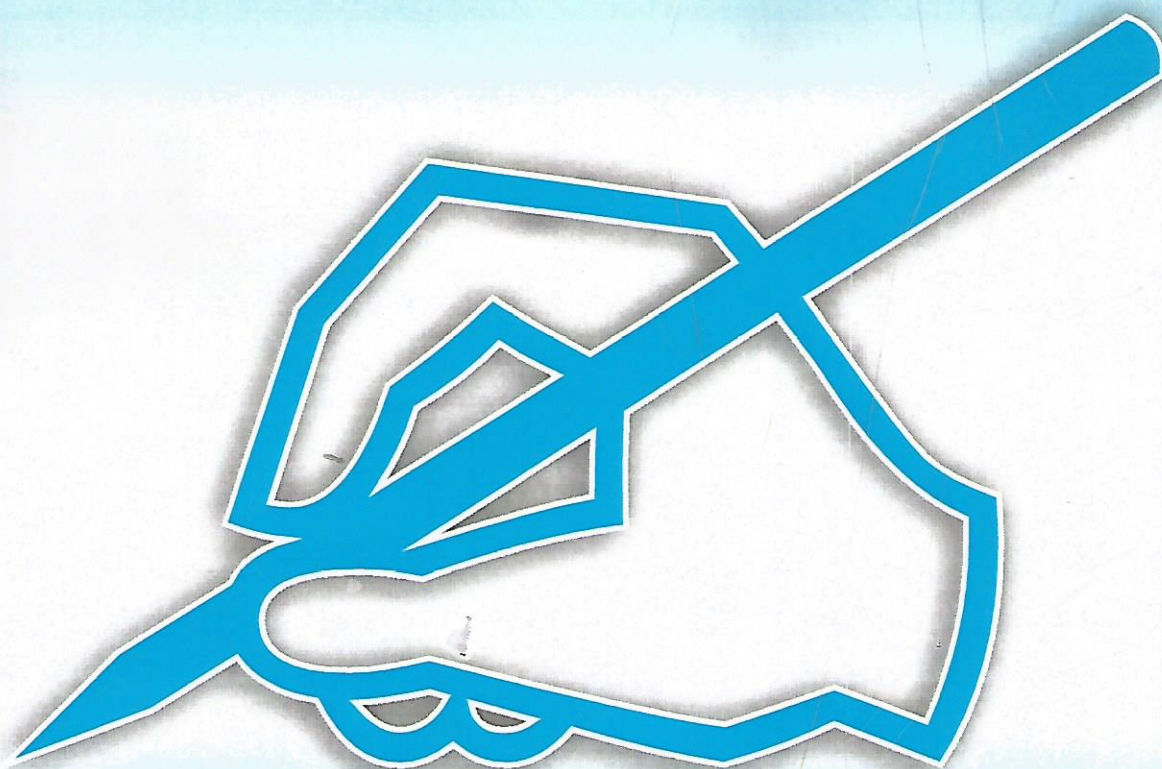


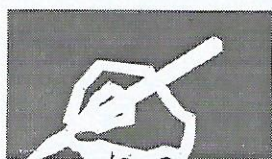


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"WHO HAS THE GOOD NEWS RIGHT?" AHMED DEEDAT, ISLAMIC FAITH AND ITS PROPAGATION

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ABSTRACT

The Qur'an says: "Invite (all) to the Way of Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching, and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious: For thy Lord Knoweth best, who have strayed from His Path, and who receive guidance" (Q16:125). In this verse, the principles of Islamic faith propagation was laid down. Here, we demonstrate Ahmed Deedat's approach to Islamic propagation using knowledge, experience, and discretion. The paper showed that Ahmed Deedat through his preaching presented propagation as an integral part of Islam and met people of other faiths on their own ground and convinced them with illustrations from their own Books. In conclusion, this propagation strategy of Ahmed Deedat made him contribute in no small measure to the development and propagation of Islamic faith in various parts of the Muslim world.

Keywords: Islam, Faith, Ahmed Deedat, Religion, Interaction, Propagation

INTRODUCTION

No religion or organisation or society can be said to be against propagation if it has any sort of scholarly spine. This is on the grounds that to deny propagation is to deny the need to request the understanding of others to what is being asserted as reality by the religion. Not to request understanding, when a case is made with respect to what is valid or acceptable and what is not, is either not being serious about the case or to announce the case as completely emotional, particularistic or relative and hence inapplicable to anybody other than the individuals who make the case (Al-Fārūqī & Al Faruqi, 1986).

In contemporary times, quite a number of Muslim societies are seeing the rigorous and intense moves taking by certain religious organizations in inviting others into their religion through evangelism, witnessing or missionary activities. This at times forced some Muslims to adopt a defensive attitude towards their religious beliefs and cultural heritage. In addition, negligence, faithlessness, and factionalism gained firm ground, which all the more intensified their weakness (Saqr & Ahmed, 1989).

This paper highlights the conceptualization of Islamic faith and particularly its propagation by Ahmed Deedat in line with the teachings of the religion and through a comparative approach with other world religions or what the paper shall put forward as 'having the good news right'. This, it can be said, is also an idea shared by Maulana Muhammad Ali when he observes that the cause of the Muslims is really the cause of truth, right and justice, and that they were compelled to strive to defend the truth has been discussed in various places. Hence, comments such as the words *fi sabil Allah* (in the Way of Allah) always meant war undertaken against unbelievers for the propagation of the Islamic faith is baseless. Therefore, carrying the message of Islam to non-Muslims is indeed the duty of a Muslim, and anyone engaged in this work is undoubtedly working in the way of Allah, but that a Muslim was required to carry the message of God at the point of the sword or gun is no more than a myth (Ali, 2011). This is how Ahmed Deedat's understanding of the Islamic faith can be gleaned and is also the bases of his Islamic

propagation in different parts of the world. It is against this backdrop that the paper shall proceed as follows: Biography of Ahmed Deedat, Ahmed Deedat as a public speaker, his writings and publications, his means of propagation, his missionary activities among non-muslims, influence and effect of his propagation activities, and conclusion.

Biography of Ahmed Deedat

Scholars have argued that success and credibility are not bestowed. They are earned through vision, integrity and hard work. These are variables upon which Ahmed Deedat stands tall. A man totally dedicated to his faith and its propagation and who was not afraid to challenge anyone to a debate to settle once and for all the matter, who has the good news right? This he stood for and was committed to till the end of his life.

His full name is Ahmed Hossen Deedat, he was the third born in the family of four. He was born in the Surat district of India on July 1, 1918. When he was nine years old he moved to Durban, South Africa. His farewell to his mother in 1927 was the last time he saw her alive for she passed away a few months later (Deedat, n.d.-b).

Ahmed's father was a tailor by profession he owns a small shop in Durban. He made little revenue from it due to the strict apartheid government his opportunities were limited since he was not of European descent but he was not driven by sale and made a humble living from it. He was a strong man who loved the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) intensively and did not tolerate any disrespect towards him. Much of the money he made went for the rent of their small apartment in Ismail building near one of the oldest mosques in Durban (Al-Majd T.V, 2002).

Ahmed Deedat enrolled in the Al-Jaman school where he started from standard four, it was the first time he had seen the letters A B C and heard the words "Yes" and "No". In six months, however, he had learnt English and became the top of his class. His avid passion for reading helped him excel academically and gained promotions until he completed standard six. Everyday Ahmed had to walk to school and back home because his father could not afford the bus fare to two pennies. He later moved on to Sastri College a respectable school built by an Indian immigrant in South Africa. It was at Sastri College that his education came to an abrupt end because after only three days at College his father pulled him out. Financial considerations brought his education to a stop (Al-Majd T.V, 2002).

At an early age of about 16, he took on the first of many jobs in retailing. The most significant of this was in 1936 where he worked at a Muslim owned store called O. A. Muhammad shop just across the way is the enormous Adam's mission complex an institute where young missionaries learn how to convert others to Christianity. It was Ahmed who was to become the students' homework. Deedat himself says:

Almost every day I was subjected to various remarks whenever the students and teachers come to the shop to buy things. They start with, "do you know the Prophet had so many wives? Do you know the Prophet spread the religion with the point of the sword?" Meaning he threatened People that if you do not accept my religion I will chop off your head (Al-Majd T.V, 2002).

Ahmed then knew next to nothing about Islām all he knew was *Laillaha illaha Muhammad Rasullulah*. He was agitated and angered by this type of harassment and he felt an urge and a desire to respond to them but he was not equipped to deal with the challenges because he didn't have the background knowledge in developing the response they required.

It was while cleaning out the shop where he worked that he stumbled upon the book that would change his life forever. The book entitled *Izharul Haq* meaning "Truth Revealed". Ironically, it was a religious dialogue between a Christian priest and a Muslim Imam. This book recorded the techniques and enormous success of the efforts of Muslims in India in turning the tables against Christian missionary harassment during the British subjugation and rule of India. In it, Deedat found for the first time a response to the Christian allegations. In particular, the idea of holding debates had a profound effect on Ahmed Deedat.

Armed with this newfound zeal, Ahmed Deedat purchased his first Bible. Book by book, page by page his mind begins to linger with names, debates, facts and quotes but not only was he learning about

his own religion he found one book particularly interesting 'The Bible'. He studied the Bible and can quote at random, at any time, anywhere and anyplace. He now has his armour, his shield would be the extensive knowledge of the Qur'an and his sword would be his fine piecing style of delivery. He began holding debates and discussions with the trainee missionaries. When they beat retreat in the face of his incisive counter arguments, he personally called on their teachers and even priests in surrounding areas (Deedat, n.d.-d).

For some time, he worked for the Simplex Furniture Factory. He was solemnly responsible for what is going in and out of the factory, he was given this responsibility because he was an honest man. He found an opportunity in the furniture factory to give his spill on comparative religion. He has an African Zulu working for him, his name was Dadan Pengu. He became Deedat's first guinea pig for he started working on him. His preaching began taking over his life he spent his money to print cards and talking about Islam. That time there wasn't enough money to pay rent for their flat. His wife made toothpicks and sell during *Idl-Adha* and also by selling sheep and goats and they use to make a lot of money from these things. The house they lived in then was very close to the Mosque in Durban. He used to take his visitors for a little walk and it was strategically positioned. He would invite people to his home for a meal and speak to them what Islam was and told them "you know there is a Mosque just across the road would you like to come and take a look at it?". That was one of the core propagation strategies of Ahmed Deedat in the early days. He must have lived humbly to save money for his preaching and although money was tight he still tried to make his family a priority. His wife Hawaw commented that: Whenever I saw something that I like and he knows he would buy it for me (Al-Majd T.V, 2002).

In 1957, he and alongside two of his closest friends Mr. G.H. Vanker and Mr. G.H. Agjee established the Islamic Propagation Centre {IPC}. In his early years, IPC was involved in printing books and organizing classes for new converts. In 1958 while given a lecture a man by the name Haji Kuduwa donated 75 hectares of land for Islamic Propagation. After spending 17 years on the As-Salam project Deedat's dream of a Muslim *dâi* college turned out differently from what he envisaged. Lack of funding despite Ahmed's best effort and lack of expertise were proving too much. In 1975, he finally asked the trustee to relieve him of As-Salam. Now he was able to focus on Daawah International.

Along with his prominence came more financial support he was now able to open new doors. He moved the IPC to a much larger building which soon became the IPCI {The Islamic Propagation Centre International}. He is the Life President of the Centre. It was in this office he received various types of visitors some friendly and some fuming.

In 1986, in a fitting tribute to his monumental achievement foundation awarded him the king Faisal SERVICE TO ISLAM. The award came after a lifetime of struggle to propagate Islam and to defend Islam against the onslaught of the missionaries.

It was a sad day, when on May 3rd, 1996. Ahmed Deedat's life was changed drastically, the vibrant dynamic author and orator was viably catapulted into a body that no longer walked. He suffered a stroke, which left him paralyzed from the neck down. His only mode of communication was by coordinating his eye movement in an alphabetical chart.

Throughout this period, he gracefully persevered under the most difficult personal conditions: however, not forgetting his task as a *dai* (Islamic worker) and, an ambassador of Islam, he continued to inspire, educate, challenge and inform people about the universal message of Islam. In his sickbed, he always looked forward to the day he will be able to speak and move again. He says the first thing he would do is to tour the Arab world once again (Al-Majd T.V, 2002). This was a wish he was unable to fulfill.

For on Monday 8 of August 2005, Deedat succumbed after nine years to a severe stroke that has left him paralyzed. He died at the age of 87 and was survived by wife, children, and grandchildren. Different groups of people will have different reasons to remember Ahmad Deedat, but Muslims the world over will remember him as an inestimable treasure, whose books tapes and CDs will continue to aid their spiritual progress for a long time to come. Perhaps the best tribute the Muslim world can pay to him is to heed his advice about Muslim unity. According to his son Yusuf, in a phone interview with *Weekly Trust* on the day of Deedat's death "My father used to say, I don't care about your labels, you may call

yourself a Sunni, a Shiite or a Sufi, all I know is that we have work to do for Islam and we have to come together to do it. Forget those differences, Almighty Allah, knows best who is doing the right things, while here, we should all work for Islām. When our enemies decide to work against us they don't, differentiate between a Sunni and a Shiite. We should learn from them and also be blind to our differences." That was his cherished belief Yusuf said (Al-Majd T.V, 2002).

Ahmed Deedat as a Public Speaker

Ahmed Deedat's life as a Public Speaker began in 1940. He took to the stage and began giving lectures to a small audience. The title of his first lecture is "Is Muhammad a messenger of peace?" His friends helped him to secretly put up posters at night since it was illegal to hang posters advertising such talk then (Al-Majd T.V, 2002). His wife Hawwa was at first shock to see her husband doing so well on the stage. His talks gave him popularity until he found himself at the town hall in Durban. He now has a full house of around 2,000 people. Deedat talks there was some of the few events in which segregation quickly disappeared.

His message was that there were many contradictions in the Christian Bible and Doctrine and Muhammad was indeed the noble messenger sent by God. There was always excitement in the crowd and tension in the air (Al-Majd T.V, 2002). When he speaks, he speaks in simple English and not jaw-breaking grammar. His early talks were very successful and he expected them to be a hit because he was raising hot topics so he anticipated strong sell-out.

But not everyone was so supportive some Christians and Hindus felt his sarcastic comments were disrespectful; they were also frustrated that the evidence he gave was from their holy books. Many Muslims in Durban felt he was too aggressive and they did not want him to bring anything that would bring friction between the Muslims and Christians. He believes the Maullana's then were not opposed to him but were indifferent to his propagation. They may have been afraid to support someone who was challenging the religion of those who rule the country. Ahmed did not feel threatened by the Government and so he continued.

Eventually, some Muslims became impressed with him and changed their views after they saw Christians and Hindus converting to Islam. The Nida'ul Islam Magazine once asked Ahmed Deedat, "what would you say to the Muslims, particularly the Muslim Imams who object to a Muslim having a debate with a Christian?" He answered saying:

...Our Nabi Kareem (S.A.W) had a debate with a Christians. They are ignorant, it is a Sunah of the prophet, the Christians came from Najran, for 3 days and 3 nights, they had their debate in the Masjidu Nabawi ("An Interview with Sheikh Ahmed Deedat," 1996).

But many were still opposed to his supposed missionary tactics including his own brother Abdullah. Ahmed Deedat always looked forward to the Question and Answer section at the end of his lecture in which Christians lined up with their bibles in their hands ready to refute his points. But no question was too difficult for him. He could silence his challengers by quoting the Bible from memory. He was later invited to Cape Town where he received an overwhelming welcome. But his lecture there more than just a religious significance. Many Muslims in Cape had been brought from Indonesia, Malaysia, India and were slaves and political prisoners.

To them, Ahmed Deedat was a knight in shining armour who has come to liberate them from the pressures of hard-line missionaries. But Deedat was able to deal an easy blow to Christian missionary aggression and raised the morale of the Muslims. After being relieved of As-Salam his international propagation began. On a trip to World Association Muslim Youth Conference in 1976 in Riyadh, the Arab world was swept off his feet they were fascinated by his dynamism, approach, personality and the ideas that he presented. It was a turning point for Ahmed Deedat for it did not only open the East but also the West (Al-Majd T.V, 2002).

In July 1985, he agreed to a debate in Royal Albert Hall London with Professor Clark on the topic "Was Christ Crucified" and it was an instant hit. After London came other tours from Morocco to

Sweden, Australia, Kenya and Denmark, the world was to small a stage for him. He delivered thousands of lectures all over the world, crossing all the continents and successfully. Engaging some of the biggest names in Christian evangelists in public debates. Ahmed Deedat's debates and lectures are available all over the world in the various languages in video and DVD format (Al-Majd T.V, 2002). So fearless was his stand in defending the truth that Deedat was refused entry into France and Nigeria on the pretext that he would cause civil unrest ("Ahmed Deedat," 2005).

His most memorable talk was the one he had with Jimmy Swaggart on 11 March 1986, head of a 100 million dollar ministry whose sermons were televised over 30 countries. The topic of the debate was "is the Bible word of God?" 8,000 people showed up ready to watch what would become known as the "Great Debate". Ahmed Deedat's last public debate was the one he did in Sydney, Australia in April 1996. It was a momentous tour. He gave one of his most passionate talks in front of a capacity crowd in Sydney, on the theme "Easter: A Muslim viewpoint" (Al-Majd T.V, 2002).

His Writings and Publications

Ahmed Deedat was known to have written many books. He was a vibrant dynamic author. Most of his books are small pamphlets, but that does not mean he did not write books that have many pages. His writings show his unparalleled knowledge and burning desire to share clear-cut pieces of evidence from Christian scriptures that destroy illogical arguments. He writes in simple English that makes his readers follow what he is trying to prove and tries as much as possible to go straight to the point. He uses the thread of logic, weaves a tapestry of Islamic thought and instruction in his own imitable way. This enables the reader to avoid the minefield of distortions in his or her walk through life (Deedat, n.d.-d).

Ahmed Deedat has published more than 10 books and distributed millions of copies of free literature and pamphlets the world over. Many of Ahmed Deedat's publications have been translated into many languages of the world: Russian, Urdu, Arabic, Bengali, Bangladesh, French, Aramaic, Chinese, Malayalam, Indonesian, Zulu, Afrikaans, Japanese, Dutch and Norwegian. His works and other materials are still in great demand worldwide and most people express their appreciation, for his enormous contribution to defend and propagate Islam (IPCI News, 2005).

Some of his Publications are as follows: *Al-Qur'an The Ultimate Miracle* (Deedat, 1979), *Crucifixion or Cruci-Fiction* (Deedat, 1984), *Arab and Israel: Conflict or Conciliation?* (Deedat, 1999a), *Is the Bible God's Word?* (Deedat, 1983), *What the Bible Says About Muhammad (pbuh)* (Deedat, 1991b), *Al-Quran: The Miracle of Miracles* (Deedat, 1991a), *Was Jesus Crucified?* (Deedat, 1980), *Christ (pbuh) in Islam* (Deedat, 1992a), *A Collection of Comparative Religion Booklet* (Deedat, 1993a), *Muhammed (pbuh) The Greatest* (Deedat, 1999b), *What is his Name?* (Deedat, 1981), *Combat Kit: Against Bible thumpers* (Deedat, 1992b), *50,000 Errors in the Bible* (Deedat, n.d.-a), *Revelation of the Truth* (Deedat, n.d.-b), *Revelation of the Truth* (Deedat, n.d.-c), *The Choice: Islam and Christianity* (Deedat, 1993b).

His Means of Propagation

There are various means of carrying out Islamic propagation activities. Some of these were means practiced during the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad and also employed by the Prophet's Companions and those who followed them. These means of Islamic propagation can be grouped into five. They are (a) Individual method (b) Public or Mass method (c) Private lessons to Students (d) Propagation through writing (e) Propagation through modern means of communication.

On the individual method i.e. to invite the person individually if the matter pertains to him specifically or not. Prophets of Allāh like Ibrahim (A.S.), Mūsā (A.S.), Muhammed (S.A.W), Nuh (A.S.) used this means of propagation. For instance, the Qur'ān talks about when Mūsā was sent to Fir'aun (pharaoh) this:

And Musa said; "O Fir'aun! I am a messenger from the Lord of the world (Q7:104).

Also, the Qur'ān talks about prophet Ibrahim as saying to his father thus:

And (remember) when Ibrahim said to his father Azar: "Do you take idols as gods? Verily, I see you and your people in manifest error (Q6:74)

This method was practiced by Ahmed Deedat when he invites people to his home. On the public or mass propagation that can be seen in the lectures or exhortations to a large audience. Ahmed Deedat was also invited by some communities to give talks about Islam. Moreover, the public means of propagation can also be said to have been used by the prophets. For instance, Prophet Muhammad (S.A. W) was reported to have gone to Mountain calling on his people to believe in Allāh as their only God and that he is only His Messenger. Another example is the prophet Nuh. The Qur'an says:

Then verily, I called to them openly aloud; then verily, I proclaimed to them in public, and I have appealed to them in private (Q71:8-9).

The third means of propagation is private lessons to students'. This is the task of the scholars who have students' that they teach. An example of this can also be found in the history of the prophet for he was reported to have taught the companions Islam and enjoined some of them to write down what he taught them for future references. This means was practiced by Ahmed Deedat with the As-Salām school. He established it to train young Muslims on Islamic mission and propagation.

The fourth means is the propagation through Writing, correspondence, and authorship with guidance and benefit for those who are called. The holy prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) can be said to have invited people to Islam by writing to them, telling them about Allah and His religion. For instance, the content of the Prophet's (SAW) letter to Hercules, the emperor of Byzantine will be appropriate here. It reads:

In the name of God, the Merciful, Compassionate, from Muhammad bn Abdullah to Herachns, Emperor of Byzantium. Peace be upon the rightly guarded. I call you to the religion of Islam. If you convert, you will be saved and God will double your reward. If you do not convert, responsibility for the salvation of your subjects rests with you (Haykal, 1982).

This means of propagation was used by Ahmed Deedat by writing many books to show the beauty of Islām and what it entails. He can also be said to have written correspondence, for instance, the letter he wrote to the Late Pope Jonh Paul II about having a dialogue with him. When asked by the *Nidaul Islam Magazine* that "we heard you challenged the Pope to a debate, what was the outcome?" He said:

... I wrote to him, I said your holiness you are talking about having a dialogue, I am prepared to have a dialogue with you in the Vatican, you tell me when and I will come along.... ("An Interview with Sheikh Ahmed Deedat," 1996).

The fifth means of propagation is through modern means of communication to advance the cause of truth or any means within the propagator's own individual capacity. It must be noted that development in communication technology really assisted propagation since propagation has to do with communication.

Ahmed Deedat used these modern communication devices such as the Internet, for his organization I.P.C.I have a website named after him www.ahmed-deedat.co.za. Other modern devices he has to his credit is the audio and visual devices. There are some of his debates recorded in videocassette and DVD.

It could be inferred from what has been said above that these means of propagation could be utilized by propagation workers in the propagation of Islam. Since a propagator always requires knowledge and wisdom in carrying out these activities. Knowledge is incomplete without access to recent and new information in the world. One of the ways to gain access to current information world over in contemporary time is through modern technology (Adetona, 2002).

Also, Muslim individuals and organizations should invest in the communication industry such as electronic media, computer and internet services so that Muslims generally and the propagators particularly could have easy access to the services. This, in turn, will enhance propagation activities (Adetona, 2002).

His Missionary Activities among Non-Muslims

Ahmed Deedat, it can be said, also directed the propagation of Islam to the Jews and Christians especially the Christians to change their opinion about Islam in particular and Muslims in general and reason with him about what he is telling them about Islam. In his book, *The People of the Book*, he says:

I was asked as to my reasons for not leaving the Jews and the Christians alone in my discourses and writings (Deedat, n.d.-c, p. 1).²²

The reply he gave to the question was Qur'an 3 vs 110 which reads:

.. And had the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians) believed, it would have been better for them; among them are some who have faith, but most of them are *Al-Fasiqun* (disobedient to Allah and rebellions against Allāh's command).

In other words, if only the people of the Book hearkened unto this message of the Holy Qur'an it will be better for them. They (the Christians and Jews) should have been the foremost in submitting their will to the will of Allāh in Islam, a renewal and a confirmation of the revelation already with them. Yet they have been the first to reject it.

Nevertheless, Allah assures that among the Jews and the Christians are some who are sincere. And so the best method must be applied to get the message through to the goodly people and even the rebellious, arrogant people.

In his book, *Arabs and Israel Conflict or Conciliation?* He narrated how he invited his employer Mr. Beare and his guest to his house. After he talked to them about Islam, prayer among others, his employer exclaimed: "Deedat you people are more Jewish than the Jews." He Deedat) says if they were Christians he would have retorted "Yes Sir, shortcomings, Muslims he noted can boast that they are greater and more Christian than the Christians" with all their followers in the footsteps of the prophets of the Old and New Testaments than most of their followers (Deedat, n.d.-c).

Furthermore, he noted that the Jews do not believe in God and they would always tell you that God gave them Israel. He wrote:

That it was God Almighty who had given Palestine to the Jews. But over 75%% of the Israeli Jews if questioned, "Do you believe in God"? They immediately respond with "No". Yet these atheist and agnostic Jews falsely use God's name for their usurpation of the land of the Palestinians (Deedat, n.d.-c, p. 26).

He also continued that if Ishmael (the forefather of the Arabs and Isaac {the forefather of the Jews come from the same source why m should not the children of Ishmael and the children of Isaac live in peace and harmony and enjoy the blessing of God together in the land of promise? (Deedat, n.d.-c, p. 34)

He also pointed out that in his theology, his ancestry, and in cultural values, the Muslims are the closest to the Jews, but he continued that the irony is that, though the Muslim honours, respects and reveres all the Jewish prophets as his own prophets, the Jews will not accept one of ours. We accept all the Biblical Jewish heroes as our own heroes (Deedat, n.d.-c, p. 54). In this regard, Muhammad Al-Uthaymin says:

They attack Islam through faith and ideology by changing correct and sound beliefs and ideologies to corrupt and deviant ones. The enemies of Islam attack it with vice and depravity, opening wide every gate that corrupts the. Virtuous moralities and supreme ideals of its followers. The enemies of Islam are also attacking it militarily, in order to weaken its followers,

disunite them and scatter them in every direction. The most vicious attack comes from the Jews (Al-Uthaymin, 2002, p. 2).

Though Ahmed Deedat believes there are few of them among the Jews and Christians who are good, sincere and faithful people who reject the oppression of the Muslims. He concludes that:

Christians and Jews must awaken recognize the rights of Islam and the Palestinians. The revival of religion, the intifadah and the refusal by Israel to share Palestine is nothing but a commitment to political suicide. All attempts to liberate Palestine so far have failed. The answer to peace and prosperity lies in hearkening to the call of the last and final revelation to mankind.²⁸

By and large, this section addressed the kind of engagement and interaction that Ahmed Deedat had with people of other faiths. His interactions with those of other faiths were not just in religious terms but also political and socio-cultural terms. In addition, he draws their attention to the similarity of the messages that can be found in the Qur'an as well as in their books. This enables him to gain both enemies and friends from the other faiths. In the next section of this study, the influence of his propagation activities would be discussed as well as the effects.

Influence and Effect of His Propagation Activities

From the beginning of Ahmed Deedat's Islamic propagation message, he has been able to raise eyebrows just as it has been able to strengthen hearts. One of the effects of his *propagation* activities is that he succeeded in arousing the consciousness of the adherents of other religions especially the Jews and Christians about the religion which they profess and looking critically at their doctrines in comparison with their actual practices.

Secondly, Ahmed Deedat has been able to win souls into Islam. There have been many conversions from other religions to Islam after listening to his lectures and reading his books. One of these converts is Mr. Dawood Ngwane, a trustee of the Islamic Propagation Centre International (IPCI).

Thirdly, through his propagation activities from the early 1940s to 1996, there has been an increase in the quest for comparative studies. This bug also spread to Nigeria, with people like Jamiu Adegunwa and the Late Lateef Adebawale of the Izharul-Haq Propagation Movement of Nigeria whose mode of preaching on comparative analysis has been having a great impact and have been able to convert many into Islam especially in Lagos State. It is important to note that the Islamic Propagation Centre International (IPCI), an organization established by Ahmed Deedat with some close friends, also take courses on comparative study.

Another effect of his propagation activities is that he has been able to explain some controversial concepts like Fatherhood of God to Christ, Crucifixion of Christ, Authenticity of the Bible (as it is today), Trinity among others. In addition, he also proved the comprehensiveness of Islam. That is, Islam is a realistic and practicable religion for all mankind for him to have as peace of mind in this world and the Hereafter.

Furthermore, through his propagation activities, Ahmed Deedat was able to show that all prophets preached the same message of Islam i.e. there is no God except Allah, thereby, raising the morale of the Muslims against the hard-line missionary activities of the Christians and empowered them to counter some of the claims of the Christians.

Also, due to the comparative nature of his religious propagation, he was able to reach a wider range of people and present Islam to them. In other words, because he was not only talking about Islam, people of other views wanted to know what he has to say about their religion. However, some Muslims felt that he was too aggressive and his missionary work would bring friction by creating more enemies and hatred than the love between the Muslims and other religions.

Ahmed Deedat influence on Nigerian Muslims came majorly from watching video & record of his lectures and reading of his books, people became more enlightened on comparative analysis, have more access to the Bible and ways and manners of reading the Bible (Jamiu Adegunwa, personal

communication, October 4, 2005). Admiration for his knowledge and scholarship made him receive an endless amount of mails from Nigeria in the 1980s. This made him embarked on a trip to Kano from Khartoum in 1989 (Aisha, 2005). In addition, before Ahmed Deedat became internationally known scholar there have been scholars dealing with comparative analysis in Nigeria such as Araghoshana and Bolaji Akewukewe both of Lagos in the 1970s (Jamiu Adegunwa, personal communication, October 4, 2005).

Unfortunately, he was turned back from Aminu Kano International Airport on the orders of the Federal Government. The letter given to him by the State Security Service (SSS) said he was turned back because he was from apartheid South Africa which at that time had international sanctions on it. But Ahmed Deedat didn't miss the irony that President F.W De Klerk, the head of the apartheid regime had been received in Nigeria a little earlier. Disappointed, Deedat and his son Yusuf made their way out of Nigeria on the next available flight. They were detained for 18 hours at the airport (Aisha, 2005).

Despite this unfortunate incident Ahmed Deedat still had a great influence on Nigerian Muslims. He meets quite a number of his Nigerian brothers and sisters when lots and lots of them made a point of paying him a visit at the end of apartheid rule. Students, diplomats, journalists and politicians from Nigeria all found their way to his bedside after news of his illness became known (Aisha, 2005).

Other groups and personalities sprang up in Nigeria in the early 90's such as Izharul Haq Propagation Movement of Nigeria, Izharul Haq Movement of Nigeria, Abdullahi Olorunjoje of Sango, Jesu Okola leading to different books being written on comparative analysis such as Kaleje Okunrin, the *Truth Bearer Magazine* which is based on comparative study or analysis among others.

Conclusion

This paper discussed the issue of propagation as an integral part of Islam, Ahmed Deedat's approach to it and how people of other religions have been affected by Islamic propagation. Through the foregoing, the impact of Ahmed Deedat on Islamic propagation could be appreciated. Ahmed Deedat was a Muslim scholar of immense erudition whose works contributed in no small measure to the development and propagation of Islamic faith in various parts of the world.

Moreover, the paper observed that there is a need to give adequate attention to comparative studies. This would help in taking the religion to greater heights and help in reaching out to people of other creeds. Also, propagation schools should be built to cater for those who are interested in propagation work in order to train them for Islamic propagation and on the challenges they are going to face.

Finally, the paper suggests a need to inculcate the spirit of propagation in Muslims and to ensure Islamic education for their children by making sure that they receive it in the schools they attend. There is also the need for Muslims to be role models wherever they find themselves their characters and behaviors should be exemplary. It is believed that if corruption and deviations are to be remedied, the mysteries of religion unraveled, commandments of religion revived, and ideological consciousness awakened among Muslims, the duty of religious propagation has to be performed fearlessly and openly. The findings of this paper have implications for Islamic propagation and open the way for further research in the area.

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