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Philosophical Approaches in Islamic Studies

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Abstract

Philosophy and Religion, two different things but not necessarily contradictory. One of these efforts is to study Islam with a philosophical approach. Islam is required to be able to contribute to solving problems. Understanding Islam through a philosophical approach is intended to give meaning to something encountered, capture the wisdom, essence or essence contained in Islamic teachings so that in doing acts of worship do not feel empty, spiritual dryness and boredom in carrying out this approach views religious problems from a philosophical perspective and tries to offer solutions and solutions to problems with a critical-analytical method. The philosophical approach in the study of religion seeks to find explanations of the concepts of religious teachings by examining and finding a system of reason that humans can understand.

Introduction

The Islamic religion brought by the prophet Muhammad SAW, is believed to be able to guarantee the realization of a prosperous human life both physically and mentally. In it there are various instructions on how humans should respond to life and this life more meaningfully in the broadest sense.

In such conditions, Muslims are required to do a movement of thought that is expected to produce a concept of thought which is brilliant and operational to anticipate developments and progress. Therefore, Islamic Studies is also required to open to the entry and use of new approaches an objective and rational approach, for example through Philosophical approach .

Islam is like a ball floating on water, its surface that touches the water is only one-tenth, we cannot know the ball completely from only one-tenth that floats on the water. Likewise with Islam, Islam is not monodimensional but multidimensional, if we want to understand it completely even though we will never reach the finality of our faith, but the effort to understand it is more important, we need to understand Islam through various dimensions and with various approaches. So to better The author will clearly discuss one of these approaches, namely "Philosophical Approaches in Islamic Studies".

Discussion

Definition of Philosophical Approach in Islamic Studies

Literally, the word philosophy comes from Greek which consists of two words, namely Philo which means love and the word Sophos which means knowledge or wisdom. So, philosophy means love of knowledge or wisdom. According to Poerwadarminta in the General Dictionary of the Indonesian Language, the word philosophy indicates the meaning of knowledge and investigation with reason regarding the nature of everything that exists, its origin and law. Philosophy can also be interpreted as seeking the nature of something, trying to find cause and effect and trying to interpret human experiences.

Thus, it can be explained that philosophy essentially attempts to explain the essence, nature or wisdom of something that is behind its formal object. Philosophy looks for something fundamental, principle, and essence that lies behind the external.

The characteristics of philosophical thinking are: a) Radical means up to root of the problem; b) Critical means being responsive to problems that developing; c) Rational means as far as reason can reach human; d) Reflective means reflecting personal experiences; e) Conceptual means the result construction of thought; f) Coherent means sequential or in order; g) Consistent means think straight/not contradictory; h) Systematic means interrelated; i) Methodical means there is a way to obtain the truth; j) Comprehensive means comprehensive; and k) Free and responsible answer.

There are benefits obtained from the study of sciences Islam through this philosophical approach is expected to be a person have competitions, namely: a) Understanding the basic concepts of philosophy related to the meaning philosophical terms and formulations, objects of study & fields philosophy, methods of philosophy, fields of philosophical study, philosophical schools and the functional relationship between philosophy and religion. Understanding this basic concept can be used as the basis for thinking, planning and development of Islamic sciences (Islamic studies) academically and professional; b) Able to develop oneself as an Islamic scientist who can build a critical

and systematic thinking framework and can apply it in the context of use alternative research methodologies, both quantitative approaches and qualitative or a combination of both in concentration in the field of Islamic studies (Islamic studies) become his main interest.

Specifically, the benefits of a philosophical approach for students are : a) Getting used to being critical; b) Getting used to being logical-rational, opinionated and argumentative; c) Developing a spirit of tolerance and plurality in differences of opinion; d) Teaches how to think carefully and tirelessly.

Principal Characteristics of Philosophical Approach

John Hick argues that philosophical thinking about religion is not a branch of theology or religious studies, but rather a branch of philosophy. Thus, the philosophy of religion is a "second order activity" that uses philosophical tools for religion and religious thought. There are four branches of philosophical approaches, as follows:

a. Logic

Logic as a branch of philosophy, that logic is concerned with the activity of thinking. Etymologically, logic comes from the Greek word logos , literally logic means 'thought or reason', logic is the art of rational and coherent argument. Logic permeates the entire process of arguing with someone making it more precise and improving the process.

An argument starts from a starting point, the arguments need an opening statement to start. This opening statement in logic is called a premise. The premise is what starts the argument. If the premises are related to each other, then the final conclusion that is used as an argument can be accepted rationally. However, on the other hand, if the premises are not related to each other, then the final conclusion is not related to each other, then the final conclusion cannot be accepted as an argument for a statement. One of the most famous premises in the philosophy of religion is the one put forward by Anselm: "God is something that nothing greater can be thought of than him". When it comes to arguments, a philosopher will look at the premises to find out whether an argument is true or false, and whether it is coherent, because if the premises are false, no argument can be built from them.

Logic itself has the purpose of clarifying the content or comprehension and breadth or extension of a meaning or term by using sharp definitions. The function of logic is 1) to distinguish one science from another if the object is the same; and 2) to be the basis of science in general and philosophy in particular.

b. Metaphysics

Term metaphysics comes from the Greek word meta ta physika which means something that is behind or behind physical objects. Metaphysics can be defined as the study or thought about the deepest nature (ultimate nature) of reality or existence .

Metaphysics is concerned with the most basic things, the fundamental questions about life, existence, and the nature of being itself, metaphysics literally means life, nature, and all things. In other words, metaphysics questions the existence of something. This is applied in the philosophical approach to religion which itself is concerned for example with questions of ontology (the study of being or existence including the existence of God), cosmological questions (arguments related to the origin and purpose of the world, including the influence caused by science) and questions about humanity (the nature and status of humans and human communities including the nature of subjectivity).

c. Epistemology

Etymologically, the term epistemology comes from the Greek word epsteme meaning knowledge and logos meaning theory. Epistemology can be defined as a branch of philosophy that studies the origin, or source, structure, method and validity of knowledge. Epistemology focuses on what we can know and how we know it. Epistemology is concerned with knowledge and how we acquire it. The task of epistemology is to discover how knowledge differs from belief and opinion.

d. Ethics

Etymologically, the term ethics comes from the Greek word ethos meaning character. Literally ethics means the study of "behavior" or the study and investigation of the values by which we live, which regulate the way we live with others, in a local community, national community, or international global community. Ethics focuses on questions of obligation, justice, love, and goodness. And in ethics as a general concern, attention arises to particular practices in society, so we have special attention to business ethics, medical ethics, work ethics, and political ethics. All of these are sometimes referred to as issues included in applied ethics in other words, it applies ideas, theories, and general ethical principles to particular areas, and specifically in human life and work

Patterns and Methods of Philosophical Approach in Islamic Studies

Using a philosophical approach in Islamic studies can be described in two patterns, namely First , Scientific efforts carried out systematically to know and understand and discuss in depth the ins and outs or things related to the Islamic religion, both teachings, history and practices of its implementation in real life, throughout its history using the paradigm and methodology of the discipline of philosophy. Second , Scientific efforts carried out systematically to know and understand and discuss the philosophical values (wisdom) contained in the doctrines of Islamic teachings sourced from the Qur'an and As-Sunnah which are then implemented in religious practices.

Therefore, to explain the first pattern, it is better to first explain the method that can be taken in Islamic studies through a philosophical approach. As a method, the development of a science, in this case Islamic studies, requires the following four things:

a. Materials. Materials that will be used for the development of scientific disciplines. In this case, it can be written materials, namely, the Qur'an and As-Sunnah and the opinions of scholars or philosophers. And materials taken from empirical experience in religious practice.

b. Method of searching for materials. namely to search for written materials can be done through literature studies and field studies, each of which has its own procedures that have been arranged in such a way.

c. Discussion method. In this case, Muzayyin Arifin proposed an alternative analytical-synthetic method, namely a method based on a rational and logical approach to the target of inductive, deductive, and scientific analysis thinking.

d. Approach. Approach is usually needed in analysis, and is related to certain scientific theories that will be chosen to explain certain phenomena. In this connection, the approach is more like a knife that will be used in the analysis. It is a kind of paradigm (point of view) that is used to explain a phenomenon. This is then closely related to scientific discipline.

Meanwhile, in the second pattern, a philosophical approach is taken to explain the philosophical values or wisdom contained in the Islamic teachings contained in the Al-Qur'an and As-Sunnah, such as wisdom in the application of Islamic law or wisdom in the commands regarding prayer and fasting. , Hajj, and so on. This pattern has been adopted by several scholars, including Imam As Syatibi through his work: Al-Muwafaqatu fi Ushūl Al-Syarīati .

This approach pattern is expected so that someone will not be trapped in a formalistic religious practice, namely practicing religion with difficulty but without any meaning, empty and meaningless. What they get from this religious practice is only formalistic recognition, for example, having performed the hajj, having fulfilled the fifth pillar of Islam, and stopping there. They cannot feel the spiritual values contained therein. However, this philosophical approach does not mean denying or belittling the form of formal religious practice. Philosophy studies the inner aspect which is esoteric, while form focuses on the outer aspect which is exoteric.

Philosophical Approach Model in Islamic Studies

There are three models that include the philosophical approach in Islamic studies, as follows:

a. Hermeneutic Approach

The word hermeneutics comes from the Greek word hermeneuein which means to interpret and from the word hermeneuein can be drawn the noun hermenia which means interpretation and hermeneutes which means interpreter . Hermeneutics can be defined terminologically as three things, as follows: 1) Expressing one's thoughts in words, translating and acting as an interpreter; 2) Efforts to divert from a foreign language whose meaning is dark and unknown into another language that can be understood by the reader ; 3) Transferring unclear expressions of thoughts, changed into clearer forms of expression. The function of hermeneutics is to find out the meaning in words, sentences and texts, in addition to also functioning to find instructions from symbols.

Thus, it can be concluded that hermeneutics is the activity of interpreting or translating the Al-Qur'an carried out by someone and transferring the dark meaning contained in the Al-Qur'an into language that is easy to understand and clarifying unclear expressions.

b. Philosophical Theological Approach

Islamic studies using a theological-philosophical approach began with the emergence of rational understanding among mutakallimin (kalam experts) among Muslims, namely the Mu'tazilah School.

Mu'tazilah put forward theological concepts (theology) based on the methodology and epistemology of the Greek philosophical discipline which at that time was penetrating the intellectual development of the Islamic world (during the reign of the Bani Abbas) due to the translation project of Greek literature carried out by Muslim scholars at a certain time. The presence of this rational theology school attempted to provide answers with a philosophical approach to the basic doctrines of Tawhid which at that time were becoming the subject of debate in the Islamic world of thought.

The emergence of the Mu'tazilah movement was a very important stage in the history of Islamic intellectual development. Even though they are not pure rationalists, they are clearly pioneers who are very serious about encouraging thinking about the main teachings

of Islam in a more systematic way. Their rationalistic attitude begins with the starting point that reason has the same position as revelation in understanding religion. This attitude is a logical consequence of their desire for systematic thinking.

It also happened that during the final period of the Umayyad rule, there was already a wave of Hellenistic influence among Muslims. Because of their rational carriers, the Mu'tazilah were a group of Muslim thinkers who enthusiastically welcomed the invasion of philosophy. Although there were various gaps in providing a system to the early Mu'tazilah school of thought, their theses were clearly a collection of dogmas that were upheld on certain rational principles. Because rational and systematic thinking is actually a natural demand of the Islamic religion, then its reasoning, in other fields, also produces rational and systematic thinking, such as in the field of sharia law pioneered by Imam Syafi'i, the first formulator of the principles of jurisprudence (Usul Al-Fiqh).

In the era of contemporary Islamic thought, Islamic studies with a theological-philosophical approach have been widely conducted by several orientalist figures (outsiders) such as W. Montgomery Watt through his works, Free Will and Predestination in Early Islam (1948), Islamic Theology and Theology (1960), and The Formative Period of Islamic Thought (1973). The sources of kalam (theology) studies by western scholars have utilized many classical Islamic theological literature such as the works of Al-Syahrastani such as Al-Milal wa Al-Nihal, Al-Baghdadi, Al-Farq Bayn Al-Firāq and Al-Asy'āri, Maqālat Al-Islāmiyyin.

c.   Philosophical Interpretation Approach

Al-Dzahabi, as quoted by Jamali Sahrodi, explains that philosophical interpretation is the interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an based on philosophical approaches, both those that attempt to synthesize and syncretize philosophical theories with the verses of the Qur'an and those that attempt to reject philosophical theories that are considered to be in conflict with the verses of the Qur'an. The emergence of this type of interpretation cannot be separated from the introduction of Muslims to Hellenistic philosophy which later stimulate them to get involved in it later making it a tool for analyzing teachings Islam, especially the Qur'an.

Philosophical interpretation is also defined as an interpretation that is philosophical in nature. In explaining the meaning of a verse, the interpreter quotes or refers to the opinions of philosophers. The issues discussed in a verse are interpreted or defined based on the views of philosophers. The meaning of a verse is interpreted so that it is in accordance with their views.

There are three models of philosophical approaches in Islamic studies that have been mentioned above, Philosophical Sufism can also be called a discipline of study with a philosophical approach. Philosophical Sufism, or also commonly called Nazhari Sufism, is a Sufism whose teachings combine mystical vision and rational vision as its foundation. Philosophical Sufism uses philosophical terminology in its expression. This philosophical terminology comes from various philosophical teachings that have influenced its figures.

Examples of Philosophical Approaches

Based on the methods that have been explained, as a method, the development of a science in this case Islamic studies, requires four things, as follows: a) The materials that will be used for the development of the discipline can be written materials, namely the Qur'an and Hadith and the opinions of scholars or philosophers, b) The method of

searching for written materials can be done through literature studies and field studies, c) The discussion method is a method based on a rational and logical approach to the target of inductive, deductive, and scientific analysis thinking, d) The approach that is usually needed in analysis and related to certain scientific theories that will be chosen to explain certain phenomena. So we can take an example of a philosophical approach. We take the discussion about fasting.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Using a Philosophical Approach in Islamic Studies

Based on the explanation of the philosophical approach in Islamic studies that has been discussed, there are several advantages and disadvantages. The advantages that can be obtained when using a philosophical approach in Islamic studies are as follows:

a. So that the wisdom, essence or core of religious teachings can be understood and comprehended thoroughly.
b. Every individual can give meaning to everything he encounters and take lessons from it so that when performing worship or whatever, he does not experience degradation of spirituality which causes boredom.
c. Forming a person who always thinks critically (*critical thought*).
d. The existence of intellectual *freedom* .
e. Forming a person who is always tolerant.
f. Do not get caught up in a merely formalistic understanding of religion and one that does not find the spiritual values contained within it.

The weaknesses that arise when using a philosophical approach in Islamic studies are as follows:

a. Not all problems that humans ask can be answered by science because science is limited in the sense that it is limited by the research subject, object and methodology.
b. Not all problems that cannot be answered by science can be answered by reason and proven

Conclusion

Islam as a religion that often instructs its followers to use their minds certainly requires a philosophical approach in understanding its teachings. The philosophical approach in religious studies seeks to find explanations of the concepts of religious teachings by examining and finding a system of reason that can be understood by humans. Philosophy as an approach to religion in general can be stated to have four branches, namely logic, metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics. In contemporary philosophical studies, there are at least three types or models that are included in the approaches used in current Islamic studies, namely the Hermeneutic Approach, the Theological-Philosophical Approach, and the Philosophical Interpretation Approach. It is this philosophical ideal that is expected to also influence efforts to study Islam using a philosophical approach so that the products of thought that are born truly demonstrate the universality and grace of Islam for the people, for humanity, and for the universe.

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