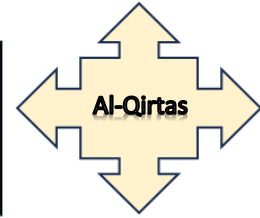


**Kaffarah: A Comparative Analysis across Islamic Schools of Thought  
and World Religions**



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**Abstract**

The concept of kaffarah, a religious expiation in Islam, is one among the many important topic of Islamic laws and theology. The study discusses the madhabs comparison of make-up and the way it is included in the world religions. Classification will be conducted through studying the primary sources of Fiqh such as the Quran and Hadiths to elucidate the basic establishment and the nature of Kaffarah. It will be followed by the analysis of the opinions and solutions on Kaffarah provided by the most famous scholars within the four schools (Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i and Hanbali) as well as the Jaferian sect. Using this comparative approach of Kaffarah will insight to different Islamic legal traditions philosophy in both similarities and differences in applying the concept of Kaffarah. Besides the research will also analyses another major world religions such as Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism on this concept for example of expiation or atonement. The study will scrutinize the scriptures and the practices of both religions in order to determine possible similarities and/or disparities in how deeds that transgress the law and harm others are confronted and even mended. This evaluation study attempts to achieve a higher understanding of Kaffarah within the Islam and facilitate inter-religious talks through the examples of how different religious communities deal with sin, repentance and forgiveness.

**Keywords:** Kaffarah, World Religions, Islamic Schools of Thought, Reconciliation

## Introduction

Kaffarah, for Muslims, since it is the concept of expiation or the process of atonement, refers to transgression and violations fidelity or religious practices. It holds significant importance within Islamic theology and jurisprudence, serving as a means of seeking forgiveness and purification for sins committed knowingly or unknowingly (Al-Quran 4:1). The concept of Kaffarah underscores the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, providing believers with a pathway to repentance and spiritual purification (Al-Quran 5:3). Instead of setting unrealistic deadlines or pushing for unreasonable standards, leaders should focus on fostering a culture of open-mindedness, critical thinking, and innovative problem-solving among their teams. It is mostly considered as a remedy for certain temptations, e.g. breaking a sacred promise, failing to observe the holy fast of Ramadan or undergoing prohibited activities. Kaffarah serves both as a deterrent against wrongdoing and as a means of restoring one's relationship with Allah and the community (Al-Quran 58:3). These individuals express their remorse for their misdeeds through charity, fasting, or any prescribed rituals while they are overlooking to attain spiritual purification and renewal.

Different positions are taken into account and there are different rulings in Islamic schools of thought (madhhabs) by way of making respect to the diverse and rich divide of both legal and theological perspectives in the Islamic tradition. Every school of thought such as Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i or Hanbali have their own Fatwas on Kaffarah according to the principles of Quran, the Hadiths and whether it is a matter of ijma (consensual Jurisprudence) (Brown, 2015). Such an interpretations may differ by including and excluding certain types of committed offences, by determining the relevant forms of redemption and by defining the scope and cases of applicability according to the opinion of the different jurists (Al-Marghinani, 1999). For instance, the wahdatush-shahada (Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed knowledge and Human Sciences) requires both a sadaqah and fast for some of the major sins than the others which are known to cancelling, or, they only pay more importance to the process of feeling repentance and right intention. The fact that, Islamic law, has multiple interpretations give a great insight into its dynamic nature and the scholarly debates become an important means of reaching ethics and the law resolutions.

The comparative religion study (outside of Islam) is used in this research, which among others, highlights the influence it has on interfaith understanding and dialogue. It is all about the

comparative religion which gives an opportunity to investigate the character of the particular belief(s), practice(s) and ethical principle(s) of different traditions, as well as explore the similarities, differences and mutual influence of these traditions (Smith, 1991). Thanks to the fact that comparative religion is made possible by the exploration of the point of view of the concept that concerns both expiation and atonement there is possibility to experience how religions across various world makes sense about these ideas (Armstrong, 1993). Through dialoguing and collaboration, these communities develop mutual comprehension and concern for each other which in turn favors tolerance and mutual respect (Bhaskar, 2005). Through the comparative study of religion, the people come to find out and see the truth about the common human situation in which everybody is in need to discover the meaning of life, morality and a deep spiritual fulfillment regardless of culture and nationality (Nasr, 2007).

The research aim in this paper is an in-depth examination of Kaffarah across the various Islamic madhhabs and how similar this concept is with comparative compensations or purification rituals in other religions. By including the interpretations about Kaffarah by the various schools of jurisprudence in Islam, as well as some similar notions in Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism the analysis project will enrich our knowledge of how different religions deal with sin, repentance and forgiveness. A comparison is done in the analysis to show these two things: what is different and what is the same as far as religious fashions to remit sins and to atone. Therefore, inter-faith dialogue and mutual understanding among people of different religious communities are fostered.

### **Kaffarah in Islamic Jurisprudence**

The Quran and Hadith foundations for Kaffarah are based on the fundamental texts of Islam that provide guidance on the process of giving punitive prayers for certain offenses and for the abandonment of duties set by Islam. In Quran Kaffarah is found as the main condition and the process of the way of forgiveness and cleansing are found in many verses of Quran. For example, Surah Al-Ma'idah (5:89) Allah mentions in the context of analogy related to expiation for unintentionally breaking an oath, prerequisite of feeding ten indigent ones as Kaffarah. Similarly, Surah Al-Baqarah (2 :), He mentions Al-Quran on which a certain clemency is required which can

be regarded as a thorough compensation of aggressive behavior or some kinds of worldly works like charity or fasting (Al-Quran). Hadiths which is reported through the prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) about the Kaffarah also give us more information on how the concept is implemented in a couple of situations. As told in Al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, the Prophet instructed that fasting be taken as a reparative act for a number of offenses, which include eating or drinking past the sunset or sunrise during Ramadan without plausible reason. There are these Quranic verses and Hadiths that are the key points that explain Kaffarah concepts and the purpose.

Islamic scholars have developed various forms of Kaffarah in *ushūr al-fikh*. The different types of Kaffarah are intended to compensate for specific actions or violations of religious duties. What type of Kaffarah and what consequences of the offense it is aimed at are the things that change not only for immorality reports but also for the severances of sin. There are different types of Kaffara that may vary depending on the situation and the crime involved. For instance, if someone has to destroy an oath, violate the fasting during Ramadan, or do some actions which are not allowed by the Quran and Sunnah, Kaffarah can include money compensation, fasting and acts of charity (Al-Quran; Al-Bukhari). For instance, food for ten in need or clothing among the impoverished is compensatory for oath breaking in the Hanafi Maliki School of jurisprudence (Al-Marghinani). On the other hand, the might exempt fasting as penance for some offenses, but the positions of both the schools may allow doing any one of the other forms of Kaffarah or without fasting. (Al-Nawawi; Ibn Qudamah).

The implementation of Kaffarah, in the four schools of thought (Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, Hanbali) is guided by fundamental principles drawn from the Quran, Hadiths and consensus among scholars. Each school. Applies these principles within its framework leading to varying interpretations and judgments concerning the types, conditions and methods of Kaffarah. For instance, as it is in the Hanafi School, some stress is being laid on compassion and seeking compensations as well as on leniency in the field of the interpretation of Kafka often leading to a preference for compensation instead of fasting in certain cases. In contrast to that the Hanbali School considers compliance with the *az-Zahir* (established rules) as the method of the prayer expiation for some offenses. The Shafi'i and Hanbali mindset is also a bit delicate since it takes

other elements of the circumstances and intent into consideration in order to pick the best atonement form.

The way in which the Sunni schools generate and rule on Kaffarah from their own sources, in light of traditions within each field, makes us aware of the directions present in Islamic jurisprudence. Religion legal works are also key in aiding understanding of the compensatory penalties like Kitab al Hidayah by al Marghinani for Hanafi school, Al Muwata by Imam Malik for the Maliki School, Al Majmoo by al Nawawi and Al Mughni by Ibn Qudamah for the Shafi'ee and Hanbali schools respectively provide the deep analysis and understanding. By studying these texts scholars can enhance their knowledge of the core principles and methodologies that shape the interpretation and implementation of Kaffarah in Islamic legal traditions.

### **Comparative Analysis with World Religions**

In Judaism, the Kaffarah type of concept is bearing similarity to the Jewish holy day of Yom Kippur, which is considered the most important day in the Jewish calendar. The community on that day used to offer sacrifices to the Lord. Yom Kippur, also known as the Day of Atonement, involves the offering of sacrifices and prayers for forgiveness of sins committed throughout the year (Leviticus 16: We suggest installing lockers or racks for cyclists to store their helmets and other cycling gear to encourage the security and convenience of cycling trips. The goal for sacrifice is atonement. The act of giving something up can be a way of showing repentance and resolution between the person/community and God (Heschel, 1972). Also, in the Christian religion, the doctrine of expiation and reparation has two faces. These two faces of Christianity are sacraments – confession and penance. Through confession to a priest and the performance of acts of penance, such as prayers or acts of charity, believers seek reconciliation with God and the Church for sins committed (John 20:34). A person expresses his sorriest and asks for God's forgiveness. Moreover, confession also restores grace and shows faith in the forgiveness of sin through Christ's sacrifice (Catechism of the Catholic Church).

The Kaffarah is associated with these themes of forgiveness, redemption, and reconciliation of God's anger all the while atonement is the symbol of unity between man and his heavenly Creator. The rituals of Yom Kippur in Judaism and Christianity, such as the sacrifice of

animals and confession and penance, aim to reconcile the individual with God and the community (Heschel, 1972; Catechism of the Catholic Church). The emphasis on acknowledging wrongdoing, expressing remorse, and performing acts of contrition underscores the universal human desire for redemption and spiritual renewal in the face of sin and transgression (John 1:9. Another significant impact of our educational trip to the United Nations is the newfound passion it ignited in me to actively engage in humanity's pursuit for peace.

Nevertheless, such disparities conditioning both Kaffarah and these notions can be seen when considering their theological bases, modes of penitence, and the offence acts. While Kaffarah in Islam is rooted in the Quranic injunctions and Hadiths, emphasizing acts of charity, fasting, or other prescribed rituals for specific offenses, Yom Kippur sacrifices in Judaism are based on the sacrificial system outlined in the Torah and focus on collective atonement for the entire community (Leviticus 16:(15-19). Similarly, confession and penance in Christianity are based on the belief in the forgiveness of sins through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the sacramental authority of the Church (Hebrews 10:(19-22) There are different theological backgrounds and types of expiation in Judaism and Christianity than in Islam, which implies dissimilar goals and meanings for the sins, repentance and forgiveness of the human beings as a whole (Catholic Catechism; Heschel, 1972).

To sum up, both Kaffarah and the concepts of repentance, acts of atonement, and rejoicing, found in other major religions like Judaism/Christianity, share some essential features, however, there are simultaneously some key distinctions in their theological foundations, approaches to the expiation, and target transgressions. Such a knowledge is one of the tools used by scholars and scholars of the various religious faiths in discovering the unique, as well as the similar ways through which these faiths address sin and seek forgiveness, in turn, meaning interfaith dialogue and mutual understanding.

## **Discussion**

The address to the aforementioned comparison of Kaffarah with the other religions parallel concepts not only deepens our understanding of the institution within in the Islamic religion, but also provide more context and perspectives. Through the exploration of how different faiths

address fundamental concepts such as reconciliation, repentance and absolution, we additionally realize the world-wide human experience of trying to find the way to prevail over our sins and attain spiritual sustainability (Brown, 2015). Kaffarah is similar to Yom Kippur sacrifices in Judaism and confession and penance in Christianity, which all use this as the basis for addressing mistakes and seeking divine forgiveness and employee participation in the penance-seeking process. By directly comparing these themes safeguards their universality and at the same time ascertains their unique theological and ritual foundation (Smith, 1991).

Furthermore, such analogy sheds significant light on interactive fields for inter-faith talk as well as mutuality in terms of atonement and repentance. Through acknowledging shared aspects of how different faiths address the issue of sin and, thus, a substance to allow people and the communities to forge mutual understanding, empathy, and respect, we are able to make progress in these existing domains. Through such an interfaith communication, people may become more appreciative of the different religious views on this subject with the effect that religious communities develop greater co-operation and tolerance for each other (Bhaskar, 2005). A joint sense of being, based on shared values and overall aims to develop spiritually and ethically, can be an interfaith activity's valuable contribution to a process aimed at erasing the religious boundaries by building bridges of understanding and fellowship (Nilas N., 2007).

Therefore, it should be kept in mind that the study comes with its own limitations. Places of this kind comparison are confined which in turn means being mostly about Judaism and Christianity, thereby excluding other major world religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, or Sikhism. Every literary work from which this tradition is used adds new understandings of the issues of forgiveness and redemption that forms a basis of a comparative analysis which, in its turn, improves the whole understanding of this topic (Siddiqui, 2008). Moreover, metaphysical ideas including atonement and rehabilitation could be other obstacles that face the trans-religion comparative analysis. The finer points of different religions, such as many sacred texts, varied denominations, and many ritual observances call for diligent consideration and may defy easy comparisons (Brown, 2009). Moreover, follow-up studies should therefore aim to overcome these limitations by expanding the scope of investigated religions, as well as adopting a more sophisticated methodology for meaningful comparative research. In the nutshell, an investigation

of Kaffarah through the lenses of similar concepts of other religions yields a better picture of its importance within the Islamic framework, and opens door to the questions about possible dialogue and cooperation between believers of different religions. Here, the study has explicitly mentioned its limitations by taking the example of religions chosen and theological concepts' complexity. Nonetheless, this comparative approach brings along many opportunities, including the uncovering of similarities, the promotion of inter-religious dialogue and last but not least, the building of bridges between different religions.

### **Conclusion**

From the perspective of the comparative study, the Kaffarah rituals among the Islamic religion divisions and the similar religious practices of various religions worldwide have some differences in expiation practices. The multiplicity of Kaffarah approaches among Islamic legal scholars is an indicator of broad interpretations grounded on the foundation of authentic texts from the Koran and consensus. Also, West with its examples like Kaffarah, gives us the equivalent in Judaism and Christianity that revolve around seeking forgiveness and spiritual renewal. Interfaith relations gets enhanced through an appreciation of the various cognitive phenotypes and this allows for coexistence and tolerance within various religious groups. Perhaps, forthcoming research should be expanded to additional Islamic madhhabs, as well as searching for other world religions to follow, and interdisciplinary approaches will enhance this research by emphasizing the many implications of atonement for the problems of today. Analyzing of Kaffarah's complexities by various scholars may significantly help in promotion of peace and equality between people who do not profess the same faith.

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