

Qur'anic Methodology in the Study of Comparative Religion

Metodologi Quran dalam Kajian Perbandingan Agama

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Abstract

The Holy Qur'ān is a unique source of knowledge. It has comparatively discussed various religions, religious thoughts and communities to settle the truth and dispute the false and wrong. The Qur'an has its own methodology in the study of comparative religion based on its views on world religions, methodological objectives, principles and approaches. Yet, there is some kind of unawareness on the part of most of the scholars of the significance of the Qur'ān in the field of comparative religion. This paper is devoted to discuss the methodological issues related to the comparative study of religions according to the Qur'ān.

Keywords: The Qur'ān, Comparative Religion, Methodology, Objectives, Principles.

Abstrak

Kitab Suci al-Quran adalah sumber pengetahuan yang unik. Ia berbincang mengenai perbandingan pelbagai agama, pemikiran beragama dan komuniti untuk menegakkan kebenaran dan mempertikaikan kepalsuan. Al-Quran mempunyai kaedah kajian perbandingan agama tersendiri yang berdasarkan pandangannya terhadap agama-agama dunia, objektif metodologikal, prinsip dan pendekatannya. Namun, terdapat ketidaksedaran di pihak kebanyakan ulama terhadap kepentingan al-Quran dalam bidang perbandingan agama. Karya ini ditumpukan kepada pembincangan isu-isu yang berkaitan dengan kajian metodologi perbandingan agama berdasarkan al-Quran.

Kata Kunci: Al-Quran, Perbandingan Agama, Metodologi, Objectif, Prinsip.

Introduction

The Qur'ān deals with innumerable issues related to man and his life, religious, familial, social, political, economic, intellectual, educational, cultural, psychological, emotional, and moral. The Qur'ān has also

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included discussion on Comparative Religion, a significant branch of knowledge in social sciences. This is with a view to confirming the true religion for man. In this respect the Qur'ān focuses on the genesis, development, objectives and principles of comparative study of religions of the world.

Nature and Subject Matter of Comparative Religion

The discipline of comparative religion is characterized by investigation into religious doctrines, study of the extent of their verity, the points of commonalities as well as differences among them, and other related matters. Louis Henry Jordan mentioned that:

“Comparative Religion is that Science which compares the origin, structure, and characteristics of the various Religions of the world, with the view of determining their genuine agreements and differences, the measure of relation in which they stand one to another, and their relative superiority and inferiority when regarded as types.”¹

It includes the defensive attitude for the sake of truth and interest of humanity. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan pointed out that:

‘Comparative Religion was a branch of apologetics and apologists used it in defense of their respective faiths. The change, which the recent study of comparative Religion has brought about, is a change equally in the spirit of approach and the exactness of the data. No longer is it impressionist pictures that we obtain, but critical estimates based on more accurate information.’²

The Comparative Religion, as a method of study, means a systemic, critical and objective study of Religions determining their genuine arguments, rise and development, philosophy, agreements and differences, the measure of relation in which they stand with one another, the way in which different religions interact and their relative superiority and inferiority. This study aims to reach the true path of belief, thoughts and life-style for the sake of mankind. Areas of the study covered in this discipline include

¹ Jordan, Louis Henry, *Comparative Religion: its Genesis and Growth* (Edinburgh: T. & T Clark, 1905), 63.

² Radhakrishnan, Dr. S., *East and West in Religion* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1933), 21.

all religions, their doctrines and beliefs, practices, salvation and rites, scriptures, and other fundamental sources, people and objects.

The Religions Mentioned in the Qur'ān

The Qur'ān mentioned six major religions and religious communities of the world: Muslims (followers of Islam), Jews (followers of Judaism), Magians, Christians, Sabians, and Polytheists. The Qur'ān says:

'Those who believe (in the Qur'an and they are Muslims), those who follow the Jewish (scriptures), and the Sabians, Christians, Magians, and Polytheists-Allah will judge between them on the Day of Judgment: for Allah is witness of all things.' (22:17)

According to the Qur'ān, Jews who claim to be followers of Moses and Christians³ who claim to be the followers of Jesus strayed from the true Path of Islam and changed the divine books and forgotten the fundamentals of Islam. When the Last Prophet invited them to Islam they denied it.⁴

Trinity of Christianity and duality of Magians are condemned by the Qur'ān:

'Certainly they disbelieve who say: Allah is the third of the three. And there is no God but One God. And if they desist not from what they say a painful chastisement will surely befall such of them as disbelieve.' (5:73)

'Take not (for worship) two gods: for He is just One Allah: then fear Me (and Me alone).' (16:66)

The Qur'ān mentions Sabians. Several interpretations of this term are advanced. Some Scholars pointed out that they are the followers of prophet Noah, Idrīs, Dā'ūd, Yaḥyā or other Prophets, and some others said that they are the worshipers of Angels and Stars.⁵ Some commenta-

³ No Prophets named them as Jews or Christians but, as mentioned in the Qur'ān, they themselves claimed to be Jews and Christians. The Qur'ān says: *'And from those who call themselves Christians, We took their covenant, but they have abandoned a good part of the Message that was sent to them.'* (5:14).

⁴ Islam is *al-Dīn* (Code of life) preached by all the Prophets. Jews and Christians are not on Islamic path as they denied *al-Dīn* of preached by the Last Prophet (s.a.w.).

⁵ Al-Qurṭubī, Abū 'Abd Allah, *Al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān* (Beirut : Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1991), Vol. 1, 463.

tors of the Qur'ān explained the word sabian from linguistic angle⁶ that they were basically protestors of conventional religions in their society like Ḥunafā' of Arabia before the arrival of Prophet Mohammad (s.a.w.) who were against idolatry. It may be suggested here that Buddhists and Jains of India who are against Idolatry and cast-system of Hindus, Confucianists of China who protest the religions of Idolatry of Chinese and Japanese are Sabians.

Origin of Comparative Religion

Comparative Study of Religious Values started from the beginning of the first man, Adam. He was informed by Allah that Iblīs (devil) was the enemy of mankind, but he forgot that. Iblīs came to Adam and persuaded him and his wife to eat the forbidden fruit. The Qur'ān describes the story with some detail:

'And (remember) when We said to the angels: "Prostrate yourselves to Adam." They prostrated (all) except Iblīs, who refused. Then We said: "O Adam! Verily, this is an enemy to you and to your wife. So let him not get you both out of Paradise, so that you be distressed in misery. "There is therein (enough provision) for thee neither to go hungry nor to go naked' And you (will) suffer not from thirst therein nor from the sun's heat. Then Shaitān whispered to him, saying: "O Adam! Shall I lead you to the Tree of Eternity and to a kingdom that will never waste away?" hence they both ate of the tree, and so their private parts appeared to them, and they began to stick on themselves the leaves from Paradise for their covering. Thus did Adam disobey his Lord, so he went astray. Then his Lord chose him, and turned to him with forgiveness, and gave him guidance.' (20:116-122)

When Allah informed him about enmity of Iblīs, Adam did not drive away Iblīs from his place but engaged in a dialogue with him for understanding the new information to settle permanently in comfortable life. Adam took the suggestion of devil seriously but got cheated. Then he understood comparatively that devil was really his enemy. In this regard we can remark that cognitive and functional enmity does not deny the environment of dialogue for co-existence and peaceful comparison.

⁶ Sabian as an Arabic word is derived from 'sab'a' that means going out for the protest against some thing and changing from one religion to another. See, Al-Qurṭubī, op. cit., Vol. 1, 434.

Methodological Objectives of Comparative Religion in the Holy Qur'ān

The main objective of the Qur'ān in the study of comparative religion is the argument for true religion:

'He it is Who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth (Islam), that He may make it (Islam) superior over all religions. And All-Sufficient is Allah as a Witness.' (48:28)

This objective may be contested by others:

'It is He Who has sent His Messenger with Guidance and the Religion of Truth, that he may proclaim it over all religion, even though the Pagans may dislike (it).' (61:9)

The Qur'ān shows similarities and differences among Islam and other religions:

'Say: O People of the Book, come to an equitable word between us and you, that we shall serve none but Allah and that we shall not associate aught with Him, and that some of us shall not take others for lords besides Allah. But if they turn away, then say: Bear witness, we are Muslims.' (3:64)

The Qur'ān does not compromise with falsehood. Moreover, it mentions that the approval of idolatry and predilection of unbelievers destroy the system of life:

'If the Truth had been in accord with their desires, truly the heavens and the earth, and all beings therein would have been in confusion and corruption!' (23:71)

The Qur'ān approves freedom in thinking and embracing the truth:

'Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error: whoever rejects evil and believes in Allah hath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold that never breaks.' (2:256)

The Qur'anic mention of other religions does not mean approval of all religions as true hence religious pluralism.⁷ The objective of comparative religion in the Qur'ān is not confirmation of other religions as true. If the confirmation of other religions as true was the objective of the Qur'ān, it would never say:

'Allah will judge between them on the Day of Judgment: for Allah is witness of all things.' (22:17)

The only true religion as mentioned in the Qur'ān is Islam:

'And (know) that this is My path, the right one, so follow it, and follow not (other) ways, for they will lead you away from His way. This He enjoins on you that you may keep your duty.' (6:153)

The Qur'ān does not deny the diversity in faith and communal life:

'And if thy Lord had willed, He would have made people a single nation. And they cease not to differ, except him on whom your Lord has bestowed His Mercy.' (11:118-119)

'Mankind was but one nation, but differed (later). Had it not been for a word that went forth before from thy Lord, their differences would have been settled between them.' (10:19)

⁷ John Hick defines the religious pluralism as follows: "... the term refers to a particular theory of the relation between these traditions, with their different and competing claims. This is the theory that the great world religions constitute variant conceptions and perceptions of, and responses to, the one ultimate, mysterious divine reality." Hick, John, 'Religious Pluralism,' in Eliade, Mircea (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987), 12: 331. This idea flowed through ages in different societies. In the nineteenth century CE Ramkrishna and his followers of Bengal claimed the 'Religious Pluralism'. He said: 'All religions have different path to reach out to the same Reality to achieving the love of God.' see *Sri Sri Ram Krishna kotamrita* (compilation of his verses) (Calcutta: Udbhodhan, 22th ed. 2004), 151.

If the Religious Pluralism means co-existence⁸ of other religious communities with Muslims, the Qur'ān approves it socially and politically with justice as the basis of interaction:

'Allah forbids you not respecting those who fight you not for religion, nor drive you forth from your homes, that you show them kindness and deal with them justly. Surely Allah loves the doers of justice.' (60:8)

Methodological Principles of Comparative Religion in the Qur'ān

The Qur'an prescribes some principles for the comparative study of Religion.

Rationality in Comparison

The exercise should be rational without any pressure or extremism. The environment of comparison should be free of any kind of fanaticism. The Qur'ān invites man to think rationally so as to reach the truth:

'Do they not then earnestly seek to understand the Qur'an, or are their hearts locked up by them.' (47:24)

There are men whose hearts and reason do not work properly:

'Many Jinns and men we have made for Hell: They have hearts where-with they understand not, eyes wherewith they see not, and ears wherewith they hear not. They are like cattle-nay more misguided: for they are heedless (of warning).'' (7:179)

⁸ Dr. Kamar Oniah Kamaruzaman said in her book: 'Pluralistic co-existence is not pluralism. Simply stated, pluralism is the philosophy or the understanding that all religions ultimately reach out to the same Reality or to the same God. Pluralistic existence simply means that there are many religions or communities living side by side, each with its own identity.' See Kamaruzaman, kamar Oniah, *Religion and Pluralistic Co-existence* (Kualalampur : IIUM Press, 2010), 52.

Prophet Ibrāhīm is quoted to have said in the Qur'ān:

He (Ibrahim) said: "Do you then worship besides Allah, things that can neither profit you, nor harm you? Fie upon you, and upon the things that ye worship besides Allah! Have ye no sense?" (21:66-67)

Proper Argumentation based on Evidence

Comparison should be based on evidence and proper argumentation. The Qur'ān says:

'Those are their (vain) desires. say: "provide your proof if you are truthful.' (2:111)

The Qur'ān demands evidence for the justification of idol-worship:

'Or have they taken for worship (other) gods besides him? Say, "Bring your convincing proof: this is the Message of those with me and the Message of those before me." But most of them know not the Truth, and so turn away.' (21:174)

Accurate Information

Comparison should be based on true information about religions in the study. No comments on any issue or subject will be acceptable without true source. The Qur'ān invites the Jews to show the evidence from Torah:

'All food was lawful to the children of Israel, except what Israel made unlawful for himself before the Torah was revealed. Say: Bring you the Torah and study it, if you be men of truth.' (3:93)

The Qur'ān condemns the Jews and Christians because of their changing the texts of revelations:

'Those who conceal Allah's revelations in the Book, and purchase for them a miserable profit-they swallow into themselves naught but Fire; Allah will not address them on the Day of Resurrection, nor purify them: Grievous will be their penalty.' (2:174)

'O people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians): "Why do you mix truth with falsehood and conceal the truth while you know?" (3:71)

Fair and Just Comparison

Comparison should be objective and fair:

'Say: Who gives you sustenance from the heavens and the earth? Say: Allah. And surely we or you are on a right way or in manifest error.' (34:24)

Here the Qur'ān attracts attention to two parties, we and you, and two stands, right and error. The two sides have to decide on the basis of the foregoing argument as to who is on the right path and who is in manifest error.

Reality as the Basis of Comparison

Comparison should be based on real fact, experience and reality. The Qur'ān advises men to gather the facts from the earth by roaming around:

'Do they not travel through the land, so that their hearts (and minds) may thus learn wisdom and their ears may thus learn to hear? Truly it is not the eyes that are blind, but the Hearts which are in their breasts.' (22:46)

The Qur'ān also directed the men to anthropological survey in the comparative study of religion:

'Say: "This is my way: I do invite unto Allah-on evidence clear as the seeing with one's eyes-I and whoever follows me. Glory to Allah! And never will I join gods with Allah. Nor did We send before thee (as Messengers) any but men, whom we did inspire-(men) living in human habitations. Do they not travel through the earth, and see the end of those before them? But the home of the hereafter is best, for those who do right. Will ye not then understand?' (12:108-109)

'Do they not travel through the earth and see what was the End of those before them? They were more numerous than these and superior in strength and in the traces (they have left) in the land: Yet all that they accomplished was of no profit to them. But when they saw Our Punishment, they said: "We believe in Allah, the one Allah-and we reject the partners we used to join with Him. But their professing the Faith when they (actually) saw Our Punishment was not going to profit them. (Such has been) Allah's Way of dealing with His Servants (from the most ancient times). And even thus did the Rejecters of Allah perish (utterly)!' (40:82-85)

Search for Similarities between Islam and other Faiths

The Qur'ān remarks that all the people including idol-worshippers know and acknowledge unity of Lordship (*rubūbiyyah*) of Allah. This acknowledgement may lead them to realize the significance of unity of worship (*ulūhiyyah*) of Allah. The Qur'ān says:

'If you were to ask them: "Who has created the heavens and the earth and subjected the sun and the moon?" They will surely reply: "Allah." How then are they deviating (as polytheists and disbelievers)?' (29:61)

The Qur'ān makes it crystal clear that all the Prophets before the Last one invited their respective people to one and the same message:

'To all the Messengers that were sent before you We revealed that I am the only God to be worshipped.' (21:25)

Quest of the Truth as the Objective of Comparative Study

Comparison should be for the quest of truth in the interest of mankind:

'And We send not messengers but as givers of good news and warning : But the unbelievers dispute with vain argument, in order therewith to weaken the truth, and they treat My Signs as a jest, as also the fact that they are warned!' (18:56)

The Qur'ān inspires man to find out the meaning of life by comparing between path of Allah and that of others:

'He said: Get ye down, both of you all together, from the Garden, with enmity one to another: but if, as is sure, there comes to you Guidance from Me, whosoever follows My Guidance, will not lose his way, nor fall into misery. But whosoever turns away from My Message, verily for him is a life narrowed down, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgment.' (20:123-124)

This is mainly because the true religion in the eyes of Allah is only one, Islam. While making the comparative study between religions it must be proclaimed that Islam is the Truth:

'If anyone desires a religion other than Islam, never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter He will be in the ranks of those who have lost all.' (3:85)

Wisdom as raison d'etre for Comparison

Comparison should be based on wisdom:

'Invite (mankind, O Muhammad) to the Way of your Lord (i.e. Islam) with wisdom and attractive speech, and argue with them in a way that is best. Truly, your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His Path.' (16:125)

Prophet Ibrāhīm's approach to convey the message of One True God to the people was quite wise. It merits attention of those engaged in comparative study of religions. The Qur'ān says:

"When the night covered him over, he saw a star; he said: "This is my Lord." But when it set, he said, "I love not those that set." When he saw the moon rising in splendor, he said: "This is my Lord." But when the moon set, he said: "Unless my Lord guides me, I shall surely be among those who go astray." When he saw the sun rising (in splendor), he said: "This is my Lord; this is the greatest (of all)." But when the sun set, he said: "O my people! I am Indeed free from your (guilt) of giving partners to Allah.' (6:76-78)

It is to be noted here that Ibrahim never believed in polytheism. The above story as recounted by the Qur'ān refers to a hypothetical style of arguments against worshippers of star, moon and sun. Abdullah Yusuf Ali says:

“According to some commentators, the whole thrust of Ibrahim’s reasoning in verses 76-78 is directed against the superstitious beliefs of his people and demonstrates the folly of worshipping stars and other heavenly bodies. As such his statements may be seen as premises of his arguments against Polytheism rather than as stages in his enlightenment.”⁹

The Quran also advises Muslim never to make a contrasting situation in the study. If it is necessary to make some critical comments on other religious traditions, it should be performed most appropriately:

‘Revile not ye those whom they call upon besides Allah, lest they out of spite revile Allah in their ignorance.’ (6:108)

Verification of the Sources used in the Comparison

There is a need for verifying the sources and persons who pass on the information. The Qur'ān says:

“O you who believe! If a sinner comes to you with any news, ascertain the truth, lest you harm people unwittingly and afterwards become full of repentance for what you have done.” (49:6)

Methodological Approaches in the Comparative Religion and the Qur'ān

Scholars of Comparative Religion in modern time suggested some methodological approaches in the comparative study of religion such as Descriptive approach, Analytical approach, Critical approach, Philosophical

⁹ Ali, Abdullah Yusuf, *The Holy Quran: English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary* (Al-Madinah al- Munawarah : King Fahd Holy Quran Printing Complex, 1410 A.H.), 361.

approach, Dialectical approach (Debating and disputing approach), Empirical approach, Evolutionary approach, deductive approach, inductive approach, Suspension of judgment¹⁰ approach, Historical approach, Psychological approach, Sociological approach, Anthropological approach, Scientific approach and Hermeneutical approach¹¹ etc. Most of these approaches are supported by the Qur'ān.

1. **Descriptive Approach:** This is used to describe characteristics of a population or situation or phenomenon being studied. It does not answer questions about how/when/why the characteristics occur. It rather answers the question about 'what'. This method can be seen in the Qur'ān. It mentions religion of the peoples of the Prophets as idolatry and paganism. Three categories of people, Jews, Christians, and pagans and their characteristics are reported in the Qur'ān in a descriptive manner.

2. **Analytical Approach:** Analysis signifies thorough investigation of an issue with a view to identifying what is what and also why. The Qur'ān analyzes the belief of Polytheists:

'Or have they taken (for worship) gods from the earth who can raise (the dead)? If there had been in the heavens and the earth other gods beside Allah, then surely both would have gone to disorder and ruin.' (21:21-22)

'Out of what Allah hath produced in abundance in tilth and in cattle, they assigned Him a share: they say, according to their fancies: "This is for Allah and this for our "partners"! But the share of their "partners" reacheth not Allah, whilst the share of Allah reacheth their "partners" Evil (and unjust) is their assignment!' (6:136)

3. **Critical Approach:** This approach generally means an attempt to find out faults or to point out mistake in something and to give judgment. However, it does not always mean negative. Some critique may, at times, be quite constructive so as to understand the meaning of human texts and symbolic expressions or social phenomena. It is also

¹⁰ That is by Ninian Smart and others. See Williams, Cyril Glyndwr, *Basic Themes in the Comparative Study of Religion* (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press Ltd. 1992), 9.

¹¹ Mugambi, J. N. K. (ed.), *Comparative Study of Religions* (Nairobi : Nairobi University Press, 1993), 8-9.

used in comparative religion especially in the religious scriptures and other literatures like biblical criticism¹² and Vedic criticism¹³ by the eastern and western scholars. The Qur'ān used this method specifically toward Torah of Jews and Gospels of Christian that stand modified by their religious scholars:

'Among those who are Jews, there are some who displace words from (their) right places.' (4:46)

'Then woe to those who write the Book with their own hands, and then say: "This is from Allah," to traffic with it for miserable price! Woe to them for what their hands do write, and for the gain they make thereby.' (2:79)

'O people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians)! Now has come to you Our Messenger (Muhammad) explaining to you much of that which you used to hide from the Scripture and passing over (i.e. leaving out without explaining) much. Indeed, there has come to you from Allah a light (Prophet Muhammad) and a plain Book (this Qur'ān).' (5:15)

4. **Philosophical Approach:** This applies as attempt to provide a framework in reason that can explain all questions and problems related to human life that provides the ultimate constituents of reality, a metaphysics, justification of beliefs and the role of religions in the solution of human crisis's which destroy the justice, peace, harmony. The Qur'ān approaches philosophy of life and universe based on justice and practicality:

'And the Word of your Lord has been fulfilled in truth and in justice. None can change His Words.' (6:115)

'Indeed We have sent Our Messengers with clear proofs, and revealed with them the Scripture and the Balance (justice) that mankind may keep up justice. And

¹² Ibn Ḥazm (384-456 A.H./ 994-1064 C.E.) and Ibn Taymiyah (661-728 A.H./ 1263-1328 C.E) on their studies on the Bible applied the critical approach. On biblical criticism in the western world, Karl Heinrich Graf and Julius Wellhausen (they were from Germany and lived just before World War I) and other suggested for biblical criticism.

¹³ Akshay Kumar Datta (1820-1860), of Bengal, used critical approach in the study of Vedas, Hindu Religious Scriptures. See, Roy, Mohendra Nath, *Srijokta Akshaykumer Datter Jiban Britanta* (Life Sketch of Sri Akshay kumar Datta), (Calcutta: Noton Sanskrit Jantra, 1292 B.), 99.

We brought forth iron wherein is mighty power (in matters of war), as well as many benefits for mankind...’ (57:25)

‘And they became divided only after Knowledge reached them,- through selfish envy as between themselves. Had it not been for a Word that went forth before from thy Lord, (tending) to a Term appointed, the matter would have been settled between them: But truly those who have inherited the Book after them are in suspicious (disquieting) doubt concerning it.’ (42:14)

5. **Dialectical Approach:** The term dialectic has several meanings evolved over time. The Hegelian thesis-antithesis-synthesis dialectic or Marxist’s Dialectic materialism are the most recent form of dialectics. Originally, Dialectic method was a method of argument for resolving disagreements.¹⁴ This method is used in comparative study of religion to contrast between two or more religions to find out the differences and in historical analysis between few religions like relation between Hinduism and Buddhism on Hegelian thesis-antithesis-synthesis dialectic, etc. From Islamic perspective it may be used in both the meaning in the field of comparative religion. There is a dialectic relation between the Truth (*ḥaqq*) and false (*bāṭil*) as it is cited in the Qur’an:

‘We bring forward the Truth to crush and destroy falsehood; it is doomed to be banished.’ (21:18)

‘And say: The truth has come and falsehood vanished. Surely falsehood is ever bound to vanish.’ (17:81)

6. **Empirical Approach:** It is a way of gaining knowledge by means of direct and indirect observation or experience with evaluating the outcome of experience and testing. Empirical evidence (the record of one's direct observations or experiences) can be analyzed quantitatively or qualitatively.¹⁵ The Qur’ān invites the people to study the world and its heritages of destroyed civilizations to find out the causes behind their destruction:

‘Many were the Ways of Life that have passed away before you: travel through the earth, and see what was the end of those who rejected Truth.’ (3:137)

¹⁴ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dialectic>.

¹⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Empirical_method.

7. **Deductive Approach:** This method is to make conclusion reached by reasoning from general laws to a particular case.¹⁶ The Qur'ān has used deductive method to prove some realities and facts like attributes of Almighty Allah and His works in the universe. The Qur'ān uses this method in the following verses:

'People, listen to this parable: Those whom you worship instead of God do not have the power to create even a fly, even though all of them would come together for the task. If the fly was to snatch something from them they would not be able to rescue it from the fly. How feeble are such worshippers and that which they worship. They estimate not Allah with His due estimation. Surely Allah is Strong, Mighty.' (22:72-73)

In these verses it has been stated that one of the qualities of the Lord and God is His creativity. It is the general theory and common sense. But the Goddess's have no power to create any thing. So how can be they suitable for men's worship.

8. **Inductive Approach:** This is reasoning through which is obtained or discovered general laws for particular facts or examples to prove a general statement.¹⁷ The Qur'ān has used inductive method to prove some realities and facts like divine activities of Almighty Allah:

'It is Allah Who causeth the seed-grain and the date-stone to split and sprout. He causeth the living to issue from the dead, and He is the one to cause the dead to issue from the living. That is Allah: then how are ye deluded away from the truth? He it is that cleaveth the day-break (from the dark): He makes the night for rest and tranquillity, and the sun and moon for the reckoning (of time): Such is the judgment and ordering of (Him), the Exalted in Power, the Omniscient. It is He Who maketh the stars (as beacons) for you, that ye may guide yourselves, with their help, through the dark spaces of land and sea: We detail Our signs for people who know.' (6:95-98)

In these verses Allah (SWT) mentions some facts to prove a general statement that He is the only one creator and sustainer.

9. **Scientific Approach:** This is a method of investigation involving observation and theory to test scientific hypotheses in which a problem is identified, relevant data are gathered, a hypothesis is formu-

¹⁶ Hornby, op. cit., 225.

¹⁷ Hornby, op. cit., 434.

lated, and the hypothesis is empirically tested. When the Qur'ān discusses any religious issue provide proper data and relevant information. The Qur'ān discourages people from indulging fanciful thinking and making false allegations:

'And pursue not that of which you have no knowledge...' (17:32)

10. **Historical Approach:** A way of reading circumstance, Scriptures, rituals, and festivals etc. Comparative religion has a lot of historical basis, as it uses the historical records of a religion to gain further knowledge. The Qur'ān describes the history of nations and their rise and fall to reach the end that Allah is the Supreme, the Controller and the only Sustainer:

'But how many (countless) generations before them have we destroyed, who were even better in equipment and better in outward show?' (19:74)

The Qur'ān comments on the history of Gospel and Christians:

'From those, too, who call themselves Christians, We did take a covenant, but they forgot a good part of the message that was sent them: so we estranged them, with enmity and hatred between the one and the other.' (5:14)

11. **Psychological Approach:** The view here is that each person has personal problem which includes the manner in which he handles his personal drives like the need for sexual satisfaction, friendship, acceptance by his peers, prestige and power, and the sense that he is somebody. Psychologists analyzed how religious symbols and practices help or hinder the individuals in working out these problems. The proponents of this approach are Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung and Erik Erikson.¹⁸ The Qur'ān does not support all explanations which Freud claimed for that, but acknowledges strong effects of psychological aspects of human life on their religious behaviors. For the Qur'ān, the true religion is revealed by Allah, it is not the byproduct of sex or other mental expositions. The Qur'ān recounts the impact of human psyche on his action and reaction to a situation:

¹⁸ Mugambi, op. cit., 8.

'So when they ride in the ships they call upon Allah, being sincerely obedient to Him, but when He brings them safe to the land, lo! they associate others (with Him).' (29:65)

The Qur'ān explains the feeling of Jews, Christians and pagans toward Muslims:

'Verily, you will find the strongest among men in enmity to the believers (Muslims) the Jews and those who are Polytheists and you will find the nearest in love to the believers (Muslims) those who say: "We are Christians." That is because amongst them are priests and monks, and they are not proud.' (5:82)

All religious communities hope the conversion of others to their religion:

'Never will the Jews nor the Christians be pleased with you till you follow their religion.' (2:120)

12. **Sociological Approach:** Sociologists analyze how religion operates at the social level to solve a number of problems in human society. Chief proponents of this approach are E.B. Tylor, Frezer, Max Weber, and Emilie.¹⁹ The Qur'ān used the sociological approach in the study of different religions. It examines the relationship between Muslims and other Religious communities like polytheists, Jews, and Christians. The Qur'ān allows Muslims to develop strong social relations with Jews and Christian:

'This day are (all) things good and pure made lawful unto you. The food of the People of the Book (Jews and Christians) is lawful unto you and yours is lawful unto them. (Lawful to you in marriage) are chaste women from the believers and chaste women from those who were given the Scripture (Jews and Christians) before your time.' (5:5)

¹⁹ Ibid., 8-9

Conclusion

It is clear by above discussion that the Qur'ān has different methodological dimensions in the comparative religion. It has mentioned major religions of the world besides Islam and condemned the falsehood in these religions. According to the Qur'ān, the attempt to comparative study of religious thoughts can be traced back to the beginning of the human civilization in the world. The Qur'an has its own methodological objective in comparative study of religion. It has also plenty of methodological principles and approaches in the comparative religion. If researchers in this field exercise this Qur'anic Methodology, it will bring to the mankind true knowledge and idea about the Truth and falsehood.