The Relevance of *Kalaam* to Comparative Religion
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Dr. Fatmir Shehu
Department of Usul Al-Din and Comparative Religion, KIRKHS, IIUM
The main objective of this study is to show the clear relevance of ‘Ilm al-Kalam (Science of Logical Arguments) to the scholarship of comparative religion. Especially in the aspect of dealing with the study of other religions by showing the approach of Muslim Mutakalimun and the Western scholars.
The focus of discussion is on Kalaam and Comparative Religion’s:

- DEFINITION
- DEVELOPMENT
- RELEVANCE

1. SUBJECT
2. METHODOLOGY
**KALAAM** means:

1 - to speak clearly / logically / with reflection – don not accept things blindly

2 - the logical approach to have better understand of Islam, the Quran, its meaning and various controversial issues.
• **KALAAM** means:

Ibn Khaldun defines al-Kalam as “a science that involves the arguments with rational proofs in defense of articles of faith and refuting innovators who deviate in their dogmas from the doctrines of the early generations and the people of tradition. The core of these dogmas is TAWHID ‘the oneness of God’.”
**KALAAM: Development**

- **KALAAM** developed through the following stages:

1. **Building of Principles - Seeds**: It happened during the life time of the Prophet (a.s.) – Introducing the Islamic Creeds with proper methodologies: Wisdom, Good manners, Arguing with what is best.

2. **Developing Period**: It happened after the death of the Prophet (a.s.) – during the Righteous Caliphs: - this is the time when the disputes, arguments, and dialogues took place between Muslims: - Different sects emerged in this time: *al-Shi’ah, al-Khawaarij, and al-Murjiah*
3. The spreading Period: It happened after the Righteous Caliphs: - it is during Banu Umayyah – Umayyah’s ruling – this is the time when Kalaam spread an different schools of Kalaam were established, like al-Mutazilah,

4. The Compilation and Writing period: It happened during the time of Abasid Caliphate. Different disciplines were written during this time: al-Asha’riyyah and Maturidiyyah were established during this time.
Comparative Religion: Definition

• COMPARATIVE RELIGION:

➢ It is a discipline that investigates scientifically the similarities and differences between various religions or religious phenomena, in order not only to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of its goal but also to determine the various interactions of religions (how they relate and influence each other).

Different Terms are used for the study of religion:

✓ Comparative Religion (North America)
✓ History of Religion (U.K)
✓ Religionswissenschaft / The Science of Religion (Europe)
Comparative Religion: Development

- Revival of The World of Antiquity:
  - **Greek Civilization**: Greek scholars studied other people’s religions arguing with them in rational way and provided rational evidences by using:
    1) Descriptive Methods
    2) Critical Methods, and
    3) Comparative Methods
  - **Judeo-Christian Civilization**: Both Jews and Christians did not show any interest in others’ religions and civilizations, and therefore they use:
    1) Excusive Approach and
    2) Intolerant Approach
Comparative Religion: Development

The Muslim and Modern Worlds:

- **Muslim Scholarship**: Muslim intellectuals showed their interest in the study of other religions and communities from the very beginning. They were inspired by both:
  1) Qur’an and
  2) Prophetic Sunnah of Muhammad (a.s.w)

Muslim scholars of different fields studied other religions, like:

- **Mufasirun**: Commentators of Qur’anic verses - explanation
- **Mu’tazilites**: Intellectual polemics - defense
- **Caliphs and Amirs**: Leaders and Governors - ruling
- **Fuqaha**: Great Imams and their schools - Fatwa
- **Schools of Comparative Religion**: Ibn Hazm, al-Biruni, Shahrastani, Ibn Taymiyyah, Faruqi, Shalabi, Abu Zahra, Irfan, etc.
Comparative Religion: Development

Modern Worlds and Scientific Approach:

- **Western Scholarship**: Western intellectuals showed their interest in the study of religions and communities through the following periods:

1. **Renaissance** (Age of reasoning): exploitation, colonization, humanization, scientific, rationalism
2. **Reformation**: religion versus secularism (politics)
3. **Modernism**: Evolution Theory (Darwinism), and rejection of religion (materialism, socialism, communism)
4. **Age of Analysis**: scientific study of religion, pluralism, unity of religion.
KALAAM and Comp. Religion: Relevance - Scope

COMPARATIVE RELIGION – Scope - features of different religions:
- The Concept of God,
- The Scriptures,
- The Prophets/Founders
- The Meaning of Life,
- Eschatology,
- Ethics, etc.

KALAAM: Scope - Islamic Creeds/ Dogmas (Arkan al-Iman):
الإيمانُ أنْ تؤمنَ بـ:
(1) اللهِ،
(2) وملائكتِه،
(3) وكتبه،
(4) ورسله،
(5) واليوم الآخرِ،
(6) والقدرِ كلِه خيره وشره،

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DR. FATMIR SHEHU
KALAM & COMPARATIVE RELIGION:

- Muslim intellectuals of comparative religion studied other religions by providing rational arguments supported by the revealed TEXT. They used the following Methods:
  
- **Dialogical: argumentative, critical, refutative:** Ibn Hazm, al-Razi, al-Ghazali, Ibn Taymiyyah, al-Faruqi
  
- **Analytical & Comparative: textual, contextual, empirical, objective:** Al-Biruni, Abu Zahra, Shalabi, Irfan, etc.

**Example:**

How to respond to the claim of some Christians in Malaysia about the usage of Kalimah – Allah?
Western Scholarship: Western intellectuals study religions from different aspects by using the following methods:

✓ Philosophy of Religion: analysis, explanation and investigation of religious claims – Theologians’ claims)

Its challenges to Muslims and other religious communities (How to respond?) to:

1. Religious Pluralism
2. Problem of Evil
3. Unity of Religions
Kalam & Comp. Religion: How to Respond to Western Scholarship?

✓ Anthropology of Religion (Influenced by Darwinism): Studies man and his relation with religion

✓ Sociology of Religion (Influenced by Darwinism): Studies religion as a social product

✓ Psychology of Religion (Influenced by Darwinism): Studies man’s behavior and his religion

✓ Phenomenology of Religion (Influenced by Darwinism): studies religious phenomenon.

Their challenges to Muslims and other religious communities:

1. Religion is the product of man
2. Man is APE’s descendant
3. Evolution of species and not creation by God

How Muslim contemporary Mutakalimun respond to the above claims?
Kalam & Comp. Religion: Different Approaches to Comparative Religion

1. **Scientific Approach**: Focuses on the empirical study only. It deals with subjects proven by experiments and Darwin’s theory.

2. **Philosophical Approach**: Focuses on the rational study only. It deals with subjects proven with the help of rational thinking. It goes beyond empirical world. However, it is based on man’s reasoning only. How does man perceives the existence?

3. **Religious Approach**: Focuses on both the rational and Revelational or scriptural study only. It deals with subjects proven by man’s reasoning as well as divine like revelation or scripture. For instance, Muslim Mutakalimun make use of both reasoning and revelation. Both should complement each other.
Kalam & Comp. Religion: Different Approaches to Comparative Religion

1. This study suggest that contemporary Muslim intellectuals have to make use of the approaches employed by Muslim Mutakalimun in the classical times.

2. The term comparative religion it is better to replace with the term – ‘Ilm al-Kalam.

3. Comparative Religion is a term coined by the scientific movements that took place in the west for a period of six hundred years.

4. The scope of ‘Ilm al-Kalam is broader compared to Comparative Religion.
THANK YOU

BARAK ALLAH FIKOM JMUAA
WALIYKOM SALAM WARRAHMA ALLAH WIBRAKATIH