

Theology of Religions: An Analytical Overview

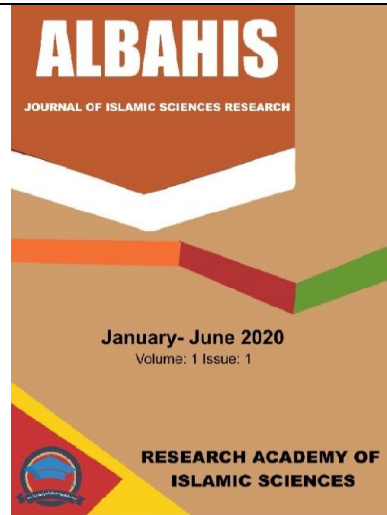
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Abstract

Islam is a divine religion with extensive lessons and direction revealed to Muhammad (P.B.U.H.), to direct mankind in the matter of faith, customs, human relationship, believes and religious diversity. Islam teaches some principles about diversity that Muslims need to respect each belief system, culture, community, ideology, and religion. This study discusses religious diversity as an undeniable and indisputable truth of the world. Every religion must be respected, at least in its literary, artistic and philosophical manifestations, as the result of culture. Religious diversity is about as old as mankind's history. The idea of religious acceptance and co-existence is debated since a long time. Contemporary world recognizes three main approaches to deal with religious diversity; pluralism, exclusivism and inclusivism. These are the terms used and contested by scholars, theologians, philosophers of religion (most notably John Hick), participants in inter religion dialogue and general researchers of religion. This article discusses about Islamic perspective of these terminological areas and examines their application in order to accept diversity. This research paper will provide an overview of three main western religious theories (pluralism, exclusivism and inclusivism) from Islamic viewpoint. As Islam is a comprehensive and universal religion, these study further attempts to pave the way towards interfaith harmony and peaceful coexistence with the notion of “live and let live”.

Key Words: Theology, Religious Diversity, Religious Pluralism, Religious Exclusivism, Religious Inclusivism, Islamic Perspective

Introduction

An increasingly mainstream issue in this day and age is the exchange among the adherents of various religions. People are living on this planet with different believes, nationalities, cultural and social foundations. People interface with other people of different religions as neighbors, classmates, friends and colleague. Thus, the interreligious experience has turned into a piece of our everyday existence experience. Interreligious dialogue is really important for keeping an amicable relationship and peaceful conjunction among

religious gatherings. Christians introduced different terms that fall under theology of religion. It is important for Muslims to find out actual theology of religion and Islamic perspective.¹

Theology

Theology is an ancient scholarly discipline, with proceeding and momentous social importance around the planet today. It is an understanding of the intellectual supporting of religious traditions and for social and cultural context for religious faith and practice. Theology is a critical investigation of the idea of the divine; more generally, Religion refers to any social system of worship that relates mankind to the powerful or supernatural.²

Religious Diversity

Religious Diversity is a reality that there are huge contrasts in believes and religious practices. People are practicing their religious customs since this world came into existence. But with the passage of time information spread from publishing, travel and emigration from place to another have compelled people to think more on religious diversity. Generally, pluralistic approach to deal with religious diversification says that, inside limits, one religion is pretty much as great as some other. Interestingly, exclusivist approach says that only single religion is remarkably significant. At last, inclusivism hypothesis attempt to guide a center course by concurring with exclusivism that one religion has the most worth as well as concurring with pluralism that others actually have remarkable religious values.³ The Dalai Lama said “there will be no peace among the nations, without peace among the religions. No peace among the religions without dialogue among the religions.”⁴

Islamic Perspective about Religious Diversity

¹ Issa Khan et al., “A Critical Appraisal of Interreligious Dialogue in Islam,” SAGE Open 10, no. 4 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244020970560>.

² Domenic Marbaniang, “Theology of Religion: Pluralism, Inclusivism, Exclusivism,” no. February (2007).

³ Rifat Atay, “Religious and Islam : Pluralism Examination of a Critical John Hick ’ S Pluralistic Hypothesis,” 1999.

⁴ Linda Groff. “Intercultural Communication Interreligious Dialogue and Peace”, The Journal of Forecasting, Planning and Policy 34 (2002) 701–716

Among non-Muslims both in the West and in the East Islam is broadly seen today as a particularly narrow-minded religion. Islam is a heavenly religion. It depends on divine revelation and Sunnah of the Holy prophet (SAW). Patience, broadmindedness, tolerance and forbearing are the signs of the last divine religion, Islam.⁵ There are numerous principles of the culture of harmony and peace in Islam. However, this doctrine might be misjudged in some societies because of the less information on Islamic lessons or wrong education.⁶ The idea of “diversity” as referenced in the Qur'an and how shared traits in diverse religions might be utilized as a model for civilizational discourse towards accomplishing amicability, harmony and peace.⁷ There are three different and most important schools that fall in this field: Pluralism, Exclusivism and Inclusivism.⁸ Although these are the terms used by Christians but now these are very common globally so, because of their importance, there is an utter need to find out Islamic perspective about these terms.

Islam and Pluralism

It is essential to find out the actual meaning of pluralism before discussing its Islamic perspective. A condition of society in which people of different ethnic, religious, nationalities or social groups keep up and foster their customary culture and unique interest inside the limits of common civilization.⁹

Pluralism" and "diversity" used as similar words in some cases, but diversity is simply accepting or compromising. Pluralism is the commitment that makes a typical society from that entire majority. Having mosque, church and temple on the same road and not

⁵ Osman Bakar, “Exclusive and Inclusive Islam in the Qur’an: Implications for Muslim-Jewish Relations,” *Jismor* 5, n.d.

⁶ Abbas Yazdani, “The Culture of Peace and Religious Tolerance from an Islamic Perspective,” *VERITAS*, N^o 47 (n.d.): 151–68.

⁷ Hilal Wani, Raihanah Abdullah, and Lee Wei Chang, “An Islamic Perspective in Managing Religious Diversity,” *Religions* 6, no. 2 (May 21, 2015): 642–56, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel6020642>.

⁸ Marbaniang, “Theology of Religion: Pluralism, Inclusivism, Exclusivism.”

⁹ Muqarrab Akbar and Hafsa Yaseen, “Interfaith Harmony in Pakistan: An Analysis,” *Global Political Review* V, no. I (2020): 9–18, [https://doi.org/10.31703/gpr.2020\(v-i\).02](https://doi.org/10.31703/gpr.2020(v-i).02).

harming or damaging anyone's religious place is religious diversity but without engaging or being in a relationship with one another it may not be an occasion of pluralism.¹⁰ Thus religious pluralism is acceptance of different religions or believes in multi-faith society.¹¹ There are many verses from Quran prove that pluralism is allowed in Islam so it is necessary to find out Islamic perspective about this term.

Dignity of Human Being

Islam does not allow disrespecting any person. The current world is profoundly different. There is definitely not a solitary country on the planet which is similar and without diversity. Islam forces to respect others because of their differences because Quran says that diversity is made by God.

وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ فَأَسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ ۗ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ
جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ¹²

“And if Allah had willed, He would have made you a single community, but (He did not) so, that He might test you in what He gave you. So, vie with each other in virtuous deeds.”

Diversity is a law of nature; it is not something people can ensure is man-made, but Holy Quran states that diversity is made by God.

Diversity must be accepted as a natural phenomenon as Quran says

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۗ
إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَىٰكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ¹³

“O Humankind! To be sure, We have made you of a male and female; and we have dispersed you in nations and tribes that you might know one another and perceive that, in the sight of God the most fair

¹⁰ Diana L. Eck, “WHAT IS PLURALISM? The Plurality of Religious Traditions and Cultures Has Come to Characterize Every Part of the World Today. But What Is Pluralism? Here Are Four Points to Begin Our Thinking: • First, Pluralism Is Not Diversity Alone, But,” n.d.

¹¹ Michael S. Merry, "Islam versus (Liberal) Pluralism? A Response to Ahmad Yousaf," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 24: 1 (2004), 124-126

¹² Al-Quran 5:48

¹³ Al-Quran 49:13

person of you is the most ardent. Indeed, God is canny and all knowing”

It is also proven scientifically. Mitochondrial DNA from the men, as well as same samples from twenty four women, revealed that all women in the world follow back to a Mitochondrial Eve, who lived in Africa some place in the scope of 99,000 and 148,000 years earlier basically a similar time span during which the Y-chromosome Adam lived.¹⁴

The implication of considering history to be a ground whereupon the divine messages are revealed is that all religions somehow are inter-related and share a common purpose. Allah did not leave any nation in the obscurity; rather he enlightened them by sending prophets.¹⁵ In this regard Islam is the name of recent message which has been shown throughout history. In other words, one divine religion cannot be nevertheless a partner of another religion. In Islam the possibility of the comprehensiveness of Allah's revelations has consistently plays a significant role in comprising an Islamic philosophy of religions. Thus, because of accepting such a belief, Muslims can take an interest in the pith and the ‘religious proximity’ of different customs.¹⁶ In fact authorization for battling is conceded distinctly to the people who are being confronted with mercilessness. As Quran guides

أُذِنَ لِلَّذِينَ يُقَاتَلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظَلَمُوا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ¹⁷

Consent (to wage war) is given to those against whom battle is being dispatched in light of the fact that they have been off-base and Allah has ability to grant victory.

It is clear that Islam does not allow war but in special and specific circumstances.

Freedom of Religious Practices and Harmony

¹⁴ <https://www.livescience.com/38613-genetic-adam-and-eve-uncovered.html> accessed August 11,2021

¹⁵ Al-Quran 10:47/ 16:36/ 35:24

¹⁶Dr. Adnan Aslan, “RELIGIOUS PLURALISM IN ISLAM Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization (JITC)” 1, no. 1 (2011).

¹⁷ Al-Quran 22:39

Religious pluralism for Islam isn't only a question of obliging contending cases to religious truth in the private domain of a person. It was and remains intrinsically an issue of general approach in which a Muslim state should recognize and ensure the heavenly appointed right of every individual to decide their spiritual destiny fate without intimidation.¹⁸

From the earliest starting point, Qur'an verifies that no one can be compelled for his belief. History of Islam shows that not a solitary individual was rendered to acknowledge Islam. In Quran it is clearly mentioned that

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ¹⁹

There is no compulsion in religion.

Islam does not guide to force anyone to become Muslim as Quran says

وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَأَمَنَّ مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كُلَّهُمْ جَمِيعًا أَفَأَنْتَ تُكْرِهُ النَّاسَ حَتَّى
يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ²⁰

Would you, compel mankind, so that they become believers?

Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) also allowed Christians of Najran to worship according to their religion in mosque. Madina charter is the biggest example of religious harmony as that charter was written with the consent of all parties.²¹ Peace treaty of Hudaibiya is also an

¹⁸ Zulfikar Hirji, "Debating Islam from Within: Muslim Constructions of the Internal Other," Diversity and Pluralism in Islam: Historical and Contemporary Discourses amongst Muslims, 2010, 1–30.

¹⁹ Al-Quran 2:256

²⁰ Al-Quran 10:99

²¹ Arshid Iqbal Dar Jamsheed Ahmed Sayed, "FIRST WRITTEN CONSTITUTION OF THE WORLD : AN IMPORTANT DOCUMENT OF THE PROPHET ' S TIME : A STUDY OF DR MUHAMMAD HAMIDULLAH ' S International Journal of Current Advanced Research FIRST WRITTEN CONSTITUTION OF THE WORLD : AN IMPORTANT DOCUMENT OF THE PROPH" 6, no. July (2017): 1–4.

example of religious pluralism and Quran called it biggest victory.²² On the victory of Ghazva Khaybar, Prophet (P.B.U.H.) ordered that all copies of Taurah captured in booty, ought to be gotten back to their proprietors.²³

Safety of Life, Honor and Wealth

Religious pluralism for Islam is not only an issue of obliging contending cases to religious truth in the private domain of a person. It was and remains intrinsically an issue of public approach in which a Muslim government should recognize and ensure the divinely appointed right of every individual to decide their spiritual destiny fate without intimidation.²⁴

Islam provided safety and protection to non-Muslims in early Islamic era. Islam also allows Non-Muslims to trade in Muslim countries. There are some minor taxes which non-Muslims have to pay to Muslim majority country.²⁵ Islam respects every person as it is mentioned in Quran

مَنْ أَجَلِ ذَلِكَ كَتَبْنَا عَلَى بَيْتِ إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنَّهُ مَنْ قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ
فِي الْأَرْضِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَمَنْ أَحْيَاهَا فَكَأَنَّمَا أَحْيَا النَّاسَ
جَمِيعًا وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولُنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ ثُمَّ إِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُمْ بَعَدَ ذَلِكَ فِي الْأَرْضِ
لَسُورٍ فُؤُونٍ²⁶

²² Mohd Rosmizi Bin Abd Rahman, Mohamed Mihlar Abdul Muthaliff, and Muhammad Khairi Bin Mahyuddin, “Religious Harmony and Peaceful Co-Existence : A Quranic Perspective,” *مجلة الثقافة الإسلامية و الإنسانية*, no. 7 (2016): 47–62, <https://doi.org/10.12816/0029924>.

²³ Taqi 'l-Din Ahmad b. Ali Maqrizi, *Imtā' ai-Asma' bima li'l-Rasul min al-Anba' wa 'l-Amwal...* Mahmud Muhammad Shākir (ed.) (Qatar: Lajnat al-Ta'lif wa 'l-Nashr, 1980), 1: 323

²⁴ Muhammad Zia-ul-haq, “Gious Diversity: An Islamic Perspective MUHAMMAD Zia- Ul-Haq” 49, no. 4 (2014): 493–519.

²⁵ Wilson Hassan Nandwa, “Plurality and Religious Tolerance in Islam,” *European Scientific Journal*, ESJ 12, no. 32 (2016): 314, <https://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2016.v12n32p314>.

²⁶ Al-Quran 5:32

“Whoever kills a person not in retaliation for a person killed, nor (as a punishment) for spreading disorder on the earth, is as if he has killed the whole of humankind, and whoever saves the life of a person is as if he has saved the life of the whole of humankind. Islam does not differentiate between Muslim and Non-Muslims in the matter of safety of human life, honor and property. When Prophet (P.B.U.H.) conquered Makkah, he announced general amnesty.²⁷

Islamic Perspective about Pluralism

In case pluralism is taken as diversity than the concept of pluralism that Islam gave centuries back is far superior to the concept which modern world is giving. If pluralism is taken as its latest definition or term than there are numerous concepts which are against Islam such as Plurists take difference of race, nation and religion similarly but Islam does not take this difference similarly. Islam accepts difference or tribe, nation and race but about religion it is clearly mentioned in Quran

إِنْ تَكْفُرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنْكُمْ وَلَا يَرْضَىٰ لِعِبَادِهِ الْكُفْرَ .²⁸

“If you disbelieve, then, Allah does not need you at all, however He does not like for His servants to be disbelievers”²⁹

According to Pluralism all religions are equal and everyone should accept them as such. No religion is greater than other one. Religious pluralism can be considered between different religions as in we believe them all to be true, or possibly to all contain some component of truth. Or within specific religion, different sect can be viewed to be true.³⁰ Islam does not allow disrespecting other religions but at the same time does not accept as a true or divine religion. As Quran says

²⁷ Yazdani, “The Culture of Peace and Religious Tolerance from an Islamic Perspective.” Veritas, 2020: 151-168

²⁸ Al-Quran 39:7

²⁹ Al-Quran 39:7

³⁰ <https://www.al-islam.org/faith-and-reason/question-50-religious-pluralism-and-different-interpretations-religion> accessed August 12,2021

يُخْرِفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَنْ مَوَاضِعِهِ وَنَسُوا حَظًّا مِمَّا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ³¹

They change words from the meaning and have overlooked (deserted) great piece of the message that was given to them. It is crystal clear that Islam encourages religious harmony, accepts some kind of diversity, gives rights to all human kind whether they are Muslim or Non-Muslim but at the same time Islam does not accept other religions as divine and truthful religion.

Exclusivism

The worldwide spread of Christianity through the action of European and American churches in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries carried it into contact with any all-current religions. During the twentieth century most Christians embraced one of three essential perspectives. As per exclusivism, salvation is only for Christians. This theology communicated both in the Roman Catholic doctrine "extra ecclesiam nulla salus" (there is no salvation outside the church) and in the assumption of the eighteenth and nineteenth century Protestant evangelist developments.³² The term "exclusivist" was basically a polemical term, picked to a limited extent for its negative underlying meanings. Some have asked that it be supplanted by the more impartial terms "particularism" or "restrictivism."³³

Religious exclusivism is the dogma that the followers of a specific belief or believes, will achieve salvation while groups that don't share this belief will not receive the grace related with such a state. In its more outrageous structure, religious exclusivism instructs that only people from one religion or sect will arrive at Heaven, while others will be doomed to everlasting hellfire.³⁴ Jean Jacques Rousseau, hypothesizing on the relationship of religion to a

³¹ Al-Quran 5:13

³² <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Christianity/Christianity-and-world-religions#ref927263> accessed August 12, 2021

³³ Kärkkäinen, Veli-Matti. 2003. An Introduction to the Theology of Religions: Biblical, Historical, and Contemporary Perspectives. Illinois: InterVarsity Press. 80-81

³⁴ https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/religious_exclusivism accessed August 18, 2021

democratic political order, broadly denied the distinction among common and religious intolerance: "It is impossible to inhabit harmony with people whom one believes are damned. To love them means to go against God. They should totally be either brought into the faith or tortured."³⁵

Exclusivism is the term which is introduced by Christians and they limit salvation only in Christianity but after receiving criticism they showed change in its definition by saying that religious exclusivism is to believe that salvation is in one specific religion.³⁶ Religious exclusivism is the doctrine or faith that only one specific religion or belief system is true. It is, generally considered, opposite to religious pluralism.³⁷

Exclusivism: A Muslim Approach

Exclusivism keeps up with that only one religion holds the absolute truth that leads to salvation, while others are considered to be unsuitable as vehicles of salvation, despite the traces of truth they might contain. The exclusivist line discovers its underlying foundations among Muslims from the belief that Islam is the last and full religion for mankind as put forward in the Quran as a way of life. This belief is expressed vividly, as expressed by numerous Muslim researchers.³⁸ Muslims believe that Islam is the primordial and original religion, or fitrah, that was revealed by Muhammad (P.B.U.H.).³⁹ Religious faiths and practices consolidate with the five mainstays of Islam, which are essential demonstrations of worship, and keeping Islamic law, which addresses for all things considered each part of life and society, enveloping everything from government assistance and banking, to fighting and the

³⁵ Jean Jacques Rousseau, "On the Social Contract with Geneva Manuscript and Political Economy," New York: St. Martin's Press, (1978): 131-132

³⁶ Imran Aijaz, "Traditional Islamic Exclusivism - A Critique," European Journal for Philosophy of Religion 6, no. 2 (2014): 185–209, <https://doi.org/10.24204/ejpr.v6i2.186>.

³⁷ <https://slife.org/religious-exclusivism/> accessed August 19,2021

³⁸ Atay, "Religious and Islam : Pluralism Examination of a Critical John Hick ' S Pluralistic Hypothesis."

³⁹ <https://slife.org/religious-exclusivism/> accessed August 19,2021

environment.⁴⁰ There are many verses that support Islamic exclusivism.

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا
جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ يَأْتِ اللَّهُ فَاِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ⁴¹

“Truly, the (perceived) religion in the sight of Allah is Islam. Those who have been given the Book did not vary (among themselves) until after the information had come to them, (and all this) due to jealousy against each other. Whoever refrain the verses of Allah, then, Allah is swift at retribution.”

According to Islam, it is the last and divine religion. Salvation or rescue is only in Islam and whoever denies Islam will suffer in life hereafter.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ
افْتَرَىٰ إِثْمًا عَظِيمًا⁴²

“Indeed Allah will not Forgive that aught be associated with Him, and He will forgive all else unto whomsoever He wills. Furthermore whosoever partner with Allah, he hath of a guarantee manufactured a strong sin.”

On the other hand, this is Allah’s favor on people that He is giving guidance (Hidaya) to people and people are embracing Islam. It is not the favor of people to Allah.

يَهْتَدُونَ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ أَسْلَمُوا قُلْ لَا تَمْتُوا عَلَيَّ إِسْلَامَكُمْ بَلِ اللَّهُ يَمُنُّ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ
هَدَاكُمْ لِلْإِيمَانِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ⁴³

⁴⁰ R Naaman Kipsigei, “Investigations on Philosophy of Religion: Religious Diversity and Pluralism,” no. January 2014 (2015): 1–51.

⁴¹ Al-Quran 3:19

⁴² Al-Quran 4:48

⁴³ Al-Quran 49:17

“They oblige you that they have accepted Islam, (as if it was a favor shown to you). Say, do not oblige me for your accepting Islam. Rather, Allah makes you obliged for His having directed you to the Faith, if you are honest.”

The fundamental attitude of Islam toward different religions stays unaltered today, yet it ought to be noticed that specific Islamic countries, like Saudi Arabia and Iran, are more exclusivistic toward different religions than are others, like Indonesia and Egypt. Also, most of the Islamic scholars strongly oppose the unwinding of Islamic exclusivism.⁴⁴

It is a general misconception that Islam asks its followers to keep distance from Non-Muslims. It is true that Islam has made a line of distinction between Muslims and Non-Muslims but it is for its uniqueness and care purpose rather than denying other religions.

Islamic Perspective about Exclusivism

According to Christians exclusivism is the religious position that holds to the conclusiveness of the Christian belief in Christ. The certainty of Christ implies that there is no salvation in non-Christian religions.⁴⁵ According to Islam, following Islam is the path to attain heaven.

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ
دِينًا⁴⁶

“Today I have consummated for you your religion, and have completed My favor upon you, and am well-pleased with Islam as your religion.”

وَقَالُوا كُونُوا هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَى تَهْتَدُوا قُلْ بَلْ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ
الْمُشْرِكِينَ⁴⁷

⁴⁴ https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/religious_exclusivism
accessed August 18,2021

⁴⁵ Marbaniang, “Theology of Religion: Pluralism, Inclusivism, Exclusivism.” Hong Kong Baptist University, 2007

⁴⁶ Al-Quran 5:3

⁴⁷ Al-Quran 2:135

“They said, Become Jew or Christian, and you will track down the correct way. Say: Instead, (we follow) the belief of Ibrahim, the upstanding and he was not one of those who partners accomplices with Allah.”

Christians say that only Christian’s exclusivism can save people from hell and salvation is only in Christianity whereas Quran says

وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَسِرِينَ⁴⁸

“Person who seeks belief other than Islam, it will never be acknowledged from Him, and he in the hereafter, will be among the defeated.”

Islam respects other religions but does not accept their salvation because according to Islam Jews altered their scripture⁴⁹ as Quran says

أَفَتَطْمَعُونَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِالْكُمْ وَقَدْ كَانُوا فَرِيقًا مِمَّنْهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ كَلِمَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُحَرِّفُونَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا عَقَلُوا وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ⁵⁰

“(O Muslims) do you still think that they will trust you, albeit a gathering of them used to hear the word of Allah, and afterwards, having understood it, used to twist it intentionally?”

Although Islam says that Christians can be your friends and promotes harmony but does not believe in trinity as mentioned in Quran

لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ وَقَالَ الْمَسِيحُ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ مَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَأْوَاهُ النَّارُ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ⁵¹

“Indeed, skeptics are those who say, Allah is the Jesus, child of Maryam while the Jesus had said, O children of Israil, worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. In fact, whoever attributes any

⁴⁸ Al-Quran 3:85

⁴⁹ Bakar., “Exclusive and Inclusive Islam in the Qur’an: Implications for Muslim-Jewish Relations.”

⁵⁰ Al-Quran 2:75

⁵¹ Al-Quran 5:72

accomplice to Allah, Allah has restricted for him the Paradise, and his sanctuary is the Fire, and there will be no allies for the treacherous.”

People call Muslims as a biggest terrorist and there are various books written by them against Muslim such as book “The Clash of Civilization” but in reality, the way other introduced religious exclusivism and said that salvation is only in church and rest of religions are not able to provide salvation and focused on their religion shows that all religions are same in this perspective. Islam is not an extremist religion because at least Islam did not introduce such kind of terms to degrade other religions instead of this Islam respects other religions and encourages religious harmony.⁵²

Inclusivism

In evangelicalism, there is no monolithic development of “inclusivists” exists. Every inclusivist researcher will define and depict the inclusivist position with different subtleties⁵³ but general concept of inclusivism is that just a single world religion is completely right, yet other world religions participate in or to some degree uncover a portion of the reality of the one right religion; it is conceivable, however, to acquire salvation (Najah, Nirvana, Moksha, and so on) through different religions.⁵⁴

Acknowledgment and a dismissal of different beliefs, a rationalistic 'yes' and 'no.' On one hand it acknowledges the spiritual power and profundity show in them, so they can appropriately be known as a locus of heavenly presence. Then again, it rejects them as not being adequate for salvation separated from Christ, for Christ alone is savior. To be inclusive is to accept that all non-Christian religious truth has a place at last with Christ and the method of apprenticeship which springs from him. Inclusivism consequently includes its

⁵² Hilal Wani, Raihanah Abdullah, and Lee Wei Chang, “An Islamic Perspective in Managing Religious Diversity,” *Religions* 6, no. 2 (2015): 642–56, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel6020642>.

⁵³ <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/trevin-wax/what-is-inclusivism-and-why-does-it-matter/> accessed August 23, 2021

⁵⁴ Kipsigei, “Investigations on Philosophy of Religion: Religious Diversity and Pluralism.”

followers in the undertaking of depicting lines between the Christian belief and the inward religious dynamism of different believes.⁵⁵ From one perspective, it is hard to differentiate inclusivism from exclusivism, on the grounds that the latter almost concedes some important values to different religions. "Inclusivism" for certain scholars simply implies a tenderer or more receptive exclusivism. On the other hand, many writers need to take on the amicable and open-minded sounding name "pluralism" for their theory, despite the fact that they obviously hold that one religion is remarkably significant.⁵⁶ Historically, Jewish people have generally embraced an inclusivity as opposed to an exclusivist view about different religions. A normal rabbinic view is that albeit non-Jews might be accommodated to God, and consequently acquire life on the planet to come, by keeping a lesser pledge which God has made with them, but still Jews enjoy in a superior contract with God. In the late 20th century, however, some Jewish masterminds have contended for pluralism in accordance with different Christian authors, revising traditional Jewish religious philosophy.⁵⁷

Since the last 20th century numerous Roman Catholic scholars have investigated non-exclusivist choices. A significant catalyst for this has been articulations given by the most recent authority committee (Vatican II, 1962-5). One ventures to such an extreme as to say that "the Holy Spirit offers to all [humans] the shot at being related, in a way known to God, with the Paschal Mystery [that is, the saving downfall and recovery of Jesus]."⁵⁸

A German scholar Karl Rahner (1904-84), in his paper "Christianity and the Non-Christian Religions," contends that before experience Christianity, various religions may be the divinely chosen for their salvation. To the extent that they in great conscience practice what is acceptable in their religion, people in different religions

⁵⁵ Race Alan, *Christians and Religious Pluralism*, SCM Press, 1983

⁵⁶ Burton, David. "A Buddhist Perspective." *The Oxford Handbook of Religious Diversity*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. 321-36

⁵⁷ Cohn-Sherbok, Dan. "Judaism and Other Faiths." *The Myth of Religious Superiority: A Multifaith Exploration*. Ed. Paul F. Knitter. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2005. 119-32

⁵⁸ Dupuis, Jacques. "Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism". Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, (2001): 162

receive God's elegance and are "unknown Christians," people who are being saved through Christ, however they don't understand it. All Christians acknowledge that some were saved before Christianity, through Judaism. So too some different religions should in any case be implies for salvation, however not really in a similar way, for God wills the salvation of all humanity but, these lesser ways ought to and in the end will offer approach to Christianity, the most genuine religion, expected for all mankind.⁵⁹

If Islam presents such kind of ideas unfortunately, media and people start saying that Islam is an extremist religion and Muslims are extremist whereas now this concept is not given by Islam so many people who objects Islam as an extremist religion are followers this theology.

Islamic perspective of Inclusivism

While it is true that some Muslim researchers don't call themselves 'Muslim inclusivists', many express their view that fits one characterization of inclusivism: they endeavor to clarify the salvific adequacy of other religions as far as Islamic requirement for salvation.⁶⁰

Islam respects other religions and encourages religious harmony. There are many verses which portrays that Islam is a supporter of interfaith dialogue and harmony. In order to be sincere, love and commitment to religion needs to come from the heart and soul. We don't reserve the right to compel others to act as per our understanding of religion but we do have the right and the obligation to reprimand Muslims in case they are in danger of wandering. They have a reciprocal right and obligation to exhort us in case we are on wrong track. Islam empowers consultation.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Plantinga, Cornelius, ed. *Christianity and Plurality: Classic and Contemporary Readings*. Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1999. 288-303

⁶⁰ SHAFFARULLAH ABDUL RAHMAN, "A Bibliographic Survey of Jewish, Christian, Islamic, Hindu and Buddhist Inclusivisms," *MANU: Jurnal Pusat Penataran Ilmu Dan Bahasa (PPIB)* 2018 (2018): 1–32, <https://doi.org/10.51200/manu.v0i0.1580>.

⁶¹ Abdul Karim Abdullah, "Cultural and Religious Tolerance in Islam," *Bangi EPF* 2003, no. July (2020),

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ
الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ⁶²

“There has to be a group of people from among you who call towards the good, and bid the Fair and preclude the Unfair. What’s more, it is these who are prosperous.”

Islam allows cordial relations and to inter-marriage between people of book (ahl kitab).

الْيَوْمَ أُحِلَّ لَكُمْ الطَّيِّبَاتُ وَطَعَامُ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ حَلَّلَ لَكُمْ وَطَعَامُكُمْ
حَلَّلَ لَهُمْ وَالْبُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْبُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ
قَبْلِكُمْ إِذَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ أَجُورَهُنَّ مُحْصِنِينَ غَيْرَ مُسْفِحِينَ وَلَا مَتَّخِذِي
الْحُدَانِ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالْإِيمَانِ فَقَدْ حَبِطَ عَمَلُهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَسِرِينَ⁶³

This day, beneficial things have been made legitimate for you. The food of the people of the Book is legitimate for yourself as well as your food is lawful for them and good women from among believers, and good women from among those who were given the Book before you, provided you give them their dowers, binding yourself in marriage neither going for desire, nor having lovers. Whoever rejects Faith, his good deeds will go to waste and, in the Hereafter, he will be among the defeated.

All examples from Islamic history, the lessons of Holy Quran and Sunnah require Muslims to connect emphatically with their people from diverse social and religious groups. It is the right of every Muslim to explore in different manners by which they can take part in formal or casual dialogue.⁶⁴

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342158508_Cultural_and_Religious_Tolerance_in_Islam.

⁶² Al-Quran 3:104

⁶³ Al-Quran 5:5

⁶⁴ Arshmah Jamil, “Inter-Faith Dialogue; a Solution for Global Peace,” 2017, 203–15.

أُدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ
رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ⁶⁵

Invite (people) to the way of your Lord with intelligence and great direction. And contend with them in the best of method. Indeed, your Lord knows best the person who deviates from His way, and He knows best the ones who are on the right way.

Inclusivism holds that there is one surest approach to salvation, which is Islam. An inclusivistic approach might have been a common method of managing different religions according to an Islamic point of view. Sociologically, Muslims set genuine instances of integration with different religions throughout the history; a decent illustration of which was the Andalus Moorish Empire in Spain where Muslims, Christians and Jews created an exceptionally modern, civilized and progressed society.⁶⁶ Islam always encourages peace, love and harmony.

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَلَا
نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا إِنَّ دُونَ اللَّهِ لَأَفْئُوتُوا
أَشْهَدُوا يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُسْلِمُونَ⁶⁷

“Say, O people of the Book, come to a word similar between us, that we worship none but Allah, that we do not connect anything with Him and that a few of us do not accept others as Lords rather than Allah. Then, at that point should they turn around, say, Bear observer that we are Muslims.”

Islam emphasizes to respect non-Muslims and their religions. Islam discourages to use bad words about any religion. It is clearly mentioned in Quran:

⁶⁵ Al-Quran 16:125

⁶⁶ Atay, “Religious and Islam : Pluralism Examination of a Critical John Hick ’ S Pluralistic Hypothesis.” 1999

⁶⁷ Al-Quran 3:64

وَلَا تَسُبُّوا الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَيَسُبُّوا اللَّهَ عَدْوًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ كَذَلِكَ زَيَّنَّا
لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ عَمَلَهُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ مَرْجِعُهُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ⁶⁸

“Try not to chide those whom they invoke other than Allah, in case they ought to criticize Allah in in offense without having knowledge. This is how We have made the deeds of every community appealing in their sight. Then, to their Lord is their return, after which He shall mention them, what they have been doing.”

The traces of inclusivity can be seen in various Islamic perspectives. These perspectives have their own unique and distinctive epistemologies. Religious inclusiveness guarantees that the source of Divine Reality is just a single religion ontologically, yet that salvation is feasible for certain individuals in different religions. Islamic inclusiveness claims Islam to be the solitary source of salvation and divine reality.⁶⁹

In nutshell, all religions keep up with the feeling of salvific superiority to the detriment of the salvific uniformity of different religions. At the point when inclusivists believe different religions to be salvific, this thought is on the inclusivist's conditions: different religions don't have an equivalent salvific worth. On account of Christian inclusivism, salvation of others is disclosed by appeal to the salvific work of Jesus Christ. In the case of Islamic inclusivism, salvation of others is disclosed by appeal to divine mercy. On account of rabbinical inclusivism, salvation of others is disclosed by appeal to the possibility that non-Jews can merit a salvific portion in the world to come. On account of non-mystical inclusivism of the Hindu and Buddhist practices, salvation is at last gotten after the underlying driver of samsaric presence is survived.⁷⁰

The task of assessing religious theories or systems raises the significant issue of religious tolerance, for assessment, which includes the conceivable conclusion that one belief or belief system

⁶⁸ Al-Quran 6:108

⁶⁹ Mustafa Çakmak, “Foundations of Religious Inclusiveness in Muslim Thought,” *Islamic Quarterly* 60, no. 4 (2016): 467–508.

⁷⁰ RAHMAN, “A Bibliographic Survey of Jewish, Christian, Islamic, Hindu and Buddhist Inclusivisms.” *MANU: Jurnal Pusat Penataran Ilmu dan Bahasa (PPIB)*, 2018. 1-32

is true and another false. It can prompt an attitude of egotism or prevalence. Islam does not promote such kind of theories. According to Islam it is very important to love its religion but respecting the belief and practices of other people who hold different points of view and religion is also very essential.

Conclusion

Professor Mufti Ahmed says that whenever west introduce any theology, they use most appealing term or word which attracts people a lot and they start following it unintentionally without realizing that good and bad views are inter mixed and if a person accepts it, he will accept evil too. If he will reject that theology, he will reject good things of that terminology as well. It is very complicated to accept or reject these theologies because without explanation no one can understand actual drawbacks or advantages of these theologies.⁷¹

Religious diversity is a natural phenomenon. As for the diversity in language, nationality and culture, Al-Qur'an has offered directions to the people in addressing to religious diversity as two clear and decisive attitudes. Namely: an exclusive attitude (al-inghilaq) in matters that are related with aqidah and 'ubudiah; and inclusive attitude (al-infatih) in the intuitive social circle.⁷² The verse "verily the religion with God is Islam"⁷³ is referred to during the sermon in each Friday congregational prayer in mosques all through the world. But members of the congregation who pay attention to the verse comprehend or understand it differently. The two understandings of Islam coincide in the mosque and society and community outside with every one of the ramifications these have for intra-Islamic relations as well as for interfaith and inter religious relations in general.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Muhammad Ahmed, Mufti, "Taaruf e Tahzeeb e Magrib aur Falsfa Jadeed" Maktaba Islamia, Lahore (2014) 102-105

⁷² Dhikrul Hakim, "Inclusivism and Exclusivism As Well As Their Effect on Islamic Education Based Multicultural," International Journal of Islamic Education, Research and Multiculturalism (IJIERM) 1, no. 1 (2019): 18–29, <https://doi.org/10.47006/ijierm.v1i1.3>.

⁷³ Al-Quran 3:19

⁷⁴ Bakar, "Exclusive and Inclusive Islam in the Qur'an: Implications for Muslim-Jewish Relations."

There are verses which support pluralism, exclusivism as well as inclusivism. Here, question raises that which theology is according to Islam. Islam does not take any of these theories nor rejects completely. Islam does not present such kind of terms or theories but gives better way of living life which is role model for today's world too. Islam is complete code of conduct of life. It is a complete religion. It is not possible to compare a complete religion with some terms or theologies. There are many things that Islam accepts such as Islam not only tolerates views of Non-Muslims but also protects their rights who live in Muslim's states. The concept of dimmi is biggest example of this that Islam follows its traditions but does not disrespect any other region. At the same time there are the things which Islam does not support. Islam does not support extremism and does not accept wrong faith too. Shortly speaking, Islam does not acknowledge any of these theologies completely nor dismiss totally. Islam has its own system which is complete code of conduct of life which is based upon revelation instead of materialism. But still if we talk about the different schools of approach to deal with the investigation of religion, exclusivism but in moderate way ends up being better, since it neither mutilates the importance of truth, as pluralism does, nor compels itself over different religions, as inclusivism does, yet stays true to its source of principle as Islam does not accept wrong as well as does not enforce itself on other people.



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