

Original Paper

The Religious Argument—How We Substantiate Divine Authority in Human Terms

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Abstract

Religious beliefs are unprovable except by empirical argument. The human race has struggled with full submission to these beliefs because beliefs, by definition intangible. The Argument, if performed well, substantiates valid religious beliefs and their utility to in human society, do not exact a price upon it or presume to self-enforce.

Still, several kinds of arguments exist: Religion as an absolute, far from optional, and the other provides logic as to how we find God, the Real One, connect with Him and the beautiful universe around us without the constant redirection of religious nonsense-or its proponents in the way?

This paper will examine Arguments from Islam, the Fatwa, the Greek, called a Polemic, the Apologetic, which exists in both Protestant and Catholic Christianity, the Chazakah, or presumption used in Judaism, and the Upanishad, an ancient form of spiritual inquiry and scientific method used by Vedantin Hindus.

My objectives include overview of the history, structure, and forms of each type of Argument, and finally, recommendations for a standard format all religions can take advantage of.

Keywords

apologetics, Islam, fatwa, polemics, Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism

1. Introduction: The First Arguments—the Upanishads

The order and dates of the Upanishads vary widely. The first is thought to have been the *Brihadaranyaka*, “The Exploration of the Forest”, and dates to 700 BCE, Black (n.d.). The purpose of an Upanishad was to elaborate upon and ultimately convince students of the unity between *Purusha* (the Creator) and *Prakriti*, includes all He has made, this through “the development of a discursive language, the Upanishads further frame later philosophical debates by their exploration of a number of means of attaining knowledge, including deduction, comparison, introspection, and debate.” (ibid).

There are 108 Upanishads, and the order and timeline is unclear because the Vedantins, their authors believe in what is called Sruti, or timeless ageless knowledge. The order, chronologically or otherwise is unimportant, and has not been carefully maintained, Chinmayananda (2020).

The Upanishads rely on scientific method to prove that God exists and there is unity in all forms and phenomena through the machinations of their Creator, and that intelligent men and women can easily argue God and His Manifold Forms into existence:

“It is the way the declaration, this great truth appears to be—beyond my sense abilities to observe, mental abilities to conceive, it is something beyond my faculties that are available to me in my present state of evolution. Modern science then would have then kept quiet, would have said that it is impossible to know. In modern science too its accepted tradition or methodology, when direct method is not available, indirect methods of investigations are undertaken.”—Chinmaya Mission Hong Kong (n.d.)

The phrase, “available to me in my present state of evolution” is something we will explore as the status of the mind—open or closed—is a final determinant in any argument of any kind:

“This questioning ability in the human intellect that has brought about the entire—from the caveman to the modern man, all the progress that we have made are all that contribution of this human intellect investigative anxiety, to know—understand the world outside.”

Clearly the Vedantins consider themselves advocates of human progress, and believe its outskirts can never be reached.

2. The Greek Polemic

The polemic or “confrontation” was used in ancient Greece and Rome as a method of religious scholarship, Kindt (2009). The format is traced to the times of Plato and his followers circa 300s BCE, IEP (n.d.) to substantiate the arguments of “skeptics” regarding matters of discrepancy or disagreement over matters of paramount importance to the culture:

The article in IEP states:

“Many of the arguments of the ancient skeptics were developed in response to the positive views of their contemporaries, especially the Stoics and Epicureans, but these arguments have been highly influential for subsequent philosophers and will continue to be of great interest as long as there is widespread disagreement regarding important philosophical issues.”

And, “Nearly every variety of ancient skepticism includes a thesis about our epistemic limitations and a thesis about suspending judgment.”

During this era, polemicists argued using various methods for a variety of reasons not all of which were confined to religious questions.

Among these were to refine the art of the debate, to attack hedonists and stoics, to motivate a particular course of action, discredit under or uninformed opponents, to tease out the best solution to a societal

problem or series of arguments, the wisdom of man vs. the natural order, whether or not truth of any kind can be grasped, ever, if even once.

Polemics applied to religion are a separate branch on the tree. Polemics or “polis religion” specifically study how religion, politics and lifestyle are embedded within one another. The discipline identifies with many models and approaches, none of which appear to be a mode or standard, a complication with establishing one firm modern technique.

Kindt says:

“Polis religion operates on three levels of Greek society: the polis, the “world-of-the-polis system,” and the Panhellenic dimension. The definition of Greek religion as polis religion follows this tripartite structure of Greek society and runs along the following lines:

- 1) **Polis:** Individual religious beliefs,
- 2) **The “world of the polis system”:** the shared history of individuals with the same religious beliefs, and
- 3) **Panhellenic:** the philosophies and dogma of religious institutions.

The goal of polemics was to “...describe the symbolic nature of Greek religion is that of religion as a shared ‘language’ which enabled the Greeks to communicate their experiences of the external world to each other.”

Even though the definition of polemics sounds pregnant with hostility, the end result appears to be to resolve potential for tension and create a friendly medium of social-religious exchange.

This sentiment appears to have followed the polemic through medieval times into the present, where a wide range of polemic methods are still in active use.

Another source, Hettema and Van der Kooij (2004) state polemics serve different purposes, almost certainly not to signify or create unity. Rather they broker power to the polemist, are used as tools to win over the audience, and take over or reorder religious operations to which they apply.

They say the polemic does not settle arguments but raises them and refers to other arguments instead, are supposed to be contemporaneous but can be argued “as shams” meaning against the arguments of the long-since deceased, but this violates the fact all polemics must be current. Still, there are many aging polemics. They also assert that modern polemics do not have to be rational, refer to rational arguments or even contain rational arguments.

They also identify various categories of polemic, layers, and a purpose: Polemics are supposed to be used in place of violence between parties of differing opinions. Social progress is clearly an aim.

The aforementioned can take place because of a discussion, dispute and controversy depending on the level of tension about the subject matter, and pertain to intra-, inter-, and extra-faith matters.

All faiths use polemics and often. Hettema and Van der Kooij claim that even though Muslims, Jews, and even Buddhists employ them, it is how and why Christians use them that sets the standard for the practice at any given time.

An analysis of Christian: Muslim polemics was performed by Zwirahn (2018) upon the *al-Jawāb al-Ṣaḥīḥ* and the *Cyprus Letter* in order to draw conclusions about the structure, tactics, and techniques used in 14th century polemics and how they might apply to contemporary arguments.

The first comment Zwirahn makes regards the nature of the irresistible force and the immovable objects of Christianity and Islam and how their similarities and differences are addressed or left unresolved in polemics. He quotes Charles J. Adams:

“Here the difference is so great that one may well ask whether in truth there is any hope of Christian-Muslim dialogue ever progressing beyond the stage of registering the differences with one another.”

And

“They have “different estimates of the religious situation of mankind, offer different solutions to the problem that all men face, and issue in states and attitudes.”

Zwirahn like Hettema and Van der Kooij, says:

“In these inter-religious polemical exchanges, polemicists did not adhere to scriptures alone; they also utilized logical argumentation techniques based on traditional Aristotelian logic. These types are: the *discussion*, the *dispute*, and the *controversy*. In light of this theoretical framework, I will analyze the above-mentioned polemical exchanges.”

Zwirahn detected a vein running through the arguments regardless of impetus or format, however, and we will see the very same play a role in the Apologetic: “the ‘truth’ of religion as understood by both polemicists is embedded in their own understanding and beliefs of scriptural and logical ‘proofs.’ To them, it is more a matter of what you believe is true, rather than what your contender is attempting to convince you is true.”

There was a tendency for the polemic to measure up to a false standard of success based on how convinced the polemist was his polemic represented a flawless religion rather than how convincing or reliable the argument.

Polemics between Christians and Muslims began at once in Syria, circa 630 CE. Muhammad had introduced the Qu’ran in 609 CE and work on it was ongoing until 632, McLean (n.d.) but it was obvious the new scripture stirred up conversations between the two religions at once.

Zwirahn states the Qu’ran itself is a polemic, a criticism of Judaism and Christianity, and Christians responded with polemics about the authenticity of the document and its author, the Prophet Muhammad. Muslims countered, and polemics between the two faiths mounted, in particular from the 12th century, the Crusade period, onward:

“Muslims refuted the Trinity and questioned the authenticity of Christian scriptures and the divinity of Christ (Lazarus-Yafeh 1996, p. 62). In a commentary on the alleged corruption of the Bible and the alteration of its text, Ibn Ḥazm carried out one of the earliest, most detailed examinations of Christian Scripture, looking for discrepancies, contradictions, anthropomorphic description of God, and the attribution of unreasonable behavior to the prophets.”

In spite of the fact there were authors on both sides, this was never achieved. Christians accused Muslims of confusing faith and facts, and Muslims felt Christian polemics served one purpose, the eradication of Islam and conversion of its followers to Christianity.

The rest of Zwahir's paper analyzes aspects of the discussion, dispute, and controversy.

2.1 Discussions

Discussions are not as common as the other two. Discussions employ science and mathematics as the means for drawing conclusions.

"In this type, the contenders tend to eventually acknowledge the problem, the mistake behind it, and the possible solution. The preferred "argumentative move" correlated with this type is proof, as, usually, the polemicists' goal in a discussion is to "establish the truth." Proof is usually based on "inference rules and evidence."

2.2 The Dispute

Disputes use metaphysics as the basis of their analyses.

"The object of debate in a dispute is a well-defined" discrepancy and the polemicists' goal in this type is primarily winning the debate. The problem of a debate is "rooted in differences of attitudes, feelings, or preferences". "A dispute has no solution; at most it can dissolve or be dissolved." The polemicists' goal in this type is primarily winning the debate.

2.3 The Controversy

The controversy is based on tactical moves that employ techniques common to the aforementioned and just about any other source or method of rhetorical argument, alternating between scriptural and logical proofs.

Zwahir quoting Sirry (2005) says although polemics did not always stem the tide of violence, nor did they necessary result in it, the primary goal was unfortunately the same, the buttress the polemicists and their faiths against the ideas of the others.

2.4 The Apology

The Apology or "defense" began in the 4th-5th centuries AD to defend Christianity from pagan religions and within from heresy, Ando (1996). The specific goal of the Apology was to assert the superiority of Christianity and the moral and intellectual bankruptcy of paganism, specifically to redirect pagans who formerly served the nation of Rome into service of the Roman Catholic Church.

Additional drivers behind the apology include the continued existence of paganism and a lack of acceptance in spite of the claims of the church it is inferior and the fact Church Apologetics only disguise the fact that pagans and Christians live just fine together and share similar objectives in life.

The Church is also continually agitated over the continued progress in areas of society, science, philosophy that have been "rapid and revolutionary" and outpaced it, Ladd (1903).

The other is the fact the government supports antagonism of non-Christians and keeps apologetics alive: "Within this debate, the coercive power of the government gave new force to the public utterances of Christian intellectuals in both ecclesiastic and political contexts."

The Apology focuses on areas of continued ambiguity about other religions and continually elevates Christianity using well worn terms of ideas that are familiar, comfortable and galvanize its audiences, even if the topics and subject matter are completely unprovable and unknowable.

Apologetic forms are many and varied. Van Vlastuin (2016) identifies one way of bucketing them into *Apologetic Schools*:

“This division tends to appeal to God’s truth derived either through existential encounter, natural theology and human reason, or God’s direct revelation. This approach can be refined by the subdivision of the second school into classical apologetics and evidentialism, whilst the third school is also sub-divided into presuppositionalism and reformed apologetics.”

In addition, van Vlastuin’s research found another that uses five categories instead, “a subdivision into five categories, namely classical apologetics, evidentialism, historical apologetics, experiential apologetics and presuppositionalism.”

Van Vlastuin synthesizes the two approaches into one, stating his rationale thus:

“...to divide the apologetic schools from a synthetic perspective in classical apologetics, evidentialism, revelational apologetics (including presuppositionalism and reformed apologetics) and fideism.

The characteristic differences between these apologetical schools can be mapped in a general way.

Classic apologetics emphasizes reason, evidentialism emphasises facts, revelational apologetics God’s revelation, whilst fideism stresses personal faith.

Classical apologetics is centered around the reasonable structure of reality; evidentialism shows that faith suits a reasonable worldview, and that from a scientific worldview sufficient arguments for the Christian faith can be given; revelational apologetics reasons from Scripture; whilst the fideist testifies from his personal relationship with Jesus.

Whilst apologetics for the classical apologist functions as the prolegomena for theology; the evidentialist will use apologetics in a polemical way; for the revelational apologist theology and apologetics belong together; and the fideist has less interest in a completed theological system.”

Van Vlastuin discovered a tendency by Roman Catholics to prefer classical apologetics while Reformed faiths lean towards the revelational, and Protestants towards fideism, who shun liberal thinking.

Regarding religion and science and the spectrum between them, van Vlastuin discovered:

“Classical apologists are usually positively oriented towards philosophy and science, whilst fideists are characterized by a critical and detached attitude. Revelational apologists accept philosophy and science, but they employ their own Christian philosophical and scientific system, because they are critical towards secular science. Evidentialists are often less philosophical, but they try to integrate faith and science.”

Van Vlastuin found spectra exist within apologetics and their handling of philosophy and science, scripture, and good and evil.

Regarding philosophy and science, Classical apologists are positively inclined to the mingling of the two, Revelational proponents believe scripture trumps science, and Fideists are detached to hostile towards science.

Revelationists slant science or manipulate its precepts in favor of their beliefs about scripture, and are openly critical of science otherwise, Evidentialists will try to integrate the two.

He writes:

“Revelational apologists understand Scripture as authoritative concerning the issues of faith and science. Evidentialists seek to prove the historical truths of Scripture and to refer to fulfilled prophecies. Fideists see Scripture often as a witness of God’s acts in which the Self-revelation of God is most important and in which the historical reliability can be relativised.

When it comes to the pressing question of evil in history, the revelational apologist will stress God’s sovereignty, the evidentialist will wonder whether the amount of evil can be reconciled with God’s goodness, the classical apologist argues that God has reasons to accept evil in his creation, whilst the fideist witnesses of his hope in God despite all the evil in history.”

The Apology is clearly is the most hostile towards social and human progress of the forms presented in this paper.

3. The Muslim Fatwa

The word fatwa means “an authoritative legal opinion”, Oxfordislamicstudies.com (n.d.) which is sought by a *mustafi* or seeker and granted by a *mufti*, derived from *mu’afta* or “one who judges”. The purpose of a fatwa is to provide definitive answers to legal questions, Sirry (2013).

Awass (2019) explains that fatwas are the process of ifta, which is “...an ethical embedding mechanism that historically carried out this function through a set of discursive and nondiscursive relations. “Ethical embedding” signifies the situating of the various spheres of the social world into an ethical domain.”

Awass states fatwas that address discursive topics—those deviant from the norm—by attempting to force them into regularity, and explain nondiscursive topics—those that are esoteric in nature—by explaining them in terms of social norms. Fatwas help civil societies work through their issues constructively.

Caeiro (2013) agrees, and adds they are also used for to export Muslim ideas to other cultures. The process is also apparently evolving from ifta, production by a mufti to ijthihad, production by collective process.

As with Awass, Caeiro says the purpose of the fatwa is to help Islam and Muslims cope with the challenges of modernity and provide a means for relevance. Contemporary fatwas, for example, focus on helping Muslim expatriates assimilate in foreign countries while preserving their original identities.

Fatwas date from the 10th century, Skovgaard-Petersen, (2015) Topics vary widely, and Awass says there is no guarantee that a given fatwa will be constructive or serve any useful purpose. The list in the aforementioned resource aptly demonstrates this.

Cairo's work documents the work of ECRF, the *European Council on Fatwa Research* which was created to study and document why fatwas are requested, how they are written and how effective they are in practice.

Cairo's paper identifies the process by which a fatwa is created and "meet the needs of Muslims in Europe, solve their problems, and regulate their interaction with the European societies".

The ECFR states that the objective of the drafting of a fatwa is to ground the question and all responses in what is called "fiqh" or "fertile soil", AKA the authoritative voice of the Qu'ran and its Prophet, Divine Muhammad, *fiqh al aqalliyat* or "the fertile soil of jurisprudence for minorities".

Cairo explains the process for *fatwa fiqh al aqalliyat* as follows:

- 1) All fatwas of this nature are performed ijihad or by an ensemble of Muslim scholars of excellent repute.
- 2) The question is posed by a *mustafi*.
- 3) A mufti analyzes the question for validity, sincerity and relevance.
- 4) The mufti then challenges the requestor's character and reasoning for requesting the fatwa.
- 5) Assuming the mufti finds the requestor's character to be sincere and the question is valid, the fatwa progresses to the next step, which is "diagnosis", an in depth exploration of the topic and its pertinence to the mustafi's life.
- 6) Extensive research is performed in authoritative texts for similar fatwas. "This methodology finds the regulatory power which the muftis attribute to their fatwas. It also transforms an individual question into an opportunity for da'wa and tarbiyya—for showing the comprehensiveness of Islam and for inculcating the virtues necessary to live a pious Muslim life." A list of references is created for reference during this stage.
- 7) A qarar or "statement" is made that defines the discussion on the fatwa with the collective that will take place. Qarar frames the issue as narrowly as possible.
- 8) A draft is made after the first discussion.
- 9) The arguments of each mufti are weighed and positioned.
- 10) An attempt is made at resolving all conflicting arguments so the fatwa is not disjointed, and that all subjectivity within the document is removed.
- 11) A legal brief is performed. This ensures none of the resolutions in the fatwa run afoul of secular law.
- 12) The fatwa is published.

In addition to *fatwas fiqh al aqillayyat*, which as stated are written collectively, the following types exist per Skovgaard-Petersen (2015).

- 1) **The Ephemeral Fatwa**—requests a personal spiritual guidance from a mufti or a sheikh. “they may for instance touch on the legality of medical treatments, questions of purity and impurity, or lifestyle.” Ephemeral fatwas rarely delve into the richness of Islamic literature.
- 2) **The School Fatwa**—collections of fatwas that establish the normative values of the school or a particular personality at the school. These are among the oldest of fatwas, dating from the 10th Century CE.
- 3) **The Court Fatwa**—addresses legal matters and upon publication is deemed a “legal instrument”. They often “deal with issues of medicine and health, such as contraception, birth control, autopsies or organ transplantation.”
- 4) **Public Fatwa**—general public announcements regarding decisions made by public officials on matters of state.
- 5) **The State Fatwa**—a declaration made by a mufti that is recognized by the state and has its authority in hand.
- 6) **The Collective Fatwa**—see above regarding the *fatwa fiqh al aqalliyat*.

Regardless of format, “a fatwa is not just an instance of a meeting between reality and Islamic doctrine. It is also part of an ongoing Muslim scholarly discussion about Islamic norms and their applicability.”

4. The Jewish Chazakah

The Talmud, the primary source of Jewish Laws is decentralized by subject, Hollander (2006). *The Chazakah or Presumption* helps to bring various references together by topic, reference, and associates their meaning in a clear and applicable manner. Hollander states:

“The authoritative law codes provide a solution to this problem. Great rabbis have undertaken the enormous task of creating comprehensive law codes by separating out the actual laws from the great Talmudic discussions and putting them together by subject. These authoritative law codes are an extremely helpful resource, especially since they have the force of law themselves”.

The first of the major codes is Maimonides’s Mishneh Torah, circa 1170-1180 CE. This work, also called *Yad ha-Chazakah* (“Code of Maimonides”) or simply the “Rambam” (an abbreviation for the author’s name), “codifies almost 15,000 laws from the Talmud.”

Hollander and Hirschprung (2013) date the Chazakah to 12th Century where the Chazakah or *dominium* was used to resolve “adverse ownership” cases in England. Chazakah was employed to address squatting and the old adage “Ownership is 9 tenths of the law” and the Jewish rule of thumb based on seating in the Synagogue—three times in a row was sufficient to usurp it from its owner whether one owned it or not, Jewish Treats (2018).

On this, Hirschprung says:

“According to this paper’s thesis that possession doctrines are influenced by ownership conception, it may be suggested that the real difference between the Roman law of possession and the Jewish law of Chazakah lie in the influence of dominium versus stewardship. A system that advocates dominium is

necessarily based on the importance and protection of power, whereas a stewardship-oriented system would be more open to fluidity and less rigid transfers of possession”.

So the goal of the spiritual argument called Chazakah is actually more than “presumption” but is instead “possession” of the Truth about God and His Plan for humanity, not only from an inarguable perspective, but one that is concrete, observable and irrefutable. That is, has been substantively argued as far as it can so that no more contrary evidence or even intuitive sense is able to contradict it.

The Chazakah was also used in religious and theological arguments. As Auerbach (1951) states, they were to be used to protect and preserve life, limb, and property:

“There is a doctrine in our law of quasi contracts known as ‘dutiful intervention,’ which deals with the preservation of life and property in imminent danger of harm. The rule seems to be that sans contract, the recipient is under no obligation to pay for the nonprofessional services which one may render in preserving his life during an emergency. The law creates an irrebuttable presumption that such acts on the part of the intervenor are prompted by natural human instincts to preserve life and are conferred without expectation of compensation.”

The Jews, like the Vedantins also clearly think religion should be purposed towards the protection and advancement of human interest.

The specification for a religious presumption in Judaism must include the following aspects:

4.1 Religious Sensibility

Dorff (1978) states that any declaration and presumption must make sense betwixt the twin poles of religion and the law and make sense when deployed to real life:

“Because Jewish law developed in a religious context, many features of its methodology, content, transmission, and motivational structure have been influenced significantly by religious concepts and concerns. In other words, although Judaism is not just a religion, it is not just a legal system either; it combines religion and law and gives both a higher priority than it ascribes to the other elements of the Jewish civilization. Moreover, Judaism seeks to integrate religious sensibilities into the legal structure as fully as possible.”

“This integration makes the law the major vehicle for the expression of those sensibilities and makes religion the foundation for law and the medium through which it operates. Consequently, studying the relationship between religion and law in Judaism is crucial to an understanding of what is central to Judaism and also to an analysis of how religion and law can interact when their symbiosis is taken seriously.”

4.2 Plausibility

Dorff also says that God’s role in the process of clarifying or interpreting the law must take temporal mechanics seriously. There is no such thing as divine retribution for failure to follow the Law as this is not real, not observable. Jewish Arguments therefore include *observable and tangible outcomes* as evidence of their viability:

“For example, the Bible claims that Jewish law was initiated by God at Sinai amidst thunder and lightning, and it speaks of Moses and other prophets who added to that law by speaking to God, often in rather eerie circumstances”.

“These events certainly do not resemble the normal legislative process by which human beings create and extend the law. Moreover, under Jewish law, an omniscient God, as well as human judges, renders judgments and enforcement of those judgments is not restricted to the remedies that human beings impose. An omnipotent God, who controls nature and history, uses His powers to provide an inescapable mechanism of enforcement for His laws.”

4.3 Enforceability

It is not enough to say “God will get you”. The Jewish system of Arguments insists that human hands play a role in ensuring the terms of the Presumption are fully executable by human hands. This statement from Dorff does not rule out harsh punishment, but I refer back to the comment from Auerbach as a guiding principal for the drafting of a Chazakah, “to preserve life, limb and property.”

Still, Dorff says:

“Judaism assumes that God will act as the ultimate enforcer, but Jewish law does not hesitate to use remedies imposed by human authorities.

These remedies have varied in form with changes in time and location and have included such measures as compensation, fines, excommunication, lashes, and death.

The parties who executed these punishments also have varied. When Jews ruled themselves, the leaders of the community appointed judges and officers to enforce the law.”

4.4 Mutability

Christians presume that the Word of God is unalterable and all arguments stem from His static position regarding the contents of the Bible. One way to skew this position is with Argument as we will see, the other is through the actions of a prophet.

In Judaism, however, Rabbis use interpretation rather than revelation as the means of applying religious law and its tenets to human situations:

“...they greatly expanded the judicial powers created by the Torah in chapter 17 of Deuteronomy and claimed that God only speaks to mankind through their interpretations of the law.

The Rabbis thus clearly and consciously shifted the operation of the law from the prophets to the judges and from revelation to interpretation.”

4.5 Customary

Dorff goes on to say that decision making from the body of interpretations must be logical and customary and usable. In the absence of a Presumption, custom must rule the day, and even in the presence of a solid Argument, Jews are reluctant to overrule secular custom with religion as they feel this oversteps the authority of religion.

So, in the absence or even the presence of a Chazakah, secular authorities are observed first. This aspect of the process should be noted before the drafting of a new Presumption is attempted.

4.6 *Specific and Probable*

Koppel (n.d.) says that Presumptions must be made so that all uncertainty about their declarations and pertinence is put to bed. In order to be valid, Arguments must therefore be placed and operate within a context of what is well understood to be probable under the present circumstances.

4.7 *Conclusions about the Chazakah, the Jewish Presumptive Argument*

Jews in modern times and indeed across history have questioned the nature of a shared national and individual identity that is at times, but not always, a religious one, Aronson (2018). The quest for how to merge the two in a logical and appropriate way and provide adequate representation of all Jewish people is ongoing. Aronson says:

“Capturing new forms of Jewish behavior and understanding their relationship to more traditional expressions of Judaism is challenging for researchers who seek to understand Jewish life through a standard set of survey measures.”

He goes on to say the answer is beyond what can be known about a Jew, their religion, predicament or thoughts and expectations of creation must be dynamic rather than based on a snapshot.

This suggests along with all the other aspects of Jewish life that intersect secular and religious law that the Rabbi and constituent alike must continually revisit the Torah, all precedents and credible and established methods for writing Presumptions, and also ensure sure that all engagements with a Jew regarding the uncertain matters of life are responded to in a contemporaneous and deeply personal way.

5. Conclusions

The religious argument as seen across faiths and history was implemented to clarify theological discussions and comfort people who were in crisis or engaged in a dispute. All of the faiths studied believe, strongly they should protect the person, their property and create confidence in their faith, clergy and the institution of religion they participate with.

Christians stand apart in their use of the Argument as an instrument of discord, have used it, for the most part, to broker power and undercut competitors.

All of the faiths mentioned except Christianity state an interest in ensuring relevance and currency, an ever-evolving process for their arguments as well.

In the drafting of this paper, I wanted to see if a process that delineated a standard, respectable, and effective instrument could be inferred from those used by the world’s major religions. A standard in this area would help inter-faith relations and help students and established clergy alike draft new Arguments and critique them, much as peer-review in academia, using firm universal criteria.

A standard format would also assist with implementation and measurement of success. To that end, I discovered *A Guide to Writing in Religious Studies*, Halpern and Lewis et al. (2007), which outlines the following steps I believe could be used as a guiding light in the drafting of arguments worldwide, across religions and languages:

- 1) **Generate a thesis.** This should arouse your deep curiosity about God’s Will and how to apply it to the well-being and comfort of self. If this is done well, it will appeal to the audience as well. The goal of any argument, of course, is to generate a well-written argument using an established methodological approach that compels others to be instruments of God’s Grace. In this effort, self is always the first one that needs to be convinced. There are two types of Theses, both must be arguable using authoritative voices and resources:
 - a. **A level one thesis** addresses a question that is assigned or is requested by a parishioner.
 - b. **A level two thesis** pursues a question that is the subject of extensive research.
- 2) **Establish a motive.** The motive is the “so what?” about the thesis. Why is exploring the topic important? Why is engagement with the topic a game-changer assuming the author can prove his points?
- 3) **The body.** The body contains all the references for and against the thesis and bolster the importance of the motive. The body should use topic sentences for each paragraph and continually tie the evidence to the hypothesis of the argument.
- 4) **Conclusion.** The conclusion should consider what your paper argued from a new angle, not open up a whole other debate.

Though this process seems like a rubber stamp of freshman argumentative paper, or collapses an academic paper, there is an important difference—the religious argument addresses problems of conscience. Where there are questions of conscience, we must always invoke the Spirit, who is Pure of Intention as is His Counsel through the scriptures and distill the wisdom we find there into an Effective Practice through superior arguments.

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