

Ahmed Deedat's Methodology in Comparative Theological Discourse and Zakir Naik's Integration

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ABSTRACT

Ahmed Deedat has a distinctive approach and unique way of formulating his da'wah materials and their organisation. Similarly, he presented his evidence and arguments to prove his point in the debates he engaged in, the talks he delivered, and the books he authored. Hence, this paper aims to exhibit Deedat's methodology in studying religions, focusing on his preparation for a debate, delivering it followed by a question-answer session and the extent to which Zakir Naik incorporated it. Besides that, Deedat's short biography and contributions to the comparative theological study are explored. An analytical and comparative method is employed in this study. The most significant finding of this research is Naik's realisation in his fifties as a dā'īn in all situations must be versatile in his preaching and propagation.

Keywords: Ahmed Deedat, Methodology, Zakir Naik, Integration, Comparative Theology.

INTRODUCTION

Ahmed Deedat has a distinctive approach and unique way of the study of comparative theological study. He is a textual, contextual, rational, argumentative, and confrontational Islamic scholar of the Christian Bible. Initially, he faced many challenging questions from the prospective Christian Missionaries from Adams College in South Africa (Goolam Vahed, 2030, p. 30). Deedat equipped himself with the book '*IDhÉr al-xaq*' (The Truth Revealed) written by Rahmatullah Kairanavi; as such, he challenged the whole Christendom of his time. Only high school standard sixth grade passed Deedat influenced many Muslims to be full-time *dā'īn* or part-time *dā'ī*. Zakir Naik is one of the prominent figures among the many young Muslims who were influenced and inspired by Deedat and got the title of Deedat Plus from Deedat himself. This study explores Deedat's methodology in comparative theological discourse and the extent to which Zakir Naik adopted and integrated it. This study has attempted to offer Deedat's methodology in theological discourse and Naik's integration into it through an analytical and comparative method.

DEEDAT'S BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

A nine-year-old boy from Surat, India, Ahmed Deedat, migrated to South Africa to help his tailor father, Hossein Deedat. After his departure, his mother passed away in India. He faced many challenges in his life. Deedat sometimes worked as a Toothpick seller, a taxi Driver, and sometimes as a storekeeper in a furniture shop. One day, he migrated to Pakistan to be a *Pakka* Muslim (practising/proper Muslim), while Pakistan is an Islamic state. Sometimes, Deedat worked as an efficient typist and sometimes as a worker in a gramophone wholesaler company called Morgan Milton Pakistan Ltd and also as a correspondent of Jahangir Textile Mill and other business people on a part-time basis. Deedat left Pakistan about a week before its first Prime Minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, was assassinated on October 16, 1951 (Goolam Vahed, 2013, p. 54).

From a shopkeeper, he became a scholar. From Adam's mission, he focused on Ahmed's mission. After two years, he went back to South Africa. A Standard Six passed school dropout student became a famous debater who debated the giants and legends of the whole Christendom of his time. He was born on July 1, 1918, and after being paralysed for nine years, Deedat passed away on August 8, 2005 (ibid., p. 25).

BACKGROUND OF DEEDAT'S APPROACH

Some crucial points formed the foundation of Deedat's approach to comparative theological studies. Those crucial points are as follows:

First, he did not choose to become a Muslim scholar of the Christian Bible. Still, he was forced to do so due to the provocations from the Christian priests, which was the turning point in his life to generate an intellectual and scientific movement. Deedat said, Deedat and his Muslim colleagues -working with him in the shop beside Adams Collage- have always been a target for the experiences of these students who aspire to be priests. Not a day went by when these people did not bother the Muslims with their insult and contempt for Islam, the Prophet, and the Qur'an. He was a twenty-year-old young man at that time. He spent many nights crying because of his weakness and inability to defend the dearest and most precious thing in his life, the Noble Messenger, who was sent as a mercy for the whole universe. He insisted on studying the Holy Qur'an, the Bible, and other literary books about them. There was a transformation in his life, and after spending time, he got the ability to confront those students to the extent that he sent invitations to them to have dialogues with them and to debate them to the point of combustion, which made them break out in a sweat when embarrassing them with presenting the truth (ibid).

Second, Deedat's sources of acquiring knowledge were the Noble Qur'an and the Bible, then the book "The Truth Revealed" by Sheikh Rahmatullah Al-Hindi. He referred to the Christian books and their sources, such as the book of Reverend David, Professor Compesti, Reverend Babel Bennett and Sir William Murr, Sir Winston Churchill, and the Reverend C.I. Scofield, Elaine White, and some other Western scholars who criticised Christianity, such as W. Graham Scroggie and his book "*Is the Bible the Word of God?*".

Third, Ahmed Deedat did not suffocate himself in the field of comparative religion to face the Christian missionaries and entered this immersion after spending time preparing for the task that he had set himself up to carry out. When he became aware of his ability, he took the initiative to confront the students of theology.

Fourth, Deedat started confronting the missionaries. He began to make Muslims aware of the truth of their religion and the falsehood of the missionaries' religion. He launched to give lectures introducing the scientific facts of the heavenly religions to the people, revealing the goals of the Christian missionaries. It started instilling self-confidence into the hearts of Muslims. It is worth noting that these lectures were open to Muslims and non-Muslims to witness the truthfulness of Islam and the falseness of Christian scriptures and the missionaries. Then, he started writing books and booklets. Subsequently, he authored more than fifteen books.

Fifth, Deedat used rhetorical methods in his lectures, debates, and writings. Even in presenting facts, various issues, arguments, and proofs, he used rhetorical Methods without neglecting the scientific methods. Perhaps the reason is his intense affection, deep sadness, and continuous emotions toward the Muslims challenged by the provocations of the Christian missionaries worldwide. That is why the reader can see in most of Deedat's writings that he never left any advantage to respond to questions of the Christian missionaries, highlight their discrepancies and mistakes, their alteration of the religious texts, clarify misconceptions posed by the Christian missionaries, and guide Muslims in dealing with them (Qais Salim al-Mu^cāyaṭah, n.d., p.7-8).

TYPES OF SCIENTIFIC METHODS

Ahmed Deedat followed scientific methods in his course. Deedat used almost five aspects of scientific methods in his theological discourse. Abdur Rahman Badawī said that "*the main rule governing the research method is that each science has its method to be articulated, which matches the nature of that research*" (Badawī, Abdur Rahman, 1963, pp. 5-10). A researcher may need more than one approach in one research, depending on the nature of the study, the materials, and the objective of the research. Deedat ensured that in his research and its delivery. Here are the definitions of the most prominent types of scientific methods that Ahmed Deedat followed.

Al-Manhaj al-Naqlī or al-Manhaj al-Wathā'iqī

This approach is applied through religious sources like quotations and references from the Qur'an and Sunnah. It needs authentication (*al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta^cdīl*) and verification of the narrators and the narrations that the scholars of the Hadith do. It also includes the historical and retrospective approaches (Ibid., 183).

Inductive Approach

Induction means reasoning from detailed facts to general principles, from *juziyyāt* to *kulliyyāt*, and from *khaī* (particular) to *Ām* (general). To philosophers, it is to prove the ruling for the *kull* (whole) by affirming it to *juziyyĒt* (the most parts) of that *kull* (whole) (Salība Jamil, 1983, pp. 68-69). This approach requires following a few stages, which can be categorised into three. Observation and experiment are the first stage, the second stage forms a scientific hypothesis, and the third stage is their actualisation or realisation. In the inductive approach, the researchers move from the part to the whole, or from the particular to the general, where the researcher can identify the observed particles and the scientific conclusion based on the experiment in the modern concept of observation and experiment. In short, the inductive approach means to start from many variables to conclude (Ibid., pp. 72-73).

Deductive or Rational Approach:

The deductive or rational approach in Arabic is called *al-Manhaj al-Istimbāti* or *al-Manhaj al-Aqlī*. Idiomatically, it means concluding one or several valid issues or entities according to the logical rules without further experiments (Muhammad Muhammad Qasim, 1999, p. 57).

Argumentative Approach

The argumentative approach, which is in Arabic called *al-Manhaj al-Jadaliy*, is an approach that tends to lead to doubt in its search for the truth, relies on criticism in its investigation of opinions, and relies on contemplation and dialogue in discussions. It incorporates the mathematical approach (*al-Manhaj al-Riyādi*), the analytical or Socratic method (*al-Manhaj al-Tahlīlī*), and the experimental approach (*al-Manhaj al-Tajribī*). The mathematical approach is to follow some valid clauses to prove something else, which will be unavoidable because it is necessarily a result of those recognised valid clauses. Hence, the analytical or Socratic approach is dividing the matter into parts and interpreting each part, posing the questions and answering them according to the level of people's understanding to reach the essence of the truth. However, the experimental approach starts from observation and goes by other proven experiments and classification of the experiments' findings based on universal principles or general issues affirmed by experience. As evidence, they are as rational proof as they are the valid conclusion of the experiment.

Critical Approach

In *Usūl al-Ḥadīth*, literature and historical studies, philosophy, etc., the critical approach or *al-Manhaj al-Naqdī* is an approach in which a person scrutinises the issues and testing them on a principle, event, or idea before giving any judgment on it. It is a rational ability that enables a person to distinguish between the truth and the false and the right and the wrong. There is no doubt that criticism has been found among nations of different civilisations and scholars of other religions since time immemorial, considering it an instant reasoning process that results in judgments regarding a subject.

Human beings strive for perfection in everything. So, they work for excellence in everything they want to make it comfortable and try to discover the shortcomings of things they desire to perfect. However, the approach of scrutinising things was only developed systematically under Islamic civilisation. The Qur'an and the Sunnah generally set the rules and foundations of criticism. Systematic criticism has a distinctive role in reformation, construction, and rectification. Thus, the Qur'anic approach of criticism is the best evidence of how it guided the Muslims to behave toward those who worship other than Allah (Qais Salim al-Mu'āyāṭah, pp. 9-10).

Deedat's Method of *al-Manhaj al-Naqli*

The method of *al-Manhaj al-Naqli* refers to proofs and evidence from the primary sources of religious scriptures. Besides that, it deals with the chain of narrators and the narrations. Perhaps the most famous scholars who used this approach are Ibn Ḥazm, al-Shahrastānī, Rahmatullah al-Hindi, Ahmed Deedat, and his student Zakir Naik. Ahmed Deedat indicated in his books and lectures that the first and foremost thing that drew his attention to the methodology of responding to the opponents' arguments and defending his own belief is the book '*The Truth Revealed*.' That is why this book greatly influenced Ahmed Deedat, as it will become apparent in what will come later.

Deedat's Textual Method

The extent to which Ahmed Deedat applies the documentary method (*al-Manhaj al-Naqlī*) or (*al-Manhaj al-Wathā'iqī*) in the study of comparative religious studies is so much so he could mention hundreds of quotations and references from the religious scriptures. One can find him bringing quotation after quotation from his instant memory, reference after reference from the religious scriptures, especially from the scriptures of Islam and Christianity. He also presented historical documents that can be used as evidence to prove a case he wants to establish. Deedat used this textual method in his lectures, debates, as well as in his writings. He relies on the texts of the opponent's religious scriptures in most of his speech to respond to the opponent's arguments. After presenting them, he explains the texts and points out the differences and errors if they are contradictory, using other scientific approaches such as rational, dialectical, inductive, and others.

Perhaps the references and the quotations on which Ahmed Deedat relied are the references and the quotations of the Bible. Most of Deedat's study of Christianity was to respond to the Christian missionaries and defend his belief from their attack. Therefore, he mentioned texts of the Bible attacking the opponents' beliefs, highlighting their corrupt beliefs, and the contradictions and errors of some texts of their scriptures defending Islam, the Qur'an, and the prophethood (Goolam Vahed, 2013, p. 7).

We also find him inferring the texts of the Qur'an to prove the extent of massive inequality between the state of the Qur'anic text and the form of the Biblical text. An example of this is what was mentioned in his book 'Jesus (PBUH) in Islam' when he was arguing with one of the Christian scholars regarding the birth of Jesus (peace be upon him). He presented the Qur'anic scenario and the Biblical scenario. He said: "Now compare the miraculous representation that came with the forty-seventh verse of *Sūrah Āli 'Imran* mentioned in the Qur'an with what came in the Gospel of Mathew, chapter one and verse eighteen, "As for the birth of Jesus Christ, it was like this when his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph the Carpenter before they came together, and she was found pregnant by the Holy Spirit" (The Holy Bible, *Mathew* 1: 18). Then he says, and let us compare this with what was mentioned in the Holy Qur'an in the Almighty Allah's word, "She said, "Lord, how can I have a son when a human being has not touched me" (Qur'an, *Sūrat Āli 'Imran* 3: 47) And the Gospel of Luke mentions what it says, "Maryam said to the angel, how can this be when I do not know a man?" (Luke 1:34). Even the way to respond to Maryam's solemn request between the two books of the Bible is different. Luke said, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of God the Highest will overshadow you" (Ibid., 35). Deedat asked his Christian friend to see the difference between the statements. To Deedat, the Biblical statement is the same as putting a stick in the hands of an atheist by which the atheist will strike his Christian friend. Someone might say, how did the Holy Spirit come upon Mary? And how misled by the power of God the Highest? We know that spontaneously, the meaning that appears in people's minds is not descent but below the appropriate level. Deedat compared a Quranic presentation and a Biblical presentation of Jesus's birth. The Holy Qur'an says, "An angel replied, "So will it be. Allah creates what He wills. When He decrees a matter, He (Allāh) tells it, 'Be!' And it is!" (Qur'an, *Sūrat Āli 'Imran* 3: 47). whereas the Biblical presentation is "The holy spirit will come upon you," "overshadow you," and "misled by the power of God." Someone might ask how the Holy Spirit came upon Mary. How did the Holy Spirit overshadow Mary? An imaginary question can come to an atheist's mind: "How did the power of God mislead Mary?" So, we surely know the language used here is to be blamed.

This is the Qur'anic conception of the birth of Jesus (peace be upon him) that He can create a million "Jesus" without fathers and mothers because the Almighty can create whatever He wills. Deedat said, *I asked the House of the Holy Book supervisor, which one would you choose for your daughter regarding the birth of Jesus, peace be upon him, the Qur'anic vision, or the evangelical vision?* So, the man bowed his head humbly and said the Qur'anic conception. How did the Christian evangelists and the Jews claim that the Qur'an was copied from the Bible? How is this Qur'anic presentation better than the Biblical presentation if copied from the Bible? This cannot be in any case unless it is the Word of God (Ahmed Deedat, pp. 38-41).

Deedat used the documentary method to falsify some Biblical statements using other Biblical verses. In doing so, he had support from the sayings of the great Christian scholars, whether the fair ones among them like Michel H. Heart or as his inference with some of the expressions of their scholars who did not strengthen their reasoning with wisdom or tried to falsify even scientific facts about which no two disagreed like the creation of the light. The Bible says that the light was created on the first day (The Holy Bible, *Genesis* 1: 3), whereas the Sun was created on the fourth day (*Genesis* 1: 16-19). Again, the Bible says grass, herbs, and fruit trees were created on the third day (*Genesis* 1: 11), whereas the Sun and the moon were created on the fourth day. How can the light be on the first day, whereas the Sun and the moon were created on the fourth day? How can grass, plants, and herbs be without sunlight?

This is how Ahmed Deedat used *al-Manhaj al-Wathā'iqī* or *al-Manhaj al-Naqlī*; references from the original texts form the religious scriptures. However, his position in using this method is no less than his predecessors like Ibn Ḥazm, Shahratānī, and Rahmatullah al-Hindi. It is not excessive to say, "*Huwa khairo khalafin li Khairi salafin*" means "*He is the best successor to the best predecessor to use this approach.*"

DEEDAT'S RATIONALE APPROACH

The rational approach is one of the essential approaches that Islamic scholars use in many fields of knowledge. In Arabic, it is called *al-Manhaj al-Istimbāṭī*, concluding one or several valid issues or entities according to the logical rules without resorting to further experiments. It is also called the inductive approach (Muhammad Qasim, n.d., p. 57). To use this approach, a person must involve his sense, reason, axioms, and authentic news. Irfan Abdel Hamid confirmed this in his entitled "*Manhaj al-Mutakallimin*". The Extent of Ahmed Deedat's application of the rational approach is not less than that of his predecessors like Ibn Hazm, Ibn al-Qayyim, Shahrastani, and Rahmatullah al-Kairanawi al-Hindi (Irfān Abdul Ḥamīd Fattāh, n.d., p. 23).

Agreed with the consensus of scholars of theology and the principles of jurisprudence, Imam al-Maturidi al-Samarkandi said that the paths by which one can reach the knowledge of the facts of things are *al-ʿAyān* (testimony of the senses) and *al-Akḥbār* (the saying of the truthful Prophet) and *al-Nadhar* (consideration). So, *Ilhām* (inspiration) is not a medium to reach knowledge and the essence of the facts of things. In the same way, Ahmed Deedat rejected *Ilham* (inspiration) and *Taqlid* (blind following) of those who preceded them. If *Ilhām* (inspiration) had proven the sciences, *Nadhar* (consideration/observation) would have no meaning. There are many examples where Ahmed Deedat condemned following *Ilhām* (inspiration) of some people (Bible writers) and *Taqlid* of some people without *al-Nadhar* (looking) into it and without justification and consideration.

For Instance, Deedat asked his opponent debater, Pastor Stanley Sjoberg, while they were debating on a topic entitled "Is the Bible the word of God?" to follow up after Deedat's reading from the Bible. Deedat was holding a Bible, and Sjoberg was holding another Bible. So, Deedat asked Sjoberg to open the Book of Isaiah, chapter thirty-seven. Deedat started reading, and Sjoberg followed up on Deedat's reading. Deedat kept reading and asking if it matched what he had. He replied time after time, saying, 'Yes,' it is matching. Deedat finished reading until the end of the chapter, and the chapter was still open in the pastor's hands. In the same place Deedat was speaking from, Deedat announced to the audience that he was not reading from the book of Isaiah chapter, the thirty-seventh at all, but from the book of the second Kings, the nineteenth chapter (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OVJjmj6FPXM>> retrieved on November 24 24, 2021).

When the audience realised that Deedat had not been reading from the book of Isaiah, the thirty-seventh chapter, they were stunned by the strange similarity between the two texts, and a horrible attack occurred among the audience after the clear argument proved that plagiarism of texts are literary theft materials that they believe as the *Ilhām* to the writers of the Bible. In other words, the two texts are attributed to different authors in different places and times. They are nothing but apparent plagiarism (what they consider as *Ilham* to the author of those chapters). There was a round of applause from the audience.

Almost seventy-five million Christian evangelists and missionaries claim the blessing of direct personal contact with the Holy Spirit, meaning this grace does not cost anything or trouble to have this privilege (Ahmed Deedat, p. 28). Nevertheless, the Christians claim to be inspired, and Deedat mentions the extent of the deviation of the claim of inspiration among the Christians until the number of the inspired people in their sect became beyond imagination. This is how Ahmed Deedat annulled the claim of inspiration that makes millions connect directly to the Holy Spirit, which is the antithesis of human reasoning. Deedat used the same method in his debates and writings also to disprove the beliefs of the Christians that human beings can comprehend whether about the essence of God or the person of Christ to be God or to be crucified for the redemption of the sin of human being, or anything related to their books and religious sources. To explain this is what he mentioned in his book, *Equipment for Jihād*, when he was asking a denouncing question about what was mentioned in their books regarding the Divine essence, where he asked: Is it permissible for God to roar as lions roar? Strangely, it was mentioned in Jeremiah 25:30, which says, "*Therefore prophesy thou against them all these words, and say unto them, The LORD shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation; he shall mightily roar upon his habitation; he shall shout, as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth*" (The Bible (KJV), *Jeremiah* 25: 30). Similarly, Deedat asked, is it permissible for God to do the work of a barber? No wonder it is mentioned in the Bible, "*On that day the Lord will shave the head of the Assyrians and the hair of the feet, and the beard will be removed as well*" (The Holy Bible, *Isaiah* 7: 20). He also mentions some other examples using that rational approach that does not go with the *‘Aql* (reasoning), such as "a talking ass" (The Holy Bible, *Numbers* 22: 27-28.), "four-footed fowls" (The Holy Bible, *Leviticus* 11: 20.), "birth of females a double pollution" (The Holy Bible, *Leviticus* 12: 1-2 & 5), "seven-headed leopard" (The Holy Bible, *Revelation* 13: 1-2.), and so on that do not match with sound rational reasoning and logical perspective. Thus, Deedat used the rational approach in his lectures, debates, and writings to prove that Christians do not rely on proof and evidence.

DEEDAT'S ARGUMENTATIVE APPROACH

Some Muslim scholars used the argumentative approach for studying comparative religious discourses. As the researcher mentioned earlier, the argumentative approach (*al-Manhaj al-Jadaliy*) leads to doubt in its search for the truth, relies on criticism in its investigation of opinions, and relies on contemplation and dialogue in discussions. It incorporates the mathematical approach (*al-Manhaj al-Riyādiy*), the analytical or Socratic approach (*al-Manhaj al-Taḥlīliy*), and the experimental approach (*al-Manhaj al-Tajrībiy*).

Ahmed Deedat applied the argumentative approach to such an extent that his biographer Goolam Vahed named him in the first chapter of his book, *The Argumentative Muslim* (Goolam Vahed, p. 1). Muslim scholars link debate with Islamic morals, so we see Al-Juwayni when he talks about the etiquette of argumentation, stressing the need to observe some conditions: One, the purpose must be to get close to Allah and seek His pleasure. Two, spending energy in explaining and revealing the truth and eradicating falsehood. Third, fearing Allah, the person does not intend to show off, seek prestige, or personal gain. Last but not least, his intention should not be to win over the opponent and have the pleasure of victory because this is like the practice of cattle and virility like rams and roosters. Ahmed Deedat followed the etiquette that the previous scholars of comparative religion like Ibn Ḥazm, Shahratānī and others decided for conducting a debate. The argumentative approach is the dominant feature in Deedat's debates, books, and lectures. Nevertheless, Deedat was committed to the approach of the previous scholars who extracted it from the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and used it in their debates.

The foundations and rules of the argumentative approach, according to Ibn Hazm, are limited to the following: First, the declarative question. Second, going along with the opponent and agreeing to a corrupt premise for a while to show him the corruption of its production and that it leads to impossible. Third, demanding the opponent to correct his claim and prove the falsehood in his claim. Fourth, Saying the necessary points is to refute the opponent's words from the content of his words. Fifth, presenting that the opponent's claim has no evidence. Instead, if the opponent presents any proof, Deedat proves how it is against the opponent's claim. Sixth, sounding the matters and dividing them in a well-organised way (Maḥmūd^cAlī Ḥimāyat, 1983, p. 177). Let us see to what extent Deedat implemented those rules.

First, The Declarative Question

Ahmed Deedat applied declarative questions in many places in his lectures, debates, and writings. He used to say, *'Perhaps some of you have heard' or 'some of you have seen this verse in the Bible which says, "Those who bear witness in heaven are three: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one." Who among you has heard or read this text? Is it not in your Gospels?'* This is how he used to pose declarative questions.

Second, Going Along with the Opponent and Agreeing to a Corrupt Premise for a While

It is like agreeing to a corrupt premise of the opponent until showing him how he is wrong in his claim. Perhaps the best example of this rule is what Deedat mentioned in the debate with Stanley Sjoberg on the topic 'Is the Bible the Word of God?' Deedat showed two copies of the Bible from the cover, where the colour, design, and even the title on the cover, 'Revised Standard Version of the Bible', were written on both covers. Both Bibles, from their outlook, seem to be identical. Two copies were published in 1952 and the other in 1971. Deedat asked

which one Sjoberg would accept as the Word of God. Deedat asked Sjoberg this question because these two copies of the Bibles are identical in their cover but not in their content.

He further showed some other copies of the Bible, like the King James Version (KJV), the Roman Catholic version of the Bible, the Protestant Christian Version, and the Swedish version. Then he asked the Pastor that the Pastor had to tell Deedat which version of the Bible he would accept as the Word of God. Every version of the Bible is different from the other. Deedat said, *'They have to decide which version of the Bible Deedat should take for the debate. Should he take the revised standard version of the Bible, or does the Pastor tell him to take the King James Version or the Roman Catholic edition?'* He would like to know which one they accept so that they can move forward in their discussion. These are all different in content; by God, they are not the same. So, if one of those versions is chosen by the Pastor as the Word of God, the other versions will immediately be counted as not the Word of God. Deedat followed this rule to disprove the opponent's claim (Ahmed Deedat, *Two Debates in Stockholm*, p 19).

Third, Proving the Opponent's Claim Has No Evidence

It is a rule where a debater needs to prove that the opponent's claim has no evidence. Even if the opponent presents any evidence, the debater must prove that it goes against his opponent. This rule became clear to the audience when Ahmed Deedat debated with Anis Shorrosh. Deedat said in the debate that the only fundamental difference between Muslims and Christians lies in one point: the divinity of Jesus Christ (peace be upon him). That is why Deedat searched for a long time to find an unequivocal statement and an unambiguous statement where Jesus Christ himself says, *"I am God"*, or where he says, *"Worship me."* However, he did not find any evidence like that. This is how Ahmed Deedat proved that his opponent had no evidence for the claim. Shorrosh has no textual evidence from the Bible to prove that Jesus Christ said he is a God or to worship him. Instead, Jesus Christ's many statements prove that he did not go beyond a human being and contrast with the claim.

Fourth, The Affirmative Statement

This rule of argument is reflected in what was stated in his book *"Two Debates in Stockholm,"* where Deedat stated that he wants to ask Pastor Stanley some questions as the Pastor has a doctorate in theology and knows the ancient Greek language which original texts of the Bible were written, especially the books of the New Testament. Deedat explains that the Greek word for the true God worthy of worship is 'Hotheos'. Nevertheless, if the deity is not worthy of worship, they use the word "Tontheos". In translating the first verse of the Gospel of John from ancient Greek into English, the translator of the Bible used the capital letter while translating the phrase "And the Word was God". Deedat asked why the translator used the capital letter (G) instead of the small letter (g) in God even though it was Tontheos, not Hotheos. They are deceiving people, according to Deedat, and thus, it becomes clear that Christian translators are manipulating the translation of their Holy Book, which they translate according to their whims.

Here, it is seen how Ahmed Deedat responded to Pastor's words from the content of his words, as he infers the texts of the Bible indicating that Christ is God, which is the text that says, "And the Word is God." This is how Deedat invalidates this evidence from the Bible by proving that this text is distorted in the English translation, which is supposed to be, "And the word was a god", which should be with the small G letter. Thus, Deedat invalidates the opponent's words from the content of his words.

Fifth, Correcting the Opponent's Claim and Proving Its Falsehood

Ahmed Deedat used to correct the opponent's claim and show its falsehood. Deedat used this rule of argument in Pastor Stanly's debate. There were many incidents where Ahmed Deedat corrected his opponent's claim and proved falsehood. For instance, Deedat told the Pastor that he had deceived people by telling them that Deedat authored a book named "The God That Never Was", whereas neither he authored any book like that nor asked anyone to write it. That was a lie (*The God That Never Was*).

Sixth, Sounding the Matters and Dividing Them in A Well-Organised

This approach becomes clear to the audience in many situations while Deedat debated with some Christian priests and notable figures. Perhaps the most prominent of these situations is when Deedat debated with the chief priest of Sweden, Reverend Stanley Sjoberg, on the topic entitled "*Is the Bible really the word of God?*".

Suppose a topic is dealt with in a scientific study. In that case, the first thing to do is to test the evidence's validity and examine the witnesses' testimony regarding any information required to acknowledge that topic's validity.

Ahmed Deedat started his topic directly: "*Is the Bible really the word of God?*" Subsequently, focusing on the study here, he brought many different versions of the Bible to the audience. People may generally think there is only one gospel, but he presented many versions of the Bible to show them with their eyes and touch with their hands that there is more than one gospel. Deedat was pointing at the Roman Catholic Gospel and asked Pastor Stanley whether he accepted this gospel as the true word of God. Moreover, Pastor Stanley did not accept the Roman Catholic Bible as he believed in the Swedish Bible. This is the first point in that debate that Deedat won.

The second point Deedat highlighted in the debate is that he has a copy of the Holy Scofield Bible. With the help of eight Doctors of Divinity, the scholar Schofield has revised this version of the Bible. Deedat asked Pastor Stanley whether he accepted this Bible or not. Deedat also asked the pastor whether he accepts the protestant Bible as the Word of God. Then, the Pastor replied that he does not believe in any of those versions of the Bible as he believes in the Swedish version of the Bible as the word of God. Thus, Deedat proved that those versions of the Bible are not the word of Almighty God.

Then, Deedat said that he has two twin copies of the Bible with the same title, form, and cover. The title of each copy is "The revised standard version". However, one was published in 1952, whereas the other was published in 1971. Deedat asked the Pastor which one the Pastor accepts as the Word of God. There are many differences between the contents of those two Bibles. The Pastor again rejected and accepted the other even though initially he thought that both copies were the same. This approach is called in Arabic *al-Sabr wa al-Taqsīm* (sounding the matters and dividing them in a well-organised (Ahmed Deedat, pp. 17-18). Through the preceding research, the researchers sought out that Ahmed Deedat has a few other distinguished charismatic strategies for convincing answers to the questions posed by his audiences. It is easy to prepare a lecture, memorise it and deliver it to the audience from memory, along with their references and quotations. However, responding to the random questions mentioning the references and quotations is not easy. Deedat

ZAKIR NAIK'S INTEGRATION

Zakir Abdul Karim Naik is a medical doctor and a renowned and dynamic international orator on Islam and 'comparative religious discourse. He endeavours to clarify Islamic viewpoints and clear misconceptions about Islam using the Qur'an, authentic Ḥadīth, and other religious scriptures as a basis, in conjunction with reason, logic, statistics and scientific facts. He is famous for his critical analysis and convincing answers to challenging questions posed by the audience after his public talks. He is the founding president of the Islamic Research Foundation (IRF) and peace TV networks.

In the last 30 years, Zakir Naik delivered over 2000 public talks in many countries, including the most-talked debates with William Campbell and the prominent Hindu Guru Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. In March 2012, his public talk delivered at Kishanganj of Bihar, India, was attended by over one million people, being one of the largest gatherings in the public lecture history of the world for any religious lecture by a lone orator (Zakir Naik, Interview by the researchers, Putrajaya, Malaysia, January 17 2019).

Zakir received many unique titles from his audience, like "*he is the most logical, rational, understandable person across the globe*" (Zakir Naik: A Brief Profile, *Zakir Naik – A Brief Introduction*, Editorial Team, (May 2015), p. 1). He was also entitled to the title "*Deedat Plus*", the title Ahmed Deedat gave Naik for his expertise on all major world religions. This research describes Naik's integration with Deedat's methodology in comparative religion.

Zakir Naik delivered thousands of lectures in India, including many countries like South Asia, Europe, the Middle East, North America, South America, Africa, Southeast Asia, Northeast Asia, and Australasia. The countries include India, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Brunei, Thailand, China, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, Yemen, England, Scotland, France, Italy, Australia, New Zealand, United States of America (USA), Canada, Guyana, Trinidad & Tobago.

Zakir Naik delivered numerous Islamic talks in South Asia, especially in India, Sri Lanka, and Maldives. South Asia is a hotbed for numerous religions and cultures, where people are pretty sensitive about their faith and beliefs. In such challenging environments, since the inception of the Islamic Research Foundation in Mumbai in 1991, Zakir Naik has dared to deliver numerous public talks on Islam and Comparative Religion followed by Open Question and answer sessions.

Zakir Naik was addressing a crowd of over 1 million people, one of the world's largest gatherings for a religious lecture delivered by anyone (excluding conferences) at Kishanganj, Bihar, India, in March 2012. Zakir Naik remains the only Islamic Speaker in the world to draw a crowd of more than a million for his solo lecture. He has also consistently drawn crowds of more than 100,000 on many occasions during the annual International Peace Conferences held in Mumbai, India, for five consecutive years from 2007-2011.

In Southeast Asia, especially Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Brunei, and Thailand, Zakir Naik has toured since 1996; he has delivered Public Talks on a variety of religious subjects like Misconceptions about Islam, Jihad and Terrorism: An Islamic Viewpoint, Why the West is Coming to Islam? And many more. In the past two decades, Zakir Naik has delivered several

talks on Islam and Comparative Religion to large audiences in the heart of Southeast Asia, in countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, and Brunei.

Besides that, Zakir Naik has travelled to the Northeast Asian region since 1998. He has delivered public talks on various religious subjects. Zakir Naik's lecture tours to China and other Northeast Asian countries helped him launch Peace TV Chinese in December 2015. Now, Peace TV reaches audiences who speak Chinese (Mandarin) - the most widely spoken language in the world.

Besides his numerous trips to the Holy Cities of Makkah and Madinah in Saudi Arabia, Zakir Naik has toured the Middle East (including all six Gulf countries), delivering hundreds of talks on Islam and Comparative Religion. He has helped clarify the misconceptions about Islam by engaging in Question-and-answer sessions after his Public Lectures. Zakir Naik has enthralled audiences across the Middle East with his convincing answers to challenging questions posed after his public talks. Moreover, most of his public talks have been attended by large audiences of tens of thousands, never witnessed by any other Speaker on Islam.

Zakir Naik has been invited for lecture tours to various European countries and has delivered many public talks, followed by Open Question and Answer Sessions. Among the notable countries are the UK, France, and Italy. In his Public Talks and Open Question and Answer Sessions around Europe, Zakir Naik has explicitly condemned any act of 'Terrorism' committed in the name of religion, irrespective of the faith the Terrorists adhere to.

Since 2001, Zakir Naik also delivered many Public Talks, followed by Open Question and Answer Sessions, in Australia and New Zealand. "Islam will enter every home," said Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Naik prays to Allah (SWT) to make him and the Peace TV Network instrumental in fulfilling this Hadith. His lecture tours to the far-separated continent of Australasia are one such endeavour. Many famous and internationally acclaimed Newspapers, Magazines, Blogs, and News Websites in various world languages regularly covered news related to Zakir Naik and his tours and talks (Editorial Board, ed., *Dr. Zakir Naik: A Brief Profile*, May 2015, 111-55).

Since 1996, Zakir Naik has delivered numerous public talks and held debates and Symposia in North America, especially the USA and Canada. The 'Islamophobia', propagated by the media, leads to many acts of violence and hate crimes against Muslims living in the West. Zakir Naik has been invited several times by leading North American Muslim Organisations to present the correct understanding of Islam and to clarify the misconceptions about this religion of Peace. Since 2000, Zakir Naik has delivered Public Talks in South America. Islam has even reached the shores of the South American continent. Following the footsteps of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the *Ṣaḥābah* (the companions of the Prophet), Zakir Naik has been at the forefront of conveying the message of Islam across the globe, including South America. From the northern tip of Africa, Algeria, to the southern tip of Africa, namely South Africa, Egypt, Nigeria, Ghana, Algeria, Morocco, The Gambia, Botswana, and Mauritius, Zakir Naik has enthralled his African audiences with his informative and inspiring speeches, followed by open Question & Answer Sessions. Africa also holds a special place in the heart of Zakir Naik because it happens to be the continent from which his inspiration and mentor, the late Ahmed Deedat, hails. Since 1994, Zakir Naik has been given Public Talks in Africa. In 2013 and 2014, Zakir

Naik's lecture tours to Nigeria, Ghana, and The Gambia in Africa were a resounding success wherein many Christians accepted the true faith – Islam.

Zakir Naik's Debates and Symposium

Since the Islamic Research Foundation's inception in 1991, Zakir Naik has delivered numerous talks, followed by Question-and-Answer Sessions, and participated in many Interfaith Dialogues and Debates with prominent religious personalities of other faiths. The researcher will present Naik's topics that he debated and delivered in the symposium, explaining one debate as the researcher did during Deedat's debate with Jimmy Swaggart.

The Qur'an and the Bible in the Light of Science

The Qur'an and the Bible in the Light of Science Zakir Naik's public dialogue with William Campbell (of USA) on the topic. "The Qur'an and the Bible in the Light of Science", held in Chicago, USA, on April 1, 2000, was a resounding success from the Qur'anic viewpoint (Editorial Board, *"DR ZAKIR NAIK A Brief Profile,"* May 2015, p. 113.) In this single debate, along with its question-answer session, Zakir Naik adapted polemical, apologetic, confrontational, contextual, critical, analytical, comparative, scientific, historical, argumentative, inductive, deductive, and versatile methods and approaches. Western philosophical, anthropological, sociological, psychological, and phenomenological methodologies have failed to study religion holistically (Siti Nurleha Bt Saffie, 2012, p. 2).

The Concept of God in Hinduism and Islam in the Light of Sacred Scriptures

Zakir Naik's Interfaith Dialogue with prominent Hindu Guru Sri Sri Ravi Shankar on "The Concept of God in Hinduism and Islam in the Light of Sacred Scriptures", held at Palace Grounds, Bangalore, on January 21, 2006, was highly appreciated by people of both the faiths (Editorial Board, p. 115).

Is Non-Vegetarian Food Permitted or Prohibited for a Human Being?

In later times, Indian society, due to a strong influence of incumbent Religions like Jainism and Buddhism, adopted 'Strict Vegetarianism', contrary to the Culture of India wherein non-veg food was a delicacy, even Beef (Zakir Naik and Rashmi Bhai Zaveri, 2000). This debate was held in a friendly spirit between Rashmi Bhai Zaveri (President of the Indian Vegetarian Congress) and Zakir Naik, who, in his presentation, unveiled the myths surrounding the consumption of non-veg. Food for a human being from Religious, Scientific, and Logical points of view (Editorial Board, p 116).

Was Christ (peace be upon him) Crucified?

For a Muslim, the Qur'anic testimony proves that Jesus Christ (peace be upon him) was neither killed nor crucified. Pastor Ruknuddin Pio, a Coptic Christian, was overzealous to debate this crucial topic with Zakir Naik. After watching this Debate, our Christian brother (if unbiased) would undoubtedly agree that there is clear evidence in the Bible that Jesus Christ (peace be upon him) was Not Crucified (Editorial Board, p. 117).

Press Debate

Is Religious Fundamentalism a Stumbling Block to the Freedom of Expression?

The first Public Debate of Zakir Naik was held in Mumbai (then Bombay) and organised by the 'Bombay Union of Journalists at a time when Islamic Shariah was the target of the Media for its

ruling on blasphemy. Zakir Naik was joined by Father M Pereira, Vasudev Vyas, and Ashok Sahane for this debate. The debate was accomplished so successfully that even though the Bombay Union of Journalists organised it and most of the media was present, no one reported it! A lucid and explicit presentation was made by Zakir Naik in defence of Islam and its *Shari'ah* (legislation) laws, proving that the *Shari'ah* laws are perfect and not barbaric as portrayed by the Media (Ibid., 118).

Symposium: Religion in the Right Perspective:

Concept of God in Hinduism, Christianity and Islam

Three learned men, Swamy Golokananda, Father Geo Payyapilly, and Zakir Naik, representing Hindu, Christian, and Islamic Faiths, respectively, gathered on one stage for the Right understanding of 'Religion'. In his presentation, Zakir Naik invincibly proved that the best way to understand 'Religion' is by understanding its Sacred Scriptures and not by looking at its adherents.

Symposium: Family Values in Islam:

An Islamic family is built on the Qur'an and Sunnah's values and teachings; each family member has rights and duties to fulfil. Zakir Naik and other internationally renowned speakers highlighted the importance of raising an Islamic family to build a peaceful society and, ultimately, a peaceful world (Ibid., 119).

Oxford Union Debate: Islam and the 21st Century:

The most prestigious and one of the oldest Students' Unions in the world at Oxford University, UK – the 'Oxford Union', organised a Historic Debate of Zakir Naik on the relevance of Islam in the 21st Century. Zakir Naik's outstanding talk on the topic, followed by answering challenging questions from the audience, was impeccable and convincing (Editorial Board, p.120).

ZAKIR NAIK'S BOOKS ON COMPARATIVE RELIGION

In the age of modern technology and social media, Zakir Naik focused more on a few rich websites instead of writing more books. Therefore, Naik has only five written materials. They are as follows: Similarities between Hinduism and Islam: Is the Qur'an God's Word? The Concept of God in Major Religions, The Qur'an and the Modern Science Compatible or Incompatible? Answers to Non-Muslims' Common Questions about Islam.

Zakir Naik wrote some books before or after any debate with non-Muslim scholars from different religions. For example, Zakir Naik debated with Sri Sri Ravi Shankar on "Similarities between Hinduism and Islam" and wrote a book under the same title. Naik also debated with William Campbell on "*The Qur'an and the Bible in the light of science*" and wrote a book on the same topic. Then he wrote "*The Qur'an and the Modern Science Compatible or Incompatible?*" to prove that the Qur'an is an authentic word of God Almighty and compatible with science for all times, all places, and all nations (Zakir Naik, "*The Qur'an and the Modern Science Compatible or Incompatible*"). The same goes for other books where they are the gist of the lectures and debates, except for "*Answers to Non-Muslims' Common Questions about Islam*" because it is the gist of Question-answer sessions of the many programs. This is a book in which Zakir Naik compiled 20 common questions frequently asked by non-Muslims about Islam. Zakir Naik shared his experiences in this book. He says,

In conveying the message of Islam to a non-Muslim, it is usually insufficient to highlight only Islam's optimistic nature. Most non-Muslims are not convinced about the truth of Islam because there are a few questions about Islam at the back of their minds that remain unanswered (Zakir Naik, *Answers to non-Muslims' Common Questions about Islam*, p. 2).

Many times, non-Muslims agree with the positive nature of Islam, but in the same way, they bear in the back of their mind, Ah! "*Your Prophet chopped off the heads of those who denied his religion. You are the same Muslims who marry more than one woman. You are the Muslims who subjugate women by keeping them behind the veil. You are the ones who spread Islam with swords, etc.*" Zakir Naik likes to respond to non-Muslims for whatever they feel is wrong about Islam. He encourages them to ask questions even though he accepts criticism about Islam and handles it with wisdom. From his long experience dealing with question-and-answer sessions, he found only five or six questions that invariably fall among non-Muslims' twenty most common questions (Ibid).

CONCLUSION

Zakir Naik met Ahmed Deedat in South Africa and asked him about his confrontational approach, "*Uncle, why are you so aggressive on the stage?*" he then replied: "*My son, there are two ways of fighting the battle; either with the holy water or with the fire. I have chosen to fight with the fire. If you can fight with the holy water, you are most welcome. However, I have chosen the fire*" (Goolam Vahed, 2013, p. 194). Deedat used textual, descriptive, analytical, comparative, dialogue, debate, disputative and polemical, exclusivist, unapologetic, militant, aggressive, and forceful approaches to prove the issues. In contrast, Zakir Naik added more scientific, historical, statistical, and logical approaches to it. Having a medical background, Zakir Naik could describe things better from a scientific perspective.

On top of that, Ahmed Deedat was known as an Islamic scholar of the Christian Bible. In contrast, Zakir Naik expanded the domain to include the world's major religions like Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, etc. The researchers recommend a few things, like a dā'in should be more diplomatic in his approach, especially when making *da'wah* among non-Muslims. Specifically, not to insult those who invoke gods and idols other than Allah (Qur'ān, *Sūrat al-An'ām* 6:108).

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