

**Lecture and Discussion**  
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**Crosspollinational *Tawhīd*? Tracing Features of Mu'tazilite and Christian  
*Kalām* on *Tawhīd* in Early Islam**

By

(Prof. Dr. Phil.; Dr. Theol. Habil)

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My paper is a draft of a chapter in a monograph on a comparative theology research I am conducting on Mu'tazilite and Arab Christian *Kalām* during the second/eighth- third/ninth centuries. In this chapter, I endeavor to look at the data we have on Mu'tazilite and Arab Christian *Kalām* on the concept of *Tawhīd* in particular. I investigate if the data we have on the rationalist *Kalām* on '*Tawhīd*', might be a historical exemplification of the existence of a trans-religious, trans-sectarian, common, encompassing intellectual-cultural sphere that trespassed divisive, otherizing religious affiliations. I shall try to demonstrate that if '*Tawhīd*' named a particular rationalist, philosophico-theological cultural affinity that wanted to override different religious affiliations, without forcing its followers (*mutakallims*) to give up their religious faith or become non-religious, one can then speak of '*Tawhīd*' as a *cultural* phenomenon permeating the major religious trends in the early Abbasid *Sitz im Leben*.

**- Short Bio:**



**Najib George Awad** (Prof. Dr. Phil; Dr. Theol. Habil.): an Arab-American (originally from Syria) Theologian, Religious Scholar, author and poet. He is the former Professor of Christian Theology & Eastern Christian Thought and the Director of the PhD Program in Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations in Hartford Seminary, Connecticut USA. He had his first PhD from King's College University of London, UK (2007) and his second Dr. Theol. Habil. from the Philipp University of Marburg, Germany (2014). His monographs in English are, *God without Face? On the Personal Individuation of the Holy Spirit* (Mohr Siebeck, 2011); *And Freedom Became a Public-Square: Political, Sociological and Religious Overviews on the Arab Christians and the Arabic Spring* (LIT Verlag, 2012); *Persons in Relation: An Essay on the Trinity and Ontology* (Fortress Press, 2014); and *Orthodoxy in Arabic Terms: A Study of Theodore Abū Qurrah's Trinitarian and Christological Doctrines in an Islamic Context* (De Gruyter, 2015); *Umayyad Christianity: John of Damascus as a Contextual Example of Identity-Formation in Early Islam* (Gorgias Press, 2018); and *After-Mission, Beyond Evangelicalism: The Indigenous 'Injīliyyūn' in the Arab-Muslim Context of Syria-Lebanon* (Brill, 2020). He is working right now on a research project on Mu'tazilite and Christian *Kalām* in the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century Abbasid era.