Islamic Theology: an Epistemological Criticism

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Abstract

The purpose of epistemology is to question what is knowledge and how to acquire its nature as well as to question the validity of knowledge. The Islamic theology is a main source of Muslim's knowledge stemming from revelation. A method of acquiring knowledge is by involving language games, while its truth is regarded as an absolute truth with a more logical verification. Such an epistemological structure countains some foul, especially when we make religion as a means to solve social problems, such as poverty, disrespecting plurality, environmental disaster, or social conflicts. Therefore a Muslim is obliged to review all aspects of Islamic theology by borrowing social   sciences, methods to explain a religious phenomenon. Then, he or she tries to reformulate a new structure of Islamic theology in accordance with modern development. Some of 'mending' offered herein are a question of what is a community role to formulate a faith as well as a need of holistic epistemology form, and even of a non-foundational theology which did not justify certain faiths.
Keywords: Theology, Methods, Postmodernism.

1.   Introduction

According to Ledger Wood, epistemology is part of the treasures of the Western philosophy. The term is defined, among others, as the branch of philosophy which investigates the origin, structure, method, and validity of knowledge (1976). Manuel Velasquez has defined epistemology as the branch of philosophy that investigate the nature, sources, limitation, and validity of knowledge (1999). The embryo of epistemology initially was laid by Plato. However, as a branch of philosophy, epistemology grew rapidly after the echoes of rationalism exhaled by Descartes (Hamlyn, 1994), in the 17th century and during the 18th Islamic thought tradition, including Islamic theology (*al-'Ilm al-Kalam*) which no longer experienced significant development.

   In general, there are two principal streams in epistemology. The first stream is more popular with idealism or rationalism as a school of thought that emphasizes the important role of "thought", "idea", "category ", "form" as a source of knowledge. The role of five senses herein becomes less important. The second stream is realism or more popular with empiricism which emphasizes more on the five senses (touch, sight, smell, taste, and hearing) as a source of knowledge as well as a means to acquire knowledge. The role of thought herein is less important (Abdullah, 1992). During its development, the study of epistemology in the Western literature introduced new perspectives in the study of science which is multi-dimensional, whereas the tendency of epistemology in Islamic thought, including Islamic theology (*al-'Ilm al-Kalam*), moved closer to the area of idealism and rationalism so that it does not care about the input provided by the empiricism (Abdullah, 1992).

            The dominant aspects of rationalism in Islamic theology (*al-'Ilm al-Kalam*) eventually makes this thought moves to metaphysical thinking which is speculative and beyond the limits of ordinary human ability and absorption. It is the reality of classical thought of *kalam* which is full of vagueness. The condition Islamic theology (*al-'Ilm al-Kalam*) is not only caused by the object of metaphysics   studies but also by the linguistic factor which is difficult to describe the objects. As the statement of God, it cannot be verified or falsified objectively and empirically. So in understanding the holy book, a person tends to use double standards. Someone thinks in his or her capacity and experience of humanity which is directed toward an object that he or she believes and beyond the logic and senses. In other words, he or she thinks based on his or her belief, and he or she believes based on his or her thought. Indeed, there is a dimly lit area because of the attitude of faith is believed correctly. But it is not known, and it is not affordable by the logic. This is the region that gave birth to the Islamic theology (*al-'Ilm al-Kalam*) (Hidayat, 1996).

The existence of historical distance and differences in traditions caused problem in the epistemology of Islamic theology (*al-'Ilm al-Kalam*). Moreover, in the tradition of Islamic thought, literature that specifically addresses the question of epistemology as a whole can be used as a reference to the direction of the discussion of epistemology of science, which is arguably inadequate. The introductory talking about epistemology is simplified into discussions about the source, method, and validity of the Islamic theology (*al-'Ilm al-Kalam*) truth with reference to historical facts that exist in the schools of Islamic theology.

2. Source of Truth

All streams in the school of Islamic theology (*al-'Ilm al-Kalam*) are based on the God's revelation as the primary source. In this case, however, the differences emerged because different interpretation and approaches to texs of verses of Qur'an and hadith. Those different interpretations may cause different streams. Some theologians believe that our thoughts have a strong power to freely interprete the texts of the Qur'an and the hadith, and then the belief arises a theology which is considered liberal in Islam, especially by Mu'tazila. On the other hand, another group of theologians believed that thought is unable to interpret the texts of the Qur'an. If it can do so then the risk of mistakes is greater than the truth which is perceived. Despite of the obtained fact, the mayority of theologians agree that all sources of truth are from God's revelation.

Various issues are often found in such a model of thinking, i.e., in the thought of Islamic theology (*al-'Ilm al-Kalam*), the text that was read is usually separated from tradition, or historical context surrounding where it was. In fact, the tradition is far more complex than the text. An example given by Hidayat, a text is like a picture of a mountain on a map. In fact, a mountain is more complex than what is imagined in the map (1996). Based on the perspective, a text plays an important role for the communication between God and human beings or among human beings, between the substance (God) that is metaphysical and the human beings that are concrete. The unordinary problem which is often found is that the text of Qur'an as God's revelation has become historical area to discuss. That is why in understanding the texts (the Qur'an), we found many conceptual analogies between the world of human beings and the world of God. We do not use the historical-contextual analogy, for example, between Muhammad's world, which is Arab and the world of other Muslims living in at completely different times and regions. Although we believe that the texts of the Qur'an as if as "the incarnation" and "the presence" of God, belong to historical area, the God's revelation was bounded by cultural restrictions of human world.

Three factors making the holy book never lasts and is still strongly believed by human beings: first, it is preserved orally from generation to generation. Second, it is documented in the form of neat writings to avoid historical manipulation. Third, it is always included in the traditions and religious rituals when the Qur'an verses are recited for reading and praying. In relation to the existing streams in Islamic theology (*al-'Ilm al-Kalam*), both traditional and liberal streams, both models and ways of thinking of the groups are still connected to texts. Liberal theology produces liberal view of the teachings of Islam. Proponents of this theology believe in dogmas that clearly and expressly referred to the verses of the Qur'an and the texs of hadith, that can be further interpreted have meanings different from literal meanings. Instead of traditional theology proponents having less space because they are bound not only to the dogmas but also to verses implying *dzanni*, i.e., passages that may contain literal meanings, and they translate these verses literally.

3. Method

Language is an aspect that dominates the *kalam* tradition of thought, especially when Islamic theologians *(mutakallimin)* sought to issue legal products or teachings. The dominance of language study in Islamic theology (*al-'Ilm al-Kalam*) is caused by historical factors, meaning that the presence of the theologians at first is as propogandis of a particular stream. In connection with the unavailability of adequate hardware at that time, then rhetorical practice is the right choice. On the other side, these Islamic theologians (*mutakallimin*) formulate the faith concept and become its defenders (al-Jabiry, 1990). One of their concrete involvement with the rules of interpretation of the text is the emergence of problems of *i'jaz* (inimitability or wondrous nature of the Qur'an) and *ta'wil Qur'an* (interpretation). The issues of *lafdz* (text or word) and *ma'na* (meaning or spirit) among Islamic theologians (*mutakallimin*) were also quite striking in their discourse about the Qur'an as a creature or God's word. This arises the question of whether *kalam* (the word of God, the Holy Scriptures and also a systematic theology) itself consists of *lafdz* (text or word) and *ma'na* (meaning or spirit) or *kalam nafsi* (the word of God in Himself), which does not consist of *lafdz* and *ma'na*. In terms of *ta'wil*, for example, the intensity of study of *lafdz* and *ma'na* is so high because *ta'wil* in the Islamic thought is only applied in studying the holy Qur'an alone which is not free from the rules of the language. The use of the strict language in understanding the meaning makes their *ta'wil* (interpretation) remain dialectical or rhetorical course (*bayani*). In the classical logic, dialectic means discussing method and ways in a debate in winch the contrast ideas and different perspectives are presented. Each perspective tries to show disadvantages and false of someone based on knowledge and prepotitions that have validated the truth. The differents and contradictives in Islamic theologians

(Mu'tazila and Ash'ariya for example) are caused by ideological and school dominantly rather than epistemological differences.

What happened to *kalam* thought is not much different from those found in legal reasoning, that is the logic of language and problems of meaning. Initially, at least the only problems is around *lafdz* and *ma'na*. The issue of how to identify the relationship between the two is what tickles and grammar of the Arabic language experts to be involved in this discourse. The general trend rather than exponents of this study is that they perceive *lafdz* (text) and *ma'na* (meaning) as two separated elements, or at least it makes them as two poles, each of which stands alone (al-Jabiry, 1990). This tendency will be found again among linguists, because the relationship between the two later had a tendency to look full of variety and are subject to different identification. On this basis, generally, it can be said that the various debates that occurred and become a central issue is the relationship between *lafdz* (text) and meaning earlier. The issue becomes the basis of the language collectors to discuss the idea of "meaning" and " named " on one hand, and " *lafdz* " and "name " on the other hand.

Another fundamental issue in *ta'wil*, as it has been alluded to earlier is the relationship between the name (*ism, lafdz*) with the given name (meaning). Name *(ism)* according to the Islamic theologians consists of two types, namely the name of the substance (substance *ism*) and the name of quality (propert *ism*). If the name of the substance is not meaningful cues in addition to a substance, the quality name has a meaning refers to the quality or species so that it becomes an intellectual meaning. Because the dialecticians separate between *lafdz* and meaning, they give priority of meaning in terms of quality names. Accordingly, there is no meaning without a name *(lafdz).* This means that the meaning of a *lafdz* has existed before the *lafdz* is expressed by (name). So, before *lafdz* was pronounced, we must know the meaning that corresponds to context.

The purpose and context of the conversation are the main elements of *ta'wil*. Context is an agreement between the speaker and the audience. While the intention of the speaker was obtained by analogy, namely the analogy of the abstract to the concrete. In this analogy, there should be a process called *dalil* (postulate) and *qarinah* (connection), so between the abstract and concrete there could be an analogous proces. This is *ta'wil* intended by Islamic theologian like *Mu'tazila.* So, accoding to their terms, *ta'wil* has three aspects, namely context, purpose, and argument of the conversation.

Thus *ta'wil* in Mu'tazila theologians' view is no more than referring to the paragraph that is *mutasyabih* (obscure) to *muhkam* (exact or well-aimed). In accordance with this paragraph of two categories then they divide the *shar'i* text (legal or lawful) into two groups, namely a group called *al-khitab manzum* (addressed based on ordered), and the other group called *ma'qul al-khitab* (addressed based on reason). This, of course, comes to *lafdz* and meaning. Regarding the relationship between the two, it can be concluded that first, *lafdz* could refer to the meaning in its capacity as the arguments, and the arguments do not need help. Second, *lafdz* could refer to the intended meaning but the meaning is the meaning of the other. Three, only *lafdz* is reminiscent of the sense of meaning that has been obtained. In the first condition, its role is only as a tool to understand and to gather meaning. The second condition of the role of reason as an explanatory tool and diggers meaning. The third condition, reason is a tool of *ta'wil* and deduction. Clearly, the overall relationship and meaning above *lafdz* never mind the role independently without overshadowed by *Shar'i* text. If this is so then the work patterns of contemporary linguistic angle, it can be explained that the thinking of *kalam* and mindset of *'aqidah* (faith) over the flow of monistic, not dualistic or pluralistic. Three categories of perspectives when we discuss about *lafdz* and *ma'na*: first, as monism said *lafdz* and *ma'na* are unity that not able to separated. In other words, there is no possibility of difference in understanding the texts because texts and *ma'na* (meaning) are in unity. Second, as dualism said *lafdz* and *ma'na* (meaning) can be separated. In other words, each has existed exclusivism although there is relationship but this relation is not so complex. Third, pluralism said that ralation between *lafdz* and *ma'na* is very complex. According to pluralism, text is a meta-funcitional construct that consist of idetional meaning, interpersonal, and context. In other words, not only each meaning and form have existence but also the relation between them is very complex (Abdullah 2000).

4.   Validity of Truth in Islamic Theology (*al-'Ilm al-Kalam*)
Based on the discussion of Islamic theology (*al-'Ilm al-Kalam*) object, namely the existence of God and His attributes in relation to the universe and humans, the method used is deductive to make the existence of God which is believed to be the truth. Deductive reasoning method requires the use of coherence theory as a measure of truth in a knowledge-making process. According to the coherence theory of truth, the proposition can only be

accepted if it is in accordance with the previous propositions that have been accepted as the truth (Brummer, 1981). Departing from the statements and confessions that have been absolutely right and that was followed by the principles that prove it, the theologians differ in this perspective because of the difference in displaying the concept of God used as the main premise.

When Mu'tazilites were interested in the issue of freedom of will and do, then the starting point is not thinking on the problem itself, but they are reviewing the matter for anything to do with the existence of God, free will, and that is whether or not done in accordance with the concept of God Most Just. For the Mu'tazilites, as described by Jabbar, a close relation to the rights of justice and the concept of God only means that everything he does is good, God can not perform wrongdoing and can not ignore His obligations to humans (1965).

In the contrary to the Mu'tazilites who uphold the concept of God's justice, it upholds the concept of Ash'arites absolute power of God. The doctrine of the Ash'arites about the relationship of human actions in relation to the absolute power of God is described with the man-made (*al-kasb*). According to Ash'arites, *al-kasb* (acquisition) arises from the *al- muktasib* (achievement) created by the hand of power (1955). In other words, *al-kasb* (acquisition) is actually God Himself because, according to Ash'arites, God has absolute power that requires all that might be desired. If God wants something, He certainly does not exist, and if God will do, it is not necessary (al-Ash'ari, 1990). This is based on the word of the Lord, "You do not want unless God wills" (Qur'an 76: 30). This verse is interpreted by Ash'arites with 'that man can not want something that'. So the concept of the absolute power of the Lord is then Ash'arites came to the conclusion that human actions are created by God (al-Ash'ari, 1955).

Based on the analysis of the doctrine propounded by the two schools of theology above, it is clear that the use of deductive method in the study of *kalam* (systematic theology) decreased the general doctrine to the doctrine of a special nature with the consequence that the coherence theory of truth as a criterion. The use of coherence theory as a criterion of truth makes the classic character of metaphysical thought of *kalam* (systematic theology) becomes metaphysic-speculative and is not able to engage in a dialogue with the empirical reality of a society that is constantly changing. The style of the building Islamic theology (*al-'Ilm al-Kalam*) such as epistemology and the criterion of truth are based on the logic of conformity between the established doctrines that require the existence of historical criticism. The product of classical thought of *kalam* (systematic theology) in response to the phenomenon of a person who appears on a certain historical fragment might be relevant to the issues of his or her time, but it will be barren and lose meaning when it is confronted with contemporary empirical phenomena. On this side, it is probably needed a renewal of classical epistemology of science such as *kalam* (systematic theology).

The pattern of *kalam* logic that is deductive reasoning is similar to Plato's thought pattern. Plato states that everything that can be recognized by humans is derived from the ideas that have been embedded and are inherent in human beings by nature since the very beginning. For example, the idea of virtue and justice, according to Plato, is not recognized through historical-empirical and inductive-experience but is derived from innate ideas brought by humans before birth. Humans live recall of innate ideas that have been inherent in such a way in the existence. Abdullah asserted that Plato never agreed that human knowledge can be gained through knowledge, examination of the nature or social reality, and via observation and sensory experience. Islamic though is also *kalam* thought and is deductive. It is just the function of innate ideas in the Plato's mind which is not to say to be Muslim replaced by the verses of the Qur'an and hadith texts, often extends to *ijma'* (consensus) and *qiyas* (analogous). Attention to the need to postulate and *istidlal* (argumentation) as the basis of thinking and acting in the daily lives of Muslims easily lead a person and a group toward a model of justifiable thinking to the available text (Abdullah, 1992).

5.   Building the Contemporary Islamic Theology (*al-'Ilm al-Kalam*)
If theology really wants to be a science, as Murphy cited Pannenberg, it is not enough merely to study the holy book, but it must seek and find a number of entries based on contemporary empirical data (1990). Similarly, Capps stated that the future of religious studies should borrow and adapt some understanding and discovery of a wide range of other scientific disciplines (1995). Earlier in this paper, it was delivered that mindset and logic used in Islamic theology ('*aqidah*, doctrine, dogma) is deductive mindset, which is highly dependent on primary sources (texts). Deductive mindset is merely one away from the existing mindset. There is still called the inductive and abductive (Bucher, 1980).

Inductive mindset suggests that science comes from the empirical-historical reality which is changing, which can be captured by the senses and perceived through experience, and further it is abstracted into concepts, formulas, ideas, or arguments compiled by the mind alone. In inductive mindset, there is nothing called illusif. All that is known to man in this concrete world can be used as a basic material knowledge, Islamic theology *(al-'Ilm al-Kalam)* is no exception. But, according to Abdullah, in the analysis of the historical development of knowledge (history of science), deductive and inductive patterns are not considered sufficient to be able to explain the working procedures for obtaining the real science accurately (1992). The development of science in the 20th century arised a new category in the scientific mindset, that is abductive. This mindset emphasizes the logic of discovery and not the logic of justification. Critical testing to what can be called a science building, including the formulation of religious knowledge or *aqidah* (faith). The formulations can reexamined in the validity and the truth through experiences that constantly develop in the actual social praxis. The problems faced at present time are more colored by issues that demanded universal human problems. Issues, such as democracy, religious and cultural plurality, human rights, environmental degradation, or structural poverty become a huge challenge by current generation. These issues are clearly different from the issues in the middle centuries and the classical era which are raised in the study of Islamic theology and classical philosophy of Islam.

When it is faced with those issues, the development and renewal of Islamic theology (*al-'Ilm al-Kalam*) must be realized. The stages in an attempt to restore "the balance" between the weight of scientific thinking that charged classical *kalam* normative morality and the demands of contemporary science empirical which is absolutely fundamental in epistemological critique. Furthermore, reconstructive efforts should lead toward a theology that can format a dialogue with reality and the development of thinking that runs currently. For the object of scientific study of classical *kalam* transendent-speculative nature, such as the discussion of God's attributes, which are less obvious relevance to today's life, should be replaced with a more current study, such as the relation of God to man and history with a correlation between religious belief maintenance of justice and many other aspects. Even Hanafi, a contemporary Muslim philosopher asked about the need for a radical shift in the region pursued previously thought that focuses on the problems of divinity (theology) paradigm toward thinking more seriously and assess the problems of humanity (anthropology) (1981).

There are eight steps offered by Hanafi toward this change: 1. from God to land; 2. from eternity to time; 3. from redestination to free will; 4. from authority to reason; 5. from theory to action; 6. from charisma to mass-participation; 7. from soul to body; and 8. from eschatology to futurology (1988). Similarly, the source of truth *kalam* in contemporary science does not only focus on the concept of revelation and plain but methodologically should receive input from various disciplines of contemporary products (Capps 1995). Murphy stated that the coherence theory of truth as a criterion in the study of classic theology (Islamic theology), the contemporary science of *kalam* is no longer the only epistemological option (1990). Here, Murphy first looks at what is conveyed by MacIntyre and Bellah and others where they renewed their views of the important role of a community.

Modernists assume on individual which is capable in establishing various beliefs and speaking a language. Knowledge and societal languages are collections of individuals. However, in the period of postmodernism, the community plays an important role. The scientists decide when facts are considered to deviate. The community should decide the change and how they should do. Rules in a language that a person is involved in it and decides what should and should not be stated is our concern. In short, language and knowledge are tradisionally practiced. Both are the community achievement.

In the era postmodernism, holism as a form of epistemology and theory of meaning, on the other hand, basically have an unnegotiable relationship. Therefore, in Murphy's view, to establish our network to the belief of looking at the world. We must first change the belief that special (internalized) about the world as well as establish a variety of meanings to obtain better results. The belief and meaningfulness cannot be separated one to another. In relation with postmodern theology, Murphy sets of post-liberal theology of Lindbeck with the holistic theory of knowledge and familiarity with the function of different languages. Similarly, Thienmann who looks carefully at justification which is not based institutionally on the doctrine of revelation (Lindbeck 1984).

In Lindbeck theology, he first uses a "bottomless", that is the simple expression, without being bound to a institutionalized doctrine or institutionalized religion. In the perspective of Islamic theology (*al-'Ilm al-Kalam*),

for example, Islam is no longer Khawarij, al-Asharites, Mu'tazila, or Maliki. Thienmann herein used a model knowledge free of theory (institutionalized) or the starting point or the truth claim or justification of a belief. The era of postmodernism would see a social phenomenon, the phenomenon of diversity as it is without having to first "locked" by the basic assumptions and theories especially raw standard created during a certain time frame (modernism). Similarly, religious and confidence seen in this perspective (Murphy, 1990).

Views on theology without this initial concept, it was originally a picture of the main Christian belief and worship practices. It tries to show the belief that Christians can understand, fit, and guarantee accuracy, and provide an overview of a practical concern inherent in religious belief and practice it specifically rather than just a great theory of the rationalists. The theories of modern social science presuppose the existence and structure of the raw reconstruction that can be built firmly and universally applicable. What is called the grand theory, so great, so that people believe that exaggerated the efficacy of the theory. Grand theory is considered to be able to explain various social phenomena overtime. The dominance of such grand theories, as what is stated by Abdullah, rule out the emergence of other theories that perhaps much more helpful to understand the reality and to solve problems. The claims of standard methodologies, which cannot be contested, that are opposed by the likes of Feyerabend.

When the above concepts are associated with Islam, there are various characteristics of non-foundationalism theology emerged. First, a special justification for belief is the faith of a Muslim, *jama'ah* (religious community) and various traditions. Second, offering theological language is bound to the aspect of faith. Third, using a theological justification and through search for relations between trust in dispute (*khilafiyah*) and a network of interconnected beliefs which found in the process of a rational approach. Despite the spirit of fundamentalism is so striking in this phenomenon, it is not the only symptom. In fact, there are often contradictory developments. The changes tend to be anarchist and pluralist discourse prompted some scholars to come up with a more inclusive paradigm of thinking, tolerance, and understanding the need of the other groups. Therefore, according to Murphy, one must pay attention to Stout's question "what is truth and validity of the various groups of their understanding solely up to them", and so his pessimistic about theism's prospects for support by these same standards of 'probable reasoning (Murphy, 1990). Thienmann stated there was no hint at all to choose between the various theological systems, each of which is different. According to Linbeck, problems arise in the form of truth. First, consistency or coherence of each part of a system, the system of the arguments offered, theological doctrinal statements and practices of religious communities. Second, Lindbeck himself asked questions about the truth of religion (its self). In viewing religion as a belief, Lindbeck compares his epistemology religions with a theoretical understanding of knowledge, especially science. In theory, one must evaluate the truth claims based on provisions in the various beliefs and their experiences. For such evaluation, one must use a variety of criteria, including the ability to understand new data and prepare an easily understood interpretation of various situations (Linbeck, 1984).

6.   Critics: Theology as Theoretical Activity

Murphy cited his thoughts in *Thienmann* of *Revelation and Theology* and criticizes modern approaches to see theology as a purely theoretical study. In relation with Islamic theology (*al-'Ilm al-Kalam*), by using this approach, there are two important issues in the study of theology, namely take it to be free from logical argument beliefs and religious practices of local Muslims who are in a certain period of time and space, then it contains references to measure the internal opinion Muslim traditions themselves.

To this problem, Lakatos, a widely influential Murphy's thinking, has talked a lot about how this theology is approached by a research program, which has similarities with postmodernism that seeks to modify, repair, dismantle, and rebuild the construction of religious thought he considered less sensitive to the challenges of development and historical changes taking place. Through research program, it seems to approach the changes that will be made is not a religious base building construction as a whole but rather the region or regions peripheral interpretation of doctrine. In Lakatos's research programs, there are methodological rules, one of which is called the negative heuristic. The purpose of this method is to maintain the hard core (core subject). In the negative heuristic, the research should not be directed to the hard core but directed to the auxiliary hypotheses arround the hard core which serves as a protective belt (safety loop). Auxiliary hypothesis that is the target of research should always be adjusted or replaced it as a whole to secure the hard core (Lakatos, 1970; Kung and Tracy, 1989). With another expression, that the core area (hard core) of revelation and religion normative dimensions will remain as it is. The only area of interpretation of religious teachings which are

historically relative would still develop in accordance with the development of the intellectual and the development of human science. These will be exposed to the process of deconstruction. If that is so, then by the process of deconstruction precisely indicate the dynamics of human diversity in the real sense.

In contrast to Lakatos, Thienmann wants a theology that regardless the strength of institutions or foundations of previous theories so that someone will be able to improvise their own. Thienmann stated there were no clues to choose one of a variety of the existing systems. So, typical of a theology that postmodernism is an anti-foundational concept that rejects any form that serves as a starting point to build a truth. Postmodernism is also anti-totalizing the underlying theory of the totality of a reality (Adam, 1995). Murphy tries to draw a synthesis of the two models of thinking above. On one hand, it took a lot of thought patterns of Lakatos' research program for the purpose of a theology of reconciliation that can assess the merits of different belief systems, and on the other hand, he is so in response to the warning will Thienmann loss basics apply common rationality that often pay less attention to and tried to change the models of justification and evaluation inherent in the teaching of the first language of faith of people who have embraced certain religion and their religious practices. Each theological research program demonstrates its internal logic based on beliefs and justifications offered by the relevant community. In short, religious truth was let go for what it is, the substance of the truth of what took place is and no doubt much less rejected. It is just that the major of all is the need to re-construct the various concepts and theories where and under what conditions the Islamic theology (*al-'Ilm al-Kalam*) was built.

7.   Concluding Remarks

There is no intention of removing the great services of Islamic theology (*al-'Ilm al-Kalam*) as a classical product of theologians that has been delivering cargo Muslim religious spirituality but epistemological criticism inevitably has to do if Muslims want to know the various aberrations that occur in their life and makes religion as a means to solve social problems at hand. The need for improvement that includes the epistemological structure containing therein: sources, methodology, and validity of the truths that have been obtained from them. From the aspect of the source, Islamic theology (*al-'Ilm al-Kalam*) should develop sources of knowledge not only of revelation and tradition alone, but also of the reality that is anthropocentric. From methodological way, Islamic theology (*al-'Ilm al-Kalam*) also has to involve other disciplines as its partner in solving social problems. If there is no involvement of other discipline, Islamic theology (*al-'Ilm al-Kalam*) is only discipline that is impressed hereafter simply and less involved in the affairs of real life. The validity of the truth emerging from Islamic theology (*al-'Ilm al-Kalam*) is also not a normative validity oriented, just right and good before God, but the truth was measured before man as a creature of God as well. When Islamic theology (*al-'Ilm al-Kalam*) becomes a discipline, it can no longer shut out criticism. A discipline is called a knowledge when it is not immune to criticism.

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