

# Intellectual Discourse

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# *Intellectual Discourse*

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## Transliteration Table: Consonants

Arabic	Roman		Arabic	Roman
ب	b		ط	ṭ
ت	t		ظ	ẓ
ث	th		ع	‘
ج	j		غ	gh
ح	ḥ		ف	f
خ	kh		ق	q
د	d		ك	k
ذ	dh		ل	l
ر	r		م	m
ز	z		ن	n
س	s		ه	h
ش	sh		و	w
ص	ṣ		ء	’
ض	ḍ		ي	y

## Transliteration Table: Vowels and Diphthongs

Arabic	Roman		Arabic	Roman
اَ	a		اَ، اِيَّ	an
اُ	u		اُو	un
اِ	i		اِي	in
اَ، اِ، اِيَّ	ā		اَو	aw
اُو	ū		اَيَّ	ay
اِي	ī		اُو	uww, ū (in final position)
			اَيَّ	iyy, ī (in final position)

*Source: ROTAS Transliteration Kit: <http://rotas.iium.edu.my>*





# Investigating Ismā‘īl Rājī al-Fārūqī’s Methodology in the Study of Christianity through Selected Textual Analysis from His *Christian Ethics*

Fatmir Shehu\*

**Abstract:** This article seeks to investigate the methodology of Ismā‘īl Rājī al-Fārūqī, a contemporary Muslim scholar recognised as an authority on Islam and comparative religion, in the study of Christianity based on his masterpiece “Christian Ethics: A Historical and Systematic Analysis of its Dominant Ideas.” The goal of this article is to study al-Fārūqī’s genuine and comprehensive work through which he presents a new approach toward the understanding of Christianity, highlighting its ethical aspect. Its significance lies in defining the value of the methodology he used in the study of Christian dogma and ethics. This article uses historical, descriptive, and interpretative analytical methods throughout the entire work. This study discusses: (1) al-Fārūqī’s short biography; (2) al-Fārūqī’s work on Christianity; and (3) the interpretive analysis of al-Fārūqī’s methodology in the light of selected texts from his work on “Christian Ethics.” The outcomes of this research provide new insights into the existing body of knowledge concerning Muslims’ experience in the study of other religions, which is very advantageous for contemporary scholars of comparative religion.

**Key Terms:** Ismā‘īl Rājī al-Fārūqī, Christian Ethics, the objective-analytical-comparative methodology, Comparative Religion, inter-religious dialogue.

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## Mengkaji Metodologi *Ismā'īl Rājī al-Fārūqī* dalam Kajian Agama Kristian Melalui Analisis Teks Terpilih Daripada Etika Kristiannya

**Abstrak:** Makalah ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji metodologi *Ismā'īl Rājī al-Fārūqī*, seorang sarjana Islam kontemporari yang pakar dalam perbahasan Islam dan perbandingan agama, dalam kajian Agama Kristian, berdasarkan karya agung beliau “Etika Kristian: Analisis Sejarah dan Sistemik Tentang Idea Dominannya.” Tujuan makalah ini adalah untuk mengkaji karya tulen dan komprehensif *al-Fārūqī* yang mana beliau membentangkan pendekatan baharu ke arah pemahaman agama Kristian yang menekankan aspek etikanya. Kepentingannya terletak pada pentakrifan nilai metodologi yang beliau gunakan dalam kajian dogma dan etika Kristian. Makalah ini menggunakan kaedah analisis sejarah, deskriptif dan interpretatif, untuk keseluruhan kajian. Kajian ini membincangkan: (1) biografi ringkas *al-Fārūqī*; (2) karya *al-Fārūqī* mengenai agama Kristian; dan (3) analisis tafsiran metodologi *al-Fārūqī* berdasarkan teks terpilih daripada karya beliau “Etika Kristian”. Hasil kajian ini memberikan pandangan baharu dalam pengetahuan sedia ada mengenai pengalaman Muslim dalam kajian agama lain, yang mana sangat bermanfaat bagi sarjana perbandingan agama kontemporari.

**Kata Kunci:** *Ismā'īl Rājī al-Fārūqī*, Etika Kristian, Metodologi Objektif-analitik-perbandingan, Perbandingan Agama, Dialog Antara Agama.

### Introduction

The history of inter-religious relationships between adherents of different religious communities exhibits an experience of both hostile and friendly natures. The former has occurred because of ignorance, misinterpretation, and vilification of each one's religious teachings. The latter has been initiated by the learned representatives from different religious communities, who engaged themselves in the study of the teachings of religions with the intention of providing writings as proper references for the adherents of world religions. Thus, a proper understanding of one's own religion and the sincere intention to study the religions of others have allowed people to co-exist peacefully in a society characterised by the diversity of religions. Learning about each other's religion and its main tenets enables its followers to construct an amicable environment in their community. When the adherents of each religion obtain accurate knowledge about the teachings of their own religion and the religions of others, friendship can be fostered. Religion

is seen as a comprehensive way of life and a divine dictum, on which their entire activities are dictated and accounted for. An appropriate exploration of each one's religion keeps its followers away from conflicts and brings them to a friendly engagement, dialogue, and better understanding. In the past, many intellectuals from different religions have shown great interest in the study of other religions and produced significant literature.

Muslim scholars were among the forerunners who made great contributions to the scholarship of comparative religion. They demonstrated their scholarly efforts toward this subject through various works produced during different historical periods. The Islamic sources, *al-Qur'ān* and the Prophetic *Sunnah*, have motivated and inspired these scholars to be mature in the selection and adoption of different methods in their writings about other religions in general, and Judaism and Christianity, in particular. It has been observed from the content of their works that the historical, descriptive, analytical, comparative, objective, critical, disputative, polemical, and refutative methods have been the most useful ones, with the purpose of easing the relationship between Muslims and the adherents of other religions. Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq (?-861C.E.), Ibn Nadīm (935C.E.-990C.E.), al-Bīrūnī (973C.E.-1048C.E.), Ibn Ḥazm (994C.E.-1064C.E.), al-Shahristānī (1086C.E.-1153C.E.), Ibn Taymiyyah (1263C.E.-1328C.E.), Ibn Baṭūṭa (1304C.E.-1368C.E.), al-Fārūqī (1921C.E.-1986C.E.), Fattāḥ (1933C.E.-2007C.E.), and others, have made use of all these methods in their writings on other religions.

The main objective of this paper is to investigate the methodology used by a great contemporary Muslim scholar and thinker of comparative religion, Ismā'īl Rājī al-Fārūqī (1921C.E.-1986 C.E.), in the study of Christianity emphasizing its fundamental ethical teachings. The subject of this research is significant as it attempts to perceive and analyse the methodology used by al-Fārūqī in the study of ethical principles of Christianity based on his writing "Christian Ethics: A Historical and Systematic Analysis of its Dominant Ideas". The qualitative library-based methodology that includes the historical, descriptive, and interpretive analytical methods is used by the researcher in this study. The historical method deals with the exposition of historical data that are collected from various literature related to al-Fārūqī's life, his early

intellectual development concerning the field of comparative religion, and his administrative experience. The descriptive method is used to present historical facts and other related matters about the scholar. The interpretative analytical method is used to identify and analyse al-Fārūqī's methodology in the study of Christianity in the light of selected text extracted from his original work entitled "Christian Ethics."

Numerous works have been published, many of which highlight al-Fārūqī contributions to the study of Islam and other religions. Imtiyaz Yusuf presents a comprehensive study of the views and thoughts of al-Fārūqī. He collected al-Fārūqī's most significant scholarly comments and remarks about "Islam and its impact on different aspects of human life, thought and interreligious relations" (Yusuf, 2021, 2). Malik Badri introduces some of the psychological factors that greatly helped al-Fārūqī to shape his life, as well as transform him into a prominent Muslim thinker of contemporary times. Badri (2014) also discusses Al-Fārūqī's psychological situation, which helped him shift from Arabism to Islamism. Abdulkader Tayob asserts that al-Fārūqī contributed greatly to the study of other religions, especially Judaism and Christianity. He engaged in living dialogue with the adherents of these religions. Also, he introduced new methodologies in the study of religion, which posed a great challenge to the existing approaches (Tayob, 2013, 230-250). Ilyas Ba-Yunus discusses al-Fārūqī's powerful views on the future directions of Islamisation of Knowledge. Al-Fārūqī's early intellectual growth and his activities in the USA and Canada are discussed in this paper (Ba-Yunus, 1988, 13). The information provided by the authors of all these works has contributed greatly to this research. However, al-Fārūqī's works on "Christian Ethics," has not been discussed.

Thus, the study of the content of al-Fārūqī's writing on "Christian Ethics," with a special focus on his methodology in the study of Christianity through interpretive analysis of selected texts, is necessary and timely. The focus of this study is on: (1) al-Fārūqī's brief chronology; (2) al-Fārūqī's work on Christianity; and (3) the interpretive analysis of al-Fārūqī's methodology in light of selected texts from his work on "Christian Ethics".

### **Al-Fārūqī's Short Biography**

Ismā'īl Rājī al-Fārūqī,<sup>1\*\*</sup> who is known as al-Fārūqī was one of the great Muslim scholars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with an Ummatic vision concerning the conditions of Muslims, as well as humanity. He was a renowned Palestinian-born contemporary Muslim thinker, philosopher, visionary, and authority in comparative religion. His scholarship covered the study of religion, Islamic thought, approaches to knowledge, history, culture, education, interreligious dialogue, aesthetics, ethics, politics, economics, and science. In addition, he was one of the founders of the concept of "Islamisation of Knowledge," through which he applied Islamic teachings showing their relevance to the contemporary age. This concept became the agent of change for Muslim intellectuals of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Al-Fārūqī's main concern was to establish educational centres and institutions, leading the way to the Islamisation of Knowledge project. His visionary approach towards the application of Islamisation was meant to: (1) reconstruct the existing human knowledge introduced by the human-cultural-based Western worldview; and (2) produce an intellectual generation for the Muslim world and humanity that could

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1 \*\* He was born in Jaffa, Palestine on January 1, 1921. His father made two special supplications for him: (1) to become a great scholar, and (2) to die as a *shahīd* (martyr). Al-Fārūqī wandered by saying, "Now I am a scholar, but how can I die as a *shahīd* in the US?" Indeed, Allah (s.w.t.) accepted both of his father's supplications (Badri, 2014, 152). Finally, he met death as a martyr on Wednesday, 29 May 1986. Three different narratives are related to his death. *Firstly*, he and his wife were murdered in their home in Philadelphia on May 26, 1986, in circumstances that have never been resolved (IIIT, 2010, para. 1). *Secondly*, he died on May 27, 1986, and his death was an unexpected one. Both he and his wife Lamyā (Lois) al-Fārūqī were inhumanly murdered in their home on 18 Ramadan 1406/27 May 1986 (Yusuf, 2012, 22). *Finally*, he and his wife Lamyā (Lois) al-Fārūqī were brutally assassinated on May 28, 1986 (Naeem, 1986, 369-370). This shows that the date of his death is interpreted differently, and it requires appropriate data to verify its authenticity. According to the researcher's own inquiry, AP News has reported that "Isma'il Raji al Faruqi, 65, a professor of religion at Temple University, and his American-born pianist wife, Lois, 59, were found dead of multiple stab wounds in their home early Tuesday" (Linder, 1986, para. 2) This shows that the news about the death of al-Fārūqī and his wife have been announced on Wednesday, 29 May 1986, which is one day after his death.

respond to and overcome the challenges posed by empirical-scientific intellectualism, which separated between revelation and reason – religion and science. According to him, there is no separation between revelation and reason or theory and practice. Rather, there is a Unity of Truth presented by the Tawhīdic Worldview. Therefore, people should reflect this unity in all aspects of their life.

### *Al-Fārūqī's Intellectual Development*

Al-Fārūqī received his early education from his father, ‘Abd al-Hūdā al-Fārūqī, who “was a judge (Qāḍī), well-versed in Islam as both a religion and a way of life” (Badri, 2014, 147). He learned al-Qur’ān and as-Sunnah at home from his father, as well as from the local Masjid near his home (Shafiq, 1994, 5-7). In 1926, he entered the French Dominican College des Frères (St. Joseph) and received his high school diploma in 1936 (Ali, 2014, 105). At the age of fifteen years old, he was fluent in both Arabic and French. Besides, in this college, he received his first exposure to Christianity. In 1937, he joined the College of Arts and Sciences at the American University in Beirut, where he studied English and continued thereafter completing a B.A. with a major in Philosophy (Fletcher, 2008, 16-20). In 1948, when Israel became an independent Jewish state, he and his family were forced to migrate and take refuge in Beirut (Ba-Yunus, 1988, 13).

Al-Fārūqī studied at the American University of Beirut for a short time and then joined Indiana University’s Graduate School of Arts and Sciences obtaining his M.A. in Philosophy in 1949. In March 1951, he was awarded a second M.A. in Philosophy from Harvard University’s Department of Philosophy. In September 1952, he obtained his doctorate from Indiana University’s Department of Philosophy with the thesis: “Justifying the Good: Metaphysics and Epistemology of Value” (IIT, 2018, xi-x). In 1954, he decided to leave the United States and go to Egypt, in order to immerse himself in the spirituality of Islam and study at al-Azhar, which was among the Islamic world’s earliest and most respected university. He stayed in Egypt until he completed his studies in 1958 (Badri, 2014, 150).

Between 1958 and 1961, he joined the Institute of Islamic Studies as a visiting professor of Islamic studies at McGill University, Montreal, Canada. During this time, he studied Christianity and Judaism at McGill’s Faculty of Divinity. From 1961 to 1963, he was invited to

work as a visiting professor at the Central Institute of Islamic Research, Karachi, Pakistan. In 1964, he went back to the United States of America, where he was appointed as Associate Professor of Islamic Studies at the Department of Religion at Syracuse University. In 1968, he moved to Philadelphia as a Professor of Islamic Studies to join the newly established Department of Religion at Temple University, where he continued until his death in 1986 (Ba-Yunus, 1988, 14; Yusuf, 2021, 3-5).

### *Al-Fārūqī's Leadership Experience*

Al-Fārūqī started his leadership experience in 1942, when he was appointed as Assistant to the Registrar of Arab Cooperative Societies, under the British Mandate government in Jerusalem. Later in 1945, at twenty-four years of age, he was promoted to the post of district magistrate (hākīm) for the Galilee district (Ba-Yunus, 1988, 13). He was an activist who inspired many with his brilliant ideas and actions. His leadership attitude was shared with others in many places where he served as Professor at various universities in America, Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and South and Southeast Asia. He successfully applied his visionary ideas in the establishment of Islamic studies programmes, recruiting and training Muslim students, organising Muslim professionals, as well as engaging in international ecumenical dialogue. He was the Founder and President of the Islamic Institute of Advanced Studies in Reston, Virginia, where a special programme in Islamic Studies was developed, to award Masters and Ph.D. Degrees. Al-Fārūqī was the Chairman of the Islamic Studies Group of the American Academy of Religions and the Vice-President of the Interfaith Colloquium (Naeem, 1986, 369).

In 1962, the Muslim Students Association was established, having strong chapters at Temple and the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. Al-Fārūqī became its advocate, who with his experience as a professor of philosophy and with his newly acquired commitment to Islam, contributed greatly to the Association's reform and change "from that of being rigidly conservative to an organisation with very knowledgeable and rational practitioners and advocates of Islam" (Ba-Yunus, 1988, 14). In 1976, he became the first president of the Association of Muslim Social Scientists and contributed greatly to the shaping of its programme (Ba-Yunus, 1988, 15). He was the co-

founder of the International Institute for Islamic Thought in the United States in 1981. He regarded the political, economic, and religio-cultural malaise of the Muslim community as a product of the bifurcated state of education installed in the Muslim world resulting in a loss of identity and world vision (Esposito, 2003, 83). According to al-Fārūqī, the Islamisation process of modern human knowledge was the sole solution for changing the condition of Muslims all over the world.

#### *Al-Fārūqī's Main Writings*

Al-Fārūqī, an authority on Islam and comparative religion, has authored and edited about twenty-six (26) books and written more than one hundred (100) articles, published in different journals worldwide (Naeem, 1986, 369; Bibliography, n.d., para. all). Among his best-known writings are: *From Here We Start* (1953); *Our Beginning in Wisdom* (1953); *The Policy of Tomorrow* (1953); *ʿUrubah and Religion: An Analysis of the Dominant Ideas of Arabism and of Islam as Its Heights Moment of Consciousness*, (1962); *Uṣūl al-Sahyuniyah fī al-Dīn al-Yahūdī* (The Zionist Foundations in the Religion of Judaism) (1964); *History of Religions: Its Nature and Significance for Christian Education and the Muslim–Christian Dialogue* (1965); *Christian Ethics: A Systematic and Historical Analysis of Its Dominant Ideas* (1967); *Al-Milal al-Muʿasirah fī al-Din al-Yahudi* (Contemporary Sects in Judaism) (1968); *The Great Asian Religions* (1969); *Historical Atlas of the Religions of the World* (1975); *The Life of Muhammad* (1976); *Sources of Islamic Thought: Kitab al Tawhid* (1980); *Islam and Culture* (1980); *Islam and the Problem of Israel* (1980); *Social and Natural Sciences* (1981); *The Hijrah: The Necessity of Its Iqamat or Vergegenwartigung* (1981); *Essays in Islamic and Comparative Studies* (1982); *Islamic Thought and Culture* (1982); *Triologue of the Abrahamic Faiths* (1982); *Islamization of Knowledge* (1982); *Tawhid: Its Implications For Thought And Life* (1982); *Islam* (1985); *The Cultural Atlas of Islam* (1986); and *Meta-Religion: Towards a Critical World Theology* (1986).

Al-Fārūqī presented his brilliant ideas and thoughts concerning the Muslim Ummah, the People of the Book (Jews and Christians), and humanity through the contents of the above-mentioned writings. His scholarship in comparative religion is presented in most of his writings. Above all, he was an active dialogist who engaged in intra-religious



dialogue with Muslims and inter-religious dialogue with the followers of other religions, especially Judaism and Christianity. He introduced an ideal and relevant model for contemporary scholarship of comparative religion in two masterpieces.

Firstly, in his book “Christian Ethics: A Systematic and Historical Analysis of Its Dominant Ideas” (1967), al-Fārūqī presents his criticism of the Christian Doctrine of Man by examining Christian dogma and ethics. Al-Fārūqī sees the study of Christianity and its main teachings through the lens of Islamic methodology as necessary. Through this book, the close relationship between Muslims and Christians was initiated in the light of inter-religious dialogue. Therefore, he discusses the steps for the establishment of a proper methodology needed for the scholarship of comparative religion at the beginning of this book.

Secondly, his book “Historical Atlas of the Religions of the World (1975)” is an excellent historical narration of the most known religions, where facts on every religion are illustrated with colourful maps. This work presents a historical introduction about each religion in a very comprehensive manner including the historical development of each religion and its Prophet, founder, community, main teachings, rites, and rituals, as well as denominations. Indeed, it is a well-written masterpiece through which various religions are presented to contemporary students, scholars, intellectuals, and devotees of comparative religion scholarship. The main methodology used in this book is rigorous historical analysis as the historical data of religions are presented, and world religion maps are inserted to show the geographical location and the populations of the studied religions.

### **Al-Fārūqī's Methodology in the Study of Christian Dogma and Ethics:**

Al-Fārūqī's “Christian Ethics: A Historical and Systematic Analysis of its Dominant Ideas” is a genuine and comprehensive work, through which he presents a new approach to the understanding of Christian dogma and ethics. It presents the historical chronology of Christianity from its early historical development until contemporary times. In addition, it responds to the claims of contemporary great Christian theologians, who, according to al-Fārūqī, contributed to the corruption of the ethics of Jesus' Message. The work of “Christian Ethics” reveals al-Fārūqī's (1) proficiency in dealing with the Christian scripture and

other related authentic sources, and (2) attempt to establish a close relationship between Muslims and Christians. Hence, to understand al-Fārūqī's scholarship, it is crucial to discuss in this section, *firstly*, the content of his "Christian Ethics" and, *secondly*, the understanding of his methodology in the study of Christian dogma and ethics, which is divided into two parts: *the first part* describes the required steps for the development of a proper methodology in the study of religion, and *the second part* investigates his comprehensive objective-analytical-comparative methodology through an interpretative analysis method of selected texts from his work.

### *The Content of al-Fārūqī's Christian Ethics*

Al-Fārūqī's masterpiece "Christian Ethics: A Historical and Systematic Analysis of Its Dominant Ideas," was first published in 1967 by Montreal, McGill University Press. Nevertheless, the researcher uses the updated version of this book, which is published by A.S. Noordeen, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in 1420H./1999C.E. Its content is written within the length of two-hundred and fifty-six (256) pages including an introduction and two main parts, as well as appendices. Its subject of discussion is a high level of discourse due to the author's use of the analytical-critical methodology in explaining Christian Ethics as the main theme of his book.

Firstly, Introduction. al-Fārūqī starts his "Christian Ethics" with a long, detailed introduction that contains 22 pages. The content of his introduction deals with the subject of comparative religion (Al-Faruqi, 1999, 1-22), which is presented in the light of the following topics: (1) The need for disengagement, (2) The search for higher principles, (3) Five theoretical principles – internal coherence, external coherence, the principle of unity, coherence with reality, the principle of right purpose, (4) The need for principles of value, is illustrated with reference to Stephen Neill, Hendrik Kraemer, Albert Schweitzer, (5) Six principles of value, the first principle – only two orders of being, the actual and the ideal, the second principle – the two orders of being, the actual and the ideal, are mutually relevant, the third principle – the ideal is relevant to the actual as a command, the fourth principle – the actual being is in itself a value, the fifth principle – the actual is malleable, susceptible to influence and intervention, and, the sixth principle – the perfection of the world is specifically a human burden. He ends his introduction with

the aim of his study, where he discusses the Islamic ethos and the basis for dialogue between Muslims and Christians.

Secondly, Part One: The Ethic of Jesus, is written in 87 pages and is divided into four main themes (Al-Faruqi, 1999, 23-109). First theme: the Jewish Background deals with two important issues concerning Jewish ethics and law. It is presented in light of the following topics, which are: (1) the Jewish Ethics, which contains the concept of a "race apart," Hebrew Scripture and the "race apart," and Apologies for "racial apartness;" (2) the Cult of Law, which discusses the return from Exile, rebuilding the Temple, rebuilding the Law, "Legalism" of the Pharisees, and the Pharisee-Sadducee conflict; and (3) ends with notes and references. Second theme: Jesus' Breakthrough covers issues related to (1) self-transformation, which is discussed based on the context of revelation, Jesus' indictment of legalism, the universality of the new "law," the priority of intentions, and the self before God; (2) the first Commandment, which includes its ethical aspect, its religious aspect, and the meaning of "firstness;" and (3) ends with notes and references. Third Theme: the New Ethics focuses on (1) Rejection of "Apartness," which discusses the Messiah of the Jews, and rejection of family ties; (2) the New Values, which are related to the political and the social aspects, "Love thy neighbour," the family, the law on divorce, Jesus on divorce, the family: parents and children, the personal, the love of God, the love of the Law, Jesus' teaching of the ethic, the Kingdom of God, the Jewish concept of the Kingdom, Jesus' concept of the Kingdom; (3) Christian legalism; and (4) ends with notes and references. Fourth Theme: Jesus and Islamic Mysticism discusses (1) The Sufi Parallel, which is understood in light of the disciplines of Sufism, love only God, the Sufi "path," Sufi "love" and the "first commandment," seeking "union" and "unity," explanations for the parallel, non-historical explanations for the parallel, a historical explanation; and (2) ends with notes and references.

Thirdly, Part Two: The Ethic of Christianity, is an important subject, which is discussed in 108 pages, emphasising three main themes that continue from part one (Al-Faruqi, 1999, 110-217). Fifth Theme: What is Man? covers one main issue related to (1) the image of God, which focuses on humanism: Hellenic Christianity, humanism rejected: Augustine, humanism rejected: the Reformation, modern

times: irrationalist confusion; and (2) ends with notes and references. Sixth Theme: *What Ought Man to Be?* is discussed in light of the first important subject in Christianity (1) Sin and Salvation, which emphasises the necessity of sin, the concept of the Fall, the Jewish background, the transvaluation of the Jewish idea of the fall, the concept of sin in the Gospel (in the teachings of Paul, in the teachings of the Apostolic Fathers, prior to the teaching of Augustine, in the teachings of Augustine, in the Reformation, in modern Christian thought), the concept of redemption, Christianity as the religion of redemption, the nature of Christian salvation; and (2) ends with notes and references. Seventh Theme: *What Ought Man to Be?* is analysed in relation to the second important subject in Christianity (1) Church and Society, which focuses on societism and personalism, the personalist ethic, the societist ethic, the quest for a societist ethic, the Kingdom of God is the Church, not society, the Church as the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of God is both Church and society, the relativism of William Temple, Karl Barth: the denial of societism, the Kingdom of God is of this world, the call to worldliness, the a-societism of Reinhold Niebuhr; (2) conclusion; and (3) ends with notes and references.

Fourthly, Epilogue and Indexes: in the last part of his book, al-Fārūqī presents in a unique way an epilogue in four pages, which portrays the outcome of his study, as well as significant suggestions directed especially to Christians (Al-Faruqi, 1999, 218-221). According to al-Fārūqī, Christianity needs to be reformed for the second time, leading the Christians beyond the traditional doctrines to Jesus himself as the voice of the Holy and exemplar of the moral law. Also, he calls the Christians to engage in dialogue with Muslims. Then, Al-Fārūqī presents three types of indexes in 22 pages, which are: (1) Index of Biblical Quotations, i.e., the Old Testament and the New Testament; (2) Index of Subjects; and (3) Index of Authors and Titles (Al-Faruqi, 1999, 222-243).

Finally, Brief Summary: al-Fārūqī's "Christian Ethics" presents systematically and historically the dominant ideas of Christian ethics and especially ethical teachings of Jesus as Jewish belief. Al-Fārūqī argues that the existing Christianity does not follow what Jesus believed and taught and therefore, a reformation is required. In addition, he affirms that the ethics of Jesus and Islamic teachings are considered

as a parallel response to the commandment to love only One God. Indeed, al-Fārūqī's "Christian Ethics" distinguishes clearly between the different ethical systems proposed by Christians, compared to the original teachings of Jesus (p.b.u.h.) and provides the basis for inter-religious dialogue between Christians and Muslims.

### *Exploring al-Fārūqī's Methodology*

The knowledge of the Western intellectual tradition and the Islamic Heritage that al-Fārūqī was equipped with made him a living encyclopaedia (Al 'Alwani, 1994, ix). Al-Fārūqī applied a methodology ruled by objectivity, fairness, justice, as well as critical analysis in all his works. His idea was to convey the Truth according to Dīn al-Fiṭrah, that is al-Islām. Therefore, his whole life was dedicated to presenting al-Islām to both the Muslim World and the Western World by using the Islamic methodology extracted from al-Qur'ān and as-Sunnah, through which he responded to contemporary scientific methodology.

Al-Fārūqī clarifies his methodology in the study of religion by arguing that the researcher should understand the purpose of "higher principles," through which he/she is able to "compare and evaluate the meanings – the cultural patterns, the moral values, the ethical doctrines – of the religion" (Al-Faruqi, 1999, 3) he/she is studying. In the explanation of these principles, he mentions that:

the "facts" of religion are not cold but, by their nature, affecting – they touch us, get hold of us, move us to do this or that. When we strive to present them systematically and critically, we do not "capture" them for cold storage in a professorial mind or a university library or museum; rather, we strive to present their full force and appeal, their authority and power to move. That cannot be done without evaluation of the meanings which, through "disengagement," we come to understand (Al-Faruqi, 1999, 3).

It can be observed from the above-mentioned statement that the researcher's disengagement enables him/her to understand the meanings provided by the studied religion(s), which then require an evaluation through which the judgment towards these meanings is governed. Therefore, the researcher should use in the study of religion two kinds of principles, the theoretical principles and the principles of value. The former, known as the theoretical principles, became al-Fārūqī's

methodology of comparative religious understanding, which he divided into five principles. The latter, known as the principles of value, became al-Fārūqī's methodology of comparative religious evaluation, which he divided into six principles.

Al-Fārūqī's "Christian Ethics" uses the objective-analytical-comparative methodology in the study of Christianity. His methodology is understood from the lengthy discussion provided in the introduction of his book, where he puts forward various arguments concerning his views about the use of appropriate methodology in the study of religion, as it is viewed and practiced by its adherents. The notions of "Disengagement," "Theoretical Principles," "Evaluative Principles," and "Inter-religious Dialogue" are the fundamental elements that shaped his methodology in the study of religion or culture. To understand al-Fārūqī's methodology used in the study of Christianity's ethical doctrines and dogma, this section is divided into two parts: the first part describes the required steps for the development of a proper methodology used in the study of religion, and the second part investigates his comprehensive objective-analytical-comparative methodology through an interpretative analysis method of selected text from his work.

*The Required Steps to Develop a Proper Methodology for the Study of Religion:*

Al-Fārūqī asserts in the introduction of his "Christian Ethics" that to achieve objectivity in the study of a particular religion, the researcher should understand and work on his subject of research according to the following steps:

First Step: the researcher should be aware of the "Disengagement" method before he undertakes a study on any subject and especially religion, which signifies the need to abstain himself/herself "from every kind of value-judgment, to be "present" to the phenomenon in question purely as an impartial observer, unconcerned with questions of truth and falsehood" (Sharpe, 1986, 224). For al-Fārūqī, religion is not made up of "scientific facts" that can be examined objectively in the way geological or biological samples are examined. Rather, religion encompasses all the internal and external principles of people's lives and is not limited to the eternal aspects, such as rites, rituals, institutions, and doctrines, which are not the real substance of religion that is made up of life experiences (Al-Faruqi, 1999, 1). In addition, people's disengagement

from their own way of judgment as viewed by their religion allows them to be sympathetic, to learn, to understand (Al-Faruqi, 1999, 2) religion(s) as is understood and experienced by its adherents. This method is applied based on being aware of the subject of study and dealing with it objectively. It is required from the researcher "to remain free to move back from (well as into) the beliefs, values and meanings of the religion and culture" (Al-Faruqi, 1999, 3) he/she is studying. The "Disengagement" approach provides the platform for the researcher to step out of his own presuppositions and values enabling him/her to step into the religion he/she wishes to study. The imagination allows the researcher's understanding to be touched and informed by "life-facts" that present the true essence of the religion studied. The longer the researcher's effort of imagination is, the deeper his/her experience of the other religion is, as well as the deeper and more reliable his/her insights into it are (Al-Faruqi, 1999, 1). In this sense, the "Disengagement" approach neither promotes the unity of religion nor does it allow the rejection of one's own religion. Rather, it provides the best platform to study the religion of others with objectivity and professionalism. The appropriate implementation of this methodology expects the researcher to know the "higher principles," which are of two types: the "principles of theory" and the "principles of value." Al-Fārūqī has applied these principles in his book on Christian Ethics.

Second Step: the researcher should understand the purpose of "the theoretical principles," known as al-Fārūqī's methodology of comparative religious understanding, which he divided into five principles. Firstly, the principle of internal coherence or noncontradiction enables the researcher to understand the fact that "the elements of the system may not contradict each other" (Al-Faruqi, 1999, 4). If in a particular religion, contradictory elements are found, then the researcher has to understand the contradiction and make it clear whether it confirms to the historical facts or not, i.e., God commands people to do something and at the same time commands them to do the opposite. This statement is incoherent to this principle, as it is contradictory even if it is a religious paradox or mystery. Secondly, the principle of external coherence is a "technical way of saying that a statement (of belief or doctrine in the case of religion) must make sense in light of what we already know" (Al-Faruqi, 1999, 6). This means that if the researcher discovers new facts in relation to the religion he/she is studying, it is necessary for

him/her to refer to the existing known source of knowledge concerning that religion, i.e., Torah (Judaism), Bible (Christianity), and al-Qur'ān (Islam). Besides, Revelation is the revealed Word of God, which is coherent with human knowledge in general and the situation of the people it was revealed to during a historical time, event, or situation. So, Revelation is not relative to the human situation as claimed by the evolutionists. Rather, it is relational to the human situation. Thirdly, the principle of unity denotes that God is the Only Source (Al-Faruqi, 1999, 6) of all Revelations through which the Truth is revealed by Him to many nations at different times. Therefore, the Revealed Truth, which is shared by different religious communities especially Muslims, Jews, and Christians should be one in its purpose. The commandments people get from the same God cannot contradict each other, i.e., One and the same God does not command one group of people to worship Him and another one to associate partners with Him or ignore Him at all. This will be incoherent with His Being as One Single God. Fourthly, the principle of coherence with reality signifies that the Truth(s) claimed by any religion, or a group of people should not conflict with the reality experienced or known by people outside of those truths (Al-Faruqi, 1999, 7). Indeed, the reality reveals the true nature of the Truth if it is hidden, i.e., if someone claims that he obeys God to please others and in his private life he does the opposite, then sooner or later the reality will reveal his hypocrisy. In other words, the inner aspect of the Truth should be similar to its outer aspect. Fifthly, the principle of right purpose seems to be derived from the principle of non-contradiction (Al-Faruqi, 1999, 7). It denotes that the Revealed Truth, which is from God, should be always related to what is right, good, just, and beneficial for the people. When a person claims to believe in al-Qur'ān as the Revealed Word of Allah, then he/she should serve the purpose of al-Qur'ān. Otherwise, his claim contradicts its very purpose, which is believing in al-Qur'ān as the Word of Allah. When the researcher understands the first group of the higher principles, then he/she should not violate the second group of these principles, through which the evaluation does take place.

Third Step: the researcher should understand the purpose of “the principles of value” that became al-Fārūqī’s methodology of comparative religious evaluation, which he divided into six principles. Firstly, the principle of two realms of being, the actual and the ideal (Al-Faruqi, 1999, 14), which are very different beings. In addition, the



actual of something ought to be “fact,” and the ideal of something ought to be “value” put upon it. Secondly, the principle of the two orders of being, the actual and the ideal, are mutually relevant, which denotes the close relationship between the two. The actual without the ideal does not make any sense as the ideal stands as the ground of the actual. Equally, the ideal realm could not be as such if it does not bring any change to the actual, i.e., no point in having the value “mercy” if it can never be implemented in the actual world. Thirdly, the principle of the ideal is relevant to the actual as a command, which means that God’s commands are ideals needed by man to regulate his actual life regardless of whether he realises them as such or not. Fourthly, the principle of actual being is itself a value, which denotes that the realm of actual being does receive and embody values because of its nature as being created as good. The actual is created by God for a purpose, and therefore, Man is not free to condemn the creation of God by looking for an easy way out of it, especially during times of trials. Fifthly, the principle of the actual is malleable and susceptible to influence and intervention, which means that the malleability of the actual is an affirmation that God’s commands can easily be fulfilled by people, as being morally good does not require any extraordinary efforts. Sixthly, the principle of the perfection of the actual is a specifically human burden, which denotes that Allah has created man as His Khalīfah (vicegerent) with great responsibility that is considered as a heavy burden on him. Man, a sound moral being, should obey Allah’s commands. Nevertheless, man as a responsible being is allowed by Allah to be free in his choice by accepting or rejecting what Allah commands. Besides, man, who is the only moral agent created by Allah, is subjected to being involved in the cosmos and changing it to a better position. If man follows Allah’s commands, his burden will become light.

Last Step: the researcher should engage in inter-religious dialogue with the members of the religion he/she is studying. A researcher in the study of religion(s), after he/she has understood the wisdom behind “Disengagement,” “the Theoretical Principles,” and “the principles of Value,” he/she needs to engage in “Inter-religious Dialogue”, which is “the only attitude that is genuinely compatible with human brotherhood in practice” (Al-Faruqi, 1999, 21). Al-Fārūqī addresses the Christians

by questioning them, “Are they willing to join Muslims in an effort to found human brotherhood under the moral law?” (Al-Faruqi, 1999, 21) This means al-Fārūqī invites Christians to engage with Muslims in inter-religious dialogue, which is “the only kind of inter-human relationship” (Al-Faruqi, 1992, 9) that helps them to remove all barriers and discipline their consciousness. Therefore, the researcher who intends to engage in inter-religious dialogue with others, and especially Christians, must have “sincerity of intention” and “respect for other religions.” Such an attitude enables him to have a better understanding of the religions he/she is studying. Al-Fārūqī’s approach to interreligious dialogue as presented in the study of Christianity signifies his sincere intention, which is to understand this religion better through objectivity where misunderstandings and prejudices are avoided and better relations with others, especially with Jews and Christians, are promoted and established. It can be argued that the current condition of Muslims can be changed only if they reform and revive their understanding of Islamic tenets in both theory and practice, as well as understand and accept others as they are in their true sense, and not as they want them to be (Shehu, 2018, 79-80). Inter-religious dialogue plays a great role in establishing peaceful co-existence and interrelationships between Muslims and other religious communities that live in a society characterized by diversity.

*Comprehending al-Fārūqī’s Methodology through Interpretative Analysis of Selected Texts*

Al-Fārūqī’s objective-analytical-comparative methodology in the study of Christian dogma and ethics, as addressed in his book, is discussed in this section through the interpretative analysis of a particular selected text. Firstly, selected cited texts from his “Christian Ethics” are provided, and then they are studied with an interpretative analytical methodology. Al-Fārūqī says in his “Christian Ethics”:

Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, has two aspects: one as redeemer, saviour; the other as the “Word,” co-eternal with God, the Creator. Through the Word, creation comes to be. This is surely valid. God is, and an aspect of His nature is the all-creative Word—the one aspect of God, His creation, which is an object of direct human knowledge (Al-Faruqi, 1992, 139).

For God to be Christ in eternity means that a plan has existed in eternity in which God, as Jesus, shall be baptised, anointed, crucified, and resurrected. This is why the Christian feels that what came to pass in the Christ-event was the revelation of divine nature. It was not God merely commanding something to be done; nor, as in Islam, communicating His Will to man, but revealing the divine nature itself as it is relevant for man. Islam too, one may argue, regards the revelation to the Prophet Muhammad as the most important event in history, and claims that it is eternal. Nonetheless, it should be noted at once that Islam entertains no illusions about an eternity of the Prophet's person (Al-Faruqi, 1999, 160).

The above-mentioned cited texts show how al-Fārūqī uses an objective-analytical-comparative methodology, which is a combination of three methods, namely, the objective method, the analytical method, and the comparative method. The interpretative analysis of these methods is as follows:

#### *The Objective Method*

The objective method denotes a fair and just approach used in the study of religion. It helps researchers to investigate the teachings of other religions or belief systems and present the subject of their study as it is without changing any information even if they disagree with it. If a Muslim scholar would like to undertake a study on Judaism, he must be fair with the subject of his research. He must look at Judaism the way it is described and lived by its adherents and avoid any attempt of looking at Judaism from his own perspective as a Muslim. Hence, being objective in the study of a particular religion and its teachings means accepting the facts as they are and not changing them based on the researcher's religious worldview.

Al-Fārūqī uses the objective method in the above-mentioned statement with the purpose of providing accurate information about what is said and believed by the Christians without any alteration. In the first part of the cited text, it is observed that al-Fārūqī deals with a very significant issue in Christianity. Firstly, he describes Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity as believed and understood by Christians, who "has two aspects: one as redeemer, saviour; the other as the "Word," co-eternal with God, the Creator" (Al-Faruqi, 1992, 139). This shows the true facts about the person of Jesus, where his position

is described by al-Fārūqī as it is mentioned in the Christian sources without any changes. Secondly, he avoids using his own perspective, i.e., the Islamic perspective, while presenting the facts about the person of Jesus Christ. He tries to look at them as they are presented by the Christians by being neutral and just. Thirdly, he presents a fair judgment, in his saying “Through the Word, creation comes to be. This is surely valid” (Al-Faruqi, 1992, 139). His objectivity towards Christians’ belief that the creation came to be through the Word is shown without any prejudice.

Al-Fārūqī plays the role of the narrator, where he presents the information about the subject that he studies by referring to authentic sources, i.e., the Bible, books, and articles. Besides, he supports his judgment by other means, such as observation, readings, communication, interaction, teachings, dialoguing, etc., which he uses to interpret the way how Christians translate this belief into practices. In addition, his long experience in dealing with Christians and Christianity enables him to be very objective in his methodology.

### *The Analytical Method*

The analytical method is used to break a problem down into the elements necessary to solve it or determine the probability of solving a problem. An analytical method is the most appropriate approach used to deal with social-oriented problems as they do not yield to any other method. Thus, the analytical method is used by the classical and modern scholars in their analysis of some problems, situations, or facts. Religious scholars have used this method to analyse the data in the form of writing based on historical facts where the problem is identified and then, is solved properly by using a sound approach and providing proper evidence.

Al-Fārūqī uses this method to explain the teachings of Christianity in a detailed form in order to present them to the reader in a simplified manner. He analyses in the second part of the first statement, the data related to the concept of God in Christianity, where he states that “God is, and an aspect of His nature is the all-creative Word—the one aspect of God, His creation, which is an object of direct human knowledge” (Al-Faruqi, 1992, 139). In this statement, he deals with the fact about “God is” and supports it through a sound analysis by emphasising the nature of God. According to him, the all-creative Word is a very important aspect

of God's nature through which the creation process did take place. He does not bring forward this kind of analysis in vain. Rather, he responds to the Christian teaching that Jesus Christ has one aspect, the Word, which is co-eternal with God. So, the Word is the shared aspect between God and Jesus Christ, which makes Jesus Christ share with God in the process of creation through the Word. Besides, Jesus Christ in being co-eternal with God becomes Divine, i.e., God. In addition, God's nature as the Creator, who causes the whole creation to be, is a very fundamental subject for human knowledge as it enables them to answer worldview questions, like – who is the Creator? or who created me? or who created the universe? or who created the entire existence?

Furthermore, al-Fārūqī presents his analysis in the following statement, where he asserts, “For God to be Christ in eternity, means that a plan has existed in eternity in which God, as Jesus, shall be baptised, anointed, crucified, and resurrected” (Al-Faruqi, 1992, 160). In this sense, the shared nature between Jesus Christ and God, which is co-eternal, has been an eternity plan before Jesus Christ came into existence in his human nature, as he has two natures: divine and human. The eternal plan is that God, who is presenting Himself in the form of Jesus Christ has to go through the situational event related to the human history of Jesus Christ. It means that God, who resembles Christ in human nature is baptised, anointed, crucified, and then resurrected. These terms form the foundations of Christianity concerning the person of Jesus Christ, who is both God and Man. In addition, he mentions another supportive statement, through which he presents what the Christians believe in the person of Jesus Christ, “[t]his is why the Christian feels that what came to pass in the Christ-event was the revelation of divine nature” (Al-Faruqi, 1992, 160). So, according to al-Fārūqī, it is the feeling expressed by Christians that what was revealed to Jesus Christ was not a revelation like what has been revealed to others; rather, it was the revelation of his divine nature, which makes him co-eternal with God, as well as God. This kind of revelation achieved by Christ has caused him to be deified, i.e., God.

### *The Comparative Method*

The comparative method is applied in the study of two or more religions, like Islam, Judaism, Christianity, etc., with the intention to: (1) identify the topic of the study, i.e., the concept of God, Eschatology—life after

death, scriptures, etc.); (2) collect data about the subject of study; and (3) analyse the selected subject of study, i.e., the concept of God, from a comparative perspective in light of two or more religions, i.e., Islam, Judaism, Christianity, etc., highlighting the similarities and differences. The comparative method is used in the study of religions and their teachings on a thematic basis dealing with religious similarities and differences.

Al-Fārūqī uses the comparative method to show the differences between revelation, as well as the person of Christ as believed by the Christians, and the person of Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) as believed by the Muslims. His comparative approach is presented in his saying, “[i]t was not God merely commanding something to be done; nor, as in Islam, communicating His Will to man, but revealing the divine nature itself as it is relevant for man” (Al-Faruqi, 1992, 160). This statement shows two different perspectives concerning the nature of revelation from God to man. This statement describes three different pieces of information at the same time. The first part shows the fact that the revelation sent to Christ was not just something for God to command to be done. The second part portrays the way revelation is in Islam, where God communicates to man His Will through revelation. The third part reveals Christians’ understanding of revelation, where God revealed to Jesus Christ the divine nature, which makes Christ both divine and human. In this way, al-Fārūqī compares the Christian perspective and the Islamic perspective regarding the concept of “revelation.” In Islam, the concept of “revelation” is believed and understood as the Will of Allah revealed to man. Such a perspective differs from the Christian perspective, where the concept of “revelation” is believed and thought to be the revelation of divine nature itself to the person of Jesus Christ and not the Will of God to man.

Furthermore, al-Fārūqī provides information about the similarities and differences between the two perspectives in a comparative way, showing the common aspects and different positions. Firstly, he presents similarities concerning the nature of revelation, which is presented as eternal by both religions. This is expressed in his saying, “Islam too, one may argue, regards the revelation to the Prophet Muhammad as the most important event in history, and claims that it is eternal” (Al-Faruqi, 1992, 160). Thus, revelation in Islam is the most important event as it is in Christianity. Secondly, al-Fārūqī asserts that there are differences, as

far as the position of the two religions is, in the person who receives this revelation. He says, “[n]onetheless, it should be noted at once that Islam entertains no illusions about an eternity of the Prophet’s person” (Al-Faruqi, 1992, 160). This shows that Islam forbids the eternity of human beings, as it belongs to God alone. Thus, the eternal aspect of revelation does not make its receiver, i.e., Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.), eternal. Rather, his nature as a human being is preserved and not changed. It is the nature of revelation and its purposes that distinguish the prophet(s) from other human beings. Besides, it displays the Will of Allah by sending this revelation. This differs from the way Christianity teaches the nature of revelation and the person of Jesus Christ, which has been discussed above.

From the above discussion on al-Fārūqī’s methodology in the study of selected teachings of Christianity, as presented in the cited texts from his “Christian Ethics,” that al-Fārūqī has:

1. a clear picture of his subject of study, i.e., the position of Jesus Christ and what the Christians say about him, the concept of God and revelation, as well as the person of Muhammad (p.b.u.h.),
2. maintained an impartial view of the information pertaining to the central tenet of Christianity, namely, that Jesus is one of the persons of the Trinity and that he has a personal relationship with God,
3. a just and fair judgment about what is claimed by Christians,
4. a sincere intention, which is to develop a close relationship between Muslims and Christians,
5. a willingness to remind and motivate Christians to rethink the relationship between Jesus and God,
6. a readiness to compare what Christians assert about revelation and how it relates to the person of Jesus with what Muslims assert about revelation and how it relates to the person of Muhammad (p.b.u.h.), and
7. a concluding remark about the position of Christians towards the relationship between the nature of Jesus Christ in relation to God that is being co-eternal, which is very much different from the perspectives of Islam and Judaism.

## Conclusion

This research concludes that al-Fārūqī has greatly contributed with his masterpiece to the scholarship of comparative religion from a Muslim's perspective. The chronological study of his background, which deals with the development of his intellectual personality, has shown in al-Fārūqī's dedication and sincerity in the quest for knowledge about Islam and other religions. The methodology he uses in his original writings "Christian Ethics," uncovers the power of his argument and creativity while discussing Christian dogma and ethics. He pioneered the objective-analytical-comparative methodology in the study of religion. His brilliance in the selection of such methodology, as well as its application in his writing as shown in the above discussion, reveal his strong background and knowledge of the subject of his study. His objective-analytical-comparative methodology is investigated through the interpretative analysis of selected texts from his work. This study shows that al-Fārūqī's 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.

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