

The Quranic Approach to Debate: An Analytical Study of the Verses of Debate

Mukhamad Hadi Musolin, Reda Owis Hassan Serour, Shehata Hafez Mohamed Elsheikh

Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah International Islamic University (UniSHAMS), 09300
Kuala Ketil, Kedah, Malaysia

To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v14-i11/23864>

DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v14-i11/23864

Published Date: 30 November 2024

Abstract

Debate is a type of dialogue and discussion that aims to reach the truth and clarify religious facts. The Holy Quran contains many examples of debate and argument. The Holy Quran has dealt with debate and argument in various ways, including argument in the best way and argument with truth. Argument in the best way means dialogue with wisdom and good advice, and avoiding severity and emotion, and its goal is to convince opponents in a gentle and polite manner. As for argument with truth, it refers to the discussion based on strong arguments and evidence and sound logic to prove the truth. This research aims to study the Quranic approach to debate and argument and to explain the rules and etiquette of debate. A set of approaches were used in this research to achieve the desired goals, namely: the inductive, descriptive and analytical approaches. One of the most important results of this research is that the Holy Quran contains many examples of debate, and that knowing the correct approach to debate and argument is necessary to confront opponents and defend the truth. The contribution of this research is that it gives confidence and ability to society to confront enemies and opponents in a correct way.

Keywords: Methodology, Quranic, Debate, Analytical Study.

Introduction

This research is of great importance to students of knowledge, for the following:

- It teaches them methods of argumentation and debate to confront the enemy
- It gives them the confidence to confront opponents
- It teaches them the etiquette of debate

Research Problem

This research is an attempt to address the following issues:

1. Many people do not know the methods of debate and argument
2. Some people do not adhere to the etiquette of debate
3. Many people cannot defend the right through debate.

Objectives

This research has many objectives, the most important of which are the following:

1. Knowing the correct method of argumentation and debate in the view of the Qur'an
2. Clarifying the rules required in debate.
3. Statement of Etiquette in Debate and Argument

Methodology

In this research, I used a set of methods to achieve the desired goals, which are: the inductive, descriptive and analytical method. I presented some Quranic verses related to debate, analyzed them and linked them to each other to reach a thematic unity and final results that achieve the research goals according to the established plan.

Definition of Debate

Scholars have defined debate and argumentation with many definitions, including Al-Baji defines argumentation as: "The hesitation of speech between two people, each of whom intends to correct his statement and invalidate the statement of his companion" (Al-Baji, 2001). Al-Juwayni (1979) chooses to define argumentation as: "The disputants showing the requirements of their view on the conflict and contradiction through expression, or what takes its place from indication and meaning".

Al-Jurjani (1983) defines argumentation as: "A phrase related to showing and establishing doctrines." Argumentation is defined as: "The analogy composed of well-known and axioms, the purpose of which is to oblige the opponent and silence those who are unable to comprehend the premises of the proof, or it is to prevent one's opponent from corrupting his statement with an argument or a doubt." These are some definitions of argumentation as defined by scholars. We see from these definitions that argumentation includes the meaning of wrestling and drowning in speech, and its purpose is to oblige the opponent and silence them by establishing an argument against them. When argumentation is attributed to the Holy Qur'an, it means the evidence and proofs that the Holy Qur'an contains to oblige the unbelievers and the obstinate and guide them to the path of truth.

Rules of Debate

There are rules for debate that must be adhered to when arguing and debating. These rules include the following (Al-Shabili, 2016):

The first rule: If you are a transmitter, then the truth, or a claimant, then the evidence. The evidence for the first part is the Almighty's saying: Say: Then bring the Torah and recite it if you should be truthful (Al-Imran, 93). Every claim that is disputed must be supported by evidence, otherwise it is merely a claim devoid of proof. Evidence can be either transmitted or rational. What is required in the transmitted is to clarify its truth, and in the rational, to show its clarity and clarify its argument. The evidence for the second part is the Almighty's saying: Say: Bring your proof, if you should be truthful. This is general in every claim, and it must be confirmed by evidence.

The second rule: It is better to agree with the legal texts in wording and meaning than to agree with them in meaning without wording. This is because following the Qur'an and

Sunnah in wording and meaning is complete and more perfect than following them in meaning without wording.

The third rule: It is not permissible to cut off evidence and use part of it as evidence. Allah the Almighty has criticized those who take part in the Book and reject part of it, as He the Almighty said: Do you believe in part of the Book and disbelieve in part? Then what is the reward of those who do that among you except disgrace in worldly life, and on the Day of Resurrection they will be returned to the severest punishment. And Allah is not unaware of what you do (Al-Baqarah: 85).

The fourth rule: The truth is accepted by any side. The truth is accepted because it agrees with the evidence, so the speaker does not accept or reject it. Allah the Almighty said: So, Allah guided those who believed the truth about which they differed, by His permission. And Allah guides whom He wills to a straight path (Al-Baqarah: 213).

The fifth rule: The truth is not known by men; know the truth and you will know its men. The truth is what agrees with the evidence without paying attention to the number of those who come, or their fewness, so the truth is not weighed by men, but rather men are weighed by the truth, and the mere aversion of those whose aversion or the love of those who agree does not indicate the validity or corruption of a statement, rather every statement that is used as evidence, except for the statement of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, is used as evidence. The large number of followers is not evidence of the truth of the claim, just as the small number of followers is not evidence of its weakness or corruption.

Etiquette of Debate

Al-Shabli (2016) mentioned some etiquettes in the debate, some of which are as follows:

First etiquette: Sincerity of intention to Allah Almighty. One of the signs of sincerity in debate is not to be satisfied with the negligence of his opponent regarding the correct indication of a proof he has presented, and he has become aware of it, but rather he should submit to it, even if his opponent has neglected it. Any debate in which the purpose is not to support the truth is a disaster for its owner, and the harm in it is greater than the benefit. One of the aspects of sincerity of intention to Allah Almighty is not to be impressed by his words, and to be fascinated by his argument, because admiration is the opposite of correctness, and from it comes fanaticism, and it is the root of every calamity. Masruq said: It is sufficient for a person to fear Allah in knowledge, and it is sufficient for a person to be ignorant in his knowledge.

Second etiquette: Beginning with the remembrance of Allah Almighty. Ibn Aqil said: "One of the aspects of the debate is for the questioner and the one being asked to start their speech with praise of Allah Almighty because every important matter that is not started with Bismillah is incomplete."

The third etiquette is etiquette in sitting. The debater should feel dignity in his gathering, and use guidance and good manners, and long silence except when necessary to speak. Abdullah bin Al-Mu'tazz said: "If the mind is perfect, speech decreases."

The fourth etiquette is avoiding desires. This is detaching oneself from one's interests. The debater should give priority to following the truth over one's interests and defending oneself and one's pride. Among the signs of this are:

- Not distinguishing between the truth being revealed to the one who curses or to the tongue of his opponent. Our righteous predecessors have given us shining examples of repelling desires and detaching oneself from one's interests. Among these are:
- What Abu Omar bin Abdul Barr narrated on the authority of Muhammad bin Ka'b Al-Qurazi, who said: A man asked Ali about a matter, and he said about it, and the man said: It is not like that, O Commander of the Faithful, but such and such, so he said: You are right and I am wrong: "And above every possessor of knowledge is the All-Knowing."

Fifth Etiquette: Returning to the Truth When It Is Made Clear. Every Muslim must return to the truth, submit to it, adhere to it, and rejoice in it. Indeed, this is one of the requirements of faith. Allah the Almighty said: {But no, by your Lord, they will not (truly) believe until they make you, (O Muhammad), judge concerning that over which they dispute among themselves and then find within themselves no discomfort from what you have judged and submit in (full, willing) submission (An-Nisa': 65).

Allah the Almighty has condemned those who argue about the truth after it has become clear and evident. Allah the Almighty said: They argue with you about the truth after it has become clear as if they were being driven toward death while they are looking on (Al-Anfal: 6). Al-Hafiz Abu Bakr Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi said: So whoever is bound by the argument and the evidence is clear to him should submit to it and turn to its requirements because the purpose of looking and arguing is to seek the truth and follow the obligations of the Shari'ah.

Sixth etiquette: Be patient and forbearing. Because argumentation is a source of quarrels and stirring up hatred in people, words can lead to harm and injury. Allah the Almighty said: And remember when We took a covenant from the Children of Israel, (saying), "Worship none but Allah, and to parents do good, and to relatives, orphans, and the needy, and speak to people good words, and establish prayer, and give zakah. Then you turned away, except for a few of you, and you were averse" (Al-Baqarah: 83). Forbearance is when if one of them makes a mistake and wants to excuse him, his opponent must excuse him because a person's words are not part of him, but he must leave the mistake if he knows that it is a mistake. The one who prevents excuses is an unjust, troublemaker, and ignorant. Forbearance is when if his opponent says a word he dislikes in an argument, he should ignore it and not respond with the same; because Allah the Almighty says: Repel evil with that which is best. We are most knowing of what they describe (Al-Mu'minoon: 96).

The seventh etiquette is patience. It is for the debater to give his opponent time, and give him space until he finishes his speech, explains his argument, and presents his evidence, and does not interrupt him in any of that. In pausing, there is benefit for the questioner and the respondent alike: As for the questioner: he may make a mistake by rushing, and his ignorance appears, and the respondent may mention after presenting his evidence what reveals what was hidden from the questioner, and this saves him the trouble of searching.

Methods of Argumentation and Forms

The methods of reasoning and argumentation used by the Holy Qur'an take various forms, some of which we mention as follows (Al-Ta'an, 2019):

1. The Holy Qur'an used the method of analogy in argumentation, and examples of that are:
 - The Almighty says: Have they not seen that Allah, who created the heavens and the earth, can create the likes of them? (Al-Isra: 99). The Almighty said: Is not He who created the heavens and the earth able to create the likes of them? Yes, and He is the Knowing Creator (Ya-Seen: 81). In these two noble verses, the ruling on a thing is established based on its establishment for its counterpart in a more certain and stronger way, because the One who created a thing can create its like or less than it (Al-Jalanid, 1990).
 - The Almighty said: The creation of the heavens and the earth is greater than the creation of mankind, but most people do not know (Ghafir: 57), and the Almighty said: And he has presented to Us an example and has forgotten his creation. He says, "Who will give life to bones when they have disintegrated?" Say, "He will give them life who produced them the first time. And He is Knowing of all creation!" He who made for you from the green tree, fire, and then, behold, you kindle from it. Is not He who created the heavens and the earth able to create the likes of them? Yes, and He is the Knowing Creator. His command is only when He intends a thing that He says to it, "Be," and it is (Ya-Seen: 78-83). So, He who creates from nothingness is even more able to bring it back, and He who creates something from its opposite, like fire from the green tree, can create it from its elements (Al-Jalanid, 1990). The Almighty's saying: Have they not seen that Allah, who created the heavens and the earth and was not weary in their creation, can give life to the dead? Yes, indeed He is over all things competent (Al-Ahqaf: 32).
 - Among the examples of this in response to the Christians is the Almighty's saying: Indeed, the example of Jesus before Allah is as the example of Adam. He created him from dust; then He said to him, "Be," and he was (Al-Imran: 59). If creation without a father is a justification for taking Jesus as a god, then it is more appropriate for Adam, who was created without a father or mother, to be a god as well. But since Adam was not a god by your admission, it is more appropriate for Jesus not to be a god (Al-Almai, 1983)
2. The Holy Quran used the method of analogy of the opposite in the debate, and examples of that are: In the words of Allah the Almighty: If there had been within the heavens and earth gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined. So exalted is Allah, Lord of the Throne, above what they describe. This evidence is also called the proof of contradiction, and examples of it in the Holy Quran are: And if it had been from other than Allah, they would have found within it much discrepancy (An-Nisa: 82). In the first verse, the multiplicity of gods is false because it leads to corruption, so it is proven that God Almighty is One. In the second verse, the difference and contradiction are false and do not exist in the Holy Quran, so its opposite is proven, which is that it is decisive and miraculous, so it is the speech of God Almighty (Al-Almai, 1983).
3. The Holy Quran uses the method of comparing the absent to the present, which is also called the analogy of representation, and examples of that include the following:
 - The Almighty said: And he presented to us an example and forgot his own creation. He said, "Who will give life to bones when they have disintegrated?" Say, "He will revive it who created it the first time, and He is Knowing of all creation. He who made for you

from the green tree, fire, and then, behold, you kindle from it. Is not He who created the heavens and the earth able to create the likes of them? Yes, and He is the Knowing Creator. His command is only when He intends a thing that He says to it, "Be," and it is" (Ya-Seen: 78-83). So, the Holy Quran compares the unseen here, which is the resurrection after death, to matters It is known to man that he came into existence from nothing after he did not exist or from something visible and tangible that man sees with his own eyes, which is the extraction of heat from the green, moist tree, i.e. the extraction of a thing from its opposite (Al-Suyuti, 1974).

- Similar to that is also the saying of the Almighty: And among His signs is that you see the earth still, but when We send down upon it rain, it quivers and swells. Indeed, He who gives life to it is the Giver of Life to the dead. Indeed, He is over all things competent (Fussilat: 39). So, the comparison of the unseen here, which is the revival of the dead, to a visible and tangible matter that no rational person doubts, which is the life of the earth after its dryness and withering.
- 4. The Holy Quran took the form of dialectical submission to the opponents in the debate, then returned to their arguments with refutation and invalidation. Examples of this include:
 - The Almighty's saying: Allah has not taken a son, nor is there any god with Him. If it were so, each god would have taken what he created, and some of them would have sought to overcome others. Glory be to Allah, above what they describe (Al-Mu'minun: 91). The meaning is that there is no god with Allah Almighty. If this were to be accepted by you, it would necessitate that each god take what he created and that one of them would be superior to the other. No matter would be completed in the world, and no rule would be organized in it. The reality is otherwise, because the system of the world is established in the best state, and the harmony existing in the universe is extremely beautiful. Therefore, the existence of gods other than Allah Almighty is invalid because it necessitates the disorder of the world, and this type does not differ from the analogy of the successor except in terms of the dialectical assumption mentioned as borrowing and not as truth and reality.
 - Another example of this is the Almighty's saying, narrating about the prophets and their people: They said, "You are only human beings like us. You want to avert us from what our fathers used to worship. So, bring us a clear authority!" Their messengers said to them, "We are only human beings like you, but Allah bestows favor upon whom He wills of His servants (Ibrahim: 10-11). Here is a dialectical submission from the prophets, peace be upon them, to those who deny their prophethood because they are human beings, that they are truly human beings, but humanity is not an obstacle to prophethood (Suyuti, 1974).
- 4. The Holy Quran used the method of division, and Imam Suyuti mentioned an example of that in the Almighty's saying: Eight pairs of sheep, two, and of goats, two... (Al-An'am 143). These are some forms of Quranic argumentation as mentioned by Dr. Ahmad Idris Al-Ta'an in his article, and I have included here the text of what His Eminence mentioned with a slight modification so that the reader can benefit from it because he has explained the subject in a clear manner.

Conclusion

Thank God, we have finished this research and reached its end, and after presenting and researching the topic of "The Method of the Holy Quran in Debate", we can draw some conclusions, which are as follows:

1. The Holy Quran contains many examples in debate.
2. Knowing the correct method is necessary in debate.
3. The necessity of defending the right by any means, including debate.
4. It is necessary to observe etiquette in debate and argument.

References

The Holy Qur'an

Dawood, A. S. A. (2008). *Sunan Abu Dawood*, al Maktabah al-'Asria, Shida, Beirut.

Al-Almai, Z. A. (1984). *Methods of Debate in the Holy Quran*, PhD Thesis - Faculty of Fundamentals of Religion - Al-Azhar University.

Al-Baji, A. S. (2001). *Al-Minhaj fi Tarteeb Al-Hajjaj*, edited by Abdul Majeed Turki, Dar Al-Gharb Al-Islami, Beirut.

Al-Bukhari, M. (2018). *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Dar Touq Al-Najat – Beirut.

Al-Hanbali, N. A. (2007). *The Book of Extracting Debate from the Holy Quran*.

Al-Jalenid, M. S. (1990). *The Qur'anic Approach to Establishing Certainty*, Cairo Edition.

Al-Jurjani, (1983). *Dictionary of Definitions*, Dar Al-Fadhila, Egypt.

Al-Juwayni, (1979). *Al-Kafiya fi Al-Jadl*, edited by Fawqiya Hussein Mahmoud, Issa Al-Babi Al-Halabi Press, Cairo.

Al-Sa'di, A. N. (2000). *Facilitating the Generous and Merciful in Interpreting the Words of the Generous*, Al-Risalah Foundation, 1st ed.

Al-Shabli, Y. A. (2016). *A Memorandum on the Literature of Argumentation*, <https://coart.uobaghdad.edu.iq/wpcontent/uploads/sites/11/uploads/others/aaaaiibo ok/2>

Al-Suyuti, J. (1974). *Al-Itqan fi Ulum al-Quran*, al- Hai'ah al-Misriyah al-'Ammah li al-Kitab, Cairo.

Al-Ta'an, A. I. (2019). *The Methodology of Clear Dialogue in the Holy Quran and the Prophetic Sunnah*, Faculty of Sharia, University of Damascus.

Manzur, I. M. (2009). *Lisan Al-Arab*, article (J-D-L), Dar Sadir, Beirut.

Kathir, I. (1998). *Tafsir al-Quran al-'Adhim*, Darul al-Kutub al-'Ilmi, Beirut.

Muslim, A. H. (1955). *Sahih Muslim*, Dar Ihya al-Turath, Beirut.