</sup> Abd al-Rahim, “Reminiscences of Al Faruqi,” 48-49.

reflects Islam. On the other hand if he doesn't possess the Islamic values and tries to absorb the western culture he not only creates harm individually for himself but also collectively for the whole Ummah.<sup>92</sup>

Temple University provided al Faruqi a forum to lead the way of dialogue as his student Imtiyaz Yusuf described,

“In his own judgment, Professor al Faruqi saw the Department of Religion of Temple University as the ideal place for him to teach Islamics, pursue interreligious dialogue and address the spiritual problems facing humanity in the modern age.”<sup>93</sup>

Al Faruqi's efforts for dialogue through his academic life led him to work for dialogue not only in America but it extends internationally through various organizations, institutions and forums.

### **Al Faruqi's efforts viewed by those who know him:**

J. I. Smith says,

“His place as a forerunner of the interfaith dialogue experience in America is unrivaled, however, as he was among the first to seriously frame the challenge and pursue the goal of arriving at “truth” with vigor and commitment.”<sup>94</sup>

According to John Esposito,

“Isma'il proved to be a remarkable intellectual and lecturer. He was multilingual (fluent in Arabic, English, French, and German), ...A dynamic lecturer who clearly had a passion for his subject, Isma'il made Islam and Muslim history come alive in the classroom. Studying under Isma'il at Temple had many advantages, some of which I did not appreciate until much later in my career. Most important was an understanding of Islam that I gained 'from within.'”<sup>95</sup>

Moreover he explained,

“He was indefatigable, a bundle of enormous energy, who seemed like a relentless whirlwind. His profession was also his vocation, he was a man driven by scholarship and faith. He was one of the great multi-taskers of his time: writing, speaking nationally and globally, running the Islamic Studies

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<sup>92</sup> Al Faruqi, *The Hijrah*, 66-70.

<sup>93</sup> Imtiyaz Yusuf. “Introduction” in *Essential Writings: Ismail Al Faruqi*, Imtiyaz Yusuf ed. (Virginia: Center for Islam in the Contemporary world, 2021), 17.

<sup>94</sup> Jane Idleman Smith, *Muslims, Christians, and the Challenge of Interfaith Dialogue*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 126.

<sup>95</sup> John L. Esposito, “Memories of a Scholar and Mujahid” in *Islam and knowledge*, 15.

program, recruiting students from across the Muslim world, establishing major Muslim organizations and a think tank, the International Institute of Islamic Thought.”<sup>96</sup>

According to Khurshed Ahmed he was one of those few people

“who set the agenda for the future and become catalysts for civilizational change: reshaping human thought, society, culture, and history.”...“His speeches and writings have, because of their academic rigor, scientific precision, rational augmentation, literary flavor, and overpowering passion, influenced two generations of youth and seekers after truth. He made his mark as a scholar, a teacher, a thought leader, a man with a vision and a mission.”<sup>97</sup>

James Zogby explained,

“this was a man who possessed an intense intellect and a love for ideas and debate... As energetic as he was in the classroom, he brought this same vigor to his effort to create structures that would secure the Muslim role in America. Isma‘il was, as well, a committed Palestinian.”<sup>98</sup>

Muddathir Abd al-Rahim explained Al Faruqi’s concern for dialogue by stating,

“interreligious dialogue for al Faruqi... was an existential necessity and a profound personal commitment or vocation. It was in this spirit that he had for many years been actively involved in the workings of the American Academy of Religion (AAR) and took the unprecedented initiative – with the assistance of the Inter-Religious Peace Colloquium of which he was vice-president for ten years – to bring together members of the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim academic communities in the United States. The upshot was the convening, in New York, 1979, of a conference, the proceedings of which were in due course published by al Faruqi with the title *Dialogue of the Abrahamic Faiths*.”<sup>99</sup>

Although some of his views met with the critique but his efforts and role for dialogue have been acknowledged worldwide during and after his life time by various organizations and leaders.

The gap created in the field of interfaith dialogue after the murder of al Faruqi and his wife was clearly felt. Here are some examples from Christian bodies that sent their messages at the occasion:

Catholic Bishops’ Committee for interreligious affairs stated,

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<sup>96</sup> Esposito, “Memories of a Scholar and Mujahid,” 16.

<sup>97</sup> Khurshid Ahmad, “Isma‘il Al Faruqi: As I Knew Him” in *Islam and Knowledge*, 19.

<sup>98</sup> James Zogby, “Isma‘il Al Faruqi: An Intellectual and an Inspiration” in *Islam and Knowledge*, 57.

<sup>99</sup> Abd al-Rahim, “Reminiscences of Al Faruqi” 48.



“Dr. Fārūqī was an honoured and esteemed participant in numerous interreligious dialogues, both nationally and internationally. The community of dialogue will miss him surely.”<sup>100</sup>

Another respondent was the Macdonald Centre of Hartford Seminary which wrote:

“The human community has lost two persons who contributed significantly to it but their lives, and the circle of those concerned with interfaith relations has lost two of the most valuable participants.”<sup>101</sup>

The General Secretary of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops wrote:

“He was [also] a leading contributor to dialogue between the Catholic and Muslim communities not only in the United States, but internationally as well.”<sup>102</sup>

It is evident from the life sketches of Swidler and al Faruqi that their religious, financial and social circumstances set their academic lives which in turn shaped their dialogical stances and helped them contribute in dialogical foundations via their distinct approaches in the field of dialogue.

## **1.2 Lives of Swidler and al Faruqi in connection with Four Features of Personal Identity:**

Schechtman’s view of personal identity clearly distinguishes between two questions of the identity of a person; the re-identification and the characteristic; the former deals with physical identity while the later deals with thoughts and views of a person. Schechtman’s theory has been preferred due to its clear focus on the characteristic question which is relevant to know the personalities of both scholars in the present research. Moreover its four features of survival, life centered concern, moral responsibility and compensation are applied to discover the place of dialogue in the lives of Swidler and al Faruqi.

Schechtman explains,

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<sup>100</sup> Islamic Horizons, “Letters to the Editor,” Islamic Horizons, vol. 15, (special issue August - September, 1986): 4.

<sup>101</sup> Islamic Horizons, “Letters to the Editor,”5.

<sup>102</sup> Islamic Horizons, “Letters to the Editor,”5.

“The impetus for the view of persons as self-creating---and specifically as creating themselves through their self-conceptions---comes from the recognition that facts about an individual's subjective relation to her actions and experience is profoundly relevant to judgments of characterization and the four features.”<sup>103</sup>

She holds that a person's identity

“rely crucially on an individual's inner life and her attitude toward her actions and experiences...At the same time, however, it must be acknowledged that persons do not exist in a vacuum...To enter into the world of persons an individual needs, roughly speaking, to grasp her culture's concept of a person and apply it to herself...These, then, are the two basic sets of intuitions that lead to the narrative self-constitution view as I present it: first, that in order to be a person one needs a particular kind of subjectivity and orientation toward one's life, and second, that in order to be a person one's self-conception must cohere with what might be called the "objective" account of her life-roughly the story that those around her would tell.”<sup>104</sup>

Schechtman compares her narrative self-constitution view with psychological continuity theories and holds that it better explains the personal identity along with the four features because those theories cannot provide the persistence of the single experiencing subject which only narrative self-constitution view provides. She declares that such persistence is necessary to make the sense of different practices and qualities surrounded by the four features. She explains,

“Survival involves the continuation of the same experiencing subject; moral responsibility requires that the experiencing subject who commits a crime be the one to experience the punishment; self-interested concern requires that the person having an experience in the future be the one who anticipates it, and compensation demands that the same experiencing subject who suffers a sacrifice enjoy the later benefits.”<sup>105</sup>

A detailed view of the lives of Swidler and al Faruqi in connection with these four features of personal identity theory can help discover the base and place of Deep and Meta-religious dialogue as one the priorities for them.

### 1.2.1 Survival:

Schechtman's survival primarily focuses on psychological elements instead of biological ones. She explains,

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<sup>103</sup> Marya Schechtman, *The Constitution of Selves*, (London: Cornell University Press, 1996), 95.

<sup>104</sup> Schechtman, *The Constitution of Selves*, 95.

<sup>105</sup> Schechtman, *The Constitution of Selves*, 149.

“In order to capture our intuitions about survival and identity, the narrative self-constitution view must thus demonstrate that the possession of the appropriate sort of self-conception is linked to personal survival. It must also show that this view makes sense of the importance survival has for us.”<sup>106</sup>

She further explains,

“The narrative self-constitution view maintains our conception of the nature of survival... It thus offers an explanation of the value of survival of a sort the psychological continuity theory is unable to give.”<sup>107</sup>

The intellectual survival for both scholars is deeply linked with the physical and intellectual circumstances in which they lived and passed through.

Swidler’s father Samuel Swidler was a Jew and his mother Josephine Marie Reed was an Irish American Catholic Christian. Both of the families had a history of struggle for their physical survival. Swidler’s maternal family (Catholics) moved to America from Ireland and that time there were two basic reasons for the immigrants to move from Ireland to America; the economic crises and the Protestant- Catholic conflicts. His father moved to America from Ukraine at the age of 15 in 1912 when persecution of Jews was on peak in Ukraine<sup>108</sup> and a fear was prevailing for the young boys to be dragooned into Czarist army to be stuck there for almost 30 years.<sup>109</sup> This physical survival had a prominent impact on the intellectual survival of Swidler.

When his father on the continuous insistence of his mother got the American citizenship during the WW-II days, he was told that they were very lucky to live in the “land of the free.”<sup>110</sup>

He studied at different Christian schools due to financial status of his parents. From his school days he was committed to study hard to become successful to get rid of hardships his parents faced due to their manual hard work for many hours a day. Another important goal beside to be an intellectual was to become a saint. The first one he acquired while for his understanding of the second one he is “on the way.”<sup>111</sup> As he thinks that a saint is someone who fulfils all of his worldly obligations in as much care and seriousness as he can, the consciousness with which he takes the worldly life matters he compares it to carefully driving a car. It is the outward role of an individual focusing on his actions while inwardly he feels himself in a situation of seeking

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<sup>106</sup> Schechtman, *The Constitution of Selves*, 150.

<sup>107</sup> Schechtman, *The Constitution of Selves*, 154.

<sup>108</sup> His dad’s family members and relatives were killed in early 1930. Swidler, *A Life in Dialogue*, 5

<sup>109</sup> Swidler, “A Life in Dialogue”, 1

<sup>110</sup> Swidler, “A Life in Dialogue”, 5

<sup>111</sup> Adams, *There Must Be You*, 272-273.

dialogue between himself and the personal Reality although the nature of this dialogue is different from the customary sense.<sup>112</sup>

So his intellectual survival is determined by his scholarly academic life of which dialogue is the most prominent feature. His lifelong efforts and activities explicitly show his association with dialogue. Through his dialogue he wants to bring the people close to one another for understanding and cooperation to make the world peaceful.

On the other hand Faruqi was born in a country under British mandate. Although his family had a well setup both scholarly and financially, and as a young man of 24 he also got a job as the governor of Galilee, but things had to change and so the intellectual preferences of al Faruqi as well. His family had to leave their homeland in exile in 1948. Instead of staying in any of the Middle Eastern countries with his family he chose to move to the USA for his studies. So the loss of his homeland, family's settlement and his administrative position seem to be the initial factors contributed to redefine and reshape his intellectual survival. It was a time to prove his identity in the new culture under the new circumstances. According to his niece he "... sailed to the West, hoping to find answers to the multiple questions that motivated his search for an all encompassing system that would satisfy his philosophical inclinations."<sup>113</sup>

He had to evaluate his life and set his goals to shape his psychological survival and for this he evaluated his Islamic heritage to rediscover his identity as a Muslim. The developmental stages in his thought can be traced as his discovery of himself as an Arab first but later on he realized that he was merely a Muslim with a sense of responsibility.

Succinctly he summed up his spiritual and intellectual transformation as,

"There was a time in my life...when all I cared about was proving to myself that I could win my physical and intellectual existence from the West. But, when I won it, it became meaningless. I asked myself: Who am I? A Palestinian, a philosopher, a liberal humanist? My answer was: I am a Muslim."<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Adams, *There Must Be You*, 272.

<sup>113</sup> Maysam al Faruqi, "Tawhid: The measure of a life," *Islamic Horizons* 15 (Special issue August – September, 1986): 47.

<sup>114</sup> M. Tariq Quraishi, *Ismail al Faruqi: An Enduring Legacy* (Plainfield, IN: Muslim Student Association, 1987), p.9.

He used a term *jāhiliyya* (ignorance) to denote all his previous thinking from the beginning to his doctorate in 1952 in Western philosophy because during that period he did not reach the angle of thinking he developed later on.

He struggled to gain his financial support. During those years he worked and studied with the followers of other faiths and especially deeply studied the three Abrahmic faiths; Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The subsequent phases and occasions in his life helped him set his intellectual goal to work for Islam in Muslim and Western world in the form of dialogue and Da'wah.

### 1.2.2 Self-interested Concern:

Schechtman states,

“Concern for the future should thus not be conceived primarily as an event that can be localized to a particular time in a person's life-or even to a collection of different times at which there is occurrent anticipation or fear. It is an ongoing, active orientation that creates a kind of experience that is not present without it.”<sup>115</sup>

She declares,

“...the narrative self-constitution view explains not just why a person is justifiably concerned about the anticipated character of his future, but about the future itself.”<sup>116</sup>

Swidler as the eldest son in his family observed the struggle his parents did for livelihood. So from his childhood he was committed to learn by heart to become a scholar. In his college years he was studying chemical engineering but due to his concern for religious studies he moved to this direction. He mentioned,

“after the first two years, I switched to history and philosophy majors-reflecting my intense involvement in the Lay Apostolate Group.”<sup>117</sup>

Since his Norbertine experience he was committed to become either a saint or an intellectual. He grew as a Catholic so religion has a great significance for him since his childhood.

He says to himself,

“You are not a saint, you're really just trying, and it's okay. It's okay to be where you are.”<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Schechtman, *The Constitution of Selves*, 156.

<sup>116</sup> Schechtman, *The Constitution of Selves*, 157.

<sup>117</sup> Swidler, “A Life in Dialogue”, 13.

<sup>118</sup> Adams, *There Must Be You*, 163.

One of his major and the most prominent concern is dialogue which when developed in fifties became a part of his life and without it his personality cannot be understood completely. River Adams expresses Swidler's this concern in these words,

“Since I have known Swidler, I’ve pondered his consuming, unwavering passion for dialogue, but only with the help of others have I come to formulate what I now believe to be the meaning of dialogue in his life. It’s more than a professional pursuit, more even than a cause, Len has always been a sincere and evolving Christian, but in a certain sense, I think, his religion is Dialogue.”<sup>119</sup>

She further says,

“Christianity is certainly the philosophical and moral background of his life, but Dialogue---that’s an earth-shaking, life-guiding engine: the framework of existence and its purpose, the discovery, the foreground... He is calm about Christianity. He is on fire about Dialogue... he became the saint of Dialogue.”<sup>120</sup>

If we have a glance on al Faruqi's life, it becomes clear that a time came when he had to leave his academic life due to financial crises. Although he successfully presented his professional skills in the business of home construction but instead of carrying on this promising career he preferred to persist his scholarly life.<sup>121</sup> This preference for the academic life reflects his concerns through his themes and interests.

In this regard Esposito divides his life in two main phases; in the first he devotedly worked on Arabism while in the second one he represents himself as a Muslim activist.<sup>122</sup>

It is also evident by Syed Hossain Nasr's statement for al Faruqi,

“Our late colleague began his intellectual life deeply influenced by Arab nationalism on the one hand and Western philosophy in which he specialized on the other. But he was a man of ardent faith and his iman pulled him through his early intellectual odyssey, ever further into the domain of religion in general and Islamic Studies in particular.”<sup>123</sup>

His religious concern is evident from an incident that a few minutes after his arrival, al Faruqi along with other participants heard the Maghrib Adhan called from the nearby masjid at Tripoli,

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<sup>119</sup> Adams, *There Must Be You*, 269.

<sup>120</sup> Adams. *There Must Be You*, 270.

<sup>121</sup> During his PhD degree from Harvard University due to lack of sources he moved to construction business but after restoring his financial set up he returned to academic life.

<sup>122</sup> Esposito and Voll, *Makers of Contemporary Islam*, 24.

<sup>123</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr, “The Essence of Dr. Faruqi's Life's Work” in *Islam and Knowledge*, 29

Libya in 1973 on the occasion of an International Conference on Muslim Youth. Khurshid Ahmed explained his feelings,

“Brother al Faruqi broke down in tears and cried: “Wa Allah! If I had to come all the way from America only to hear this adhan I would have felt more than rewarded.” That showed the real al Faruqi – his deep commitment to Islam and his fascination for Islamic Sha‘air. His eyes sparkled with light and ecstasy; his face glowed with spiritual bliss.”<sup>124</sup>

His concern for religion is also reflected through his writing like *Christian Ethics* and *Trialogue of Abrahamic Faiths* covering the topics of comparative religion, interfaith dialogue and interfaith relations. He gave vital importance to the understanding and evaluation of religions of the world to build interfaith relations and dialogue to reach the truth. He wanted to eliminate the western misperceptions about Islam and its worldview through the declaration of its place and role among the world religions.

His concern becomes clear when he chose to live and study in western culture among non-Muslims because at that time he could choose other options as well.<sup>125</sup>

Muddathir Abd al-Rahim explains that along with general personality traits of al Faruqi like

“his sharp intellect, acute sensitivity, and deep sense of justice, right and wrong rooted in his unshakable faith in God”<sup>126</sup> two bitter inter-related experiences of his life played their role to shape his lifestyle reflected in his writing and speech; the first one was “al-Nakbah”<sup>127</sup> which was a “painful three-dimensional tragedy”<sup>128</sup> for him; the loss of his national homeland, the loss of his family settlement and property and the loss of his job and career while the second was “condition of the Muslim Ummah around the globe.”<sup>129</sup> That condition he termed sometimes as the drifted ship in the open sea and sometimes as the fallen cow in front of its attackers. He strongly felt that despite of mostly living in independent countries, comprising a huge part of world population of well educated people with enormous resources the Muslim “Ummah as a whole was nevertheless weak, divided and backward.”<sup>130</sup>

<sup>124</sup> Ahmad, “Isma‘il Al Faruqi: As I Knew Him” in *Islam and Knowledge*, 22

<sup>125</sup> He could live among Muslims by setting and working on his goals.

<sup>126</sup> Abd al-Rahim “Reminiscences of Al Faruqi,” 50.

<sup>127</sup> It is “Catastrophe” a name known by the Arabs to the loss of Palestine to Zionists in 1948.

<sup>128</sup> Abd al-Rahim “Reminiscences of Al Faruqi”, 51.

<sup>129</sup> Abd al-Rahim “Reminiscences of Al Faruqi, 51.

<sup>130</sup> Abd al-Rahim “Reminiscences of Al Faruqi”, 51.

Both of the above mentioned experiences led to develop his concerns; peace and justice for his homeland and union and revival of the Ummah. For the first he demanded from Muslims to play their role to eliminate the injustice to free Palestine and the voice he raised against that injustice is prominent in his writings like “Islam and Zionism”<sup>131</sup> in which he declared that Islam is not against Judaism, it is against Zionism. For the second dissatisfied with the double failure of the Muslim Revivalists; they were unable “to relate reality and thought” and “to interact with modernity and the West”<sup>132</sup> he took the initiative to express his commitment for the revival of Ummah by joining the institute of research at Karachi but dissatisfied he returned to the west where he played his role to establish IIIT international Institute of Islamic Thought, American Islamic College at Chicago and the like institutions. He also launched his project of Islamization of Knowledge.<sup>133</sup> Under this project he presented the revival of Islamic sciences in modern ways independent on the western sciences.

His concern of evaluating, developing and promoting interfaith relations can be clearly understood by Seyyed Hossain Nasr’s view about him when he mentions,

“Without ever losing his attachment for the land he had lost, nor forgetting the lessons he had learned from Western philosophy, he turned away from secularism in all its forms and devoted himself to religious concern – at the heart of which stood Islam, in its relation with both other religions and the secularised modern world. The most significant writings of al Faruqi belong precisely to this central concern of his intellectual life and include a number of works on comparative religion, religious dialogue and non-Islamic religions, including his well-known books *Christian Ethics* and *Triologue of Abrahamic Faiths*.”<sup>134</sup>

This concern seems to be the most precisely focused on interfaith dialogue and it is evident from his writings especially the ones he wrote in the last decade of his life. Generally his concern of dialogue can clearly be seen in his publications since the sixties of twentieth century onwards as John Esposito wrote,

“From the publication of his *Christian Ethics* in 1967 until his death, he was a major force in Islam’s dialogue with other world religions. During the 1970s,

<sup>131</sup> John L. Esposito (ed.), *Voices of Resurgent Islam* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

<sup>132</sup> Abd al-Rahim “Reminiscences of Al Faruqi, 52.

<sup>133</sup> He designed this basically to be implemented through the international Islamic universities of the muslim countries. Although in some countries could not be implemented but some countries like Malaysia it has been successfully implemented.

<sup>134</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr, “The essence of Dr. Faruqi’s life work,” *Islamic Horizons* 15 (Special issue August – September, 1986): 26.



al Faruqi established himself as a leading Muslim spokesperson for Islam. It would not be an exaggeration to say that al Faruqi became one of a handful of Muslim scholars known and respected in both western academia and ecumenical circles. His writings, speeches, participation, and leadership role in interreligious meetings and organizations sponsored by the WCC, the NCC, the Vatican, and the Inter-Religious Peace Colloquium, of which he was vice president from 1977-1982, made him, the most visible and prolific Muslim contributor to the dialogue of world religions.”<sup>135</sup>

The driving force behind his concern can clearly be seen as the establishment of good relations of Islam with other world religions and approaching them with Islamic perspective.

In summing up his concern was not only limited to study and write about different religions but he actively worked for their engagement and interactions in the form of various institutions and symposia.

### 1.2.3 Compensation:

Schechtman holds,

“The concept of compensation is closely tied to that of self-interested concern- it is because we care about what our futures will be like that the promise of forthcoming benefits can make up for present difficulties... The knowledge that today’s hard work will be rewarded tomorrow can make the suffering easier to bear, and so compensation can occur in the present as well as the future.”<sup>136</sup>

It is fact that the contributions of many scholars are acknowledged and they are honored in their lives but mostly after their deaths. It shows the influence they have and the positive and effective change they bring in the lives, views and mindsets of the people as well as the revolution in society and institutions. The acknowledgements from their peers, colleagues, communities, their own society and the people of the world who hold similar views to theirs are the proofs that the efforts of those scholars have become fruitful. Swidler and al Faruqi’s compensation for their efforts they have seen in their lives as well.

Racelle Weiman talking to River Adams admires Swidler,

“You know, abroad, Len is treated as the “wise man.” He is at the level of princes and presidents-overseas, in the non-Western world. We love him here, but there...Not because he does anything different, either. The way he works,

<sup>135</sup> John L. Esposito, “Ismail R. al Faruqi: Muslim scholar-activist,” in *The Muslims of America* ed. Yvonne Yazback Haddad, (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc. 1991), 76.

<sup>136</sup> Schechtman, *The Constitution of Selves*, 157.

he does immediate follow-up with people he meets, he doesn't let the ball drop. Of course, he put people on his listservs right away.”<sup>137</sup>

She recalls a trialogue meeting in Indonesia and acknowledges that it was due to Swidler's efforts that five representatives of Judaism also participated in the meeting held in a country where Judaism is not recognized among the five official religions. She mentions,

“Len was the most important figure in the room, on the level of the President of Indonesia and Prince Hassan. You could sense international reverence for him.”<sup>138</sup>

She further says,

“Wherever I go, people say, ‘I know that man. I know his work.’ That's a legacy for him.”<sup>139</sup>

Paul Mojzes expresses his view of Swidler's compensation by saying,

“He's got this unbelievably magnetic way of persuading people that this is the future, and, if we don't do it, we will harm the future...he doesn't use this academic, dense language...He links people, and they become his followers. There's a bunch of people out there who see themselves pretty much as disciples of Len Swidler. That's the achievement of Len.”<sup>140</sup>

Al Faruqi actively engaged in various tasks; worked for the development of cooperative relations among the followers of different religions, worked for interfaith dialogue, tried to explain and deliver the message of Islam to others because he considered da'wah the only justification for the Muslims living in the west and tried to revive the scientific thought for the Muslim Ummah. He played a leadership role as a Muslim participant at various forums and received admirable reward for this; his efforts are not only appreciated by Muslims but the non-Muslims as well. His receiving high rank of respect can be evidently seen through the remarks of others for him.

A seminar held in 2010 in honor of Faruqi's efforts is one of the examples for his compensation.<sup>141</sup>

One of his students; James Zogby explains,

“Wherever I am, in the USA or abroad, whenever I am introduced and my biography is read, when they come to the line where it is noted that ‘he studied

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<sup>137</sup> Adams, *There Must Be You*, 159.

<sup>138</sup> Adams, *There Must Be You*, 159.

<sup>139</sup> Adams, *There Must Be You*, 161.

<sup>140</sup> Adams, *There Must Be You*, 255-256.

<sup>141</sup> It was held on June 6-7 at the university of Westminster, London along with the collaboration of two other institutions; Prince of Al-Waleed Bin Talal Centre for Muslim-Christian Understanding of Georgetown University and International Institute of Islamic thought USA.

under Dr. Isma‘il al Faruqi,’ a murmur can be heard in the room together with nods of approval. Afterwards, whatever the topic I have addressed, some individuals from the audience will come forward to ask me about Isma‘il or about my time with him. It is as though Isma‘il is continuing to write letters of introduction for me. And I am proud, once again, to have been his student.”<sup>142</sup>

#### 1.2.4 Moral Responsibility:

Schechtman states,

“In order to be held morally responsible at all, one must be a moral agent, and in order to be held responsible for a particular action one must have agency with respect to it. It is thus taken for granted that there is a link between agency and personal identity-persons have more control over their own actions than those of others.”<sup>143</sup>

She holds,

“Punishment is unpleasant, and we feel that it is fair for a subject to experience the unpleasantness consequent on an ill deed only if he is, in fact, the same subject who committed it...Whereas it seems right to reward virtuous action with something that is pleasant to the virtuous subject”<sup>144</sup>

Swidler has been a committed Catholic in belief and practice since his childhood; he used to think about existence of God and believe in Him. He agrees that it can neither be proved nor disproved. He was deeply interested in interior and intellectual life, so his greater focus lies in the inner core of all the religions rather than in their outer. He used to attend mass and communion daily. Due to his seventeen years academic career in Catholic institutions he has a grasp in Catholic tradition. Later on he earned his university degrees in Catholic theology.<sup>145</sup> After completion of his academic degree he was about to take the vows for three years as Norbertine but he could not so he joined Saint Paul’s Seminary for the next four years to continue his theological studies. So his moral responsibility drove him to gain the detailed theological understanding of his religion. Later on his responsibility of the inner and spiritual aspects of religious life led him to understand and find the truth in all the other religions and even the ideologies as the means and ways of life through dialogue. Once when he attached to dialogue, this became a vibrant part of his life. Now anyone from a brief introduction of Swidler

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<sup>142</sup> James Zogby, *Isma‘il Al Faruqi: An Intellectual and an Inspiration*, 58.

<sup>143</sup> Schechtman, *The Constitution of Selves*, 158-159.

<sup>144</sup> Schechtman, *The Constitution of Selves*, 158.

<sup>145</sup> Swidler, *Religion for Reluctant Believers* 9-10 and Swidler, “A Life in Dialogue,” 13-18.

can feel that dialogue is not only a task he is committed to rather it has become his moral responsibility.

Fletcher points out that al Faruqi's "sense of responsibility was shaped and directed by his understanding of God reflected in the doctrines and expressions of Islam."<sup>146</sup> As a Muslim the only way to express his responsibility was Da'wah. His focus on his responsibility begins with his emigration. To fulfill his responsibility it was necessary to deeply understand Islam and other religions. For this his four years stay at al-Azhar University for Islam and later on his two years research at McGill University for Christianity and Judaism is evident.

What he considers his moral responsibility is clear when he mentions,

"The man of religion, however, is moral; and in Christianity and Islam, he is so par excellence. He must therefore go out into the world, teach the truth which his religious experience has taught him and in the process refute the contrary claims. ... Hence, both Muslim and Christian are intellectually and morally bound to concern themselves with the religious view of the other, indeed of all other men."<sup>147</sup>

Hence he equally considers every man of religion responsible to preach his message of religion to everyone and especially he thinks that Christians like Muslims are the most responsible in this regard.

This can also be seen by Shafique when he states,

"... I attended a congregational worship service in a room on the campus of Temple University. Altogether there were eleven of us. The leader of the service was to be Dr. Isma'il al Faruqi. His sermon energized us with the spirit of Islam and outlined the purpose of our stay at Temple University. After the service, I and two other new students were welcomed over a cup of tea. I enquired from a student near me: "Are we to spread the teachings of Islam along while we are students here?" He answered simply: "Yes, brother, for this is what al Faruqi demands of his students."<sup>148</sup>

His moral responsibility has been reflected from his work and writings from Arabism till the end of his life.

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<sup>146</sup> Fletcher, *Isma'il al-Faruqi (1921-1986) and Inter-Faith dialogue*, 65.

<sup>147</sup> Al Faruqi, "Islam and Christianity: Diatribe or dialogue," 248.

<sup>148</sup> Muhammad Shafiq, *The Growth of Islamic Thought in North America: Focus on Ismail Raji Al Faruqi*, First Edition, (Amana Publications, 1994), xvii.

The academic life of Swidler and al Faruqi and the circumstances they lived in set the direction of their journeys toward dialogue. The need of the world for peace, religious interactions/conflicts and the financial/ political set up provided them a direction toward dialogue. Study of religion in the same environment and time led them to play their role to bring dialogue to the academic level. Moreover a look on their lives in context of four features of Marya Schechterman's identity theory provided a clear view of their commitment, preference and efforts for dialogue. The intellectual or psychological survival of a person is equally and sometimes more important than his/ her biological survival because it determines the views, thoughts, desires, goals and his/her inner self and makes a person who he/she is. It was the intellectual survival of Swidler and al-Faruqi that kept them committed to their determinations and brought them to their life causes. Swidler's survival made him a pluralist American modern Catholic intellectual committed to work for dialogue and al Faruqi's survival made him a devoted Muslim Da'iah modern intellectual committed to work on dialogue clearly interlinked with Da'wah. The self-interested concern is the concern of a person for which he/she sets the future direction even if he/she has to make sacrifices in the present. It is a persistent quality a person carries throughout his/her life. So it has a permanent effect in the life of a person. The self-interested concern of both scholars began with the religion. It has been occupied a vital place and role in their lives. Swidler's concern for religion soon developed into the promotion of dialogue. Al Faruqi's concern for religion basically originated from Tawheed and had the central place throughout his life works. His concern expressed through its different dimensions and stages; peace and justice for his homeland, revival of the Muslim Ummah, interfaith interactions and the interfaith dialogue. The moral responsibility leads a person to work for his/her concern. Swidler and al Faruqi morally found themselves responsible to work hard for their concerns. Swidler's efforts for dialogue are evident in this regard who has taken it as the moral responsibility. Al Faruqi set his way of moral responsibility through da'wah. Compensation is the outcome for the efforts of a person and the benefits he/she receives as outputs in response of his/her endeavors as inputs. The compensation for the efforts of Swidler and al Faruqi is clearly seen when their work on dialogue is internationally acknowledged.

## **Chapter 2:**

### **Deep and Meta - Religious Dialogue in the Thought of Swidler and al Faruqi**

The personality traits, concerns and commitments expressed in thoughts and actions of a person show his/her sincerity and seriousness in lifelong projects. The brief introduction of the lives with special focus of their work (presented in previous chapter) provided a background of the factors that helped shaping the approaches of Deep and Meta-religious dialogue of Swidler and al Faruqi (that are to be discussed in this chapter).

#### **2.1 Meaning of Religion:**

Religion and its study have a significant place and role in the views and efforts of Swidler and al Faruqi for dialogue. Both of them have not only seen an era of study of religion as a flourishing discipline in educational institutions but spent a long period in learning, researching and teaching religion and played their role in developing a relation between dialogue and study of religion.

#### **Swidler's view of Religion:**

Swidler has emphasized deeply on various aspects of religion to highlight its importance in the lives of dialogue participants. He has equally emphasized ideologies like atheist Marxism because they act like religions in the lives of their followers and Swidler by focusing on both religion and ideology wants to expand dialogue to all the people of the world. Swidler's various dimensions of religion are as follows:

### **Definition of Religion:**

Swidler holds,

“Religion is an explanation of the ultimate meaning of life, based on a notion and experience of the transcendent, and how to live accordingly.”<sup>149</sup>

And generally it is comprised of “four C’s; Creed, Code, Cult and Community-Structure.”<sup>150</sup>

Creed for him is the meaning of religion which explains “the ultimate meaning of life.”<sup>151</sup> Code denotes to all the rules and customs according to creed. Cult refers to all the ritual activities of the followers of a religion help to relate them to the Transcendent. The community-structure is the relationship among the followers of a religion. The explanation of meaning of whole life and how to live accordingly is an inclusive view used by him for religion and ideology alike. To move further in the explanation of these two terms he uses “the Way”<sup>152</sup>; the way of life and living.<sup>153</sup>

He distinguishes religion from ideology and spirituality by declaring that ideology is the explanation of the way of life and how to live accordingly without the notion of transcendent while spirituality focuses on the inner dimension for the life of a person rather than outer one but its spotlight is the individual not the community. In this regard religion seems the most comprehensive term because through its outer and more precisely its inner dimension it focuses on the individual and community alike. However all the three are strongly connected to human life.<sup>154</sup>

### **Perceptions of the Ultimate Reality in World Religions:**

He holds that how a person conceives of reality determines how he/she acts and the question that why the Ultimate Reality is conceived of in many different ways can be answered that

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<sup>149</sup> Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study: Strategies for the Transformation of Culture-Shaping Institutions*, 7.

<sup>150</sup> Leonard Swidler, “Toward a Universal Declaration of a Global Ethic,” *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, no. 7 (2004): 19.

<sup>151</sup> Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 7.

<sup>152</sup> Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*: 9.

<sup>153</sup> Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*: 7-10 and 149-150.

<sup>154</sup> Leonard Swidler, *Religion for Reluctant Believers* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2017), 13-14.

human beings who perceive of It belong to different cultures which see Ultimate Reality as infinite but provide the finite source to perceive It. In this way every culture, community and family to which humans belong provide them a variety of experiences of the Ultimate Reality. Moreover it is described in terms of one or the other ways people experience reality which are the creations of Ultimate Reality. He categorizes seven ways of conceiving and naming Ultimate Reality:

1. **The many; Polytheism:** According to its followers Manyness found in cosmos reflects in several divine Sources.
2. **The One and the Many:** It is found in Hinduism that there is The One with Many Manifestations.
3. **The One:** Judaism and Islam hold that the Ultimate Reality is One without any kind of partners.
4. **The Two:** This Dualism is found in different religions like Zoroastrianism and Chinese Yin/Yang in the form of opposite forces.
5. **The One and the Three:** Christianity holds this concept of trinity.
6. **Ultimate Nothing:** According to Buddhism's doctrine of Sunyata there are no limitations in Ultimate Reality.
7. **Ultimate Harmony:** According to Confucius and Daoist religions humans should learn about the structure of Reality to harmonize themselves with it.

He states that these various views are not only contrary to one another but some of them are seriously contradicted. In the past they show aggression, indifference and absorption for others but it was possible in the age of monologue. In the globalized world of today people are living in the age of global dialogue where isolation is not possible and the relation of one religious tradition to the other is necessary so that its adherents learn from the other without abandoning their own specific insight.<sup>155</sup>

### **True Understanding of Religion:**

He emphasizes the true understanding of religion. Many misperceptions and partial understandings are prevailing about religion which he tries to remove to present his vivid and clear view of it. To elucidate religion from these misconceptions especially in the contemporary

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<sup>155</sup> Swidler, *Religion for Reluctant Believers*, 112 and 125-126.



secular Western world he uses the term “authentic religion”<sup>156</sup> to denote religion. It focuses on the inner dimension which is the core of a religion. The role and importance of the interior and exterior of religion he illustrates with the example of a finger pointing toward an object. The focus should be on the object rather than the finger but the people who give central importance to the externals of the religion are actually focusing on the finger instead of the object which is the interior of religion. The purpose of the finger is to guide toward the object and likewise the externals of a religion help its adherents to comprehend its internals rightly to act accordingly but the interior of the religion is its core, its essence to make a religion an authentic religion denoting the phrase, “within me, and between me and thee.”<sup>157</sup> In his view this *thee* instead of *you* focuses on second person singular because the interior of a religion joins its adherent to every other individual to develop a mutual understanding between them. Moreover he declares that this phrase makes a rhyme easily remembered and by this Swidler wants its importance should be kept in mind while both the external and internal of religion have their own worth, neither can be ignored. Both dimensions have their own place and extreme focus on either side by neglecting the other completely can be precarious. So, both of them must be focused in a proper way. If one goes on extreme in external the “within me” can be ignored and if one goes on extreme in internal “between me and thee” can be ignored.<sup>158</sup> The interior and exterior of a religion are connected to each other and cannot be separated because the interior is reflected through exterior and there should be a balance between the two. In his words, “A healthy human approach is to link the exterior and interior in a conscious manner.”<sup>159</sup>

### **Place of Religion in the Modern World:**

He refers that since the 17<sup>th</sup> century with the scientific advancement many people have been claiming that religion is fading while the fundamentalists or conservatives have been claiming that it is flourishing. He declares both of those groups wrong and right at the same time because a specific kind of religion is flourishing and likewise a specific kind of religion is fading. Religion for him as “the explanation of an ultimate meaning of life and how to live accordingly”<sup>160</sup> is flourishing but with modification. He declares that usually the people who claim that they are not religious want to declare that they are not the adherents of a religious

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<sup>156</sup> Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 10.

<sup>157</sup> Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 11.

<sup>158</sup> Swidler, *Religion for Reluctant Believers*, 70-71

<sup>159</sup> Swidler, *Religion for Reluctant Believers*, 91-92

<sup>160</sup> Leonard Swidler, “Religion: Fading or Flourishing?,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 51, no. 3 (2016): 315

institution or they do not believe in transcendent but the term transcendent literally means which goes beyond, simply that cannot be understood rationally. So he holds that now many people even those who do not believe in transcendent admit that there are many aspects for humans' life which cannot be explained through reason or under rationality. He names these kinds of questions the limit questions and in this way religion is flourishing in the lives of most of the people of the world because it can answer the limit questions. On the other hand he declares that religion is also fading but an immature religion is passing through this condition.<sup>161</sup>

His immature religion can also be seen as “popular religion”<sup>162</sup> based on low degree of awareness and consciousness. He holds that through education people's general level of consciousness becomes high while their level of religious consciousness remains low mainly because of religious institutions. However after developmental process a “popular religion” can become “reflective religion”<sup>163</sup> where the level of reflection and consciousness increases like a child's level of consciousness is naive that matures with the adulthood. He explains that a person in childhood thinks something is true. When he is grown up to an increased level of consciousness he considers that understanding wrong and rejects it. While in his adulthood he finally regards the same thing true by agreeing with his childhood perception; now in a symbolic way.<sup>164</sup>

He associates the development of mature religion to the stages of morality and faith of Kohlberg<sup>165</sup> and Fowler<sup>166</sup> respectively and especially the stages 5 and 6 are the most pertinent in this regard. As these humanistic psychologists explain that human beings at these stages become aware of limitedness of logic and realize that there are a number of statements about reality different from each other and true in their own perspective emphasizing on the others' views or perceptions about reality to be considered, for Swidler same is the case with the present situations of the world with the deabsolutization of the truth that lead to understand the others and develop the interreligious dialogue among them because the limited and bounded to various

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<sup>161</sup> Swidler, “Religion: Fading or Flourishing?,” 313-319.

<sup>162</sup> Swidler, *Religion for Reluctant Believers*, 15

<sup>163</sup> Swidler, *Religion for Reluctant Believers*, 15

<sup>164</sup> Swidler, *Religion for Reluctant Believers*, 13-17

<sup>165</sup> He was an American psychologist (1927-1987). His notable work is in the field of moral development. Peter Berry, “Lawrence Kohlberg: biography, moral development, contributions” updated March 29, 2023, <https://warbletoncouncil.org/lawrence-kohlberg-1074>

<sup>166</sup> He was an American theologian (1940-2015) best known for his research work on developmental theory. Many editions of his book “Stages of Faith” has been published in various languages. Richard Osmer and Lynn Bridgers, “James Fowler,” accessed August 10, 2022, <https://www.biola.edu/talbot>ce20>database>james-fowler>

conditions, one's own understanding of reality urges one to know and understand the perception of the other in order to have a better grasp of reality. He clarifies that it does not mean to degrade or compromise one's own view rather it can be strengthened or become more accurate.<sup>167</sup>

### **Characteristics of Religion:**

The reflective religion is the mature religion for which he refers to Gordon W. Allport<sup>168</sup> who made the important distinction between mature and immature religion through six prominent traits<sup>169</sup> which can be explained briefly in the following way:

#### **1. Differentiated:**

No religious sentiment can be claimed to be absolutely perfect. Rather it can be at any level of differentiation; low, high, weak and strong et cetera.

#### **2. Dynamic:**

In the beginning the motivation for a religion is external and concerned with self justification but when it matures it needs to be focused on its inner dimension's development without any external factor's aid.

#### **3. Consistent Morality:**

A person can develop his set of consistent morality without a religion but for a mature religion the consistent morality is required. It is also obvious by the very definition of the religion as an explanation of life meaning so it should provide its adherents a code of life to live by and consistent morality is the required code or conduct of behavior.

#### **4. Comprehensive:**

It is evident from the definition of the religion that it should cover all the aspects and bases for the life of an individual and for his interaction and role in the society.

#### **5. Integral:**

A religion's design should be harmonious in its structure and with the circumstances. For example modernity is necessary so a religion should be co-scientific rather than pre or anti-scientific.

#### **6. Heuristic:**

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<sup>167</sup> Swidler, *Religion for Reluctant Believers*, 23-25.

<sup>168</sup> He was an American psychologist (1876 -1967), pioneer in personality psychology who rejected psychoanalysis and behaviorism in favor of uniqueness and present circumstances to study personality. Theodore T. "Gordon Allport Biography," accessed March 22, 2022 <https://practicalpie.com/gordon-allport>

<sup>169</sup> Gordon W. Allport, *The Individual and His Religion: A Psychological Interpretation* (New York: Macmillan, 1959), 57. Swidler summarized this view in his work. See Swidler, *Religion for Reluctant Believers*, 18.

It means that a religion may persuade truth of something but at the same time it should be open to new arguments and evidences to have a firmer grasp of reality.<sup>170</sup>

### **Role of Religion in the Modern World:**

Besides the characteristics, true understanding of a religion in the modern context is also imperative according to Swidler which is a mental world with its four characteristics; radical freedom, finding rational sense for everything, setting human experiences in historical context and need for dialogue to learn more because of relationality of knowledge. He declares that humans cannot avoid it and it has become as essential for life as air. So its characteristics when reflect in the life of an adherent of a religion and he becomes self-aware of the mental context of modernity he asks his religion questions about the four characteristics of modernity. If his religion answers him in affirmative for the present and future, only in this way it can provide him the “explanation of the meaning of life and how to live accordingly.”<sup>171</sup>

He declares that religion in the modern world not only has a place for it but it has become a need. It is not only rational but has gone beyond it. There exist many puzzles of life which are continuously appearing on the horizon of thinking and many of them are only showing up when a puzzle has been solved. He explains that in the mental world of modernity human beings still feel unsatisfied about the depth of senses and rational thought, the need of religion appears at this stage when humans move from knowing to believing so in solving many puzzles we can answer that how the things are happening but still why they are happening has no answer in rationality, only religion can answer it which after harmonizing with the rational thought goes beyond it. He declares that it is the tendency of humans that they want the answer of this “why” and even the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century existentialists like Jean Paul Sarter<sup>172</sup> and Martin Heidiger<sup>173</sup> have not stop at the stage of nihilism or agnosticism but they have acknowledged that everyone must give a meaning to life. They make meaning of their lives as equivalent functional of religion whether they call this meaning religion or not.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Allport, *The Individual and His Religion*: 52-74. Swidler, *Religion for Reluctant Believers*, 18-19.

<sup>171</sup> Swidler, *Religion for Reluctant Believers*, 27-28.

<sup>172</sup> He was a French Existentialist Philosopher, play writer and novelist (1905-1980). His famous work is “Being and Nothingness.” “Jean-Paul Sartre - Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy,” accessed March 26, 2022, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/sartre>

<sup>173</sup> He was a German philosopher (1889-1976). His famous work was “Being and Time.” “Martin Heidegger - Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,” accessed March 26, 2022, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/heidegger>

<sup>174</sup> Swidler, *Religion for Reluctant Believers*, 68-69 and 75.

He believes that modernity as an essential mental world has not been altering to post modernity but still it is here in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with all its characteristics suitable for religion and dialogue. So in his view modernity is moving humans to the new age of global dialogue.<sup>175</sup>

### **Freedom of Religion and Dialogue:**

He emphasizes that religion and state should work separately in their own spheres for the betterment of humanity; state's function is the protection of rights of all and the promotion of the common good while religion is the explanation of the meaning of life and the way to live according to that explanation. Both can work in cooperation but one's dominance on the other is fatal and it has been experienced in the past in various civilizations which only resulted in the loss of humanity. Those civilizations have been declined because of that dominance. In this regard only the western civilization has become successful because of the separation of religion and state. Various factors like Gregorian Reforms<sup>176</sup>, Renaissance<sup>177</sup> and Enlightenment<sup>178</sup> have motivated this separation but it has taken place clearly in the end of eighteenth century through French Declaration<sup>179</sup> and Bill of Rights<sup>180</sup>. Humans with their limitless imaginative, intellectual and spiritual capabilities can cope up with continuously emerging challenges and problems but these capabilities are limited, weakened or even died when these are dogmatically bounded through the power of state, so the separation of state and religion is necessary for their proper functioning and those societies which after their separation have tried to reunite them remained unsuccessful. He declares that their separation does not mean that there should not be any relation between both of them rather there should be a creative relationship. In this regard although the western civilization does not have the perfect solution which only lies in the

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<sup>175</sup> Swidler, *Religion for Reluctant Believers*, 66-67.

<sup>176</sup> These were the result of eleventh century religious reform movement with Pope Gregory- VII its most prominent figure. Main concern of these reforms was moral integrity and clergy independence. Uta-Renate Blumenthal, "Gregorian Reform", updated Feb 15, 2001, <http://www.britannica.com/event/Gregorian-Reform>

<sup>177</sup> It was a period in European history for the rebirth or revival of culture, art, politics and economics usually believed to be existed from 14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century. Editors of history.com, "Renaissance", updated April 20, 2023, <http://www.history.com/topics/renaissance/renaissance>

<sup>178</sup> It is known as the age of reason, a period of scientific, philosophical and political discourse, lasted from late 17<sup>th</sup> century to early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Matthew White, "The Enlightenment", accessed June 21, 2018, <http://www.bl.uk/restoration-18th-century-literature/articles/the-enlightenment>

<sup>179</sup> It consists of 17 articles for the rights of man and approved in 1789 by the national assembly of France available at [https://constitutionnet.org/sites/default/files/declaration\\_of\\_the\\_rights\\_of\\_man\\_1789.pdf](https://constitutionnet.org/sites/default/files/declaration_of_the_rights_of_man_1789.pdf) "Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen" last modified August 26, 2022, <http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/csj-sjc/ilp-pji/rev5/index.html>

<sup>180</sup> It is a set of first 10 amendments to U.S Constitution accepted as single unit in 1791. It consists on guarantees of Americans' rights in relation to their government. "The Bill of Rights: What does it Say?", accessed April, 27, 2023, <http://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/bill-of-rights/what-does-it-say>

“infinite”<sup>181</sup> future of humanity but it has many imperfect ones like following the principles of democracy and religious liberty the west along with some other countries<sup>182</sup> is leading humanity toward the necessity of separation of religion and state.<sup>183</sup>

He declares that with the advancement of dialogue it becomes clear that no ideology or religion can enfold all knowledge, so the dialogic consciousness promotes freedom of religion.<sup>184</sup>

### **Al Faruqi’s view of Religion:**

Taking Joachim Wach<sup>185</sup>’s understanding of religion, al Faruqi summarizes the modern definition of religion as

“the experience of a reality that is assumed to be ultimate as well as personal, thus making the experience an encounter.”<sup>186</sup>

To specify this experience he adds that this experienced Ultimate Reality must be

1. “apprehended and understood”
2. “expressed and proclaimed”
3. “Its commandments acquiesced in and responded to with individual and collective action.”<sup>187</sup>

He declares the Ultimate Reality to be transcendent in both theoretical and practical senses. In the first sense metaphysically as the first cause it explains all the beings and events while in the second sense axiologically as the last end it justifies all the beings and events. His view of

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<sup>181</sup> Leonard Swidler, “Freedom of Religion and Dialogue” *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* 1, no. 2 (2002): 10.

<sup>182</sup> He means countries like South Korea and Japan.

<sup>183</sup> Swidler, “Freedom of Religion and Dialogue”, 4-11.

<sup>184</sup> Swidler, “Freedom of Religion and Dialogue”, 16.

<sup>185</sup> He (1898-1955) was a protestant theologian and scholar of modern study of religion. He contributed in the field of sociology of religion and established the discipline of *Religionswissenschaft* at Chicago. See “Joachim Wach, German-American theologian” *Britannica*, last modified January 21, 2023, [www.britannica.com/biography/Joachim-Wach](http://www.britannica.com/biography/Joachim-Wach)

<sup>186</sup> Joachim Wach, *The Comparative Study of Religion*, ed. Joseph M. Kitagawa (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), 30-32.

<sup>187</sup> Ismail Raji al Faruqi, “Meta Religion: Towards a critical World Theology”, *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 3, no.1 (1986): 13.

religion provides the vision and articulation of that vision of reality expressed in concepts and percepts. In this way it includes most of man's intellectual history. The acquiescence in actualization of Ultimate Reality's commands refers to man's personal values and subjective conditions. As the commandments of Ultimate Reality aim the actualization of the highest good, it includes all or most of man's actions related to himself, to other men and to the nature. He declares religion to be the core and essence of culture as all human thinking and understanding is based on the contents of religion. Moreover he regards religion to be the core and essence of civilization as the ground for all actions and decisions. It provides the explanation of civilization's inventions and systems; political, economic and social. He indicates that religion's place in the center of civilization and culture is realized in recent age and at the same period religion and its role is also misunderstood.<sup>188</sup>

He explains his view of religion further under the study of religion in different stages.

## **2.2 Study of Religion and Interreligious Dialogue:**

Both of them highlight the importance and role of comparative religion for the development of interfaith dialogue.

### **Swidler on Study of Religion:**

He explains that mainly the study of religion has been done from the perspective of the teacher/student's religion till the 18<sup>th</sup> century and then after the Western enlightenment and development of critical scientific study of various social sciences there began *Religionswissenschaft* or the scientific study of religion. He declares that till the first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century the religion has been studied and taught by a Christian theologian in the West and Temple university's department of religion is considered to be the pioneer to take the initiative to teach the religion in a new way where the teachers are mostly the adherents of the religions they teach. They are the critical scholars of world religions who know their own religion from inside and outside well. He acknowledges that this dimension of the study of religion helps in better understanding and development of the interreligious dialogue where the participants come to learn from the other what they cannot know from their own religious perspective. This way of learning he holds that does not necessarily aim for a dialogue partner to agree with the view of

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<sup>188</sup> Al Faruqi, "Meta Religion": 13-14.

the other rather it helps him/her to know the other dimensions to see the world which automatically changes and modifies his/her view to see/ understand the world and act in it accordingly. He is hopeful that dialogue deals with philosophical, socio-cultural and religious issues which if studied, their results will definitely influence the actual dialogue to occur. Moreover he holds that comparative religion through the comparison of various religions illustrates their origin, historical-cultural settings, similarities and differences that provide the insights useful for dialogue, so Comparative Religion or *Religionswissenschaft* not only provides the understanding of religions but also provide the resources for the interreligious dialogue where they can be utilized properly.<sup>189</sup>

### **Al Faruqi on Study of Religion:**

It is obvious from his view of religion that study of man's religion is in fact the study of human history; the thoughts and actions of humans.

He critically examines the prevailing and earlier approaches to study the religions. In his view both theological and secular approaches because of their stress on experience and feelings have become subjective and led to relativism. He declares that the approaches for the study of religion should be scientific, rational and systematic. For this he takes the axiological view<sup>190</sup> holding that every religion has some values which can be judged through rational set of rules. His theory emphasizes God, human life and the world. In his view every religion can be identified through its key values.

He analyses the five historical stages<sup>191</sup> for the study of religions by stating their limitations as follows:

#### **1. Classical Antiquity:**

He declares that the followers of other religions during this stage have been considered strangers or aliens and this kind of attitude have prevented any kind of study of others' religions earlier in that era. Later on in 6<sup>th</sup> century BC when Greek lost faith in their own religion, it led them to

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<sup>189</sup> Leonard Swidler, "The History of Inter-Religious Dialogue" in *The Willy Blackwell Companion to Inter-Religious Dialogue*, ed. Cathrine Cornelle (Hoboken: John Willey and Sons Ltd, 2013), 13-15. and Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 11-13

<sup>190</sup> It is the theory of values.

<sup>191</sup> Al Faruqi, "Meta Religion": 14-26.



speak about other religions. Herodotus<sup>192</sup> in fifth century BC tried to provide slightly objective study of other religions but still with influence of Greek religion. It led to a trend to study other religions with sustaining antagonism; superiority of one's faith or unfaith over the religion under study.

## **2. Judaeo-Christianity:**

According to post-Exilic record Jewish attitude toward others' religions he considers of hatred with their notion of superior and elected people. Christianity also applied this attitude of condemnation and hatred inherited from Judaism. He affirms that only religion Christianity shows favor for is Judaism but this is merely done to transform it in Old Testament to contrast it with the New Testament. Still both the religions don't view each other correctly; Jews see Jesus as a rabbi whereas Christians obsolete Judaism. Regarding Islam he declares that Christianity has an attitude of fear besides hatred and condemnation.

## **3. Modernity since Enlightenment:**

He holds that Enlightenment replaced religion with reason to be a criterion of human worth. It limited the scope of religion to psychological level. But soon under the European Particularism, skepticism won over reason because reason's stress on universalism was not acceptable by European dominion over the world under the notion of Nationalism through justification of human feelings as Romanticism. Western thinkers saw religion as savior of human existential plight. It led to denial of transcendent reality.

## **4. Contemporary Approaches:**

He states that various contemporary western approaches to study religion were developed to establish the authority of Christianity over all other religions regarding them primordial with Christianity as their zenith. He states their limitations in the following way;

- i) Anthropological study emphasizes behavioral data with its focus on ethnicity.
- ii) Sociological study regards religion as a factor to either unite or separate humans in their groups.
- iii) Psychological study regards religion as consciousness by focusing on internal states of objects.

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<sup>192</sup> He was a fifth century BC Greek historian (484- 425 or 413 BC) famous for his work "Histories". See Joshua J. Mark, "[Herodotus](https://www.worldhistory.org/herodotus)," *World History Encyclopedia*, last modified October 19, 2022, <https://www.worldhistory.org/herodotus>

- iv) Historical study focuses on all above mentioned approaches to uncover the patterns of changes in its earlier stages.
- v) Theological study of religion mainly through missionaries and orientalists aims to find points of weaknesses in other religions to establish authority and truth of Christianity over other religions.

To overcome the shortcomings of the above mentioned approaches many students of comparative religion sought a new approach which is named as *religionswissenschaft*; the scientific study of religion which uses *epoché* to study other religions. Al Faruqi explains their *epoché* as suspension of all the notions and principles derived from the sources outside the religion under study to reach the core or essence of that religion. He calls it phenomenology of religion and considers this approach the highest point for Western academic study.<sup>193</sup>

### **5. Phenomenological Approach:**

He declares that it also has limitations in both of its branches; data collection and its systemization. To overcome these shortcomings he stresses on the need of its third branch; judgment or evaluation of data<sup>194</sup> while he considers all the three as disciplines of history of religions with the third one as the most important.<sup>195</sup>

#### **A. Collection of data:**

He declares that the reportage or collection of data has become limited by two influences:

- i) Re-define religious datum with narrow manner:

Under this influence the religious element has been taken as unique, holy and sacred associated to man's personal life separated from other elements of human life. In this way the scope of investigation of history of religion becomes limited. He asserts that although the Western Christendom is now trying to realize God's relation to everything and human act is not only considered personal but social as well, still the history of religions is in the need to take the whole human life under its scope because of comprehensiveness of religion; not only the people as groups but different cultures, history and civilizations should also be studied.<sup>196</sup>

- ii) Isolated policy:

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<sup>193</sup> Al Faruqi, "Meta Religion": 20.

<sup>194</sup> Al Faruqi, "Meta Religion": 20.

<sup>195</sup> Ismail Raji al Faruqi, "History of religions: Its Nature and Significance for Christian Education and the Muslim-Christian Dialogue," *Numen* Fasc. 1, no. 12, (1965): 35 and Ismail Raji al Faruqi, "History of religions: Its Nature and Significance for Christian Education and the Muslim-Christian Dialogue," in *Islam and Other Faiths*, ed. Ataullah Siddiqui (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1998), 161.

<sup>196</sup> Al Faruqi, "History of religions", 161-163

He asserts that instead of history of all the world religions this has to be managed as the history of primitive and Asian religions while the three major world religions have been escaped from its scope. Islam he declares has never been studied as an important subject matter of history of religions; it has been handled either by colonial rule or secular hands of the West. Judaism has been studied by molding data in Christianized manner in the form of Old Testament. Christianity has been considered superior to all religions and as a standard to judge them. He emphasizes that data collection must be a continuous activity.<sup>197</sup>

### **B. Construction of meaning-wholes:**

For the systemization of data he explains its three phases:

#### i) Topical and historical arrangements:

He suggests that the data should be organized in topical and historical way to give the researcher a clear picture of the meaning-wholes of all elements under a religio-culture comprehensively.

#### ii) Systemized arrangement of developmental phases:

He holds that each datum's relation with the complexus of history should be provided in a systemized way to have a true understanding of its origin, growth and developments of its ideas, discoveries, institutions and evaluations with which it plays its role of agreement or disagreement.

#### iii) Systemization of value:

The organized religious data should be distilled to find out their meanings. After that these meanings should be illuminated and systemized. Each religious datum refers its value or meaning in its contents to which it is the human response. It can only be meaningful with "its relation to the complexi of history."<sup>198</sup> The human response can only be considered meaningful when it has its in-depth relation to value. Many a times it happens that comparative accounts of religion fail to construct meaning-wholes out of religious data. But this he considers the failure in investigator's effort. It also happens that the findings of the investigator may be acceptable by adherents but at the same time it is possible that the adherents may lose the meaningfulness of essence and perceived it wrongly to be true religion. In this case the investigator should focus on innate religious culture of that religion not from any outside principles. History of religion can

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<sup>197</sup> Al Faruqi, "History of religions", 164-167

<sup>198</sup> Al Faruqi, "History of religions", 169.

be a scientific study by organizing its data systematically and by relating cultic, moral and institutional faces to history of civilizations as a whole and this discipline he names humanistic science as compared to natural and social sciences.<sup>199</sup>

### **C. Judgment or Evaluation of Data:**

#### **i) Necessity of Judgment:**

To make history of religion autonomous he emphasizes the necessity of its third discipline that helps to relate the meaning-wholes to man, universal and divine in the light of meta-religious principles for evaluation of meaning-wholes. The judgment of data is so vital for history of religions that its survival or downfall depends on holding or renouncing this discipline. This necessity of judgment he explains in two ways; first the historian of religion with the help of collection of data and systemization of meaning-wholes reaches various religions but all the religions cannot be taken as true. For this he should investigate and continue his search to reach the truth in the light of evaluative principles. Secondly he declares that knowledge of a datum in history of religions is not like its knowledge in other disciplines. Here besides the apprehension, relation to human feelings and aspiration of its value is required which are generally human and not related to a specific religion. The data of a religion related to same reality are either wrongly constructed or they claim the truth falsely.<sup>200</sup>

#### **ii) Desirability of Judgment:**

He holds that as religious data are life-facts so while applying *epoché* only enbracketing one's own religion and presuppositions is not enough but the historian of religion must be able to move freely from one context to another by enabling his ethos to determine the data. Complete detachment can only be shown dealing dead facts but for the life facts it is not possible. He declares that although historian of religion tries his best to not influence man's decision making about meaning-wholes but his work is not finished by merely presenting the data in systemized way. Rather to relate it with universal the movement toward judgment becomes necessary and for this a system comprised of a set of principles of critical Meta-religion which is the need of time is still missing.<sup>201</sup>

#### **iii) The possibility of Judgment:**

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<sup>199</sup> Al Faruqi, "History of religions", 168-172.

<sup>200</sup> Al Faruqi, "History of religions", 172-175

<sup>201</sup> Al Faruqi, "Meta Religion": 28-29

He elaborates that usually in Meta-religion the focus is kept on commonalities considering them belonging to essence while differences are taken to be on surface level. He clarifies that this kind of Meta-religion is not suitable for inter-religious convictions because the vital kind of differences cannot be compromised at the cost of minor commonalities giving them desirable meanings. In this regard he criticizes Friedrich Heiler<sup>202</sup>'s view that "all religions teach the same God." Although he agrees with professor Meland<sup>203</sup>'s philosophical theory of religions which aims to judge different religious pronouncements about figurization on the level of commonalities but he considers it impossible to be applied.<sup>204</sup>

History of religions in his view is much more than merely an academic discipline. He sees it as a "college of liberal arts"<sup>205</sup> with its collection and systemization of human actions and as a "queen of humanities"<sup>206</sup> with its nature of judgment along with evaluative principles of Meta-religion.

### **2.3 Meaning of Dialogue:**

Their descriptions of dialogue are comprised of some distinctive features. Swidler's view is pluralistic one while al Faruqi's dialogue is relevant to his Da'wah. Both of them place their dialogue in the modern context.

#### **Swidler's View of Dialogue:**

##### **Deep-Dialogue:**

Swidler has been discussing the term "dialogue" since 50's expressing its meaning and scope in a broad sense. In 1957 he started to work for the development of good relations between Protestants and Catholics.<sup>207</sup> At that time it was not very common but later on with other events like Vatican II's stance the term began to be widely used. From the very beginning he has been committed to give a clear and explicit definition by removing all the misunderstandings about

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<sup>202</sup> He (1882-1967) was a German theologian and professor of comparative history of religion at Marburg. His first book *Das Götze* written in 1918 was very famous and translated into English in 1932 as "prayer". See "Friedrich Heiler," accessed February 25, 2023, <http://www.biblicaltraining.org>

<sup>203</sup> He (1899-1993) was American historian of liberal theology. "Bernard Eugene Meland" accessed March 24, 2023, <https://prabook.com/web/bernard.meland/3731504>

<sup>204</sup> Al Faruqi, "Meta Religion": 30-31 and Al Faruqi, "History of religions", 177-179.

<sup>205</sup> Al Faruqi, "History of religions", 183

<sup>206</sup> Al Faruqi, "History of religions", 183

<sup>207</sup> It was intra-faith dialogue under the movement of *Una Sancta* started in Germany to establish good relations at intra faith level between Catholics and Protestants. Its detail is available in chapter no. 3.

dialogue, for any term has become common does not mean that people have understood it clearly. As dialogue does not only occur among the followers of religions rather it involves all human beings who belong to different ways of lives; beliefs, cultures and ideologies, so he named it interreligious and inter-ideological dialogue by declaring that

“Dialogue is a two-way communication between persons who hold significantly differing views on a subject, with the purpose of learning more truth about the subject from the other person.”<sup>208</sup>

The interreligious or inter-ideological dialogue helps the insiders of a religion or ideology to learn from the insider of the other religion or ideology of what he thinks or does and why.

In the light of the above definition his following points become clear;

1. It is a two way communication and not a one sided lecture.
2. The basic purpose of this conversation is to learn from the other participant (about his perspective) and not to teach him/her.
3. It is different from debate, diatribe or any other aggressive attitude toward others who think differently.
4. No one has the full grasp on the truth.

Since 70's he has been reflecting on the deeper implications of the dialogue and especially with the end of the Cold War the popularity and use of dialogue has been increased and Swidler's reflection has become more prominent with Deep-Dialogue; a term which he has coined working with his colleagues<sup>209</sup> to declare that he is talking about the new life transforming way of thinking instead of keep clinging to the term “Dialogue” to make it more explicit and to make its importance to be felt as he states,

“people often tell me, ‘Dialogue is nice, but it's just drawing room entertainment.’”<sup>210</sup>

Swidler's Deep – Dialogue is a brief term denoting to the cluster of four ways namely the

“Deep-Dialogue/Critical-Thinking/Emotional-Intelligence/Competitive-Cooperation.”<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 20

<sup>209</sup> They are Ashoke Gangadeen (1941-) a notable philosopher and Howard Perlmutter (1925-1911) a professor at university of Pennsylvania. “Ashoke Gangadeen” accessed April 30, 2023 <http://www.havorfoed.edu>

“In Remembrance of Howard Perlmutter” accessed April 30, 2023 <http://www.interdependence.org>

<sup>210</sup> Adams, *There Must be You*, xiv.

<sup>211</sup> Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 4.

He declares that dialogue is not a series of conversations in the area of a religion or ideology but it is a whole new way of thinking for all the human beings to reflect on the ultimate meaning of life.<sup>212</sup>

In the late 90's regarding Deep – Dialogue he has felt the need of assertion of his term Critical-Thinking to have complete way for the betterment of humanity<sup>213</sup>. He relates Critical-Thinking to Dialogue through its meaning; dia means together, across and among et cetera and logos (thinking) in its various cognates is familiar like logic –the science of clear thinking and logy – the systematic thinking. So, dialogue is thinking together or thinking across and this thinking is “Critical – Thinking”<sup>214</sup> which is not the negative criticism rather it is made up of analysis (break up ideas in their components) and synthesis (putting them together in new ways). On the base of this analysis, synthesis and gathered data, a decision or a judgment is made. This critical thinking needs to address three basic W questions: what, whence and whither? “What”<sup>215</sup> precisely is meant by the terms used? First of all it should be clear for the participants of dialogue that reaching to etymological roots of the terms help them to understand what they are talking about. In this regard he illustrates the example of the term “believe”<sup>216</sup> which means “having faith in someone or something.”<sup>217</sup> He asserts that “faith comes from the Latin *fides*, having trust.”<sup>218</sup> So he is of the view that having faith in something means affirmation of something to be true not because of its proof but because of the believer's trust in the source of that information. Moreover he emphasizes that the participants should have the same understanding of a term or idea discussed in dialogue and same meaning of that specific term or idea should be kept in all statements about it because if this is not done the statements will end up in fourth syllogism. For example a simple syllogism can be

If L = M

And M = N

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<sup>212</sup> Leonard Swidler, "Death or Dialogue: From the Age of Monologue to the Age of Dialogue," *Grand Valley Review* 6, no. 2 (1990): 58.

<sup>213</sup> It can be viewed in his online lecture available at [www.astro.temple.edu/~swidler/course/index.htm](http://www.astro.temple.edu/~swidler/course/index.htm)

<sup>214</sup> Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 39.

<sup>215</sup> Leonard Swidler, "More than Dialogue: Deep-Dialogue / Critical-Thinking / Competitive-Cooperation," *World Journal of Islamic History and Civilization*, 3(1) (2013):38.

<sup>216</sup> Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 39.

<sup>217</sup> Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 39.

<sup>218</sup> Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 39-40.

Then definitely  $L = N$  because the meaning and understanding of the value of  $M$  is same in both the first and second statement/ equation. But if its value is slightly changed like:

If  $L = M$

And  $m = N$

Then  $L = ?$  because  $M$  and  $m$  are not considered to be of same value.

His “whence”<sup>219</sup> is from where the basis of affirmation of an idea come from, where is the source of the claim made, is there any factual evidence for it or is it based on a trustworthy source? et cetera. After having grasp of the idea and affirmation of its base the next step he suggests is “Whither”<sup>220</sup> its implications? Where it can lead to? Another important task to have Critical-Thinking is to bring the unconscious assumptions to the conscious level to analyze and judge their validity. For example one such unconscious presupposition was geocentric paradigm which after analyzes became heliocentric. Although to recognize the unconscious presuppositions is difficult, it can be done through endless self examination and reflections and he declares entering into dialogues to be a major help in this regard because this is the way to build mutual trust through which a dialogue partner can point out the unconscious presupposition of his partner which that partner cannot see by himself. In this way the dialogue partners become the mirrors for each other to see that how the outside world perceives them.<sup>221</sup>

Soon after he felt that for the description of humanity the Critical-Thinking also needs Emotional-Intelligence which is the learning about emotional maturity of humans as he asserts three directions for it. First is to know and understand oneself, second is to know and understand the others and third is to relate them to each other. A term similar to this is the imagination which is the source of human creativity. A person’s imagination about the world or a part of the world determines how he/she thinks about it and acts accordingly.<sup>222</sup>

The next is Cooperative-Competition in which Cooperation is clearly understandable that if the other partner does not act in a destructive manner the first one will also try to avoid negativity and this will lead towards a win - win situation for both of them. The second “Competitive”<sup>223</sup> seems to be a contradictory term with a “win-lose” result but the important is the way we take it. Swidler takes it in the way of Creative Competition on both the individual’s and the group’s

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<sup>219</sup> Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 40.

<sup>220</sup> Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 40.

<sup>221</sup> Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 39- 41.

<sup>222</sup> Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 41- 42.

<sup>223</sup> Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 43.



side. Through innovative thought and actions the situation can be molded towards the “win-win” and “both-and”<sup>224</sup> result. He relates his Competitive –Cooperation with *kyosei* the principles provided by Ryuzaburo Kaku, a Japanese entrepreneur<sup>225</sup> who named them “spirit of cooperation”.<sup>226</sup> Those principles focus on “living and working together for the common good”<sup>227</sup> through which every corporation holds and follows the global ethical and social responsibilities in a fair competition based on innovation quality and efficiency. For dialogue Swidler declares Competitive-Cooperation vital because it completes the task of Deep-Dialogue/Critical-Thinking/Emotional-Intelligence which is the need of time.<sup>228</sup>

Since the 90’s and afterwards Swidler whenever used the term Deep-Dialogue he certainly means it to be with its counterparts; Critical Thinking and Emotional Intelligence along with the consequent action Competitive Cooperation because they all are the four dimensions of one reality.<sup>229</sup>

### **Areas of Deep-Dialogue<sup>230</sup>:**

According to Swidler there are four areas or dimensions for the Deep-Dialogue covered by a step by step procedure.

#### **1. Dialogue of Head: Seeking the True**

This he calls the cognitive or the intellectual area where a participant reach out to the other who thinks differently from him and tries to understand how the other sees the world and why he sees in that specific way. The understanding of the world determines to act in it. This can only be done in dialogue where a participant tries to understand the other’s perspective along with his own to have a better grasp of knowing the reality.

#### **2. Dialogue of Hands: Seeking the Good**

This is the ethical or illative area where the participants in the dialogue work jointly to make the world a better place to live in because they cannot live separately.

#### **3. Dialogue of Heart: Seeking the Beautiful**

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<sup>224</sup> Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 43.

<sup>225</sup> He (1926-2001) was the chairman of the board of the Japanese Multinational Canon. He advocated the global ethical values. “Ryuzaburo Kaku” accessed January 02, 2023, <https://www.foraneworld.info/material/articles/ryuzaburo-kaku-1926-2001>

<sup>226</sup> R. Kaku, “The path of kyosei”. *Harv Bus Rev* 75, no.4 (1997): 55-63.

<sup>227</sup> Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 44.

<sup>228</sup> Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 35-45

<sup>229</sup> Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 62

<sup>230</sup> Leonard Swidler, “Introduction” in *Dialogue: Jews, Christians and Muslims in Dialogue*, ed. Leonard Swidler (New London: Twenty-Third Publications, 2007), 2. And Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 37-38.

After understanding each other and agreed to work in cooperation the participants move toward the dialogue of heart. The humans are made up of body and spirit so, they express their inner feelings of joy, sorrow, gratitude and love et cetera to grasp the reality in higher and deeper way as compared to the rational concepts or words. These feelings are the expressions of the heart and show the spiritual dimension of humanness. In this dialogue of heart the participants open their hearts to receive and welcome the feelings and expressions of the others. For the importance of this dimension Swidler quotes the words of Blaise Pascal<sup>231</sup>, “The heart has its reasons, which reason knows not.”<sup>232</sup>

#### 4. Holiness: Seeking the One

Finally having all the above mentioned three areas the humans should complete their holistic life bringing their manifold elements in dialogue within themselves and with others around them. This holiness comes from the Greek word Holos which means to be whole. So, only in this way they become authentically humans. He emphasizes that dialogue is only complete with all the four areas or levels. If any area or level is missing the dialogue will be incomplete.<sup>233</sup>

#### **Stages or Degrees of Deep-Dialogue<sup>234</sup>:**

Swidler elaborates the seven stages for the deep-dialogue as a step by step procedure for the dialogue partners to pass through. These stages show that how gradually the angle of thinking of a person widens and changes to have a better world view.

He also names these stages of development as degrees of consciousness maturity and holds that like cognitive maturity a person passes through moral maturity and if the later does not totally depends on the former it provides the moral maturity a necessary base for further development. With this development a person learns to appropriately participate in dialogue and plays his/her vital role to make it effective.

##### 1. Encounter with the Other:

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<sup>231</sup> He was a French mathematician, religious philosopher and physicist (1623-1672). “Blaise Pascal,” updated May 27, 2021, <https://www.biography.com/scholars-educators/blaise-pascal>

<sup>232</sup> Blaise pascal, *pencées*, trans. Trotter W. F. ed. L. Brunschvicg, section IV, no. 177 (N.P, Grand rapids, 1909), 46 available at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/pascal/pensees>

<sup>233</sup> Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 25

<sup>234</sup> The initial draft was drawn by Ashoke Gangadeen while it was further developed and modified by Leonard Swidler. See Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 99-102 and “Seven Stages of Deep-Dialogue/Critical-Thinking” in *Triologue: Jews, Christians and Muslims in Dialogue*, 33-37.

First stage he holds is the first encounter that brings a sudden astound to a participant regarding the other who seems to him as an alien having different /opposing world view and he realizes that his set habits cannot make sense of this other's views. So, he feels his thinking habits to be challenged and required to be changed. It is the moment to make a decision of either moving forward or drawing back.

## 2. Passing Over:

It is the point where a participant feels the other although strange but having a strong inner worldview, he due to the age of global dialogue cannot stay away from the other and opens himself to the other through two steps; he feels to experience the new habits of interpretation to make sense of this new world of the other and for this he has to bracket his previous assumptions and prejudices. In this way the strangeness goes away.

## 3. Transformation of the Self with the realization of Differences:

Here the participant embraces the Deep-Dialogue where he feels growth, learning and experience of alternative reality with excitement, inhabits in a new form of life but at the end he realizes that this is not his own home because of various kinds of differences among the followers of religions or ideologies. These differences can be contrary, contradictory, nominal and complementary.<sup>235</sup>

## 4. Returning back Home:

His fourth stage is the coming back with new and expanded knowledge where the participant on returning to his own world with a newly open mind encounters himself, his identity, his religion, his culture and ethnicity with a deep sense. Now he has a modified world view different from his earlier one. He acknowledges all the other views and visions of knowledge along with his own as the various limited views. So here arises a need of one's encounter with one's own community members to share the fruits of dialogue which one has gained from one's encounter with the followers of other communities.<sup>236</sup>

## 5. Inward Transformation in the Self:

This he names "The Dialogical/Critical Awakening: A Radical Paradigm Shift"<sup>237</sup> where the participant feels positive change through a profound shift in all the aspects of his life; his former world view and identity has been shaken through this later adaptation of open mindedness. He

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<sup>235</sup> This third stage is the fifth degree of his dialogue.

<sup>236</sup> This is the sixth degree of his dialogue.

<sup>237</sup> Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 101

becomes mindful of plurality of the other worlds, other perspectives and other world views. They become so important to him that he sees himself and his identity in relation to them and realizes his true identity to be connected to the expansive network of relations to the others.<sup>238</sup>

#### 6. Relation of Self with Others and the World:

This stage is the further step to the previous one as it is the mature level of paradigm shift where the participant in his transformed Deep-Dialogue awakening “discovers a deeper common ground”<sup>239</sup> among his surrounding multiple perspectives and worlds.<sup>240</sup> He feels that diversity and multiplicity enriches the both; his self and his world. He moves towards the realization “that all worlds are situated in a common ground of reality and that radical differences are nevertheless also situated in a field of unity.”<sup>241</sup> This he explains in the following three dimensions:

##### i) Deep discovery of Self:

Here the participant feels the Deep-Dialogue within himself. His identity feels to be deep rooted and enriched due to multiplicity and diversity of his inner self. He realizes the powerful sense of uniqueness while expanding his world of relationality with others in his surroundings.

##### ii) Dynamic Dialogue within a Community:

It leads to the openness for the dialogue of the participant’s and his own community. With this new relation with his peers he may face misunderstanding and miscommunication because he has now grown up with new identity. So a challenging and dramatic dialogue unfolds in this regard.

##### iii) Global awakening in all aspects of one’s life:

When a participant reaches this dimension he feels a global awakening in all the aspects of his life. As his inner and outer sense of Deep-Dialogue and critical thinking matures, he enters a global horizon and consciousness for interreligious, interideological, intercultural, interpersonal and interdisciplinary dialogue. In this way a new attitude develops toward life and ethics.

#### 7. Embracing the holiness or wholeness:

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<sup>238</sup> This is the fourth degree of his dialogue.

<sup>239</sup> Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 101

<sup>240</sup> This is the third degree of his dialogue.

<sup>241</sup> Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 101

This is the personal and global transformation of the life and behavior of the participant with which he feels meaning, fulfillment and self realization in his own life and in his relations to the others and the world around him. He experiences a sense of responsibility in his whole conduct and a sense of belonging not only to his community but to the surrounded world. He acknowledges that his profound care of himself is linked with his care of his environment. At this stage although one feels safe and sound with one's own tradition but at the same time he feels openness for all the other traditions as well.<sup>242</sup>

### **Phases of Dialogue<sup>243</sup>:**

The above mentioned stages can be summed up in the following three phases:

1. Unlearn Misinformation:

In this phase the dialogue partners unlearn the misinformation about each other and start to learn about one another as they truly are.

2. Discern values in partner's tradition:

In this phase a participant discerns the values of his partner's tradition to appropriate them in his own tradition.

3. New areas of reality:

In this last phase participants from both sides begin to explore new areas of meaning, reality and truth. They begin to face new "as-yet-unknown-to-us"<sup>244</sup> aspect of reality through insights and questions developed in dialogue.

### **Purpose of Authentic Dialogue:**

He holds that on completion of all the three phases the partners on both sides will perceive their own religions in changed ways but with integrity in their own traditions and openness toward the other. Only in this way the three dimensional purpose of dialogue is achieved which is to learn, change and grow. In such authentic dialogue, they will become more authentic adherents of their own religious traditions and there is no room for syncretism.<sup>245</sup>

### **Results of Dialogue:**

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<sup>242</sup> Leonard Swidler, "A near Century of Dialogue", in *Interreligious Relations: Occasional Papers of The Studies in Interreligious Relations in Plural Societies Programme*, issue 7, eds. Abdullah Saeed and Paul Hedges (Singapore: RSIS, Nanyang Technological University, 2019), 2-8.

<sup>243</sup> Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 50-51.

<sup>244</sup> Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 51.

<sup>245</sup> Leonard Swidler, "Interreligious Dialogue: A Christian Necessity: Who Are Our Partners?", *CrossCurrents* 35, no.2/3 (1985): 129. Also available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24458868>. And Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 51.

He views the two most prominent results of the dialogue; “cessation of violence”<sup>246</sup> and “burst of creativity”.<sup>247</sup> This creativity he divides into the following points:

1. Mirrors:

He holds that dialogue partners prove to be the mirrors for each other because every participant in dialogue comes to know that how the other perceives his view.

2. Outward Learning:

The dialogue results in outward learning as the other’s view or the outer world is perceived as another possible source of knowledge besides one’s own inward view.

3. Chain Reactions:

The dialogical process has reached to its modern achievement through a chain of reactions. On behalf of his religion he explains that till the first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century the popes forbade Catholics to participate in dialogue or interreligious collaborations but with the Vatican II the Catholics are not only allowed to dialogue with other Christian denominations but to all non-Christians as well.

4. Adaptation:

He argues that it is not necessary to adopt some points from the partner’s tradition or changes in one’s own tradition but it’s possible to adapt one’s tradition through dialogue.

5. Dialogue in Practice:

He argues that dialogue is of no use if it is not implemented and not resulted in action.

6. New Questions:

He holds that it is the dialogue which gives rise to the emergence of new questions not asked before. Two types of these questions are about the description of the Ultimate Reality in various religions and the Human Rights.<sup>248</sup>

7. Global Ethos:

He states that instead of bilateral dialogue “it must lead to consensus on a Global Ethos”<sup>249</sup> and by ethos he means “fundamental attitude toward good and evil, and the basic principles to carry that attitude into action.”<sup>250</sup> In this regard he gives some examples of world religions

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<sup>246</sup> Leonard Swidler, *The Meaning of Life at the Edge of the Third Millennium*, (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1992), 58.

<sup>247</sup> Swidler, *The Meaning of Life at the Edge of the Third Millennium*, 58.

<sup>248</sup> Its detail can be seen in Chapter 3.

<sup>249</sup> Swidler, *The Meaning of Life at the Edge of the Third Millennium*, 67.

<sup>250</sup> Swidler, *The Meaning of Life at the Edge of the Third Millennium*, 67.

where the followers are either fighting with others either in their own denominations or in other traditions and he insists that they should stop these perversions and move toward collaboration. He appreciates the role of world conference on religion and peace but holds that these kinds of conferences should be developed on a large scale. He suggests the following points in this regard:

- i) Every religion and ideology should appoint some experts who work jointly for global ethos.
- ii) The present ethical institutions and scholars working on global ethics should sketch the global ethos through dialogues.
- iii) Such working groups that are working on interreligious or interideological bases should play their part in this regard.
- iv) He emphasizes the creation of “Global Ethos Research Centers” supported by various religions and ideologies to develop some rules in this regard. In this way he insists on the establishment of a universal declaration of global ethos for the spiritual and moral development just like the universal declaration of human rights as complementary to UN which is for the development of political rights.<sup>251</sup>

### **Al Faruqi’s View of Dialogue:**

He holds that “dialogue is the removal of all barriers between men for a free intercourse of ideas where the categorical imperative is to let the sounder claim to the truth win”. It is the only “inter-human relationship worthy of man!”<sup>252</sup>

Regarding its nature he emphasizes that it is a non-sceptical dimension of human consciousness, a category of uncynical ethical sense, an education in its noblest and widest form and it is the fulfillment of reality’s command to be known, compared and contrasted with other claims, to be accepted if true, to be rejected if false and to be amended if inadequate. He declares that “Dialogue disciplines our consciousness to recognize the truth inherent in realities and figurizations of realities beyond our usual ken and reach. If we are not fanatics, the consequence cannot be anything but enrichment to all concerned.”<sup>253</sup>

### **Purpose of Dialogue:**

<sup>251</sup> Swidler, *The Meaning of Life at the Edge of the Third Millennium*, 67-70.

<sup>252</sup> Ismail Raji al Faruqi, “Islam and Christianity: Diatribe or Dialogue,” in *Islam and Other Faiths*, 248.

<sup>253</sup> Al Faruqi, “Islam and Christianity”, 248.

He declares that the purpose of dialogue is conversion but not a conversion to anyone's religion, mores or culture rather it is conversion to the truth.<sup>254</sup>

## **2.4 The Participants in Dialogue:**

According to Swidler the participants for any interreligious or inter-ideological dialogue must be the adherents of those specific religious or ideological communities. This dialogue should not be limited to the experts and official representatives of various traditions rather the common persons should also be involved who have interest, knowledge and education about it.<sup>255</sup>

He emphasizes that people of every level from different religious and ideological communities should participate in dialogue so that those communities learn about one another.<sup>256</sup>

He views that the participants should also engage in dialogue with their own community members to share the knowledge they gain through interreligious or inter-ideological dialogues and in this way the benefit of dialogue reaches the masses.

According to al Faruqi the dialogue should be conducted among the intellectuals. He states that mostly it is conducted by westerners whose Muslim partners he emphasizes should only be those who have the tools with them to compete. Otherwise the common Muslim laymen do not have the tools equal to westerners so the dialogue in this way will be a loss for such Muslims. However the Muslims after getting education and training for the dialogue can and should participate in it.<sup>257</sup>

## **2.5 Need for and Importance of Dialogue:**

Both of them emphasize on the importance of dialogue and the world's need for it. Swidler considers it need of the time while al Faruqi relates this need with the role of Islam.

### **Swidler's View of Need and Importance of Dialogue:**

He holds that human history has been continuously passing through various ages and the interreligious dialogue has always been needed, however this need has been felt very seriously with the events of 9/11 and fall of the wall in 1989<sup>258</sup>. He explains that different scholars have

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<sup>254</sup> Al Faruqi, "Islam and Christianity", 249.

<sup>255</sup> Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 4.

<sup>256</sup> Swidler, "What is Dialogue?" in *Triologue: Jews, Christians and Muslims in Dialogue*, 12-13.

<sup>257</sup> He declares this in a discussion after the presentation of his paper.

<sup>258</sup> This wall was built at the end of WW2 to separate Eastern Germany (under Russia's control) from Western Germany (under USA control). In 1989 When Soviet Union began to show little interest in East Germany's affairs



named these ages according to their characteristics. Religion has remained part of life of the people since primal period of collective consciousness but limited to tribal concern. Then with the Axial Age<sup>259</sup> (800-200 BCE) the conscious level of people has shifted to personal concern while with the Second Axial Age<sup>260</sup> it has become global consciousness from the beginning of twenty first century.<sup>261</sup> After affirming Hans Küng<sup>262</sup>'s Paradigm Shift<sup>263</sup> and Ewert Cousins<sup>264</sup>'s Second Axial Age he explains his own broad view that human beings are to move from the age of monologue; the age of isolation to the age of dialogue; the age of globalization where people cannot live in their self centered world rather they are to live a life with others by accepting their presence, understanding them and acknowledging their perceptions different or opposite from their own. He holds that the other cannot be ignored and the encounter with him/her is unavoidable, it is possible that one may choose to close one's mind and spirit toward the other. In this way misunderstandings and hate leads to violence even war and death. So the fruitful encounter can only be happened in the way of dialogue<sup>265</sup>.

His explanation can be understood in the following points:

**“Nobody knows everything about anything.”<sup>266</sup>**

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the government of the country decided to allow the people to cross the wall with easy legal inquiry but by mistake the spokesperson while telling this news in a press conference forgot to tell about the legal inquiry process. As it was a live coverage so people without any delay started to break and cross the wall. So it fell down.

<sup>259</sup> A German philosopher Karl Jaspers in his book “ The Origin and Goal of History”. New Heaven: Yale University Press. 1953 named this era because of some prominent changes in the thoughts of people through prophets, religious leaders, philosophers and theologians especially in the four regions of the world; Middle East, China Greece and India. It was the time when people move from their local and limited concerns to the transcendence and the deeper meanings beyond the traditions and norms. John D Mayer, “The Significance of the Axial Age” posted May 25, 2009 <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-personality-analyst/200905/the-significance-the-axial-age-the-great-transformation>

<sup>260</sup> This according to Ewert Cousins is the time of global transformation in consciousness and it is composed of human plurality and earth consciousness. Christopher Peet, “Second Axial Age: Ewert Cousins” christopherpeet.ca accessed August 27,2023 <https://christopherpeet.ca/ewert-cousins>

<sup>261</sup> Swidler, “The History of Inter-Religious Dialogue” 4.

<sup>262</sup> He (1928-2021) was a Swiss Roman Catholic theologian who was in favour of many reforms in the church. Peter Stanford, “ Catholicism, Hans Küng obituary” The Guardian, updated April 8, 2021 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/apr/08/hans-Küng-obituary>

<sup>263</sup> Hans Küng, *Christianity: Essence, History and Future*, trans. John Bowden (New York: Continuum, 1995), 61-789. In these pages Küng's explanation of the major five paradigms shifts is available in the c section of the book on history while the explanation of all of his six paradigms including post-modern paradigm can be seen in various articles, for example Juma F.A. and Vorster J.M. “Küng's theory of paradigm shifts in church history: an evaluation”. Journal of the Church History society of Southern Africa 24, no. 2 (1998): 116-130.

<sup>264</sup> He (1927-2009) was a theologian who worked for interreligious dialogue to bring the followers of different religions close to each other. K.C.Madden, “In Memoriam: Ewert Cousins 1927-2009” Springer, accessed August 27, 2023 <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10943-009-9268-4>

<sup>265</sup> Swidler, "Death or Dialogue," 57-58.

<sup>266</sup> Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 36.

This is the epistemological assumption of the dialogue according to Swidler, so the need of dialogue arises to understand others from their inner perspective which one cannot understand from one's outer perception of the other.

### **A paradigm Shift:**

“All knowledge is interpreted knowledge.”<sup>267</sup>

Truth as a statement about reality has become relational and it is an important historical development according to him for the need of dialogue. He declares that reality is there but truth about it resides in the knowing capacities of human beings; everyone grasps the truth differently. Truth once considered absolute and static has become deabsolutized and dynamic especially in its Western understanding. This realization about the truth which he denotes to paradigm shift has been developed through the following interconnected ways.<sup>268</sup>

#### **0) Absolutist view of truth:**

He refers that till the 19<sup>th</sup> century truth was considered to be exclusivist in Europe. A statement if considered true, it would be true for all the times in the sense of both its meanings of things and empirical facts.

#### **1) Historical view of truth:**

Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century people begin to think about the meanings of things in their historical perspectives. A text could be understood in its context statement was developed under that view. Scholars considered the statements about meanings of things as partial products of their histories.

#### **2) Intentional view of truth:**

According to this view he declares that a statement can only be understood in relation to the action-oriented intention of a person. He says, “we ask questions so as to obtain the knowledge and truth according to which we want to live.”<sup>269</sup>

#### **3) Perspectival view of truth:**

He refers to Karl Mannheim<sup>270</sup>'s early 20<sup>th</sup> century sociology of knowledge which says that all reality is spoken and perceived in perceiver's specific perspective of culture and class et cetera.

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<sup>267</sup> Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 36.

<sup>268</sup> Swidler, “Introduction” in *Triologue: Jews, Christians and Muslims in Dialogue*, 8-10.

<sup>269</sup> Swidler, “Introduction” in *Triologue: Jews, Christians and Muslims in Dialogue*, 8.

#### 4) Language-limited view of truth:

He pointed out to the thinkers especially Ludwig Wittgenstein's limitation of human language on the bases of which people can only describe reality partially. He declares that there can be unlimited perspectives of reality but human language can only express it in one perspective at a time.

#### 5) Interpretative view of truth:

Under this view he refers to the hermeneutics' view that all knowledge is interpreted knowledge, so a person knows about a thing according to his mode of thinking. It is the same as Thomas Aquinas<sup>271</sup> mentioned, "The thing known is in the knower according to the mode of the knower."<sup>272</sup>

#### 6) Dialogic understanding of truth:

He explains that human beings' communication with reality takes place in a specific way or language they give to it. If they receive unsatisfying confused answers, it means they have put their questions in an inappropriate way. So, they need to improve their language for questions to have more appropriate answers from reality to understand it.

Due to limited perception of everyone about the reality and truth statements' deabsolutised nature he emphasizes the need of dialogue. He names this paradigm shift a Copernican turn which has revolutionized the understanding of truth and like Copernicus this shift has to face resistance from some institutional powers.

### Relativism:

Relativism opposite of absolutism is equally impossible for any statement of truth according to Swidler because absolutism is the total objective way of making a truth statement about meanings of things and relativism is the total subjective way for it. He does not consider any of

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<sup>270</sup>He was a Hungarian sociologist (1893-1947) and one of the founders of sociology of education. See Karl Mannheim, Karl, Updated June 11, 2018

<https://www.encyclopedia.com/.../sociology-biographies/karl-mannheim>

<sup>271</sup> He was a saint, catholic theologian and philosopher in the middle ages. See Anthony Kenny, *Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 1.

<sup>272</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Summa Theologica) in Great Books of the Western world, ed. Robert Maynard Hutchings, Part II –II, Q. 1, a. 2 (Chicago: William Benton, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.1982), 381.

the two ways reasonable for the meaning and explanation of reality as they do not square with a person's experience of reality. Moreover he adds that relativism leads to isolation.<sup>273</sup>

To avoid relativism he suggests two steps;

1. A person should critically evaluate both; the information gathered by him/her and his/her presuppositions.
2. One should engage in dialogue to complement understanding of truth with others' views of truth as everyone has a part of truth. Only in this way one can have a fuller yet never ending understanding of truth.<sup>274</sup>

### **A Universal Theology of Religion:**

To widen and promote the scope and significance of inter religious/ideological dialogue he emphasizes to develop a "universal theology of religion-ideology."<sup>275</sup> His term universal indicates that the types of reflection can be recognized by the persons of all religions and ideologies and by theology<sup>276</sup> he means a reasoned and systematic reflection on ideological and religious convictions. He declares that it is theology through which an adherent can speak a language using his own religious/ideological images, terms and insights in a way that works on two levels; maintaining one's integrity with one's own religion/ideology and helping others to recognize their religion/ideology in this language. He names this language "ecumenical" or "theologico-ideological esperanto"<sup>277</sup> which shares its purpose of development with historical "esperanto"<sup>278</sup> as it is simple, rational and intercultural but it is distinct in its effect on the

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<sup>273</sup> Leonard Swidler, "Preconference Paper: Interreligious and Interideological Dialogue; the Matrix for all Systematic Reflection" in *Toward a Universal Theology of Religion*, ed. Leonard Swidler (New York: Orbis Books, 1987), 7-12.

<sup>274</sup> Swidler, "Preconference Paper," 7-12.

<sup>275</sup> For its explanation and implementation he refers to a conference held to discuss the need, scope and importance of a universal theology of religion. He wrote a preconference paper and collected the responses from the adherent scholars of different religions in this regard.

<sup>276</sup> Regarding the hurdles related to word theology to declare it universal he explains that for naming any comprehensive project one has to use "a particular cultural framework" and it necessarily raises difficulties. For his use of the word "theology" he clarifies that it is the most familiar to him. Besides he thinks it is the most comprehensive term that includes both the sources of reason and wisdom; sacred books of religion and ideology.

<sup>277</sup> Swidler, "Preconference Paper," 21.

<sup>278</sup> It was a planned language created by a Polish doctor Ludwig L. Zamenhof (1857-1917) in 1887 as a fair communication tool to overcome the disputes of different ethnic groups, people with different languages and cultures. It experienced rise and fall but never gained the status of an international language. "Esperanto: the International Language," accessed on March 25, 2023 <https://esperanto.net/en/esperanto-the-international-language>, Robert Patterson and Stanely M. Huff, "The Decline and Fall of Esperanto," *Journal of the American Medical Information Association* 6, no. 6(1999): 444-446. Richard Cavendish, "Birth of Ludwig Zamenhof, creator of

understanding of human beings. Regarding its nature and characteristics he declares that the language for the terms, images and insights of the universal theology must be understandable for the modern critical thinkers of all the religions and ideologies. Apparently it does not speak of transcendence but in reality it speaks of it in an immanent way which is started from below rather than from above and in this way it is the human based language.<sup>279</sup>

### **Dialogue at Global Level:**

He considers dialogue

“a whole new way of thinking in human history.”<sup>280</sup>

He explains that at the global level dialogue has become a necessity rather than possibility and people are to choose dialogue the need of dialogue from within the single community to global level.<sup>281</sup>

He declares that dialogue being open to learn from the other person has moved the world from destruction to reconstruction.<sup>282</sup>

### **Need for and Importance of Dialogue in al Faruqi's View:**

He emphasizes that today the world is in need of cooperation and unity to stand for the protection of human rights. Since the modern time the world has been witnessing different charters and bills in this regard but due to lack of sincerity by the authorities they have not become fruitful. Besides the skepticism and cynicism are always there to make these kinds of efforts a failure. Analytical and existential philosophy along with Christian theology only contributed to widen the emptiness felt in the way of humane universalism. So to reach the truth some critical and rational principles are needed which Islam has provided fourteen centuries ago.<sup>283</sup>

### **Islam's role in global inter-religious relations:**

As a Muslim he takes the stance from Islamic perspective and relates it to other world religions on the basis of principles set by Islam itself which he names rational and critical. He holds that since its advent Islam has its ideational and practical relation to all world religions and

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Esperanto, ” accessed on March 25, 2023, <http://www.historytoday.com/archive/birth-ludwig-zamenhof-creator-esperanto>

<sup>279</sup> Swidler, “Preconference Paper,” 20-25

<sup>280</sup> Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 160.

<sup>281</sup> Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 159-160.

<sup>282</sup> Swidler, “ Freedom of Religion and Dialogue”, 4.

<sup>283</sup> Ismail Raji al Faruqi, “Islam and Other Faiths” in *Islam and Other Faiths*, 129-131

provides a rational and critical “modus vivendi”<sup>284</sup> for co-existence, world cooperation and study of religion.<sup>285</sup>

Al Faruqi relates the need of dialogue between Islam with other two Abrahamic faiths on the basis of commonality of some terms of their faiths like oneness of Allah and belief in resurrection among Islam and other religions of the world like Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism et cetera on the bases of Islam’s view of Prophets sent to every nation and between Islam and non-religious communities/people on the basis of Islam’s view of Din al-Fitrah or vicegerency of every human being in this world. When he talks about Christianity he holds that mission should be replaced by dialogue and he declares it an essential requirement because no religion can live in isolation. Cooperation and respect is necessary.

He declares that misunderstanding and ignorance; two feeders of interreligious hostility can only be replaced by understanding and cooperation and this can be achieved through a serious return toward dialogue.<sup>286</sup>

## **2.6 Ethics and Dialogue:**

Both of them emphasize on the role and responsibilities of humans in the world. Swidler emphasizes the development of Global ethic while al Faruqi focuses on man’s nature and capabilities to modify himself and the nature to fulfill the will of God.

### **Swidler’s View of Ethics and Dialogue:**

He holds that due to necessity of dialogue and interdependency of human beings there should be a global ethic developed through dialogue so that human beings not only try to understand themselves, others and the nature but also become capable to act accordingly. For this he emphasizes the development of a “Universal Declaration of a Global Ethic”<sup>287</sup> based on the golden rule<sup>288</sup> expressed in all religions and ideologies in various forms and ways. So according

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<sup>284</sup> Ismail Raji al Faruqi, “The Role of Islam in Global Inter-Religious Dependence” in *Islam and Other Faiths*, 71-72.

<sup>285</sup> Its detail can be seen in chapter 4.

<sup>286</sup> Ismail Raji al Faruqi, Forward in *Triologue of Abrahamic Faiths: Papers Presented to the Islamic Studies Group of American Academy of Religion*, ed. Ismail Raji al Faruqi, (Virginia: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1991)

<sup>287</sup> Swidler, *Religion for Reluctant Believers*, 100.

<sup>288</sup> It emphasizes that one should like for the other what one likes for oneself by giving respect and space to the other or treating others in the way as one expects to be treated by others.

to him this declaration can be drawn through the ethical teachings of world religions and ideologies. After that it can be analyzed in the light of reason. In this declaration there should be a positive relation between egoism<sup>289</sup> and altruism and both of them should be taken in harmony with each other. The base of human society should be on authentic egoism and it should lead towards altruism which is the highest stage of human development and the goal of the human society.<sup>290</sup>

He emphasizes the need of some basic ethical principles for this declaration that are held worldwide.<sup>291</sup> These principles can be derived from various religions and ideologies. As he has also worked for these principles<sup>292</sup> in 1991 jointly with Hans Küng, he gives some suggestions and guidelines to adopt these principles. In summing up these are<sup>293</sup>;

1. Human Based Language:

He holds that for this declaration the language and images should not be directly drawn from the authoritative books of some specific religions rather they should be acceptable for all.

2. Anthropocentric:

It should be taken the whole of reality to its context.

3. Dynamic affirmation:

The affirmations should be capable to be reinterpreted in broader scales.

4. Inviolable minimums and open-ended maximums:

The minimums should be kept inviolable and if the maximums are necessary to be set they should be kept open-ended.

5. Golden Rule:

The golden rule found in almost every religion and ideology should be a starting point of this declaration although it should not only cling to this rule.

The next five principles (6-10) are relevant to his golden rule.

6. Expansion of seeking knowledge from self to others:

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<sup>289</sup> This he declares the self-love leading outward to loving others.

<sup>290</sup> Swidler, *Religion for Reluctant Believers*, 100-103.

<sup>291</sup> Its detail can be found in chapter 4.

<sup>292</sup> Besides translating the declaration of a global ethics of Hans Küng he himself has developed a draft of the declaration emphasizing on human rights and freedom. He stresses on various institutions, government and non-government organizations on both scholarly and grass-roots levels to contribute in drafting global ethic and send to the representative forums like dialogue institute of temple university Philadelphia and Global Ethic Foundation of the University of Tübingen for the agreement of all through dialogue. Swidler, *Religion for Reluctant Believers*, 103-108

<sup>293</sup> Swidler, *Toward a Universal Declaration*, 31 and Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 162-165.

He emphasizes that the knowledge gained through this declaration should be expanded for the benefit of one's self to others; family, community, world and the cosmos.

7. Authentic self-love:

He declares that loving and caring others should begin from self love and then love for others also reversibly leads to self love.

8. Human beings as subjects:

According to Swidler human beings should be treated as subjects not merely as objects.

9. Protection of others:

He insists that those who can protect others should perform their duty because there are some who are unable to protect themselves.

10. Respect for nonhuman beings:

In this regard he emphasizes that it is the expansion of golden rule to give respect and honor to nonhuman beings beside the humans.

11. Middle ethical rules:

He stresses that along with the basic principles<sup>294</sup> the “middle ethical principles”<sup>295</sup> should also be the part of the declaration.

12. Avoidance of unnecessary details:

He holds that the declaration instead of too much detail should be composed of a set of chosen principles from which the detail should be drawn.

### **Al Faruqi's View of Ethics and Dialogue:**

According to “contemporary ethical reality”<sup>296</sup> he suggests three themes for dialogue. Basically these themes are written in Muslim-Christian perspective but generally in modern context they refer to all human beings.<sup>297</sup>

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<sup>294</sup> In summing up his basic principles suggest that all human beings are worthy of equal freedom, dignity and respect. Moreover their beliefs and religions should also be dealt with respect. He holds that not only humans but even the nonhumans should also be given respectful treatment. Dialogue in his view is the source to learn about others' explanation of life and this can be done in a better way if the others are given respect and freedom. Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 171-172.

<sup>295</sup> These are the principles of UNO's universal declaration of human rights. Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 172.

<sup>296</sup> Al Faruqi, “Islam and Christianity”, 256.

<sup>297</sup> His first two themes are specific to Christians and Muslims while the third one is general for all the people.



**First Theme:**

He holds that modern man realizes that his personal and collective nature is not sinful. The nature of the world despite its imperfection is also good. Man has a special task to enter the elements of divine will into the realm of creation. Recognition of his task brings joy for and confidence in him. Man is the source by whom the will of God is to be realized in the world.

**Second Theme:**

He denies the view of justification to be confession to God rather he declares it a process to recognize the real values by walking through a long and hard road. According to him God's Will can only be realized through man's continuous effort to obey Him.

**Third Theme:**

The purpose of humanity for him is seeking moral excellence which is still to be fulfilled and possible for all the people of the world and in this regard "Justification and redemption are but a prelude to the perception and pursuit of value (God's will)".<sup>298</sup>

**2.7 Principles and Methodologies for Deep and Meta-religious Dialogue**

Swidler's ten rules for dialogue expand its role and tend to implement it on a wide scale. Al Faruqi derives his rules of dialogue from his principles of study and evaluation of religion.

**Swidler's Dialogue Decalogue<sup>299</sup>:**

Leonard Swidler set ten principles for the dialogue which he named the commandments or the ground rules. First they were known for the dialogue and later he modified them to be the ground rules of Deep-Dialogue.<sup>300</sup> His set of these principles is also known as Dialogue Decalogue which he recommends to be observed if a participant wants to conduct an authentic dialogue. He declares that they are not the theoretical rules given from "on high"<sup>301</sup> instead they "have been learned from hard experience."<sup>302</sup>

**1. Openness from within:**

<sup>298</sup> Al Faruqi, "Islam and Christianity", 242.

<sup>299</sup> Leonard Swidler, "The Dialogue Decalogue: Ground Rules for Interreligious, Interideological Dialogue", *Al-Jami'ah Journal of Islamic Studies*, no. 57, (1994): 141- 145.

<sup>300</sup> Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 47-51 and 61-68.

<sup>301</sup> Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 48.

<sup>302</sup> Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 48.

The first principle according to him lies in the very definition of the dialogue. It is the conversation to change and grow. So the basic purpose of dialogue for every participant is to learn about the belief of the other and in this way every participant changes his previous perspective about the other through self critical-thinking and emotional-intelligence which consequently turns to competitive-cooperation. When the intention is to understand the other's perspective this goal is achieved.

## **2. Attentive and conscious:**

The second principle asserts that the participants should come with consciousness about themselves and about their partners. Only in this way they can listen to and learn from their partners. They should be fully present with a focus on their partner because only in this way they can respond to and act accordingly what their partner says. This attentiveness is necessary because the dialogue is a two sided project where participants from both the sides come to listen, learn and respond not to deliver a lecture.

## **3. Openness in-between:**

According to the third principle the dialogue is a two sided project when members from both sides participate in the process not only to deliver the results of dialogue on interreligious level but at intra-religious level also. Dialogue is not only a project between the participants of two different religions or ideologies but the participant must also have a dialogue with their own communities to share the fruitful result of deep interreligious or interideological dialogue. In this way not only the participants of both sides change and grow in their understanding but their own communities as well.

## **4. Trust and Honesty:**

The fourth principle states that participants from both sides should come with complete sincerity and honesty on their side and they should also consider and assume the same sincerity and honesty on the end of their partners. Both the absence of sincerity of a participant in dialogue and absence of his assumption of the same sincerity on behalf of his

partner prevent the Deep-Dialogue from happening. Briefly he states this as “no trust, no Deep-Dialogue, nor subsequent Competitive-Cooperation.

### **5. Cultivation of Personal Trust:**

The base of dialogue is mutual trust according to the fifth principle. In communal dialogue the participants come to dialogue as the members of their specific communities/traditions means the communities different from one another and in this case to proceed in dialogue mutual trust is needed. Now the members of the dialogue are persons and the dialogue can only be built on personal trust. This trust develops in the process of dealing the commonly held matters first and then proceeding to tackle the points of difference. As effective learning about anything begins from known to unknown, same is the case with Deep-Dialogue through which the participants move from commonly held matters to the matters of disagreement. In the Deep-Dialogue this is the Critical-Thinking/Emotional-Intelligence helps the partners to raise their assumptions from the unconscious to conscious level for their judgment to act in the way of Competitive-Cooperation.

### **6. Fair Comparison without prejudgment:**

The sixth principle states that everyone participating in dialogue should come without any hard or tough assumptions because with these fast assumptions we cannot understand and show respect to each other. And without understanding no dialogue can occur. Each participant should listen to his/her partner with sympathy and openness as far as possible beside maintaining his/her integrity with his/her own tradition/community. According to this principle if the participants compare their beliefs, the comparison will be on equal bases; Ideals with ideals and practices with practices.

### **7. Defining Oneself:**

He emphasizes in the seventh principle that every participant should define himself so clearly that the other participant and even the observer must be able to recognize him as member of his community. Only a Jew, Christian or Muslim can define what it means to be

the authentic member of their own respective communities or traditions. He declares that as the participants learn from their dialogue partners, they certainly modify, deepen and continuously expand their self definition and this is done with dialogical openness in the Deep-Dialogue.

### **8. Taking Others as Equals:**

The eighth rule is that the dialogue must take place between equals. Neither of the side should be considered inferior or superior rather they should be taken as equals. This makes the sense and base for the dialogue because both sides' participants come for the dialogue as equal partners to learn from each other. If one partner considers the other as inferior, no dialogue will take place. So the participants regardless of their prior status if want an authentic Deep-Dialogue, they must enter into it respecting equal status of one another.

### **9. Self Critical:**

According to the ninth principle the participants should be self critical about themselves and their religious traditions because lack of self criticism not only makes the Deep-Dialogue unnecessary but impossible. The participants from both sides should enter the dialogue with the intention of learning, so they cannot claim to have a full grasp of truth, to have all the right answers. The participants no doubt are the members/representatives of their community with conviction and integrity in the communal Deep-Dialogue but the healthy self criticism is also associated with integrity and conviction. And in this way dialogue partners from sides will be open for constructive and compassionate critique of their positions for a fruitful Deep-Dialogue.

### **10. "Reach out, Pass over and Return"<sup>303</sup>:**

The last principle states that the participants should try to experience their partner's religion or tradition from within; from the partner's own perspective. It is the principle where all the four areas of Deep-Dialogue work jointly. First is the intellectual where dialogue partners seek to understand-it is dialogue of head, second is the practical where they collaborate to help humanity-it is dialogue of hands, third is the spiritual or aesthetic where the participants

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<sup>303</sup> Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*, 67.

enjoy and experience each other's spiritual/meaning of life and emotional resources from within-it is dialogue of heart and finally there is dialogue of Holy where integrating coalescence of all the dimensions of a human is felt in harmonious way.

### **Al Faruqi on Principles of Dialogue:**

Before moving towards the principles for dialogue it is necessary to know the principles for comparative religions and the principles of Meta-religion<sup>304</sup> because these two sets of principles provide the base for the rules al Faruqi set for dialogue. The first kind of principles he names theoretical principles to study the religions seem to be their characteristics. While the second type of principles he declares to be the rational principles also known as meta-religious principles are philosophical in nature. These he considers necessary to evaluate and analyze the religions because according to him only the study of religions is not enough to understand them, they should also be judged analytically.

### **Principles for Comparative Religion:**

Al Faruqi set the following five principles to study and understand the religions.

#### **1. Internal coherence:**

The very first and the most important principle he regards that every religion to be a system should have internal coherence. Its elements should not contradict to one another because the contradiction makes it a paradox and it is impossible for man to act upon it.

He states that it is considered that there are undeniable internal contradictions present in religions which should be understood in adhesiveness. He clarifies that in this regard there should be a higher principle to bind those contradictions together and when that principle is understood as constitutive one then the religion is not considered to be internally incoherent. Moreover he clarifies that the internal contradictions in any system can be tolerated if they are superficial but if they are claimed to be of final value admitting no search of adhesiveness they cannot be accepted by the comparativist.

#### **2. External coherence:**

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<sup>304</sup> These two sets of principles he briefly explained in his book *Christian ethics* in 1967 while the principles of dialogue derived from these two sets can be seen in his 1968 article "Islam and Christianity: Diatribe or dialogue".

The religious system must cohere with cumulative human knowledge. He elaborates that every new discovery in any discipline presents a challenge for that discipline; it is judged through all possible sources and either rejected to be false or taken as a new truth. When it is taken as a new truth, the old tradition contradicted to it is needed to be rebuilt. It is found that new truth that has incoherence with its specific discipline may have coherence with other disciplines; same is the case with new revelation, so the revealed truth must cohere with existing human knowledge. He clarifies that it does not mean that revelation is relative to human situation; rather it is relational with its historical circumstances.

### **3. Correspondence with religious experience:**

According to third principle “all revealed truths must cohere with the religious experience of mankind.” God’s commands neither contradict one another nor there do any change in purpose of revelations in different time periods, rather they should present unity of their source.

### **4. Correspondence with reality:**

Religious truths must correspond to reality.<sup>305</sup> In case of contradiction with reality they are proved to be invalid. A religion with its different aspects counter to reality is in need of revision of its theses in the light of reality.

### **5. The purpose of religion:**

A religious system ought to serve man upward to ethicality and higher value. So, the purpose of religion is to ethically and morally uplift man. If this purpose is separated from the religion, its place in human life will be collapsed.

### **Need for Evaluative Principles:**

After stating the principles of comparative religion he asserts a general claim about history of religion as an academic discipline that the task of a comparatavist is solely to pass on the true understanding of the concerned religion to others with objectivity; rather he addresses the question in another way and raises the following points;

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<sup>305</sup> Although he does not explain the reality but it seems that he has taken it in the perspective of philosophy. Then it means the natural world, all the creation and events etc. It is also clear from his explanation of reality under the principles of dialogue.

### 1. Total Objectivity:

He asserts that whether or not the historian of religion (after applying these principles) is capable of truly understand a religion and pass this understanding to others with objectivity.

### 2. Struggle Against Predicament:

Despite the utmost struggle of the historian of religion his personal involvement to some extent is inevitable. If this is the case whether or not he declares it at the very beginning of his research work so that his reader may become aware of his struggle to reach the truth.

### 3. Presuppositions as Critical Principles:

If some presuppositions become unavoidable whether or not the historian of religion will try to seek them as critical universal principles rather than his personal religious involvement. It leads that when theology in the history of religions becomes necessary whether or not the historian of religion takes it critically instead of dogmatically.

To answer these questions he examines the nature of the history of religions elaborating its following three disciplines;

#### 1. Empirical investigation:

The task of history of religions to discover authentically about the beliefs, thoughts and judgments of a certain continuing group of people is not easy to establish. For this the historian of religions should submit his findings for the test and verification that whether or not the adherents of the concerned group consider his findings adequate. This test involves the following hurdles;

- i. If some people from that group accept the findings of the comparatavist as accurate, it can be the answer of minority and if it is taken as the answer of majority from their spiritual/cultural leaders, it is very difficult to approach them.
- ii. If the findings of the comparatavist are accepted by the adherents of a religion, they may misunderstand their own religion. In this case

#### 2. Validity of Comparison:

In comparative religion it is seen that whether or not the feelings, thoughts and judgments of a group of people are comparable with that of another's. In this regard the previously mentioned principles can be helpful but the mistakes in comparison can be of two types; in comparison and in the understanding of the things being compared. The latter can be removed in the light of logical principles while the former type of errors can be removed on the base of the two things compared through their commonness in the third thing but in this kind of comparison the side of their difference is neglected which is equally important and this difference can lead toward new avenues of finding the communion keeping the search active and alive. So in this way the laws of logic can also be helpful.

### 3. Religious Experience's Common Findings:

Comparative religion discovers that whether or not a group's feelings, thoughts and judgments are closer to common findings. He clarifies that the common findings are the religious truths corroborated with religious experience of mankind.

He explains that

The religion if it is found to be lacking in internal coherence should be reconstructed in the light of history of revelation which is acknowledged by it but in the case it does not acknowledge that history then surely it should be reconstructed in the light of rational principles.

### **Principles for Meta-religion<sup>306</sup>:**

Here through his six principles of evaluation he provides a standard to judge the validity of religions.

#### **1. Ideal and actual<sup>307</sup>:**

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<sup>306</sup>Ismail Raji al Faruqi, *Christian Ethics: A Historical and Systematic Analysis of its Dominant Ideas*, (Montreal: The McGill University Press, 1967), 21-32.

<sup>307</sup> Under the principles of Meta-religion he does not define the ideal being, (however he explains its two parts theoretical and valuational. Al Faruqi, *Christian Ethics*, 25. While if this kind of detail is taken from his earlier work, he explains two levels of beings for both ideal and actual. For ideal there are essence and values, and the actual or real existence has been classified into realm of objects which is manifold of senses leads to knowledge and consciousness. The second level for the real existence is the mental being; the level of thoughts and concepts. Al Faruqi, *On Arabism 'Urubah and Religion': A Study of the Fundamental Ideas of Arabism and of Islam as its Highest Moment of Consciousness*, (Amsterdam: Djambatan, 1962), 253 and 266. In his book on Tawhid he declared Al Tawhid as "a general view of reality, of truth, of the world, of space and time, of human history and



As he declares his principles to be rational and not theological he assumes that God does not exist. It leads to have a self evident statement of truth which he provides by stating duality of beings.

He holds that there are two distinct realms or levels of being; ideal and actual. He affirms his argument to be self evident because denial of the ideal as a separate being other than actual being leads either to skepticism or self contradiction in the light of ethics, metaphysics and epistemology. So, the realm of beings is neither one nor more than two because in ordering it creates problems; if one then how to order the equal elements of a single being as in this case there is no fact and value rather all the elements are taken as facts and one fact cannot be judged by another equivalent fact. Same is the case with manifold of beings; in the absence of ex-manifold they cannot be ordered.

## **2. Ideal is relevant to actual:**

As the principle of ordering the ideal provides the standard or pattern of classification for the actual being. Due to this pattern the actual is or is not valuable. This necessitates the relevancy of the ideal to the actual. If it is irrelevant or not related to the actual, it will be of no use as an ideal being.

## **3. Relevance of the ideal to the actual is a command:**

As the ideal is relevant to the actual, it should be realized by the actual as well. The relevance of the ideal to the actual can be realized in two ways; first is that all the members of the ideal cannot be equally and at the same time realized as some are conditioned by the others in a hierarchical way. Second is that ideal can be realized in theoretical-valuational form. It may be in both the cases not realized or partially realized. (in this sense it is also considered not realized)

## **4. The actual being is as such good:**

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destiny” explaining its five core principles similar to Meta-religion but this time in theological way instead of rational where Ideal being is God and the actual is “order of space-time, of experience, of creation. It includes all creatures, the world of things, plants and animals, humans, jinn and angels, heaven and earth, paradise and hell, and all their becoming since they came into being. Ismail Raji al Faruqi, *Al Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life*, (Virginia: The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1982), 10.

As the value of ideal can be realized in actual so the actual is good. Real existence as the foundation of all other values to be realized is good and valuable. From this he postulates that this world and man in it exists, so they are also good and valuable. Any world-view, philosophy and religion which declares this world to be evil, deprives itself from the right to set what is valuable and not valuable for man. Even anyone cannot claim to acquire merely the knowledge about valuableness or invaluableness of anything he/she denies the valuableness of this world. Actual being is good does not mean that it is perfect and does not contain evil in it, rather it means that it can be modified and improved.

### **5. Actual being is malleable:**

This world as actual being and man as its member are obeying the laws of nature. In this sense this world is an orderly cosmos determined by the theoretical ideal realm; still further determinants can enter the situation by valuational ideal realm as man can play his role in this process as the susceptible being. But this does not mean that there are any gaps or shortcomings in the determination and in Faruqi's words;

“Determination, in the whole realm of actual being, is complete at every point of space-time.”<sup>308</sup>

### **6. Perfection of the Cosmos; a human burden:**

Every member of actual realm except man is under the control and obedience of theoretical ideal while man as the only susceptible being “is the only creation who holds the key to the entrance of the valuational ideal into the actual.”

He holds that these principles can also be depicted in theological way but to make them applicable for the evaluation of any religion in a rational way he has expressed them in the light of reason. If anyone wants to question their authenticity, he/she can do so only in the light of critical philosophy or rational way instead of theological or dogmatic approach.

### **Principles of Dialogue<sup>309</sup>:**

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<sup>308</sup> Al Faruqi, *Christian Ethics*, 29.

<sup>309</sup> Al Faruqi, *Islam and Christianity*, 249-256

He emphasizes that the goal of the dialogue; conversion to the truth, can only be achieved through some rules or principles, otherwise the dialogue will not be useful. Moreover the rules should be critical with a few and simplest presuppositions.

As stated earlier, his methodology or principles of dialogue have been derived from his earlier principles of comparative and Meta-religion. These are the six principles.

### **1. Openness for Critique:**

The dialogue partners from both the sides should be open and willing for the critique. Their claims should be ready for critical evaluation, judgment, argumentation, explanation and justification. For this he says: “No communication of any sort may be made ex cathedra, beyond critique.”<sup>310</sup>

### **2. Internal Coherence:**

He declares that “No communication may violate the laws of internal coherence.” As previously he regarded this coherence essential for the study of religions now in the dialogue it becomes more vital because at this stage the participants are the representatives of their religions which are not the developing entities. Paradox in dialogical communication can only lead toward unintelligible riddles.

### **3. External Coherence:**

In dialogue the participants should be able to rediscover their past to reach the origin of their religion. According to Faruqi “No communication may violate the laws of external coherence; that is to say, man’s religious history.” The past must be clear and reachable through genuine understanding, rediscovery and reconstruction.

### **4. Correspondence with reality:**

He asserts “No communication may violate the law of correspondence with reality, but should be open to corroboration or refutation by reality”.

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<sup>310</sup> Al Faruqi, *Islam and Christianity*, 250

He explains the reality by stating some of its parts like ethical, physical and religious sensitivities of the people and time period. He declares reality to be knowable. He demands that the participants of the dialogue must be familiar with the reality.

### **5. Freedom from Canonical Figurization:**

He holds that after the completion of their advent, the revelations are figurized to find the solutions of the new arising problems. Due to different perceptions of the same reality, different minds created different figurizations. This happens because everyone's perception and conceptualization is more likely to be unique and different from the other. However a community may choose a specific figurization and regard it as the most genuine by rejecting the others and in this way it becomes canonical or dogmatic. Moreover a specific community's selected figurization is bound to time and space. Any later generation in that community may regard some aspect of holy dimmed in old figurization selected by their ancestors and hence they may find a new figurization which is done in reformation. It is quite natural that with time and distance any figurization can grow dim in its way to convey what the holy is but it does not mean that the holy changes. It's only because man's perspectives change. So the dimness of figurization must be removed to recapture its relevance. Because of this nature of figurizations he suggests that they should not be discussed in the dialogue.

### **6. Ethical Questions:**

He emphasizes that dialogue should be conducted on ethical questions as it is the most demanded area in the modern world. Besides it is of no use to have a dialogue on theological issues in the beginning because it only leads to widen the distinctions and gapes among the religions.<sup>311</sup> To make the dialogue successful in theological area he suggests preliminary work with special focus on ethical matters. To answer the ethical questions can help create mutual understanding between the dialogue partners in al Faruqi's view and his preference to ethical questions can be summed up in the following points:

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<sup>311</sup> This he explains in "Christian Ethics" 254-256 in his address to Christians stating many theological differences between Islam and Christianity.

- i) The dialogue partners especially Christians and Muslims cannot reach mutual appreciation of figurization of divine nature; they can attempt to do the will of divine nature which is common to them because God's nature, His revelation and Kingdom are subjects of faith or theology, the ethical duties of man have no disputation or distinction between the two religions rather these duties are the subject of rationality.
- ii) For the modern man the ethical matters are the most relevant for his stay in the present era with tolerance and giving space to others while tolerance on theological matters means compromise or even conversion.
- iii) The difference on the ethical perceptions of the dialogue partners does not mean error or falsehood on either side rather it means more or less perception of the same and it is in need of midwifery ethical perception.

Both of them have played vital roles in study of religion as an academic discipline and in the development of dialogue as a growing need of the people of different faiths and ideologies. A look on their view of religion shows that they see the role and importance of the transcendent as a clear and strong dimension of it. They present a comprehensive view of religion; Swidler by providing its vivid picture through highlighting its prominent features and al Faruqi by presenting the nature of ultimate reality. Both of them emphasize the perception of Ultimate Reality in the religions of the world. Regarding the study of religion Swidler emphasizes that an adherent of a religion who examines his religion critically can better deliver the understanding of his religion to others. This clear understanding consequently provide the base for dialogue while al Faruqi provides his specific rules for the study and evaluation of religion on the base of which he derives his principles for dialogue. The specific kind of terms and notions used by them make their approaches of dialogue distinctive on the one hand while on the other they seem effective and interesting. Their views of dialogue are appealing and extensive. Swidler through his human based language and al Faruqi through his *din al- Fitrah* make it applicable on all human beings. If their techniques and methodologies are compared with their contemporaries it becomes clear that Deep and Meta-religious dialogue have distinctly appeared in the dialogical movement of the modern and post modern era. Swidler relates his dialogue with the need of modern man and harmonizes it with the contemporary changing scenario of the world while al Faruqi regards dialogue as the need of time to unite the whole humanity in search of reaching the truth.

### **Chapter 3:**

#### **Religious Perspective on Dialogue: Christian and Islamic Stand in the Thought of Swidler and al Faruqi**

Swidler and al Faruqi have presented their Deep and Meta-religious dialogue by defining it, emphasizing its need and importance, declaring its dimensions and setting the principles for it while on the other hand they have turned toward another important aspect of the dialogue based on Christian and Islamic foundations to build dialogical collaboration with the Abrahamic faiths and with the other religions and ideologies. In this regard, this chapter has been divided into two dimensions; first the work and efforts of Swidler and al Faruqi for trialogue have been explained and secondly their efforts for the interreligious and inter-ideological dialogue have been presented.

##### **3.1 Trialogue: Dialogue among the followers of the Abrahmic Faiths**

Swidler and al Faruqi both have their efforts for developing the ways of cooperation and understanding among the followers of the Abrahamic faiths. Their efforts can be seen on two levels in this regard; first is their theoretical view for the need and importance to conduct trialogue and secondly are their practical efforts to bring the followers of Judaism, Christianity and Islam close to each other to make the world a peaceful place to live in.

### **3.1.1 Swidler and al Faruqi on Need and Importance of Trialogue:**

Both of them have presented their views to emphasize the significance to conduct the dialogue among the followers of the Abrahamic faiths.

Swidler's view can be seen through the following points:

#### **Need for Trialogue:**

Swidler states that generally the world has been coming toward the authentic dialogue; earlier the purpose of (so-called) dialogue was to overcome the opponent but now its need has been increased and its purpose has been changed with deabsolutized understanding of truth. He declares that now the participants come with a tendency of learning instead of teaching. He holds that Islam's need for dialogue has been increasing day by day with others like Hinduism and Buddhism but its need to dialogue with Christianity and Judaism has brought Islam to participate in it.<sup>312</sup> He emphasizes the dialogue among the followers of Abrahamic faiths on the bases of many aspects shared among the three religions; they are monotheistic religions as they believe in One, Just, Loving and Creator God who communicates through Prophets and historical events. Moreover they regard Prophet Abraham (A.S) to be their originating ancestor. He proclaims that the need of dialogue arises among these three revealed religions to answer the question that if they share such a vast common heritage and if their purpose is to follow the will of God, then why they are the three different ways; if God communicates through historical events and persons, then why those events and persons are bound to their own histories et cetera. All the three should enter the dialogue not only because of this commonality among them (which is an

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<sup>312</sup> Leonard Swidler, "Islam and the Trialogue of Abrahamic Religions," *Crosscurrents* 42, no. 4 (Winter 1992/93): 444.

inner aspect) but also because of external reasons like earth's becoming a global village where industrial Judo-Christian west cannot be separated from oil-rich Islamic world.<sup>313</sup>

In response to a question about the trialogue on the base of monotheism he declares that not only all the three monotheistic religions should unite on dialogue as they make more than half of the population of the world, they should also eagerly conduct dialogue with the followers of other religions and even the people with no religion and hence in this way all the population of the world in fact the members of whole humanity can learn from one another.<sup>314</sup>

He emphasizes the importance of dialogue in the present age saying,

“Knowingly to refuse dialogue today would be an act of fundamental human irresponsibility-in Judeo-Christian-Muslim terms, a sin.”<sup>315</sup>

### **Christians and Jews:**

He considers that before moving to Christianity's dialogue with any other religion or ideology it is important for Christians to recognize the original source or base of Christianity that is Jesus.

He emphasizes that Christians are in need of dialogue with Jews, the adherents of the religion of Jesus to better understand Christianity.<sup>316</sup>

He focuses on the following points for the need of developing dialogue between the followers of both religions.<sup>317</sup>

#### **1. Anti-Semitism:**

He emphasizes to diminish the anti-Semitic tendency of Christians toward Jews which has been practiced vigorously from the beginning. In this regard he refers to some saints like John

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<sup>313</sup> Swidler, “Trialogue” in *Trialogue: Jews, Christians and Muslims in Dialogue*, 38-41.

<sup>314</sup> Abdur-Rahman Abul-Majd, “Leonard Swidler and AbdurRahman Abou Almajd on a Bridge to Islamic-Christian Dialogue”, 5. It is a published interview of Swidler taken by Abul- Majd. Pdf file of 5 pages published on 05-01-2014 available at academia.edu. Accessed December 15, 2023, [http://www.academia.edu/44902481/Leonard\\_Swidler\\_and\\_Abdurrahman\\_Abou\\_Almajd\\_on\\_a\\_Bridge\\_to\\_Islamic\\_Christian\\_Dialogue](http://www.academia.edu/44902481/Leonard_Swidler_and_Abdurrahman_Abou_Almajd_on_a_Bridge_to_Islamic_Christian_Dialogue)

<sup>315</sup> Leonard Swidler, “Age of Global Dialogue,” *Marburg Journal of Religion* 1, no. 2 (July 1996): 16.

<sup>316</sup> Swidler, “Trialogue” in *Trialogue*, 41.

<sup>317</sup> Leonard Swidler, *After the Absolute: The Dialogical Future of Religious Reflection*, (Augsberg: Fortress Press, 1990), 87-91.



Chrysostom<sup>318</sup> and Agobard<sup>319</sup> who in their speeches clearly expressed their negative views about the Jews. By declaring the past efforts of Christians to be gentle with Jews very minor ones he emphasizes that first of all there is a need for Christians to acknowledge the Jews and they should do their best to recompense the past hostilities through their theoretical and practical efforts. Only after this according to him the Christians can build the authentic dialogue with the Jews.

## **2. Jewish “No” to Christianity:**

He emphasizes that Christians should understand the nature of Jewish objection or rejection of Christianity which is not toward the Yeshua rather it is toward Christianity; the claims of some of the followers of Yeshua about him and their dealing of those claims. In this regard he suggests that Christians are in need to understand the embedded message in this Jewish “no” to Christianity or Christ (not Yeshua) and must consider the importance and value to answer the unavoidable questions like “Have Christians distorted not only Christianity but also even Yeshua?”

Swidler stresses that only through the authentic dialogue with Jews, the Christians can prove their religion to be authentic by returning to its Jewish founder and foundation.

## **3. Dialogue with Christians; a need for Jews:**

To illustrate the need of dialogue of Jews with Christians he refers to some examples;

- i) Many Jewish scholars because of Jewishness of Jesus consider Christianity very near to Judaism.<sup>320</sup>
- ii) Both Judaism and Christianity deliver the same message as historically the ancient and new covenants without any contradiction and this way they are close to each other.<sup>321</sup>

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<sup>318</sup> He (344 CE- 407 CE) was an archbishop of Constantinople “ Saint John Chrysostom” editors of encyclopedia Britannica, last updated September 10, 2023 <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Saint-John-Chrysostom>

<sup>319</sup> He (779-840) was an archbishop of Layon. “ Saint Agobard” the Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, last updated July 02, 2007 <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Saint-Agobard>

<sup>320</sup> In this regard Swidler refers to Martin Buber who declares Jesus as brother.

<sup>321</sup> He refers to Schalom Ben-Chorin in this regard.

- iii) Some of Judaism's forgotten Hellenistic phases are preserved by Christianity and to know those phases Jews are in need of dialogue with Christians.
- iv) To have dialogue with Christianity is a way for Judaism to know about one of its own portion because gospel is also a Jewish spiritual scripture.<sup>322</sup>
- v) Martin Buber states that both religions with their distinct sacred mystery unite with each other in God's mystery.

## **Muslims in Trialogue:**

### **1. Prerequisites of the Dialogue with Muslims:**

Swidler sees Judaism and Christianity more close to each other and before conducting the trialogue he wants some hurdles to be removed from the way of Jews and Christians regarding Islam and Muslims. Only in this way the trialogue can be more effective and fruitful. These hurdles or shortcomings are as follows<sup>323</sup>:

#### **i- Impact of Colonialism:**

He reminds Jews and especially Christians about the impact of colonialism associated to their West which is felt by majority of their Muslim partners in dialogue. He wants them to not only be aware of it but stresses on them to do their efforts to remove this impact.

#### **ii- Ignorance about Islam:**

He stresses on Christians and Jews to improve their knowledge about Islam as they know a little about it because of misinformation and ignorance. They need much effort to know about Islam as compared to their efforts about learning each other.

#### **iii- Distorted image of Muslims:**

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<sup>322</sup> He refers to Rabbi Leo Baeck in this regard who wrote in his book, "Here too Judaism must embrace its own, in order to know its own."

<sup>323</sup> Swidler, "Trialogue" in *Trialogue: Jews, Christians and Muslims in Dialogue* 41-43. and Swidler, "Islam and the Trialogue of Abrahamic Religions," 445.

Ignorance not only prevails about Islam it's also felt about its followers. He holds that because of the violence of a few people proclaimed to be the members of a specific religion, all the followers of that religion cannot be labeled as terrorists. Such examples are found everywhere for other religions as well beside Islam.

#### **iv- Cultural Gap:**

He identifies a cultural gap between majority of Muslims and their Jews and Christian partners by declaring that only a minority of Muslims is capable of entering a true authentic dialogue with Christians and Jews. He feels that for the majority of Muslims a great effort is required as most of them have not yet experienced the enlightenment in the sense of deabsolutizing the truth. He considers such an effort to be a prolegomena for the dialogue in its true sense and same is the case with orthodox Jews, evangelical Christians and even Roman Catholics before Vatican-II. So he emphasizes that Christians and Jews first need to do hard efforts for the dialogue among themselves, then with one another and then with their Muslim brothers.

#### **2. Role of Muslims:**

Swidler in response to a question about western media's negative image of Islam declares that media is mostly playing its role by reporting what is happening in the world by some terrorists in the name of Islam. He suggests that although non-Muslims should also try to know more about Islam but basically Muslims should play their role in three ways;

- i- They should denounce the activities of such terrorists on a large scale and this should also be done by majority of Muslims continuously. Only the effort of a few on a small scale is not enough.
- ii- They should find and communicate through various means to present the true image of Islam. He appreciates that some Muslims are playing their role in this regard and suggests that "other Muslims need to become equally creative and energetic and make the positive, peace-loving dimensions of Islam widely known through new, creative means of communication: e.g., blogs, listservs, facebook, twitter...."<sup>324</sup>
- iii- "Most important, Muslims need to transform and modernize the teaching of Islam to the masses of Muslims, stressing their shared humanity with non-Muslims. See the

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<sup>324</sup> Abul-Majd, "Leonard Swidler and AbdurRahman Abou Almajd on a Bridge to Islamic-Christian Dialogue", 5.

excellent writings on the history of Islamic education by my friend Prof. Fazlur Rahman (unfortunately now dead). With such education such anti-Islam ideas as suicide bombers could gain no support among the masses of Muslims, but young Muslims—in contact with young Jews, Christians, and others—would become builders of Bridges of Peace!”<sup>325</sup>

### **3. Islam and global dialogue:**

He acknowledges that Islam has been entering in global dialogue. For this he mentions two events in this regard; first one is ‘A Common Word between Us and You’ of 2007<sup>326</sup> and the other one is king Abdullah of Saudia’s contribution to interreligious dialogue<sup>327</sup>. He holds that ISAT (International Scholars Abrahamic Trialogue) has its prominent role in this regard.

### **4. Modern Scenario for Christian-Muslim Dialogue:**

He declares that prior to one and a half century the dialogue was not as effective as it is now. In response to a question about negative thinking of Catholics about al-Quran and the prophet Muhammad S.A.W he refers to the historical conquests of Muslim warriors conquering the vast Christianised lands and then the Christians’ crusades to take those lands back. However he is optimistic that with the second half of the twentieth century, Christians now bear much balanced dialogical views of Islam and the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W). He himself acknowledges the stances taken by the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) as portrayed in the history especially with Jews and Christians and declares that in the time of the Prophet the circumstances were not of the kind they are now for the urge of dialogue. He declares that if the prophet were alive today he definitely would lead the dialogue very effectively according to the need of the time.<sup>328</sup>

### **Role of Abrahamic Faiths in Separation of Religion and State:**

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<sup>325</sup> Abul-Majd, “Leonard Swidler and AbdurRahman Abou Almajd on a Bridge to Islamic-Christian Dialogue”, 4-5.

<sup>326</sup> Its detail can be seen in introduction.

<sup>327</sup> King Abdullah and Pope Benedict xvi met in 2007 for mutual dialogue. Later on dialogue institute has been founded and after a seven years period of discussions its mandate has been decided to foster dialogue and peaceful cooperation among the followers of different faiths. It is organized by three governments; kingdom of Saudi Arabia, kingdom of Austria and kingdom of Paris. Its board of directors consists of the members from different religions of the world. [The International Dialogue Centre \(KAICIID\) https://www.kaiciid.org/who-we-are](https://www.kaiciid.org/who-we-are)

<sup>328</sup> Abul-Majd, “Leonard Swidler and AbdurRahman Abou Almajd on a Bridge to Islamic-Christian Dialogue”, 3-4

Swidler emphasizes that freedom of humanity and development of any civilization is only possible when religion and state separately work in their own spheres with positive collaboration with each other without the dominance of the one on the other.<sup>329</sup>

He declares that in the past every great civilization of the world experienced rise and then fall. In this regard he declares that whenever the Abrahamic Faiths as well as the other religions or ideologies tried to reunite the religion/ideology and state they experienced failure. Unlike the other civilizations the Western civilization experienced only the rise and flourishing and the reason behind its glory he declares is its successful separation of the religion and state which other civilizations failed to implement. He admits that even the western civilization cannot escape the ills of modern crises and for this there is an urge to develop an ethical system for the world.<sup>330</sup>

He declares that Christianity and Islam as the world's two major and powerful religions along with Judaism can play a vital role in building a constructive relationship among the three separate entities; religion, state and ethics. He considers that there is a need for every society to develop a global ethic in modern context by focusing on human rights, cultural pluralism, freedom and separation of religion and state which can be done by focusing on human responsibilities, giving mutual respect, fulfilling obligation and conducting dialogue and in this regard it is a great responsibility of the followers of the Abrahamic Faiths to play a leading role.<sup>331</sup>

Al Faruqi's view of the need and importance of trialogue can be seen through the following points:

### **Status of Judaism and Christianity:**

He declares that Islam gives honour and respectable status to Judaism and Christianity. It acknowledges their prophets and scriptures to be truly sent by God and declares their God to be the One and Same God of Islam. In such relationship of Islam with both of these religions the

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<sup>329</sup> Its detail can be seen in chapter 3.

<sup>330</sup> Leonard Swidler, "Separating God and Caesar?" in *Religions in Dialogue; From Theocracy to Democracy*, eds. Alan Race and Ingrid shafer, (New York: Routledge; Taylor and Francis Group, 2018), 66-69.

<sup>331</sup> Swidler, "Separating God and Caesar, 70-71.

differences among them can be surmounted through wisdom and good will. Moreover the differences in this regard are merely the minor disagreements. In al Faruqi's words;

"Islam treats them as domestic disputes within one and the same religious family."<sup>332</sup>

He illustrates the example from Quran<sup>333</sup> where the Christians are praised for their humility and asceticism that they are more close to Muslims in their friendship and love.<sup>334</sup>

### **Development of Trialogue:**

Al Faruqi examines the relationship of Islam with Judaism and Christianity from Quranic and historical perspective.

He illustrates that the Prophet S.A.W and his companions built good relations with Christians and Jews. After that Muslim dynasties followed the same example with the exception of a few cases.

He holds that Comparative religion as a discipline flourished under the courts of Baghdad, Damascus and Cordova where interfaith debates occurred to value and respect the Abrahamic faiths. The work of comparative religion scholars; Shahrastani, Ibn Hazm and Bairuni et cetera is good example but it is not enough for the development and proceeding success for the positive interfaith relations as there are no such efforts seen since the Middle Ages. Although the relationships of Christians and Jews have become much better because of dialogue after the World War II but the dialogue between Muslims and Jews does not exist due to certain issues like creation of Israel and the dialogue between Muslims and Christians is still in its infancy. He further explains that from Muslims' side an effort to establish good relations with Christians was made at Tripoli Libya in 1974. In that meeting the huge Christian bodies like world Council of Churches, Protestant Churches, Greek and Russian Orthodox Churches did not participated rather they only sent their observers. Moreover the points on agreement were abstained at the airport by the Christian delegation. He declares that from Christians' side whenever such initiative has been taken, the Muslim participants are only the chosen guests of the Christian hosts to only listen and agree with them. So the dialogue between Muslims and Christians could

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<sup>332</sup> Al Faruqi, "The Role of Islam in Global Inter-Religious Dependence", 77.

<sup>333</sup> Al-Quran 5:82.

<sup>334</sup> Al Faruqi, "The Role of Islam in Global Inter-Religious Dependence", 76.

not succeed in the past and it cannot succeed in present and future as well unless participants from both sides come as hosts, both the sides have upper hands. He holds that since the Middle Ages the creation of Muslim Jewish Christian Council<sup>335</sup> is the only endeavor to bring the followers of all the three religions to communicate about their own faiths. It presented the ecumenical work through its two international conferences held in 1975 in Italy and 1977 in Portugal with later on the published result.<sup>336</sup>

Al Faruqi declares that Christian Mission and colonialization are bitter examples to affect the dialogue. He criticizes the mission to be a failure and missionaries unconsciously followed it. He emphasizes that instead of mission the Christian scholars should focus on dialogue. Because the cooperation and respect is needed that can only be achieved through dialogue.

Vatican- II's efforts are too little and Protestants' view of Christian figurisation of God in Jesus is the hurdle in the way to conduct a successful dialogue with Muslims.

### **Al Faruqi on Christian Mission:**

He severely disagrees with the understanding of Christian Mission and the role of missionary declaring that instead of preaching the message of Jesus the mission is trying to spread the Western figurization of that message. Its absurdity is of two fold according to him; first both the West and the missionary do not try to find out the meaning in that figurization with consciousness. Secondly the missionary when approaches the Muslims of Near East and North Africa for his task he is unaware of the fact that they are already Christians in three ways; first they belong to Semitic history and were spiritually ready for the advent of Jesus and the first ones to acknowledge him. Secondly they became Christians in the sense of Western figurization of Christianity by adopting its doctrinal rudiments under Byzantium influence. Thirdly even after leaving this figurization and embracing Islam they are Christians through the realization of the ethics of Jesus in their lives.<sup>337</sup>

Moreover he emphasizes that the "Western missionary" is never welcomed in the Muslim World by Muslims and Christians alike due to his farness from the mission of Jesus and this western

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<sup>335</sup> It was organized in 1974.

<sup>336</sup> Al Faruqi, Forward in *Triologue of Abrahamic Faiths*, i-iii.

<sup>337</sup> Al Faruqi, "Islam and Christianity" 244-245

figurizational Christian mission has been hardly exemplified in deeds rather it mostly remained asserted in words while a few examples<sup>338</sup> are the exceptions. Besides this the bitter history of crusades and colonialization added more fuel to high flames of hatred for the western figurization in the hearts of Muslims. He for all this suggests that “the mission chapter of Christian history”<sup>339</sup> should be closed.

Al Faruqi declares that many western scholars mostly Christians when work on non-Christian religions especially on Islam they have shown either a missionary mindset or of a-religious scientist who takes religious truths as observable external dimensions of those religions. In this regard he highlights the views of some Christian scholars as follows:

He raises objection on Neill’s<sup>340</sup> terms “self-exposure” and “personal involvement” to study a religion and suggests their analysis. He declares his three principles (despite of their similarity to some of his own meta-religious principles) non-rational and dogmatic. Moreover he holds that if Neill would not proceed further in his approach, his work would lead to a “genuine dialogue”<sup>341</sup> but his declaring Christian interpretation the only possible one for the being of God and his proselytizing call for the Muslims who in his view have not recognized Jesus prove his work an attempt of evangelization rather than a “Christian dialogue with other Religions”<sup>342</sup>.

He criticizes Hendrik Kraemer<sup>343</sup>’s view for whom comparative religion is merely a branch of missiology. Kraemer denies any kind of presuppositions and *epoché* to understand a religion holding that it can only be understood in the light of theology.

To overcome this problem he suggests that instead of changing the philosophy of comparative religion there is a need to have a “new understanding of the Christian faith.”<sup>344</sup>

Al Faruqi emphasizes the mutual understanding between Christianity and Islam and he considers the dialogue to be the only source to achieve it. He declares that although there are sources

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<sup>338</sup> He refers to Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965), a missionary, doctor, philosopher and musician who worked for the cause of humanity. He was awarded Nobel Prize in 1952. Accessed May 16, 2023, “Albert Schweitzer” <http://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1952>

<sup>339</sup> Al Faruqi, “Islam and Christianity”, 246.

<sup>340</sup> He was Stephen Neill (1900-1984) a bishop and missionary. Fiona Gardner, “Bishop Stephen Neill: towering figure of twentieth century global Christianity” last modified July 29, 2021, <https://survivingchurch.org/2021/07/29/bishop>

<sup>341</sup> Al Faruqi, *Christian Ethics*, 38.

<sup>342</sup> Al Faruqi, *Christian Ethics*, 38.

<sup>343</sup> He (1888-1965) was a Dutch historian of religion. His most famous work for Christian mission is *Christian Message in a non Christian World*. John Roxborough, “Hendrik Kraemer,” updated December 29, 2023, <http://roxborough.com>

<sup>344</sup> Al Faruqi, *Christian Ethics*, 37.



which provide understanding of both the religions like knowledge of Islamic contents and Christian tradition by orientalist and Muslim scholars respectively but it is conceptual, descriptive or listed knowledge.

After explaining the nature and highlighting the significance of history of religions, he relates it to Christianity declaring that it is only one among many of the religio-cultures of humanity that are the subject matter of history of religions. So he suggests that instead of a standard or criteria to evaluate the other religions, Christianity should be examined under the principles of history of religions just like other religions; Islam and Judaism et cetera.<sup>345</sup>

### **3.1.2 Role and efforts of Swidler and al Faruqi to develop collaboration among the followers of the three Faiths:**

Swidler and al Faruqi have their role in the development of trialogue. A few examples are illustrated to have a view of their efforts in this regard.

Swidler's role can be seen through the following points:

#### **Swidler's Trialogue:**

He has been actively working on trialogue since 1978<sup>346</sup> as he explains that "semi annual national scholars Trialogue"<sup>347</sup> meetings were held from 1978-1984 at Kenedy Institute of

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<sup>345</sup> Al Faruqi, "Islam and Other Faiths," 183-189.

<sup>346</sup> Adams, *There Must be You*, 175.

<sup>347</sup> Swidler, "Trialogue" in *Trialogue: Jews, Christians and Muslims in Dialogue* 43.

Ethics<sup>348</sup> as a result of which International Scholars Annual Trialogue (ISAT) has been launched in 1989 and since then its meetings have been held in different countries like United States, Jerusalem, Macedonia, Indonesia and Jordan. ISAT is a series of conferences among the other conferences of the Institute for Interreligious Intercultural Dialogue (IIID) established by Swidler in 1978 as a companion arm of Journal of Ecumenical Studies. The purpose of ISAT's meetings like other conferences of the Institute<sup>349</sup> is to bring published research of the Journal into various world partnerships and practical activities.<sup>350</sup>

In response to a question about his trialogue he explained,

“As far as I know, the first serious Trialogue among Jewish, Christian, and Muslim scholars started in 1978 when Sargent Shriver, brother-in-law of U.S. President John F. Kennedy and the Founder of the United States Peace Corps, asked me and my friend Eugene Fisher to bring together ten Jewish, ten Christian, and ten Muslim scholars to launch a scholars Trialogue. For the next years we met semi-annually under aegis of the Kennedy Institute for Ethics in Washington, D.C., and since the latter 1990s annually under the sponsorship of the Dialogue Institute, and known as the International Scholars Abrahamic Trialogue (ISAT)”<sup>351</sup>

Swidler emphasizes that “fundamental research and dialogue”<sup>352</sup> approach has been proved very successful between Protestants and Catholics in Germany. The same approach has been applied for the trialogue but he insists that unless the absolutes of the three religions are not discussed critically the results of this long term approach cannot be achieved. For this purpose the ISAT's members wrote nine papers on the absolutes; “The Chosen People/Promised Land, The Christ and The Al-Qur'an.”<sup>353</sup>

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<sup>348</sup> It is an institute of practical ethics at George Town University, Washington D.C. “More than 50 years of leadership in ethics for a complex world.” Kennedy Institute of Ethics, accessed August 24, 2023 <https://kenedyinstitute.georgetown.edu/>

<sup>349</sup> It began as *IIID* in 1978 then modified to *Global Dialogue Institute* and since 2008 it has been known as *Dialogue Institute*.

<sup>350</sup> Swidler, “Trialogue” in *Trialogue: Jews, Christians and Muslims in Dialogue* 43. and “History”, Dialogue Institute, accessed August 24, 2023 <http://dialogueinstitute.org/history>

<sup>351</sup> Abdur-Rahman Abul-Majd, Leonard Swidler and AbdurRahman Abou Almajd on a Bridge to Islamic-Christian Dialogue,

<sup>352</sup> Swidler, “Trialogue” in *Trialogue*, 43.

<sup>353</sup> Swidler, “Trialogue” in *Trialogue*, 43.

Swidler explains that dialogue conducted in 1992 on the base of these papers has shown the radiant results as the participants have expressed their “self-critical” view by developing “deep trust” and accepting “constructive critiques”.<sup>354</sup>

He explains that in modern times many committed adherents of these religions readily reinterpret these once un-negotiable absolutes making them relative absolutes and this is what has happened in these trialogical discussions and in this way these absolutes are no more a hurdle in the way of dialogue.<sup>355</sup>

### **Dialogue between Christians and Jews:**

His efforts to develop collaboration between Christians and Jews can be viewed by the following points:

#### **A. Jesus was a Jewish Rabbi:**

He sees Christianity very close to Judaism and the very basic point in this regard for him is Jesus. He declares that Yeshua instead of Jesus was used till the 1<sup>st</sup> century which is the Latin and Greek form of Hebrew name Yehoshua and there are three meanings of this word Yeshua; YAWAH (Hebrew name for God) salvation, wholeness and one and only God. Moreover he explains that Yeshua of Nazareth was a prophet, a teacher and a rabbi to whom many non-Jews came for salvation, wholeness and the Jewish insight of ethical monotheism. He affirms that Yeshua was a Jew till his last breath while the titles of Messiah and Christ were given to him by some of his followers and since the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century his followers have been known as Christians. He holds that Yeshua as a focal figure of Christianity is not the Messiah expected by the Jews instead he becomes Christ through whom Gentiles know one true God of Jews.<sup>356</sup>

He clarifies that Yeshua firmly believed in oneness of God and whenever he used the terms father or spirit of God his early Jewish followers took it in metaphorical and picture language but later on the followers of Jesus as Greek Christians use to think in a broader sense in Greek philosophical, abstract and ontological ways and in this regard the doctrine of Trinity emerged. Swidler holds that yeshua and his early followers emphasized doing instead of thinking, while

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<sup>354</sup> Swidler, “Trialogue” in *Trialogue*, 44.

<sup>355</sup> Swidler, “Trialogue” in *Trialogue*, 46.

<sup>356</sup> Leonard Swidler, *Yeshua: A Model for Moderns*, (Kansas City: Sheed Ward, 1988), v-vi and 1-5.

the later Christians have to raise the questions and explain the answers in a new changed mode of thinking.<sup>357</sup>

His stress on a strong relation of Jesus with Judaism is expressed in his books; *Yeshua: A Model for Moderns* and *Yeshua the Jew: A Model for Everyone*.

### **B. Oberammergau passion play:**

This is one example of his efforts to clarify the doubts of Christians about Jews and to develop good relations among them. The passion play is played every 10 years since 1634-1674 and every decadal year since 1980 by the inhabitants of village Oberammergau, Germany as a vow of the natives who faced a plague in 1633. The play covers the visit of Jesus to Jerusalem and his crucifixion according to Christians. But the problem was that there were anti-Semitic material in the content of the play and after Vatican II the authorities recommended some changes (in the context that the whole Jewish community could not be blamed for the crucifixion of the Christ) to the leadership of Oberammergau in 1965 which were not followed in 1970's script and as a result its canonical approval was withheld by the Catholic Church. So a lot of advisors and representatives went to the village to solve the matter with their suggestions and critiques. River Adams rightly refers to one of Swidler's principles of Dialogue that only an adherent of a religion or ideology can define his/her identity; no one from the outside can define it. Swidler with his team went there to build a bridge and as Adams points out, "He was a half-Jewish Christian devoting his life to dialogue,"<sup>358</sup> so his stance was neither to tell the passion committee where they were wrong nor to correct them. Rather he worked with passion committee through his dialogical stance to explore that how and why they were in need to bring changes in the play to follow Jesus in the best possible way

"to bring historicity into it and clean up its traditional Antisemitism."<sup>359</sup>

Almost for thirty years Swidler continuously visited the village and along with his team members helped to bring improvements in symbolism, costumes and most importantly in the

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<sup>357</sup> Leonard Swidler, *For All Life: Toward a Universal Declaration of a Global Ethic: An Interreligious Dialogue*, (Ashland: White Cloud Press, 1999), 118.

<sup>358</sup> Adams, *There Must be You*, 152.

<sup>359</sup> Adams, *There Must be You*, 144.

script and theology of the play. He seemed satisfy with his efforts when during the 2010 performance, someone from the audience said to him,

“This is a Jesus who is believable to modern persons!”<sup>360</sup>

### **Dialogue between Christians and Muslims:**

He considers dialogue of Christians and Jews with Muslims very important in context of today's world. He appreciates the role of Muslims to emphasize the dialogue of Christians with Muslims on the base of his personal experience.

#### **1. Muslim Scholars of the modern world:**

He on the base of his personal experience appreciates the theoretical and practical efforts of some Muslim scholars for effective dialogue because they have deabsolutized view of truth like Smail Balić<sup>361</sup>, Asaf Fyzee<sup>362</sup>, Muhammad M. Arkoun<sup>363</sup>, Muhmud Muhammad Taha<sup>364</sup>, Khalid Duran<sup>365</sup>, Mohammad Talbi, Hasan Askari and Riffat Hassan<sup>366</sup>. He illustrates their views regarding study of religion, critical thinking and dialogue.<sup>367</sup>

He declares their efforts to be very limited because their effectively played role can only be seen in their work outside their homelands; the Muslim world. For this he refers to an Egyptian scholar Fathi Osman who worked in America for a long time. He planned with Swidler to write a dialogic article for the journal of Ecumenical Studies but as he had to return to the Muslim world for some reasons, he could not write it and in Swidler's words,

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<sup>360</sup> Adams, *There Must be You*, 153.

<sup>361</sup> He (1920-2002) was a Bosnian-Austrian scholar who mostly worked abroad. "*Smail Balić*." accessed August 14, 2023. <https://www.biographies.net/biography/smail-balic/m/0k2ghb>

<sup>362</sup> He was an Indian Muslim scholar, jurist and diplomat. Farhad Daftary, "Professor Asaf A. A. Fyzee (1899-1981)" *Arabica* **T. 31, Fasc. 3 (Nov. 1984)** 327-330. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/4056205>

<sup>363</sup> He (1928–2010) was a Algerian Muslim scholar who taught in France. He is known as Advocate of Muslim modernism who applied academic disciplines of the West to the history and literature of the Muslim world. "Mohammed Arkoun" accessed August 14, 2023 [www.giffordlectures.org/lecturers/mohammed-arkoun](http://www.giffordlectures.org/lecturers/mohammed-arkoun)

<sup>364</sup> He (1909-1985) was a Sudanese Muslim thinker and professional engineer. "Brief Biography of Ustadh Mahmoud Muhammad Taha" accessed on August 14, 2023 [https://www.alfikrah.org/page\\_view\\_e.php?page\\_id=2](https://www.alfikrah.org/page_view_e.php?page_id=2)

<sup>365</sup> He (1939-2010) was a specialist of history, sociology and politics in Islamic world. "Khalid Duran" Alchetron, The Free Encyclopedia, updated December 7, 2024 <http://alchetron.com/Khalid-Duran>

<sup>366</sup> She (1943-) is a Pakistani-American Muslim feminist theologian. "Riffat Hassan" updated September 29, 2022 <http://alchetron.com/Riffat-Hassan>

<sup>367</sup> Swidler, "Islam and the Trialogue of Abrahamic Religions," 445-446.

“the intellectual atmosphere was just too restrictive for him to be able to think the thoughts needed in order to write the article.”<sup>368</sup>

Likewise he illustrates the example of Dr. Fazlur Rahman who was in favour of freedom of thought and worked for ten years as Pakistan’s education minister and six years for the Central Islamic Research Institute Karachi but he had to resign in 1968 in despair because the institute could not proceed to achieve its goal.

## **2. Swidler’s efforts for peace in Macedonia:**

Swidler and Paul Mojzes were working on Trialogue in Indonesia. When civil war broke out in Macedonia, they brought the trialogue in Macedonia on the invitation of its president Boris Trajkovski<sup>369</sup> to abolish the conflict between majority of Orthodox Christians and Albanian Muslims who were a significant minority. Although they could not succeed to stop the violence but due to their efforts the scholars from both religious institutions agreed on the following points;<sup>370</sup>

1. Religious leaders would meet twice a year for discussions over various issues to find solutions of the problems and to settle the matters with peace and cooperation.
2. An interreligious cooperative council would be set up.
3. Faculties and student bodies would meet for the collaboration between Orthodox Christians and Muslims.

Swidler comments for this “there is still so much to do.”<sup>371</sup>

Al Faruqi’s role and efforts to develop collaboration among the followers of the three Faiths can be seen through the following points:

### **Al Faruqi’s Trialogue:**

Through the assistance of MJCC the American Academy of Religion’s council of Islamic Studies in 1979 organized a conference titled “Trialogue of the Abrahamic Faiths”. Nine members from the three religions presented their papers on the three agreed topics relevant to the

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<sup>368</sup> Swidler, “Islam and the Trialogue of Abrahamic Religions,” 446.

<sup>369</sup> He (1956-2004) was the second president of Macedonia from 1999 to his death in a plane crash. [http://pantheon.world/profile/person/Boris\\_Trajkovski](http://pantheon.world/profile/person/Boris_Trajkovski)

<sup>370</sup> Adams, *There Must be You*, xv.

<sup>371</sup> Adams, *There Must be You*, xvii.

true understanding of these religions and their positive relations to one another. Al Faruqi not only participated in that meeting, he as the chairman of Islamic Studies Group of American Academy of Religion edited the work of those scholars. Al Faruqi declared it a great effort for the three faiths to cooperate with one another.

Talking about Arab Muslims intellectuals engaged in Christian-Muslim dialogue Jane I Smith<sup>372</sup> acknowledges,

“Among the most deeply involved Palestinians in such exchanges several decades ago was the late Ismail al Faruqi of Temple University, who was uniquely prepared for a deep level of discourse because of his level of scholarship in Christian theology and ethics. His seminal work on Abrahamic dialogue served as a basic text for the consideration of interfaith issues.”<sup>373</sup>

She further holds,

“As the title of al Faruqi’s pioneering work *Triologue of the Abrahamic Faiths* indicates, he was one of the first to advocate the three-way conversation among Muslim, Christians, and Jews.”<sup>374</sup>

### **Mission, Da’wah and Dialogue**

His colleague and friend Dr. Khurshid Ahmed greatly appreciated his role in the organization of Chambésy Dialogue Consultation held in 1976<sup>375</sup> by stating,

“Brother al Faruqi’s role in this unique consultation was pivotal...His command of the Christian sources was our greatest asset in this interfaith dialogue with the leading lights of the Christian world. His arguments could not be countered, despite sophisticated responses from the other side. The final communiqué of this consultation was a landmark declaration. This declaration bore his imprint on every paragraph. It was the Muslim draft, prepared mainly by brother al Faruqi, that was accepted as the basis for the final declaration. It was the first time in the global movement of Christian–Muslim dialogue that

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<sup>372</sup> She (937-) is dean and professor of history of religions at the Iliff school of theology, known for her research on Islam. “Jane Idleman Smith” accessed January 25, 2024 [www.goodreads.com](http://www.goodreads.com)

<sup>373</sup> Jane Idleman Smith, *Muslims, Christians, and the Challenge of Interfaith Dialogue*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 45-46.

<sup>374</sup> Smith, *Muslims, Christians, and the Challenge of Interfaith Dialogue*, 125.

<sup>375</sup> The topic was on ‘Christian Mission and Islamic Dawah,’ jointly organized by the World Congress of Churches, Geneva, the Islamic Foundation, Leicester and the Center for Study of Islam and Christian Muslim Relations, Sellyoak College, Birmingham, England.

the Muslim position was presented so effectively and was grudgingly accepted at a joint forum such as that.”<sup>376</sup>

In the view of Anwar Ibrahim,

“Thus unshackled, he took the dialogue to a universal level at a time when the term ‘globalization’ was not even coined yet. By being able to bring together the discourse of the three Abrahamic faiths, al Faruqi’s efforts thus represented a tour *de force* and became the precursor to the systematic engagement among Muslims, Christians, and Jews in discourses which we now take for granted as being part and parcel of civilizational dialogue.”<sup>377</sup>

### **Christian Muslim Dialogue:**

Al Faruqi’s work in his dialogue can be seen mostly on Islam and Christianity. A number of books, articles and his presentations are evident in this regard addressing the commonalties and issues between the followers of two faiths to bring their followers close to each other through positive interaction and dialogue.<sup>378</sup> He participated in many conferences and symposiums at different levels and forums for dialogue with Christians as a representative of Islam.

Jane I Smith says,

“He was also one of the very few Muslims who engaged in a thorough study of Christian theology and ethics. His untimely death in 1986 has been deeply regretted by his many Christian friends as well as the American Muslim community as a whole.”<sup>379</sup>

She further elaborates al Faruqi’s two missions;

“he wanted to discover the real Christianity unburdened by the influence of Greek thought... and to defend the truth of Islam against the distortions and prejudices through which Christians have always tended to view his faith. Rapprochement between the religions, he insisted, is possible despite these historical aberrations.”<sup>380</sup>

### **3.2 Interaction of Christianity and Islam with other Religions and Ideologies:**

<sup>376</sup> Khurshid Ahmad, “Isma‘il Al Faruqi: As I Knew Him” in *Islam and Knowledge*, 24.

<sup>377</sup> Anwar Ibrahim, Isma‘il Al Faruqi: The Precursor to Civilizational Dialogue in *Islam and Knowledge*, 32.

<sup>378</sup> His book *Christian Ethics* and article; *Islam and Christianity a Diatribe or dialogue* can be seen in regard.

<sup>379</sup> Smith, *Muslims, Christians, and the Challenge of Interfaith Dialogue*, 125.

<sup>380</sup> Smith, *Muslims, Christians, and the Challenge of Interfaith Dialogue*, 125.



Besides their own religions; Christianity and Islam they give great importance to other world religions emphasizing the role of all for the dialogue.<sup>381</sup>

Swidler before moving to interreligious dialogue emphasizes intra- religious dialogue and for this a peaceful environment is necessary within a community. Moreover he not only worked to develop good relations between Protestants and Catholics but also tried his best to win the important rights of the Catholics within the Church. When the church authorities condemned Hans Küng Swidler was one of those Catholic activists who took crucial steps against it through organizing Association for the Rights of Catholics in the Church ARCC in 1980<sup>382</sup>.

### **Swidler's View on Interaction of Christianity with Other Religions and ideologies:**

He says, "The impetus for dialogue in the contemporary world has generally come from Christians, and secondly from Jews."<sup>383</sup>

#### **3.2.1 Intra-Faith Dialogue:**

Michael S. Jones explains Swidler's Catholic stance by stating,

"While Swidler finds great value in working within the Roman Catholic tradition, he has a critical scholarly knowledge of that tradition and, working from within, does not hesitate to oppose long-held Catholic beliefs and practices when critical reflection shows them to be in need of revision. His approach to ecumenism is no wishy-washy, touchy-feely inclusivism that accepts every opinion advocated by anyone as long as it is advanced with sincerity."<sup>384</sup>

He further explains,

"It is an ecumenism based on critical reflection and the conviction that careful consideration of all options and the contexts that render them credible to those who hold them will lead to mutual understanding, ameliorate many sources of

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<sup>381</sup> Their importance and role of religion for dialogue is evident first from their view of religion explained in chapter 2. Secondly Swidler disagrees with Karl Barth's view of declaring Christianity true created by Transcendent while all the others as misleading religions created by humans. See Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study*: 8. Likewise Faruqi while talking about the Abrahamic Faiths declares that all the three are God's religions represent His will revealed through His prophets crystallizing the same truth. See "Common Bases Between the Two Religions in Regard of Convictions and Points of Agreement in the Spheres of Life" in *Islam and Other Faiths*, 216.

<sup>382</sup> Its detail can be seen in chapter 2.

<sup>383</sup> Swidler, "Islam and the Trialogue of Abrahamic Religions," 444.

<sup>384</sup> Michael S. Jones, "Leonard Swidler's influence on the work of an American Evangelical and on Romanian Academia", *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 50 no. 1, (2015): 138. Project Muse <https://muse.jhu.edu/article>

conflict, and have the greatest potential to lead to truth (appropriately understood).”<sup>385</sup>

Swidler declares Intra-Christian Ecumenical Movement a vital step to boost inter-religious dialogue as his three primary modes of dialogue of head, hand and heart have emerged from Western Enlightenment (Christendom). In response to the growing need of Global Dialogue among world religions he highlights the role of Protestants and Orthodox Christians through their world council of churches and though Catholics have joined this stream later especially by Vatican II but their struggle has also been continued long before this in the form of Una Sancta movement et cetera.<sup>386</sup>

He declares Una Sancta Movement a great step for the Protestant- Catholic unity and in paving the way for Catholics to join ecumenical movement. Regarding the historical development for the movement he refers to many forces which have been emerged after WW- I like Protestants’ turn from liberalism to their emphasis on scripture and the church, both Protestants and Catholics’ tendency to give importance to each others’ views through Lutheran Reformation and Renaissance, role of Liturgical movement to bring both denominations closer to each other and Catholic Church’s stance of giving importance to laity closer to the protestants’ view.<sup>387</sup>

Moreover he declares Germany’s role effective for the movement for the following reasons;<sup>388</sup>

- 1) It is the place where both Protestants and Catholics are in large number as compared to other European countries with Protestants’ Lutheran view which is closer to the Catholics.
- 2) Nazi persecution of the church has united both the denominations.
- 3) In 1920’s and 30’s many Catholic-Protestants groups are formed.
- 4) These groups become more active after the formation of Una Sancta Brotherhood.<sup>389</sup>
- 5) Due to Communism’s bad effects this movement has rapidly grown.

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<sup>385</sup> Jones, “Leonard Swidler’s influence on the work of an American Evangelical and on Romanian Academia”

<sup>386</sup> Swidler, “The History of Inter-Religious Dialogue”, 7.

<sup>387</sup> Leonard Swidler, *The Ecumenical Vanguard: the History of the Una Sancta Movement* , (Duquesne University Press, 1966) , xiii-xv

<sup>388</sup> Swidler, *The Ecumenical Vanguard*: xv and 269-271

<sup>389</sup> A Catholic priest Max Metzger.

- 6) After WW-II these groups have been considered to be the parts of the movement but due to the crisis of the war it seemed to be faded away. However after the mid of 50's the movement became fast.
- 7) Roman Catholic Church has committed to ecumenism because of this movement and 16<sup>th</sup> century Germany Reformation and Una Sancta movement play their role for Christian unity.

### **3.2.2 Christian perspective of Dialogue with others:**

On behalf of his religion he emphasizes that Christians should not have condemnatory behaviour towards non- Christians instead they should give them importance because only in this way they can prove themselves loyal toward their religion. It means that Christians should develop dialogue with the followers of other religions and ideologies avoiding debate. In this way they will know the insights or truth with others same to their own and it will help them to have “rediscovery of their own treasures”<sup>390</sup>. Moreover the new insights of other religions are not contrary to the Christian insights rather they will help Christians to recognize their own insights in a new way.

### **3.2.3 Catholic Community's Role toward Dialogue:**

To explain his own religious community's role in paradigm shift and in dialogue he illustrates the importance of some movements. Then with the second Vatican council's stance he highlights the following points for the role of Catholic Church for dialogue<sup>391</sup>:

#### **1. Freedom:**

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<sup>390</sup> Leonard Swidler, “Toward a Universal Theology of Religion” in *Faith Meets Faith Series*, eds. Leonard Swidler and Paul Mojzes, (New York: Orbis Books, 1987), 45.

<sup>391</sup> Swidler, “ Age of Global Dialogue”, 7-9.

Through its declaration of religious freedom the Catholic Church accepted the right of religious freedom of everyone including the Catholics. Before that they were considered to bound to follow each and every command of the pope without realization of their own freedom. Through this declaration the church acknowledged their freedom.

He considers religious freedom necessary for religious dialogue and holds that there should be a complete freedom for the followers of a religion within that religion. Moreover the followers of a religion should be concerned about the freedom of others to secure their own freedom. In this regard he refers to the restrictions for the lay Christians in Catholic Christianity in the past and emphasizes that Catholics can only develop a serious dialogue with protestants first, then orthodox, then Jews, then other non-Christians and then people with no religion by acknowledging their freedom and listening to them.<sup>392</sup>

## **2. Dynamic way of Thinking:**

Till the Vatican II the church resisted against every dynamic view about reality and remained static in its way of thinking about reality.

## **3. Inner Reformation:**

Till the 16<sup>th</sup> century the word 'reform' was forbidden to use in the Catholic Church. Even till the middle of 20<sup>th</sup> century the modern thought was banned and many theologians were censured in this regard. Through the modern thought the church became up to date.

## **4. Importance of this world:**

Salvation was considered to going to heaven after death. It was the declaration of the church in the modern world that leads to liberation theology.

## **5. Dialogue:**

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<sup>392</sup> Leonard Swidler, *Toward a Catholic Constitution*, (New York: Crossroad, 1996), 45.

Till the 16<sup>th</sup> century the church's view was self centred even the offer to participate in the ecumenical movement for the reunion from the Protestant leaders was rejected by the pope.

### **3.2.4 Need of Time for Christians:**

He emphasizes that in the third millennium to present Christianity in accordance with the modern critical thinking it is the vital task for Christians to follow the points below<sup>393</sup>:

#### **1. Return to their source:**

He holds that the source of Christianity is Jesus (Yeshua; the Jew) rather than Christ, the Anointed one, NT, ecumenical councils and teachings of the church et cetera on which most of the Christian scholars focused in the past. He is optimistic that many Christian scholars are now emphasizing the original source of their religion at both individual and collective level which he considers the need of time to be felt rightly as this is the most suitable action in the third millennium to offer by Christianity's side. He holds that clinging to its source Christianity can better participate in the authentic dialogue.

#### **2. Yeshua: A Concrete Human Being:**

He declares that as a human being Jesus lived a life that is a role model for the others. His followers can learn a lot from his life which he spent among them as a human being; from this they can learn to love the others, to see goodness in others even in the opponents because Jesus used to love his enemies as well. He refers to Jesus as a good example to be easily followed because when people observe someone and like his good manners, usually try to imitate him.

He explains that it can be taken in two ways; helpful because to follow living example of a human being is more inspirational and helpful rather than reading and listening about it but it can be dangerous as well when people want to describe that human being in the best way by associating supernatural powers to him and this has happened in the case of Jesus. He declares that for the contemporary man it cannot be useful although if it is taken metaphorically it can be wonderful.

#### **3. Yeshua positive on life:**

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<sup>393</sup> Swidler, The Meaning of Life at the edge of the third millennium, New York: Paulist Press, 1992. 71-79 and 86 - 114.

He states that the latterly adopted Christian understanding of body as evil and spirit as good is against the teachings and life practices of Yeshua; rather he led a life optimistic to the world by declaring that it is created by God; Yahweh and human beings are not composed of two separate things; body and spirit rather they are enspirited bodies or embodied spirits. Yeshua he says that set an example of following the law of God through good deeds by developing the lesson of love for God and love and care for others.

#### **4. Yeshua's Question:**

In this regard he highlights that Yeshua's focus was on the action rather than thinking. So, he kept in mind that what he should do and as a concerned Jew his emphasis was on ethics instead of doctrine. He refers that there could be one ethical law; Torah of the only one God by which Yeshua focused on two points; one's love for God and one's love for one's neighbor.

#### **5. Yeshua on persons:**

He mentions that Yeshua focused on persons either God or his fellow humans, throughout his life he served, loved and cared for people by helping them, giving them respect and working for their rights regardless of their status and reputation in the society. In this regard Swidler mentions the incidents from his life when he rose for the rights of the major but oppressed part of various cultures; woman.

#### **6. Ultimate Reality for Yeshua:**

He declares that Yeshua instead of today's abstract and philosophical language of Christianity used to speak and think in Semitic picture language. He comments that human philosophical language is too limited to speak about unlimited Ultimate Reality while Yeshua's language can help to understand the Ultimate Reality to lead the lives of individuals.

He declares that in place of Christianity's philosophical negative language the Judo-Christian and Muslim positive language can better provide the required understanding of the Source Being for the modern world.

#### **7. Doctrinal explanations for Modernity:**

He emphasizes that for modern critical mind the traditional explanation for some of the doctrines of Christianity do not make a sense and are difficult to understand. Therefore these doctrines should be explained in new ways. For this he selects three doctrines and tries to provide the understandable explanation for the modern critical thinkers;

**i- Resurrection of body:**

He explains that Christianity's beliefs like general resurrection of the bodies of all the persons on a specific day and also before that the resurrection of Jesus and immortality of the soul can be understood in the modern ways; Jesus' resurrection affirms the "best about the greatest"<sup>394</sup>, the resurrection of body expresses the goodness both in matter and spirit and immortality of soul satisfies the human urge for survival.

**ii- Is Yeshua God?**

He clarifies that Yeshua's "God-Man" understanding is the result of Hellenistic philosophical understanding which should be understood as a Greek ontological language and that was an attempt to move from the inner aspect to the outer one. Moreover he states that long before the impact of Greek culture's understanding on Christianity Jesus has also been denoted as God and for this he refers to the prologue of John's Gospel. He clarifies that it was merely an attempt to perceive the invisible God through images and metaphors.

He compares Christianity to Buddhism that from religion of Gautama Buddhism has been made as a religion about Buddha likewise from religion of Yeshua Christianity has become a religion about Christ. This he declares is only the result of different historical moves which are the attempts to express the experience of the transcendent in a trans-empirical language in the form of metaphors and symbols.

For the modern man he clarifies that instead of true human being and true God Yeshua should be denoted as true human and true divine. He declares that only in this way we can avoid to limitize the unlimitedness of God.

**iii- The Ultimate Reality; how many? One or three?:**

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<sup>394</sup> Swidler, The Meaning of Life at the edge of the third millennium, 98.

He explains that there is one God and Christianity does not deny this belief rather it takes it one God in three divine persons and it can be understood in three ways;

- a) It is taken as St. Augustine's psychological understanding of the three in one.
- b) It is taken in the perspective of Hellenistic philosophical language as mentioned earlier.
- c) It is taken as a general understanding of the trinity focusing on the one just like it is found in various religions; Hinduism, Daoism and Mahayana Buddhism et cetera by their beliefs of "Trimutri: Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva...T'ai I (Grand Unity), T'ien I (Heavenly Unity), and Ti I (Earthly Unity)... and Trikaya: the threefold body of the Buddha respectively.<sup>395</sup> Moreover he relates this threeness of God with generally known threefold understanding of thesis, antithesis and synthesis.

### **8. Dialogue; a future key:**

He appreciates Christians' move from debate to dialogue at grass-root, institutional and scholarly levels.

At the end he recommends that for the third millennium Christianity offers two points of focus to the world for better cooperation and understanding; dialogue which is a conversation to learn from the other because everyone has deabsolutized understanding of the truth and Yeshua who is the source of Christianity.

### **3.2.5 Christians' Dialogue with the followers of other Religions and Ideologies:**

Swidler holds that dialogue should be expanded from limited circle of Semitic religions to the Asian religions because their absolutely different view of reality can provide many new and unique insights of reality to Semitic religions and vice versa.<sup>396</sup>

#### **1. Christians and Hindus:**

Before their dialogue with Hinduism he declares that Christians should keep the following two points in mind:

- 1. Colonialism:

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<sup>395</sup> Swidler, *For All Life*, 119.

<sup>396</sup> Swidler, *After the Absolute*, 99.



Hindus like the followers of other Asian religions have experienced colonialism, so Christians should be ready for their response to the dialogue offer from Christians and in this regard they should be prepared to convince their partners to take part in authentic dialogue.

## 2. Nature of Hinduism:

He declares that Hinduism cannot be taken as a single religion rather it is “a complex of religions”<sup>397</sup> sharing same culture and history.

Regarding the Ultimate Reality he declares that Hinduism like Judo-Christian tradition distinguishes between the understandings of God in self and God related to or perceived by others. He declares that although the concepts of Yahweh and Hokmah in Judo-Christian tradition are similar to Brahman and Shakti or Ishvara of Hinduism but the East not only name the ultimate reality differently it also perceives it differently as compared to the West. That is why the Brahman is non-theistic and none personal while God is theistic and personal.

## 2. Christians and Buddhists:

He declares some points of similarity between Christianity and Buddhism along with the affirmation of differences. For the similarity he refers that both religions basically focus on historical figures;

“The relation of Buddha to Gautama is analogous to the relation of Christ to Jesus.”<sup>398</sup>

He refers to externalisation and ontologisation found in both the religions and recalls Yeshua’s focus on inner perfection like Rabbis through his emphasizes two commandments; love of God and love for other human beings. He relates Yeshua’s concern for others to Boddhisatva where one’s own salvation is not enough, one should be careful for others as well.

For differences he takes theistic belief of Christianity contrary to Buddhism, the former affirms the Ultimate Reality as personal god while the latter negates it. He explains that although in Buddhism Sunyata is taken negative as compared to positive concept of God but it is misunderstood as nothingness. He views that differences between both the religions may not

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<sup>397</sup> Swidler, *After the Absolute*, 100.

<sup>398</sup> Swidler, *After the Absolute*, 105.

necessarily be taken as contradictions rather their nature should be analyzed because these differences can also be complementary to each other.

He emphasizes that followers of both the religions are in need of demythologization of their beliefs to return to their original sources and messages of their founders.

For this he declares that humanity based language is necessary because only in this way any tradition can be understood in modern critical thinking. Transcendent should be understood in terms of immanence; instead of thinking externally or above there is a need to think internally from below through humanity based language understandable to all.

### **3. Christians and Confucians:**

He refers to various bases for dialogue between the two religions. He holds that Confucianism being the most dominant and organized Chinese originated religion shares its stress on spirituality with Christianity. He stresses that before Christianity's dialogue with Confucianism it is important to keep five eras of historical development in mind because different terms of Confucianism developed in specific time periods to denote to Lord the highest of the gods and God like Ti and T'ien.

He explains that many a Christian researches are discouraged and condemned by Christian authorities where usually the researchers have tried to find the similar theological points between the two religions and in this way it has remained a hurdle to engage both the religions in dialogue.

He declares that Confucianism's core like Christianity is humanism when it takes transcendent in terms of immanence with its emphasis on self-transcendence and self-effort. He also refers to the golden rule and declares that both the religions first emphasize on self love to move to love of the other.

### **4. Christianity with Ideologies:**

#### **Christianity and Marxism:**

He declares Marxism the most organized ideology which provides the explanation of the meaning of life and how to live accordingly. He holds that mostly in Christian- Marxist

dialogues the participants need to defend their participation, they have to explain their reasons of taking part in dialogue, next they have to analyse the religion or ideology of the other and then comes the partners' concern from both sides for humans; the more basic questions about human rights, interaction and role of an individual and the whole society are some questions with different answers from both sides should be discussed continuously to shape the authentic dialogue between Christians and Marxists. He recalls the memorable history of dialogue between Christianity and Marxism since 1964 with second Vatican's stance toward Christianity's dialogue with non-believers and in this regard he appreciates the efforts of Christian and Marxist scholars. Before that he declares that dialogue was not held actively. Despite of many a hurdles (unwillingness for dialogue from political powers and authorities, claim of some participants of dialogue to be adherents of both this religion and ideology at the same time) in the way of dialogue between the two he comments that the occurrence of dialogue between Christianity and Marxism in different time periods in different countries<sup>399</sup> especially of Eastern Europe is the proof that both of them can live in cooperation.

He clarifies some wrong assumptions; generally it is thought that Christian participants in dialogue are the capitalists, he holds that they can be socialists as well. Moreover he claims that capitalism and socialism are wrongly understood.

### **3.2.6 Need of a Global Declaration of Human Ethics:**

He has been working on the declaration since 90's along with other scholars especially Hans Küng to bring people unite on the base of a global ethic. He has translated Küng's draft for the Parliament of World Religions held in 1993. It has focused to bring people of the world together for justice and overcome different kinds of conflicts and discriminations. Küng has formulated the one, circulated it for comments and suggestions, and then presented it for signatures. Swidler has prepared a draft to initiate different groups and forums to generate their own declaration drafts. He has taken creation of a global ethic declaration as a continuous process to reach a common global ethic for all. He declares it as global ethic instead of ethics to avoid the lengthy

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<sup>399</sup> He points toward Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia.

set of rules difficult to reach and apply and to focus only on precise selected rules easy to follow.<sup>400</sup>

Swidler has formulated the basic and middle principles for his declaration of a global ethic. The basic principles focus on freedom, respect and dignity for everyone without violation of the rights of anyone. It stresses not only the prestige and importance of human beings but also develops a concern for non-living things as well. The middle principles are set in accordance with the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights of UNO. These principles have been divided into various categories; legal, religious, decision making, gender equalities, speech and information, properly utilization of work and time, children rights, peace and saving the environment. Every category provides the ways to protect the human rights. There is a vital place of the Golden Rule in these principles with a focus of granting high respect to the religions and beliefs of the people suggesting dialogue.<sup>401</sup>

### **Al Faruqi's View of Islam's Interaction with Other Religions:**

Along with his Islamic stance he usually talks in the terms of comparison. For example he explains Islam's perspective with the perspective of other religions regarding non-believers by stating that ethnic religions like Judaism and Hinduism condemn the non believers considering them enemies and having lower status. Likewise universal religions Christianity and Buddhism declare others the enemies.<sup>402</sup>

He declares that Islamic stance in this regard can be seen in three ways; humanism, hanafism and historical revelation in case of Judaism and Christianity. He declares that Islam acknowledges the non-believers on the base of religion giving them a double religious privilege; one is natural religion and the other is historical revelation and in case of revealed religions it becomes a three dimensional privilege with the third one of sharing Islam's tradition.<sup>403</sup>

### **3.2.1 Islam's Relation to Others:**

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<sup>400</sup> These drafts are available at different sources. Dialogue institute is the one. "Related Documents", accessed December 23, 2023, <https://dialogueinstitute.org/global-ethic-documents>

<sup>401</sup> Leonard Swidler, " Universal Declaration of A Global Ethic" accessed December 23, 2023 <https://dialogueinstitute.squarespace.com>

<sup>402</sup> Ismail al-Faruqi, Rights of non-Muslims under Islam: social and cultural aspects, *Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs Journal* 1:1, (1979): 90-102, published online: 20 Mar 2007. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02666957908715785>

<sup>403</sup> Al Faruqi, Rights of Non-Muslims under Islam: Social and Cultural Aspects, 92-93.

It is of three fold<sup>404</sup>;

### **1. Ideational Relation:**

He views Islam's ideational relation in three ways; with Judaism and Christianity, with other world religions and with all people who belong to no religion.

#### **i) Islam and Abrahamic Faiths:**

He explains that Islam has a unique relationship with Judaism and Christianity because Muslims not only believe in the prophets of these two religions; they are not allowed to discriminate among them. Moreover belief in the revelations sent to Abraham, Moses, David and Jesus are also part of faith of Muslims as those prophets and their revelations are sent by God. In this regard he refers to some verses of Al-Quran.<sup>405</sup> So he declares that Islam takes these two religions *de jure* as true revealed religions from God.

He declares that Islam along with Christianity, Judaism and monotheistic religion of pre-Islamic Arabia represents the crystallization of unity in religious consciousness through Hanifism.<sup>406</sup> And for this Islam shares the following principles with these religions:

##### **1. Oneness of God:**

He explains that unlike other religious traditions of Indians, ancient Egyptians and Chinese, this principle distinguishes the Creator from creature.

##### **2. Purpose of man's creation:**

This he declares to be the "unconditional service of God on earth"<sup>407</sup>.

##### **3. Relevance of Creator to creature:**

He emphasizes that this relevance is expressed through moral imperatives and law.

##### **4. Responsibility of man:**

Man is capable to transform the creatures under the command of God into what He desires them to be.

##### **5. Result of man's obedience:**

He declares that when man obeys the commands of God, he gains the happiness.

#### **ii) Islam and World Religions:**

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<sup>404</sup> Al Faruqi, "The Role of Islam in Global Inter-Religious Dependence", 74-92.

<sup>405</sup> Al-Quran, 2:285, 29:46 and 42:15.

<sup>406</sup> He clearly distinguishes this from Karl Rahner's Anonymous Christians. Al Faruqi, "The Role of Islam in Global Inter-Religious Dependence", 76.

<sup>407</sup> Al Faruqi, "The Role of Islam in Global Inter-Religious Dependence", 75.

With other religions he relates Islam with its universal phenomenon of prophecy. Despite of the same message of all the prophets, the reason of people belonging to various historical religions al Faruqi explains in two ways; theoretical which is divine and practical (human). In the first way the messages of prophets he declares are composed of tawhid and morality. Every revelation is sent with a particularity applicable according to historical circumstances and situations of the people and this does not affect the core or essence of their messages. In the second way he refers to many hurdles preventing people to accept and act according to the will of God like they refuse to accept commands of God that stifle their selfish desires, with the passage of time they may forget the revelation and when it passes through cultural, ethnic and linguistic frontiers, it may be changed. For this God continuously sent prophets to re-convey, revise and re-establish the same message.

### iii) **Islam and People of the World:**

To all the people he affirms relation of Islam with the following points<sup>408</sup>;

1. **Vicegerency:** He regards that man as vicegerent of God on earth is capable to transform the whole creation including him into the patterns set by God.
2. **Primordial religion:** He emphasizes the primordial religion, the true religion or Ur-religion innate in human nature on the basis of which every person belongs to religion of God.
3. **Reason d'être of man:** He affirms man's creation with a high purpose in the light of Quran that is the worship as well as the service of God.
4. **Cosmic significance:** due to the above mentioned nature and responsibilities of human beings he affirms their cosmic significance to make divine will realized in space and time.

## 2. **Practical Relation:**

Regarding the practical relation of Islam he takes Constitution of Medina as a covenant between Muslims and non-Muslims which abolished all tribal systems under the Islamic state abide by Islamic Law.<sup>409</sup>

### i) **The Jewish Ummah:**

<sup>408</sup> Al Faruqi, "The Role of Islam in Global Inter-Religious Dependence", 81-85.

<sup>409</sup> Al Faruqi, "Meta Religion," 51-56.

He holds the Jews have been considered an Ummah under the Islamic State since that covenant and have enjoyed the freedom and integrity. The three Jewish tribes showed rebellion and punished not as Jews but as the rebels of Islamic state. Later on with the expansion of Islamic state to various regions the Jews have flourished with liberty, their religion has been given prestige, they have developed their language and literature and they also willingly have served the Islamic state and all of this has happened because Islam has recognized torah as a revelation and Judaism as religion of God.

**ii) The Christian Ummah:**

He explains that Christians like Jews also have enjoyed the same liberty, freedom and dignity under the Islamic State. After the Mekkan conquest in 630 CE the Najran delegation met the Prophet S.A.W in front of whom he presented the message of Islam and some of them accepted it and joined the Muslim Ummah while others preferred to be Christians under the Islamic State likewise Muslims have developed peace relations with the Christians of Abyssinia.

**iii) The Ummahs of Other Religions:**

He holds that Islam on its advent to Persia recognized Zoroastrians as Ummah within Islamic State. With some of the converts millions chose to remain Zoroastrians accorded to some duties and rights like other ummahs. Islam's conquest to India in 711 CE provided the base to establish its good relations with Hinduism and Buddhism. So, on the basis of primordial religion Islam gives honor, respect and prestige to every other religion. Wherever there were evil leaders in Islamic State not only the non-Muslims but also the Muslims suffered a lot. He clarifies that unlike previous practices Islam laid its claim in critical and rational way. Instead of doubt, secularism, skepticism and materialism Islam have respect and concern for other religions and their adherents.

**3. Islam's Contribution to Global Inter-Religious Dependence:**

In this regard he recalls the historical experience of Islam with the followers of other religions for more than 1400 years.

**i- Islam's intercourse with others:**

He holds that Islam has a long history of interreligious interaction with various ethnic and religious communities.

ii- Relationship with Semitic Religions:

He refers to Islam's relation with Judaism and Christianity on the base of common origin.

iii- Relationship with all humans:

He refers that Islam's revelational relationship with Abrahamic religions not only extended to other religions and even to all the humans on the base of innate *din al- fitrah*.

iv- Islam's millah system:

He holds that the Islamic law devised in theory practically followed under Islam's millah system by assigning duties and rights to all the members of various communities; Muslims and non-Muslims.

v- Respect and concern for others:

Islam instead of tolerating other religions with scepticism and doubt has built a relationship of concern and respect for their adherents.

vi- Rational esteem for others' claims:

He declares that Islam with its rational and critical approach maintained its esteem for others' truth claims about religion without compromising or renouncing its "exclusivity of religious truth"<sup>410</sup>.

vii- Mutual love and dependence:

He appreciates Islam's role in creating the suitable environment for the cooperation of the adherents of various world religions for mutual love and dependence under "universal Islamic civilization"<sup>411</sup> with its prominent features like world affirmation, humanism and piety.

### 3.2.2 Interfaith Dialogue and Islam:

Al Faruqi also explained about the Islamic Meta-religion. From here, he associated Islam with the universal rationality<sup>412</sup>;

i) Islamic Meta-religion is not a priori condemning any religion, but assumes that every religion is God revealed until history proven that it is human made.

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<sup>410</sup> Al Faruqi, "The Role of Islam in Global Inter-Religious Dependence", 92.

<sup>411</sup> Al Faruqi, "The Role of Islam in Global Inter-Religious Dependence", 92.

<sup>412</sup> Al Faruqi, "Meta Religion", 56-57.



- ii) The historical background of religion is linked with revelation on the basis that there is no person that God had not sent them prophet to teach them *tawhid* and morality.
- iii) Islamic Meta-religion acknowledges man is inborn inquisitive nature to know God.
- iv) Islamic Meta-religion suggests a critical, rational examination on one's own religion on the human addition, alteration of man's original religion.
- v) Islamic Meta-religion honors reason as to revelation neither can discard the other without imperiling itself.
- vi) Human is good, not fallen sinner, he is free and responsible.
- vii) Islamic Meta-religion assumes, world is not created in vain, not the work of a blind force.
- viii) Islamic Meta-religion is an institution, not a mere theory, to appreciate pluralism of laws.

### 3.2.3 Rights of non-Muslims under Islam:

He explains that the Islamic Ummah is a pluralistic world Ummah that gives freedom and protection of rights to all the people living in the Islamic state because it has been governed by the law; Islamic Shari'ah for Muslims and the religious law for other adherents according to their respective religions. It makes man realize his high rank and status by God with the responsibility to act upon God's will and make it realize on earth.<sup>413</sup>

He clarifies some Islamic terms and some debating issues questioned by different scholars during the discussion after his presentation of the paper on the Role of Islam in Global Inter-Religious Dependence. In response to an Anglican priest Paul Bairoch's question about freedom to renounce Islam while living in Makkah he explained "to be Muslim is both to subscribe to a religion and to be a citizen of the Islamic state."<sup>414</sup> So if a Muslim renounces Islam he has to emigrate from Makkah because in this condition living in Islamic State means showing disloyalty to the state. Likewise he clarified that a non-Muslim cannot live in or visits Makkah.

Acknowledging the right of others to present their religious truth claims to Muslims he holds that Muslims should be aware of the instructions of their religions or if they don't have a grip on them they should consult the people of their religion who possess the relevant knowledge and

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<sup>413</sup> Al Faruqi, "The Nation-State and Social order in the perspective of Islam" in *Triologue of Abrahamic Faiths*, 58-59.

<sup>414</sup> Al Faruqi, "The Role of Islam in Global Inter-Religious Dependence", (discussion), 97.

even if they have been convinced by the others it will be considered the fault on their own behalf having lack of knowledge.<sup>415</sup>

### 3.2.4 Dialogue and Da'wah:

In his thought Dialogue is part of Da'wah. It is clear from a question answer session where he explained the nature of Islamic Da'wah and its relation to all religions of the world.

He explains that Da'wah is essential and a part of the obligation commanded to Muslims to invite others toward the teachings of Islam.<sup>416</sup> First of all he declares it necessary to Muslims and then to non-Muslims as he says,

“Indeed, Iqamat al-Hijrah today would mean nothing unless the Muslim possessed with the Vision of Islam began in earnest to call his fellow Muslims first, and mankind second, to join the ranks of those who seek a new world order of peace and justice, of piety and virtue.”<sup>417</sup>

He explains that a religion has some ultimate values which stand as principles for other values to be sought for the sake of those ultimate values and these ultimate values necessarily be conveyed to others while a religion also presents truths about life and existence to its adherents; some present them relativistically by declaring them as the truths only for their adherents whereas some present them exclusivistically considering these truths to be the only truths to be followed for all the people rejecting all other claims about truths. Now he declares that this second kind of claim is presented by two ways; dogmatically and rationally. Buddhism and Christianity present it in the former way claiming their truths to be fully accepted or rejected without any evaluation. Islam presents its truths in the later way to be evaluated rationally. He holds that “The Muslim is obliged by his faith, by the rational, as well as by the axiological nature of his claim, to present Islam to the non-believer.” He further explains that Islam gives the freedom to the non-believer to believe or not, “Intellectually and spiritually, the Pax Islamica is the guarantee of the freedom to convince as well as to be convinced, of the truth.”<sup>418</sup> In this regard he refers the following Ayah of the Qur'an: (translation)'O Men, the truth has come to you from

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<sup>415</sup> Faruqi, “Rights of Non-Muslims under Islam: Social and Cultural Aspects”, 97.

<sup>416</sup> He refers to al-Quran surah al-Nahl: verse 135.

<sup>417</sup> Al Faruqi, “Da'wah in the West: Promise and Trial,” 351.

<sup>418</sup> Al Faruqi, “Rights of Non-Muslims Under Islam: Social and Cultural Aspects,” 95.

your Lord. Whoever wills, may be guided by it; whoever does not will, may not' (Qur'an 10:98, 108).

He declares that Islam not only accepts the right of the non-believer not to be convinced to its truth rather it confers him the dignity and respect as the prophet Muhammad S.A.W granted to majority of the people from Najran delegation who did not accept the message of Islam. He further declares that da'wah is an everlasting process because Islam does not want its adherents to give it up rather the non-Muslim's rejection of da'wah gives the da'iah a new courage to make his work better.

He presents various rights of the non-believers or Dhimmies under Islam; beside convinced or not to be convinced as mentioned earlier he refers to a third important right of convincing holding it in two ways; convincing is a process of arguments and counter-arguments through dialogue between two parties. If Muslims can present their view to others then others are equally able to do so and it is because of their humanity. Besides these rights he states about other rights of non-believers like the right of protection for their religious and cultural places and events under the restriction of their sincerity and loyalty to the Islamic State and their fellow citizens.<sup>419</sup>

Triologue has a significant place in the views and efforts of Swindler and al Faruqi. Their views and efforts to bring the Abrahamic faiths close to each other for collaboration among them and to build positive relations with other religions and ideologies of the world are of vital importance. They went through deep analysis and provided practical solutions in this regard. Their work on trialogue can be seen on two levels; first is their analysis to highlight the need and importance of trialogue by suggesting layouts to make it effective. Second is their participation to bring those layouts in practice. Swidler and al Faruqi in their analysis emphasized the need of trialogue basing it on the commonalities between the three religions and by focusing on the role their followers can play as the majority of world's population. Swidler stressed on Christians to acknowledge the original message and history of Judaism and Islam and vice versa to build mutual respect through dialogue. Al Faruqi in his analysis explained Islam's close relation and respect for Judaism and Christianity. He considered the contemporary efforts for trialogue insufficient and emphasized to conduct serious trialogues. He criticized on Christian mission and

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<sup>419</sup> Al Faruqi, "Rights of Non-Muslims Under Islam: Social and Cultural Aspects,"95-102.

emphasized to replace it with dialogue. Swidler and al Faruqi played a vital role by initiating and participating in trialogue meetings to clarify misunderstandings among the Abrahamic faiths to bring them close to each other. The other prominent aspect of their efforts is to emphasize the role of Christianity and Islam in dialogue.

## **Chapter 4:**

## Evaluation of the Approaches of Swidler and al Faruqi:

The views of Swidler and al Faruqi about dialogue and their approaches for it along with their efforts in this area met with two kinds of responses; appreciation and critique from other scholars.

Both of them responded vigorously and actively to the critiques and objections raised on their works.<sup>420</sup> This is evident from Swidler's openness for dialogue with anyone interested and al Faruqi's responses to the arguments made on his views in discussions after presentations of his papers.

Understanding the salient features and characteristics of their approaches can help to understand the nature of evaluation in this regard.

Both of them emphasize on practical aspects of dialogue along with their theoretical frameworks.

Swidler relates his thought with other disciplines and with the views of other scholars. Mostly he explains his view in religious and scientific terms. This makes his view interesting and easily understandable for both; scholars and general readers. For example, to explain the change in thoughts with the passage of time he refers to Thomas Kuhn<sup>421</sup> who initiated the concept of paradigm shift by stating,

"Achievements that share these two characteristics I shall henceforth refer to as 'paradigms,' a term that relates closely to 'normal science.'"<sup>422</sup>

The two characteristics are unprecedented and open ended, the achievements are those acknowledged by a particular community of scientists and by normal science he means research based on past achievements of science.<sup>423</sup> Instead of taking paradigm in its general

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<sup>420</sup> Swidler has been working on dialogue and is available to response for critiques or objections raised on his views and efforts in this regard. Al Faruqi when living defended his views while the objections raised on his views he worked in the last period of his life would be better defended if he had some more time to explain them because some scholars think that if he would live for some more years he would explain his work on dialogue clearly.

<sup>421</sup> He was Thomas Samuel Kuhn (1922-1996) an American physicist, philosopher and historian of science. James Jorden, Thomas Kuhn Biography, philosophy, and Impact, updated February 17, 2022 <http://study.com/learn/lessons/thomas-kuhn-biography-philosophy-impact.html>

<sup>422</sup> Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 10.

<sup>423</sup> Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 10.

understanding of pattern or model of replication, Kuhn takes it as an object for further articulation and specification under new or more stringent conditions.<sup>424</sup> The resulting transition to a new paradigm is scientific revolution or a paradigm shift.<sup>425</sup> Swidler in this way explains that the paradigm shift or change in thoughts of people necessitates dialogue in the present era.

He uses various Latin expressions during his conversations as well as in his writings. River Adams states:

“Swidler is famous...for injecting Latin phrases, words, and sentences not only into his writing but his everyday speech.”<sup>426</sup>

Swidler repeats his points in his writings to emphasize them (although sometimes it is because many of his writing passages in a book serve as standalone articles) and for this he himself explains,

“Repetition is the mother of studies.”<sup>427</sup>

Another key element of his thought is that he relates it to modern perspective; his views of religion, ideology and dialogue are relevant to the needs of time which he names modernity.<sup>428</sup>

Al Faruqi's work depicts philosophical and high standard language which often hinders his view from the general readers as Ruqaiyyah Waris Maqsood<sup>429</sup> in her review of the collection of al Faruqi's work *Islam and Other Faiths* declares that

“the language is exceedingly academic, and this considerably limits the ordinary reader's access to his thoughts and ideas.”<sup>430</sup>

He views all the matters with Islamic perspective which he considers to be logical, but many scholars interpret his views as apologetic. For example he declares his principles of Meta-religion rational and logical (although he admits that these principles can be taken theological)

<sup>424</sup> Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 23.

<sup>425</sup> Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 90.

<sup>426</sup> Adams, *There Must be You*, 71.

<sup>427</sup> Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious study*, 3.

<sup>428</sup> He is of the view that the world is currently living in modern period while it has not entered or experienced postmodernism.

<sup>429</sup> She is a British Muslim author with 40 books on Islam and other subjects. “Ruqaiyyah Waris Maqsood: A Scholar's Journey of faith and Education”, updated April 28, 2024 <http://rahyaftaha.ir>

<sup>430</sup> Ruqaiyyah Waris Maqsood, Review of *Islam and Other Faiths*, by Ataulloh Siddiqui, *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 16, no. 1(1998): 124.

and argues that as he has presented them in the light of rationality, his principles can only be challenged according to logic and reason.

Al Faruqi in his written work and oral presentations used to speak in terms of comparison of Islamic values to that of the Western ones whether he addressed his Muslim or Western audience. For this Esposito and Voll explain,

“Some might attribute this simply to the influence of his Western education and his living in the West, but it would probably be more correct to credit it to his desire to present Islam as the only viable response to modern issues that, in his estimation, Western culture has failed to adequately address. This approach met a twofold need. It offered a modern interpretation of Islam and took into account the Western cultural tradition that had increasingly penetrated the education and lives of Muslims.”<sup>431</sup>

#### **4.1 Critical Analysis of Swidler’s Views:**

##### **4.1.1 Practical Aspects of Swidler’s Dialogue:**

Regarding the practical aspects of his approach one can divide it in two ways; practical dimensions of dialogue initiated by him and those dimensions followed and preceded by others. He has been actively participating to generate dialogue at different forums and levels since 50’s.<sup>432</sup>

There are many individuals, institutions and organizations that apply Swidler’s views of dialogue. The Dialogue Institute with its collaboration of different universities and organizations of the world has been working on the following points:

- i- Training programs for interreligious, intercultural and interreligious dialogue for many decades based on Leonard Swidler’s methodology and principles of dialogue conducted for the civic, academic and religious leaders in democratic and pluralistic communities.
- ii- Dialogue Institute’s Network (DIN) working in many countries of the world to connect scholars with the institute’s research programs

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<sup>431</sup> Esposito and Voll, *Makers of Contemporary Islam*, 29-30.

<sup>432</sup> Its detail can be seen in chapter no. 4.

- iii- Providing a forum for International Scholars' Abrahamic Trialogue (ISAT) meetings since 1978 and conducting round table conferences in different regions to develop trialogue
- iv- Conducting and designing various graduate research courses to connect religious studies with other academic disciplines like science, art, medicine and business et cetera
- v- Spreading religious freedom and helping clarify the place and role of different religious communities in global peace building

The Institute provides two types of programs; *SUSI* (Study of the U.S. Institutes on Religious Diversity and Democracy) and *Religion and History Tours*. *SUSI* is further divided into two categories; *SUSI* for student leaders taking the students of 18-25 years from different countries to develop their understanding of American history and leadership skills. It has been working since 2010 and *SUSI* for scholars provides the information of history of American society and institutions to enhance the scholars from 18 countries of the world in their understanding of religious pluralism and interaction in American context. Religion and History Tours program provides tours of Philadelphia's historical sites for understanding the role of this city in the development of religious freedom and democracy in America.<sup>433</sup>

The institute's mission has been expanded to various countries and one such example is Iraq where in Kurdistan region its projects have been acknowledged via the University of Sulaimani in the city of Sulaymaniyah. Swidler delivered his lectures at the College of Islamic Sciences during the academic sessions 2023-2024. The university is looking for the approval to launch a branch of the Dialogue Institute over there to promote Swidler's views in recognition of his profound awareness of the dialogical requirements of the region.<sup>434</sup>

Journal of Ecumenical Studies founded by Swidler and his wife sixty years ago is continuously serving as a premier quarterly journal providing an international forum for interreligious scholars to present scholarly articles.<sup>435</sup>

Maria Kaplun agreeing with the format of Swidler's book on Trialogue: Jews, Christians and Muslims in Dialogue suggests it very suitable for the students to be taught in classrooms as

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<sup>433</sup> Dialogue Training accessed December 24, 2023 <http://dialogueinstitute.org/dialogue-training>

<sup>434</sup> Basil Al-Khatib, "Swidler's Search for Understanding Through Dialogue", published February 20, 2025 <http://kurdistanchronicle.com/babat/3673>

<sup>435</sup> Journal of Ecumenical Studies, accessed December 24, 2023 <http://dialogueinstitute.org/jes/>



textbook because it has been written for the general readers in a simple and interesting format to explain the nature, need and role of dialogue among the Abrahamic faiths.<sup>436</sup>

A friend and colleague of Swidler Racelle Weiman although appreciated his work and efforts but she had a few disagreements with his approach. She explained, “He’ll talk to anyone but not to the conservatives in his own church. He’ll talk at them but not to them. He says you can’t talk to extremists, but most of them are not. He just...doesn’t do that “intra” dialogue.”<sup>437</sup>

Further she explained two examples where she expected Swidler to apply his dialogic approach but he did not. First was that in Macedonia when Muslims have a serious clash with a minority Bektashi and she wanted him to talk to either Muslims or the Macedonian Orthodox about the protection of minority rights. The second occasion was when they were invited to Bangladesh for an interfaith meeting, Swidler got the visa but she did not. She felt bad that only because of her being a Jew she was deprived to speak about Jews and wanted Swidler to highlight this issue of discrimination which he did not. Likewise she declared that “Len assumes others use the same terminology he does, but it’s not always so.”<sup>438</sup> She mentioned that Swidler visited the communities and places where people living and facing discrimination and deprivation of rights at intra or inter community levels but he avoided to talk about liberties<sup>439</sup>, “Len has no comment and no involvement...Len doesn’t realize how really evil and devious people are. He is very much a naïve and sweet guy, especially now that he’s older. He comes from such kindness that he doesn’t believe that other can see differently than he does.”<sup>440</sup>

It appears that Swidler has not tried to employ his thought and ideas where he finds them ineffective. It is possible that Swidler does not think the matters in the way Weiman views them; a significant issue in her thought may not be so in his perspective.

Generally Swidler’s dialogue has been initiating practical aspects at various levels and forums via different organizations and groups that are contributing in the contemporary dialogical

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<sup>436</sup> Maria Kaplun, review of *Trialogue: Jews, Christians and Muslims in Dialogue*, by Leonard Swidler, Khalid Duran and Reuven Firestone, Metanexus, November 1, 2007 <http://metanexus.net>

<sup>437</sup> Adams, *There must be You*, 157.

<sup>438</sup> Adams, *There must be You*, 157.

<sup>439</sup> In this regard she refers to the examples of Saudis and holds that they are dialogical in the sense to have others’ sympathies for their position and Chinese are open up but still as the representatives of a communist country means the opening up is not possible there. Moreover she holds that Saudis don’t allow bringing Bible to their country. She seems dissatisfied that Swidler does not discuss these kinds of issues which she thinks he should discuss according to his approach.

<sup>440</sup> Adams, *There must be You*, 158.

movement. Moreover these aspects can play their significant role in shaping a successful future for dialogue.

#### **4.1.2 Deabsolutised Nature of Every Statement of Truth:**

Swidler necessitates dialogue due to the deabsolutized nature of every statement of truth in the modern world. His perspective in this regard is not much criticized however a Franciscan Malaysian<sup>441</sup> in response to Swidler's view that every statement about truth is deabsolutized, so every kind of knowledge is interpreted knowledge, raised objection on his dialogue stating "Such a paradigm of dialogue inevitably breeds a strange form of pluralism that levels everyone's unique view down to an unjustified homogeneity...I find such dialogue to be illusive, and frankly, quite narcissistic." Swidler holds that this kind of nature of the truth statement urges the need for dialogue while that Malaysian brother thinks its opposite holding that such kind of nature of every statement ceases the need of dialogue completely as he explains, "we would all end up just talking much about nothing much...brand of 'dialogue' ends up disrespecting everyone in a very respectful way."<sup>442</sup>

On the other hand Swidler is of the view that his point can only be opposed of two reasons; "misunderstanding or willful ignorance," further he clarifies that those who "charge me with hypocrisy, it's either deliberate duplicity on their part or lack of clarity in thinking." He considers the view of that Malaysian brother based on misunderstanding of his (Swidler's) term truth. As he explains it with an example of a door about which many statements can be made and each one is true but no one is absolute. Adams further clarifies it by stating that there is a difference between truth of Swidler and that Malaysian brother, for the former it "is a human-made series of statements about reality," while for the later it "is the Reality itself," likewise she thinks they also differ on the dialogue as in Swidler's view "Dialogue is mutual enrichment" where open- minded partners come to learn from others while in Malaysian brother's view

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<sup>441</sup> He was a theologian and practiced dialogue in Malaysia with his other fellows. In his emails he raised some objections on Swidler's approach of dialogue especially on his deabsolutised view of truth. He did not want his name to be shown.

<sup>442</sup> Adams, *There Must Be You*, 266.

“Dialogue is persuasion” where partners are “deeply convinced seekers of harmony” can “reach out across the divide.”<sup>443</sup>

For that Malaysian brother and others who raise objection on Swidler’s view of dialogue he clarifies that one should not only engage in dialogue but one should do it thinking critically because he thinks in this way the meaning of the terms becomes clear. Moreover he thinks that where dialogue of head does not work people can go to the dialogue of hands and heart.<sup>444</sup> However he shows his complete willingness to dialogue in a respectful way with the people who have objections on his views.<sup>445</sup>

### 4.1.3 Dialogue Decalogue:

Swidler’s Dialogue Decalogue the ten principles of dialogue (translated into ten languages) along with his seven stages have provided the effective tools to engage in dialogue. If the reception of those dialogical principles is taken it becomes clear that they have got appreciation by various scholars of the world. The principles of dialogue presented by Leonard Swidler have become a source of motivation and many scholars like Ian Markham<sup>446</sup> and Rev. Francis Tiso<sup>447</sup> who developed their own principles in the light of Swidler’s Dialogue Decalogue<sup>448</sup> although they have some objections on his principles. Considering those objections as non-valid Swidler in his defense holds that they both have deliberately tried to present every rule of his dialogue in distorted way for which he has asked them the reason of misconstrue his position but he has received no answer.<sup>449</sup>

Rebecca Mays explains that Swidler’s Dialogue Decalogue lead and express the way to Seven Stages to exercise dialogue. She along with other members at the Dialogue Institute has worked on these two tools created by Swidler to fit them in the contemporary changing thought and scenario. Their team for this purpose uses the term principles instead of Decalogue and they

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<sup>443</sup> Adams, *There Must Be You*, 267-68.

<sup>444</sup> Its detail is available in chapter 3 under the different phases of dialogue.

<sup>445</sup> Adams, *There Must Be You*, 268-69.

<sup>446</sup> He (1962-) is the president and dean of Virginia Theological Seminary. “Ian Markham” published December 15, 2009 *The Catholic Century* <http://www.christiancentury.org>

<sup>447</sup> He (1950-) is a Catholic priest whose major interest is inter-religious dialogue especially between Tibetan Buddhism and Catholicism. “Father Francis Tiso” Ngakpa International accessed December 24, 2023 <https://ngakpa.org>lineage>

<sup>448</sup> Julia Sheetz-Willard, et al, “Interreligious Dialogue Reconsidered,” 258-260.

<sup>449</sup> Adams, *There Must Be You*, 252-53.

express these ten rules in a plain way to be understood and followed. Moreover the “Stages of Transformation” they express as, “A Grammar for Change” to make them better understood in the present thinking context.<sup>450</sup>

Swidler’s ten principles provide a flow of engagement in dialogue. Although some points in these principles seem to be critical like experiencing the partner’s religion as stated by Swidler appears difficult to follow. However if his explanative perspective is kept in mind it becomes clear that it means an effort to closely understand others’ belief from within their tradition instead of merely examining it from an outsider’s perspective. A deep evaluation of these principles reflects that they lead to an easy and simple way of participating in dialogue.

#### **4.1.4 Global Ethic:**

Global Ethics is a project many people have interest in and different scholars have worked on it; drafts for declaration of global ethic presented by Hans Küng and Swidler have received comments from many scholars worldwide.

Khalid Duran is one of the scholars who strongly agree with the initiative of Swidler making the declaration draft to spread it to gain others’ views. He in his comments on Swidler’s global ethic declares,

“Leonard Swidler's initiative deserves to be taken seriously, that is, consistently worked out--which of course demands an immense amount of work, which would presume world-wide intensive discussions.”<sup>451</sup>

Following are a few examples of critique on Swidler’s work:

King raises objection on Swidler’s global ethic by declaring it a Christian document instead of a global one. He holds that on behalf of a specific tradition like Christianity one cannot claim to represent the view of others at global level. Rather he suggests that instead of setting a view of Christianity and asking others to respond, the view of all prominent representatives for global ethics can only be got through a dialogue among them for the articulation of this type of document. Moreover he holds that from the beginning liberals and conservative global

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<sup>450</sup> Julia Sheetz-Willard, et al, “Interreligious Dialogue Reconsidered,” 263.

<sup>451</sup> Khalid Duran, “The Drafting of a Global Ethic: A Muslim Perspective,” accessed June 13, 2024  
<https://dialogueinstitute.squarespace.com>

representatives should be involved for the articulation of this document because both of these types of representatives should be on the same page for global ethics. He mentions some examples of nonviolent social religious movements (especially Buddhists) and suggests that the document presented to born of the violence should be of same or higher standard of those movements but he considers Swidler's document lacking in this regard.<sup>452</sup>

Zahra Zoofghari an Iranian scholar points out some of the weaknesses in Swidler's global ethic as follows<sup>453</sup>;

- i- She strongly opposes Swidler's claim of declaring religion as the origin of ethics.
- ii- She explains that Swidler illustrates the principle of freedom but his document lacks in providing the practical solution for that.
- iii- Being grounded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights his principles of second declaration have become limited in her view. Moreover she says that these principles are presented only by one scholar and others are invited to discuss them. She claims that in this regard Swidler seems to presuppose the consensus of people on these principles.

Along with appreciation of Küng and Swidler's global ethics Paul F. Knitter points out some of the shortcomings in those proposals.

First he refers to some dangers for their approach of pluralistic dialogue pointed out by some critics whom he is not fully agreed but whose comments he takes positive for the betterment of the Global Ethic Proposals. He emphasizes that Küng, Swidler or anyone working on global ethics should be aware of those dangers to avoid their ill effects. These are as follows;

- i- Apparently pluralistic dialogue calling for the view and contribution of all the people can be controlled very easily by the power dominating group.
- ii- Language for the truth claims he declares to be rooted in and linked to political, cultural and economical influence while both Küng and Swidler have not either

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<sup>452</sup> King, "It's a Long Way to a Global Ethic," 213-219.

<sup>453</sup> Zara Zoofaghari, et.el, . "A Critical Study of Leonard Swidler's Ideas of Global Ethics." 232-262.

considered or addressed these types of questions while developing their proposals.

- iii- He holds that because Küng, Swidler and the like “are not sufficiently aware how all truth claims are political and “powerful,” their program for a pluralistic dialogue toward a global ethic can become, whether they are aware of it or not, oppressive of others.”<sup>454</sup> He suggests that they should be more specific while adopting some terms and condemning the others; they condemn racism, gender inequality et cetera but take the terms like common language, global and pluralistic dialogue being unaware the true nature and function of these terms because these terms have political, economic and western influence. So he suggests that they are in need of political and economic analysis.

Secondly he suggests some steps to make the global ethic effective by the following points<sup>455</sup>;

- i- He holds that the theologians of the first world like Küng and Swidler must be aware of the previously mentioned dangers. For this he suggests their “project for a global ethic” should be presented with “Hermeneutical Suspicion” from their very beginning because “Such suspicion or awareness is a necessary condition for being able to protect such projects from the worm of ideology that infects all our language, especially when we are making global or universal claims.”
- ii- For this he suggests that they must include “the voices of the oppressed” because the theologians alone cannot protect their projects from the dangers and those oppressed prove to be the guides to the first world theologians in making their projects effective. For them he says, “we must recognize and insist not simply that “each voice contribute equally” but that some of us have a more urgent and a more helpful word to speak-namely, those who in the past have not spoken and who in the present are victims.
- iii- He emphasizes that in today’s life engaging in dialogue should be engaging in liberative praxis and by this he means that the suffering or oppressed should not only be heard but “we will also have to act with and for them.” ... “Without such

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<sup>454</sup> Paul F. Knitter, “Pitfalls and Promises for a Global Ethics, Global Religious Ethic,” *Buddhist-Christian Studies*, 15, (1995), 223.

<sup>455</sup> Knitter, “Pitfalls and Promises for a Global Ethics,” 226-228.

real-life communicative praxis, the proponents of a global ethic will not be able to protect their projects from becoming a hidden weapon of domination.”

Paul Hedges points out some critiques on the project of Global Ethics of Küng and Swidler. Although he does not agree with some of them but to make the Global Ethics strong enough to overcome those critiques he raises some questions and gives some suggestions and he is of the view that by following those points the Global Ethics can be applicable and more effective in the future. For this he mentions five concerns.<sup>456</sup>

i- “Are we including the Extremes?”

He declares that the global ethics represents the view at limited level. Despite of discussed, distributed and signed by many people still it represents the minority. Moreover he suggests that it should also be represented the institutions.

ii- “Are these Common points to GE?”

He points out some terms used in the Global Ethics which cannot be understood or taken in the same way or meaning rather they are taken in different meanings by different people and communities. For example he refers the following which are taken and understood differently in various religious traditions;

“a just economic order”, “self”, “ownership”, “equal rights and partnership of man and woman”

iii- “A Western Liberal Agenda”

He considers this Global Ethics to be the Western, although many liberals of other religions will also agree with this Global Ethics and even if the responses and drafts of others are to be taken, it will still represent prominently the western thought.

He elaborates that although both Küng and Swidler claim for their proposals to be the struggle or movement toward the Global Ethics not the Global Ethics as an end result but on the contrary both scholars after their first drafts tried to present it as the end result. Swidler’s

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<sup>456</sup> Paul Hedges, “Concerns about the Global Ethic: A Sympathetic Critique and Suggestions for a New Direction,” *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue* 18, no. 1, 2008. 1-16.

“Toward a Universal Declaration of a Global Ethic” becomes “Universal Declaration of a Global Ethic” when he tries to explain it in detail.

iv- “Are the Faiths Monolithic?”

It claims that there is an inherent set of agreements in every tradition while it ignores their differences. Hedges declares that monolithic terms like human dignity and peace cannot be envisaged for religious traditions as agreements because some of the followers may disagree on those terms and on the basis of this, those followers cannot be considered as non-followers. So, he emphasis on the importance of others, “ if we cannot have world peace without peace between the religions, then we cannot have a GE (Global Ethic) that “others” the Others who must be brought on board.”<sup>457</sup>

v- “Can we Hear the Voice of the Excluded?”

Hedges asks the question,

“whether this GE is being sought by the right people in the right places.”<sup>458</sup>

He is of the view that this Global Ethics is presented by the theologians who belong to the west and cannot speak for the people of the third world countries in the form of a GE rather they themselves can better explain their view which should also be considered in this regard.

Swidler’s declaration of global ethic could not get the acceptance on a large scale because of many factors; Swidler tried to make it simple but still it has many complications as stated above. It cannot be the representative of majority of people from East and West. It is very difficult for the followers of various religions and ideologies to agree on some selected points even along with the presence of the shared or common aspects in them on the one hand while on the other its equally impossible for the followers of different traditions to come with their own theologies or ideologies and relate them to the selected global ethical rules for cooperation and unity. In simple words the natural diversity cannot be denied that hinders the path of unity on a large scale although without this global ethic declaration the people of the world still can live in peace and

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<sup>457</sup> Paul Hedges, “Concerns about the Global Ethic: A Sympathetic Critique and Suggestions for a New Direction,” *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue*, 18 no. 1, 2008. 10.

<sup>458</sup> Hedges, “Concerns about the Global Ethic,” 10.



harmony by cooperation and unity. Swidler related his declaration to the charters of human rights that represent the hollow slogans of the West and in this way it became limited to agree lest follow.

#### **4.1.5 Study of Religion and Dialogue:**

Swidler's techniques for the study of religion are largely appreciated by his students. Michael. S. Jones shared his experience of taking his courses at Temple University from Swidler. He mentions that in the class of students with diverse religious backgrounds he always learnt a lot from Swidler, "He set us at ease with his relaxed teaching style, but it was the content of his teaching as much as his style that made us feel welcomed, for he believes that it is beneficial to interreligious dialogue for each participant to be deeply immersed in a tradition. Hence, he encouraged us to know our tradition well and to speak from within that tradition. His goal was to convert us to Deep-Dialogue and critical thinking, not to Roman Catholicism. Throughout the course, Swidler led us in a discussion of issues by asking us what positions our traditions took on those issues or what insights our traditions could offer toward understanding or resolving the issues, and then he led us through a thoughtful group analysis of each contribution. This was a tradition-oriented dialogue and critical-thinking exercise as none that I had ever experienced."<sup>459</sup>

Moreover Jones explained that when he joined the Temple University as a critical thinker, Swidler helped him shape his effective integration of different traditions and philosophies with the insight of his own tradition as in the beginning he felt lacking in it and interreligious dialogue was a new field for him. He said, "I needed a systematic theory of interideological learning, and Swidler provided this essential addition to my education."<sup>460</sup>

Swidler is of the view that study of religion provides useful insights for dialogue and this he has also employed in his theoretical and practical stances. Throughout his academic life he has been actively engaged in studying, teaching and exploring religious aspects to conduct fruitful dialogue.

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<sup>459</sup> Jones, "Leonard Swidler's influence on the work of an American Evangelical and on Romanian Academia," 139.

<sup>460</sup> Jones, "Leonard Swidler's influence on the work of an American Evangelical and on Romanian Academia" 137.

#### 4.1.6 Recognition of Swidler's Efforts:

Swidler's work and concern for dialogue is internationally acknowledged.

The tribute and honor of the Temple University authorities presented to Swidler and his wife Arlene for their efforts was seen in 2020 when the College of Liberal Arts of the Temple University established "The Arlene and Leonard Swidler Chair for Interreligious Dialogue and Modern Catholic Thought in the Religion Department" to celebrate Swidler's legacy as an institution. The Dean of the college Richard Deeg expressed,

"Len Swidler has been a vital member of the College of Liberal Arts' faculty for over five decades. I'm delighted that he'll be making such a generous gift to the college, allowing his name and legacy to live on here to the benefit of future students and faculty members. Creating an endowed professorship will strengthen the Religion department for the long haul."<sup>461</sup>

Arlene and Leonard Swidler Foundation is a forum that works with various organizations of the world to spread and preserve the dialogical approach of Swidler. It has been established to promote the ideas of Leonard Swidler and his wife for dialogue, education and rights of all the people of developing countries especially women and children. The foundation has the following objectives:<sup>462</sup>

- i- It promotes humanization of men and especially provides assistance to women considering them as mothers of civilizations.
- ii- It works for the improvement of environment and educational success.
- iii- It digitally preserves and promotes works of Swidler for dialogue, critical thinking and equality.

His efforts are acknowledged not only in his own Catholic American or Western circles but his endeavor gained worldwide appreciation.

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<sup>461</sup> Our founder- Leonard Swidler accessed December 17, 2023 <http://dialogueinstitute.org/our-founder>

<sup>462</sup> Arlene and Leonard Swidler accessed December 18, 2023 <http://www.swidlerfoundation.org>

## 4.2 Critical Analysis of al Faruqi's views:

### 4.2.1 Al Faruqi's dialogue in Practice:

Charles D. Fletcher regarding the practical dimensions of al Faruqi mentions,

“His contribution in the field of dialogue and the Muslim study of religions was that of a pioneer whose sincerity and ambition is to be applauded. Despite theoretical and practical weaknesses of his thought, he moved Muslim-Christian interaction forward as he developed his methodologies. Here for the first time a Western-trained Muslim scholar studied Judaism and Christianity and produced methodologies which resulted in the potential for deeper levels of engagement. Not only was he committed to inter-faith dialogue, but he also encouraged Muslims to study and engage others for the mutual benefit of all communities.”<sup>463</sup>

He was the active head and member of different organizations and movements; he founded the Islamic Studies program under American Academy of Religion.

He was very helpful for the students whether his own graduate students or the community of Muslim students from various parts of the world. This is evident from his association with the Muslim Students Association (MSA) created in 1963. Soon after the need was felt for a forum beside MSA for those students who got their education and wanted to pursue their careers in Canada and U.S. So Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS) was founded in 1971 with al Faruqi its co-founder and president from 1971 to 1982 except 1979. In eighties the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) also joined AMSS. His vision to introduce a new perspective of social science to the academic world led him to the creation of the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) in 1981 with al Faruqi its co-founder.<sup>464</sup>

He played the leadership roles at the Muslim-Jewish-Christian Conference and Inter-Religious Peace Colloquium.<sup>465</sup>

Establishment of an Islamic University in the US was a part of his vision. It was not fulfilled however he acted as the first president and advisor of the American Islamic College founded in Chicago in 1981.<sup>466</sup> He mainly designed the curriculum of the college.

<sup>463</sup> Fletcher, *Isma'il Al Faruqi (1921-1986) and Inter-Faith Dialogue: The Man, the Scholar, the Participant*, 312.

<sup>464</sup> “Dr Ismail al Faruqi- IIIT” accessed March 22, 2023 <https://iiit.org/en/dr-ismail-al-Faruqi>

<sup>465</sup> In Honour Of Ism'īl Rājī' al Faruqi (1921 - 1986) Biography, accessed March 22, 2023 <https://ismailfaruqi.com/biography>

<sup>466</sup> American Islamic College incorporated in 1981 and in 1982 it was authorized by Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) offers high level programs in Arabic language and Islamic Studies. It's developing day by day. “American Islamic College” accessed April 14, 2023 <http://iric.org>american-islamic-college>

Various other institutions he helped to establish include the American Institute of Pakistan Studies, the Sister Clara Muhammad School in Philadelphia and the American Council for the Study of Islamic Societies. It shows his great commitment for all educational levels. Meanwhile he contributed to different boards like the Editors of American Trust Publications, the North American Islamic Trust (NAIT) and the board of advisors for the Islamic Foundation in Leicester.<sup>467</sup>

Islamization of knowledge remained a main project for him because he considered the reason for the crises of the Muslim Ummah in its reliance on western social sciences while through the Islamization of knowledge he wanted to provide it a mean to take benefit from modern science and technology based on Islamic values and principles. In Esposito's words, "In this way, Muslim societies and communities could modernize without becoming Westernized."<sup>468</sup>

IIIT's was also established by him and the like minded scholars for the development of Islamization project. For the implementation of this project he used to visit many Muslim countries like Saudi Arabia, Libya, Egypt, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, South Africa, India and Pakistan for Muslim reform by institutional means. His project has been widely implemented in Malaysian Government and non-government institutions and organizations. For example he served as the chairman of the International Scholar Committee for advising the Malaysian government in 1982.<sup>469</sup>

As philosophy remained his major during his long academic life, during his BS, Masters and doctorate he developed value theory which later on during his doctorate and post doctorate studies developed to Arabism and later on led to comparative religion which automatically focused and shifted to interfaith dialogue.

ISNA which remained under his influence is currently collaborating with other organizations to conduct dialogue.<sup>470</sup>

Throughout his life he actively participated to promote interfaith relations. He raised his voice on as many forums as he could.

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<sup>467</sup> Esposito and Voll, *Makers of Contemporary Islam*, 30-31.

<sup>468</sup> Esposito and Voll, *Makers of Contemporary Islam*, 32.

<sup>469</sup> Islamic Horizons, "A Glance at the life of Isma'il R. al Faruqi (1921-1986)," Islamic Horizons, vol. 15, (special issue August - September, 1986): 21.

<sup>470</sup> Haris, Sibghatullah Fil Quds, "The Influence of Ismail Al-Faruqi to Islam in America," Journal of Strategic and Global studies 5, no. 1, (2022), DOI: 10.7454/jsgs.v5i1.1089 available at <https://scholarhub.ui.ac.id/jsgs/vol5/iss1/3>

#### 4.2.2 Is al Faruqi's approach apologetic?

Many scholars declare Al Faruqi's approach apologetic of Islam. Following are a few examples in this regard.

Fletcher holds, "His desire, commitment and emphasis on dialogue are unquestionable, but the application of his ideas never overcame his Islamic presuppositions."<sup>471</sup>

Jane I Smith states that Faruqi's approach for interfaith interaction is considered to be apologetic as she states, "Faruqi spoke up frequently in favor of what he might have understood as a kind of modernized pluralism (which, ultimately, perhaps was not pluralism at all)... Faruqi insisted that da'wa was not an attempt at proselytism or conversion, however, as much as what he defined as the mutual search for truth. Insofar as conversion may be the result of such an endeavor, he insisted, it means the conversion of both sides to the truth. It is logically impossible for either religion to have truth insofar as it differs from the truth proclaimed by the other. Therefore there must be one truth, and conversion to that truth is the aim of dialogue...Many of his Christian as well as his Muslim colleagues understood that Faruqi was deeply persuaded that the serious mutual pursuit of truth and the right behavior that it impels would in fact lead to the essence of what is to be found in the Qur'an. Real truth is Qur'anic truth, and thus the result of his serious interfaith engagement by definition is not pluralism at all but its opposite."<sup>472</sup>

Eric R. Dye also in his thesis for Master's degree considered his approach to be apologetic especially his principles of meta religion as advocating only for Islam and he criticized his claim of rationality and theology free meta religion because later on his meta religion of Islam is same to these principles. As he wrote:

"I cannot avoid the conclusion; Al Faruqi's 'six principles of Meta-religion' parallel his foundational principles of Islam almost point-for-point."<sup>473</sup>

Al Faruqi spent a life committed to his religious concern reflected in his dialogue and religious interactions. Islamic perspective remained prominent in his thought and action. He always spoke of Islam declaring it as a rational religion and presented his dialogical approach to be

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<sup>471</sup> Fletcher, *Isma'il Al Faruqi (1921-1986) and Inter-Faith Dialogue: The Man, the Scholar, the Participant*, 312.

<sup>472</sup> Smith, *Muslims, Christians, and the Challenge of Interfaith Dialogue*, 125.

<sup>473</sup> Dye, *The Apologetic Methods of Isma'il R. Al Faruqi and Corlenius Van Til*, 14.

rational as well, because of this similarity many a scholars declared his approach as apologetic. But if al Faruqi's own view is taken, he strongly insisted that his approach to be rational<sup>474</sup>. Likewise some scholars have the view that his approach is not apologetic rather it's the opposite.<sup>475</sup>

#### 4.2.3. Meta-religion and Islam:

His principles of evaluation for a religion are the most criticized points in his overall approach to dialogue. It is because of their philosophical nature and similarity to his principles of Tawheed and Islamic meta-religion.

Hendrik Kraemer holds that al Faruqi's meta-religious principles when applied to Christianity present a distorted image of it and cannot lead to dialogue. Moreover he views that to conduct a dialogue instead of predetermined principles only the sincere willingness is required.<sup>476</sup>

Charles D. Fletcher explains that meta-religion presented by al Faruqi for evaluating all religions based on Din al-Fitrah is found problematic. He states, "Meta-religion itself is presented in philosophical rather than religious terms. For this reason, it can be complicated to understand, let alone apply... One can hopefully see the difficulty in the interpretation and application of al Faruqi's meta-religious principles"<sup>477</sup>.

In the view of one of his students Abdul Kader Tayob although his approach for the study of religion is distinctive from the other approaches he criticized to be either too reductionist or subjective, it has also some problems due to his presentation of religions as coherent wholes judged by selected set of principles; meta-religion. He pointed out the following shortcomings in al Faruqi's approach<sup>478</sup>:

Tayob says that al Faruqi holds ahistorical view of religion by declaring,

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<sup>474</sup> This is evident from his view when he presented his meta-religious principles as rational and declared that they can be taken as theological because Islam is rational religion presents its claims basing on rationality but he insisted his principles to be taken and if refuted, on the base of rationality.

<sup>475</sup> Fetmir Shehu's articles cited in this chapter can be seen in this regard.

<sup>476</sup> Hendrik Kraemer, "Preface" in *Christian Ethics*, ix-x.

<sup>477</sup> Charles, D. Fletcher, "Ismail al Faruqi's Interfaith Dialogue and Asian Religions with Special Reference to Buddhism," *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 28, no.3, 92014): 101 and 103.

<sup>478</sup> Tayob. "Al Faruqi between the History of Religions and Islamic Theology" 245- 246.

“all religious values were rooted in the original teachings of the founders”.<sup>479</sup>

It means religions were neither the products of history nor any of their elements was borrowed from each other and there could not be any kind of social or political influence on them.

- 1- Al Faruqi’s “limitation of religions to their origins from which an essence were to be derived, was also problematic”<sup>480</sup> because in this way the long historical contexts of various religions like Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism were limited. In Tayob’s view Al Faruqi’s “choice of values was not convincingly demonstrated, relying more on certain readings within Islamic theology and hermeneutics.”
- 2- Although his approach of values seemed creative but with his Meta-religion he only preferred some selected values while ignoring others. This limited his approach to be only applicable on Islam even with more limitation because it excluded Sufism and many other “dimensions of Islamic religious life.”
- 3- “This focus on values, moreover did not allow for understanding the manipulation of religion for social and political purposes.” According to this approach true religion could only produce positivity like equality of all the people and in this way it appeared to be very limited focusing only on certain values.
- 4- He only accepted Kant’s view of values to the extent where it supported the dimension of Islamic theology he favored.

He argues that religion cannot be considered as a neutral category and similarly when al Faruqi presented a comprehensive approach to the study of religions he could not avoid being apologetic of Islam. He refers to al Faruqi’s principles of Meta-religion to judge the religious values seem to be the most controversial because they appear to be the prepositions of Islamic theology rather than objective and rational principles.

However, his approach left too little room for historical change and contingency. Even within specific religions, he promoted a theology that excluded alternative values from being considered a valid source of data for understanding such religions in both the past and the present.<sup>481</sup>

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<sup>479</sup> Tayob. “Al Faruqi between the History of Religions and Islamic Theology” 245.

<sup>480</sup> Tayob. “Al Faruqi between the History of Religions and Islamic Theology” 245.

<sup>481</sup> Tayob. “Al Faruqi between the History of Religions and Islamic Theology” 243.

#### 4.2.4 Al Faruqi's Study of Religion and Dialogue:

Study of religion was the main area of al Faruqi's work. It led him towards dialogue. Fletcher says,

“Dialogue has certainly moved past al Faruqi, but his contribution, passion and role in its development cannot be ignored.”<sup>482</sup>

Moreover Fletcher holds that al Faruqi seemed to move back and forth from defending Islam to challenging Christianity and Judaism rather than finding common grounds to build cooperation. However he was the pioneer among modern Muslims who learned about and sought to engage the other and his position as a first Western- trained Muslim is acknowledged who after studying Judaism and Christianity produced methodologies which resulted in the potential of deeper levels of engagement. His theoretical and practical efforts are appreciated worldwide.

Mudassir Abdur Rahim emphasizes that al Faruqi

“was profoundly convinced that there must be faith, belief, and commitment if the inner meaning of Islam – or indeed of any religion – is to be properly understood and explained. It is for this reason also that he deplored the fact that Islam in the West is predominantly taught by non-Muslims, while Christianity and Judaism are taught by adherents of these faiths.”<sup>483</sup>

Fatmir Shehu regards Al Faruqi as the pioneer to introduce unbiased and mutual understanding of and respect for the other religions especially Christianity (because mainly his work and encounters focus on Muslim-Christian relations and dialogue) instead of polemic or apologetic stances.<sup>484</sup>

Moreover he acknowledged al Faruqi's methodology for study of religion by stating,

“His objective-analytical-comparative methodology ...is relevant to the contemporary scholarship of comparative religion. Contemporary scholars and especially young ones can use al-Fārūqī's methodology in the study of religion by being objective and fair. In addition, it helps them to distinguish between the teachings of their own religion and the teachings of other religions as well as to engage in inter-religious dialogue with adherents of other religions with the aim of promoting peaceful coexistence.”<sup>485</sup>

<sup>482</sup> Fletcher, *Isma'il Al Faruqi (1921-1986) and Inter-Faith Dialogue: The Man, the Scholar, the Participant*, 229.

<sup>483</sup> Abd al-Rahim, *Reminiscences of Al Faruqi*, 48.

<sup>484</sup> Fatmir Shehu, “The Scholarship of Interfaith Engagement in the writings of Selected Contemporary Muslim Scholars”, *Al-Qanatr; International Journal of Islamic Studies* 6, no. 2 (January 2017): 44.

<sup>485</sup> Shehu, “Investigating Ismā'īl Rājī al-Fārūqī's Methodology in the Study of Christianity through Selected Textual Analysis from His Christian Ethics”, 54.



According to Tasnim Abdul Rahman and Zuriati mohd Rashid al Faruqi has developed a unique paradigm for the study of Religion at academic level especially with his Christian Ethics and Trialogue of Abrahamic Faiths. They declare that his principles of studying other religions present a rational critique to focus on the truth without undermining any religion, and if he were live for some more time he could better explain it further. Regarding the implementation of his views of religion and Islamization of Knowledge they state that although those views could not be followed in America and Pakistan but Malasia's Islamic University has implemented them in its religious department very successfully where taking religion as life fact Islam is taught as a civilization and worldview. Likewise it leads to the study of other religions applying Al Faruqi's methodology which also leads to inter-faith dialogue.<sup>486</sup>

Sumaiya Ahmed in her article highlights and acknowledges al Faruqi's rules of dialogue and the themes by declaring that Islam also encourages the need of dialogue at intra and interfaith levels for Muslims. She holds that al Faruqi was one of those people who played their vital role in this regard. Basically she took the work of al Faruqi from two chapters from Islam and other faiths which is a collection of al Faruqi's articles.<sup>487</sup>

Al Faruqi's study of religion presents his comprehensive view of religion, its nature, characteristics and relation with interfaith dialogue.

The evaluation of Swidler's Deep and al Faruqi's Meta-religious dialogue shows that they presented their dialogue in modern rational perspective with their distinct features.

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<sup>486</sup>Rashid, and Dr. Engku Ahmad Zaki Engku Alwi, "Al Faruqi and his views on Comparative Religions, 117.

<sup>487</sup> Ahmed, "Inter-faith Dialogue: Perspective of Isma'il Raji Al Faruqi's Islam and Other Faiths," 35-36.

## **Conclusion:**

Dialogue is a continuous struggle that needs sincerity and tireless efforts to become fruitful to lead a positive direction. So it cannot be said that it's completely successful or unsuccessful rather at some forums and levels it's highly fruitful while on the others it's lacking. Swidler and al Faruqi contributed well in this continuous struggle devoting decades of their lives for dialogue in the way that it became a prominent aspect of their personalities. The critical evaluation of their efforts on one hand shows the deep understanding they felt for purposeful dialogue, its need and ways of making it effective as they realized the shortcomings in this regard while on the other hand the limitations in their own efforts suggest the new horizons of endeavor in this field.

The purpose of the present study was to discover three areas; contributions of Swidler and al Faruqi to the foundations of dialogue through their Deep and Meta-religious dialogue, guidelines and methodology they provided for it and reception of their dialogical approaches. A mix method approach has been used for the present research work. The conceptual and relational content analysis under the framework of comparison has been employed along with the personal identity theory of Marya Schechtman to conduct research in the above mentioned three areas. First chapter provided background of the efforts of both scholars for the development of dialogue in their thoughts and actions. The purpose of this chapter was to explore the features of their endeavors and contributions. This was done in two ways; first by viewing their academic life sketches, the prevailing circumstances and their life journeys toward dialogue, secondly their life developments had been viewed in connection with personal identity theory by focusing on its four features of intellectual survival, self-centered concerns, compensations and moral responsibilities for both scholars. Second and third chapters explored the nature of methodologies and guidelines they provided to make dialogue effective; the former explained the structure of their Deep and Meta-religious dialogues while the later highlighted two areas; their views of and role in trialogue (dialogue among the followers of Abrahamic faiths) and their efforts for the positive and fruitful interaction of Christianity and Islam with other world religions and ideologies. The last chapter presents a critical analysis of their views and efforts for dialogue.

Their religious, social, financial, educational and political background played a vital role in shaping their emphasis on and setting their paths toward dialogue. Many factors seem to be

prominent in this regard like financial crisis, religious interactions, conflicts and hostilities among the people, tendencies of both scholars for learning to become intellectuals, their deep attachments to their own religions, role of religion and its study in academic life beside their three major fields of study; philosophy, history and theology. All these and like factors have led them to work on and present dialogue in an emphasized and distinct way because the dialogue already familiar in the world was not given the place it ought to be. However it was the time many organizations and intellectuals began to highlight the need and importance of dialogue and even it had been given a significant place at academic level. Both of them became the part of the movement for dialogue and presented the term in their unique ways to make it more fruitful with regard to the prevailing situations for it. They after analyzing the contemporary circumstances felt the need to make dialogue more effective. Swidler realized misperceptions of majority of people regarding dialogue who did not consider it serious or effective, so he stressed on the meaning and characteristics of dialogue to make its role more clear for the people. In 50's he began his work on intra-religious level and tried to create cooperation between Catholics and Protestants, in 60's he launched the journal of ecumenical studies and within a year it became the journal of interreligious studies and dialogue. He in 70's established an institution for dialogue. Both of these forums are contributing in the field of dialogue. Swidler in 90's modified the term as Deep-Dialogue to emphasize its importance because he realized that dialogue as a common term was not considered as much serious or valid as it should be for the development of good relations among the adherents of different religions and ideologies. Al Faruqi during his deep study of Abrahamic faiths realized to develop and spread the true understanding of those religions and to create positive interaction among their followers. He found dialogue the best tool for this purpose. Besides creating dialogue on rational principles he presented it in Islamic perspective emphasizing the role of Islam in global religious interaction. He realized the ignorance and misunderstanding of the world about Islam at various levels and struggled to present its true image and positive relation with humanity. He developed his views in 50's and 60's during his deep research and employed them from 60's to 80's at various forums like institutions and organizations.

Their dialogue emerged from and developed a strong relation with their study of religion. Both of them emphasized the role and significance of religion for its adherents. They acknowledged its importance and relation in various aspects of life, civilization and culture and presented a

comprehensive view of dialogue not only focusing on dialogue among the followers of religions but also with those of ideologies and no religion. They endeavored to spread its benefits to the whole humanity at global level through their theoretical and practical efforts.

Swidler elaborated dialogue's nature, structure, need, significance and principles in detail to make it theoretically and practically successful. He emphasized that due to deabsolutized nature of understanding the truth in the modern world the need of dialogue increased. He designed many programs and models of dialogue for practice at a large scale in various fields like business and education et cetera. His dialogue is a vast and explicit area of deep dialogue, critical thinking, emotional intelligence and competitive cooperation with its seven stages and ten principles known as Dialogue Decalogue. Al Faruqi's basic concern was da'wah and revival of the Islamic values for the Ummah. Dialogue was closely connected to his concern. Al Faruqi derived his principles of dialogue from his two types of principles; meta-religious principles he presented for the evaluation of religion and principles of comparative religion he presented to study religion.

Both of them emphasized ethical principles for dialogue. Swidler presented his universal declaration of global ethic for the people of the world to take help from those to derive their own principles while al Faruqi presented his ethical themes for dialogue.

Another prominent area of their work on dialogue is their focus on the role of Christianity and Islam in dialogue. This can be seen on two levels; trialogue as the dialogue among the followers of three major world religions and Christianity and Islam's dialogue with other religions and ideologies. Trialogue has a significant place in the views and efforts of Swidler and al Faruqi. Their work on trialogue can be seen on two levels; first is their analysis to highlight the need and importance of trialogue by suggesting layouts to make it effective. Second is their participation for the practical application of those layouts. Swidler in his analysis emphasized the need of trialogue basing it on the commonalities between the three religions and he focused on the role their followers can play as the majority of world's population. He stressed on Christians to acknowledge the original message and history of Judaism and Islam and vice versa to build mutual respect through dialogue. Al Faruqi in his analysis explained Islam's close relation and respect for Judaism and Christianity. He considered the contemporary efforts for trialogue insufficient and emphasized to conduct serious trialogues. He criticized Christian mission and

emphasized to replace it with dialogue. Swidler and al Faruqi played a vital role by initiating and participating in dialogue meetings to clarify misunderstandings among the Abrahamic faiths to bring them close to each other. Both of them put their efforts to make the role of their religions; Christianity and Islam prominent in the dialogue of their time and beyond. Swidler emphasized Christianity's relation and position to religions; Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism and ideology of Marxism. Al Faruqi explained Islam's relation and position to the Abrahamic faiths, to other world religions and to all the humanity on the base of revelation, prophethood and *din al-Fitra*. He declared that Islam established ideational and practical relations with all the people of the world.

Analysis of their Deep and Meta-religious dialogue presents successful dimensions in their views while the limitations in this regard lead toward the new directions and areas of work. The most appreciated area in Swidler's work is his nature of dialogue and its principles due to wide scale application of these aspects while the most criticized one is the global ethic which is although comprised of general nature principles but it is difficult to have different people of the world to agree on a global ethical declaration. The most appreciated area in al Faruqi's work is his grip on the religious sources of Abrahamic faiths as he deeply studied them while the most criticized one is the meta-religious principles for the evaluation of the religions due to their philosophical nature which made them complicated to understand and apply.

Both of them mostly lived under same kind of religious, social and financial circumstances, developed their approaches for the same cause; dialogue, came up with their unique forms of dialogue sharing many common aspects yet their approaches differ in many ways. Although both of them lived and worked mostly in the same scenario for interreligious dialogue yet they had very limited interaction. The reason may be the differences in their stances of dialogue; Swidler presented the modern Western perspective while al Faruqi came up with the Islamic perspective.

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