



Research Article

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Philosophy in Front of Religion

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Abstract

From Plato to Aristotle, from Augustine to Aquinas from Pascal to Freud and Heidegger the world and philosophical thought has continually interpreted the human nature, the source of morality and religion, specifically what we call (metaphysics). Man of antiquity, the medieval, modern and contemporary has his attitude towards the sacred. But what is happening with the man of our age, what relation does it have nowadays with the sacred, what is his attitude and what are the reasons for this relationship with the sacred. All the above are part of this scientific research paper. To give readers an overview of attitudes of philosophical thought of different times in front of the sacred, what are its meanings at different times and how is the attitude toward the sacred today. Descriptive analysis of the philosophical and religious issues.

1. Introduction

1.1 Ancients in front of afterlife

Philosophy and Religion have had and will always have connection with each other. Philosophy is as metaphysical as Religion or Faith as we might otherwise know it.

Since antiquity we see a connection of religion and philosophy. Orphic religion in antiquity did the separation of the body to the soul, typical of the Christian faith, but also of the Islam, which are monotheistic religions.

This similarity is also seen to Plato's idealistic philosophy, which was related with the soul and the world of ideas; this world of ideas that gives the impression of a paradise as Plato considered it a "hyperuranion", place beyond heaven, a world where the soul had existed before it came to earth, an idea similar to that of Bible, where it is stated that you exist by God and then God created you to live on earth.

The philosophy of Plato as well made the separation of the body from the soul, but he did not consider it as a religious dogma but as his own beloved philosophy, despite the similarity that it had with "Orphic religion" in antiquity and "Christian religion" later on.

The connection between these two theories is the mysticism that they have inside to the depth of the roots that feed them, as the notion of their soul that is part of both of them, a world of ideas found in hyperuranion or beyond heaven, which is similar to paradise of the monotheistic religions.

Therefore, we can notice that philosophy and religion have always been close to each other because both of them are metaphysical and deal with essential and inner parts of human nature.

Even Aristotle in his philosophy, as the religion did, spoke for two worlds almost equally. He thought that the world that we observe consists of two finite units and is divided in two areas: the earth and heavens, and the moon which was considered to be the border of these two worlds, therefore, according to him, the world consists of the the world over the moon and the one under the moon, which is our world, where all kinds of movements rule, such as birth and death, increase and decrease.

The world under the moon according to him is an object of physics, whereas the one over the moon, heaven, is populated by non-material and divine beings. Thus, even in this case of Aristotle's theory, we can notice great similarities between his philosophy and Christian religion which will be born later.

It's no wonder that Plato and Aristotle would be considered later on as the most favorite of the Christian religion in the Middle ages and of the Islamic religion. Two of the most prominent fathers of the Catholic Church such as St. Augustine and later St. Thomas Aquinas would strongly support their theories to Plato and Aristotle.

The first one, Plato, whom Augustine considered to be close to Christianity and the second one, Aristotle, whom Thomas Aquinas considered to be close to Christianity as well, one of the ideas that comes in my mind is the one of the stationary engine which propels the world, as Aristotle mentions, everything that moved, which later on will be named God by the Christian religion. But we should also know that Aristotle had made this statement around the fourth century, while long before the Jews had a similar idea, thus, the idea that a supernatural force existed, the one they called Yahweh, God, who lead them.

2. Medieval People and Moderns in Front of the Sacred

As we know St. Augustine was first a professor of rhetoric, but later he quitted his profession, giving to his life an overall direction to philosophy, which he deemed as knowledge of God. He noticed so many similarities between Platonism and Christianity so that he stated: "I believe that among Platonists I will find what is not contrary to the teachings of our religion." (Stumpf, 2000).

St. Augustine tried to build what he called "My full program" which was designed to achieve wisdom. He wanted to be a servant and disciple of Christ and shall never separate from him, because he considered Him a holy and strong person.

We must also stress that according to Augustine the real philosophy was incomprehensible without a unification of the religion with the reason. He found the philosophical wisdom in the Holy Bible and according to him wisdom was considered to be a Christian wisdom. According to him the reason without prophecy might be possible, but it might never be complete. He strongly believed that there is no difference between theology and philosophy. Many people would ask why he thought so and his answer would be: "Thinking clearly may be possible only under the influence of the Lord's prayer" (Stumpf, 2000).

Philosophy would achieve its own research in the thirteenth century and the problem that was posed from the medieval philosophy of that time was how could be possible how the thesis of Aristotle and the Arab philosophers about the world eternity could be joined with the biblical idea of creation.

Another question posed at the time and which provoked the philosophical thought was how could be understood the complete happiness and is it possible to be achieved here and now, with the contemplation of the objects of thoughts or will it be found in a future spiritual life, beyond this life, and the world that theology prepares us for.

"Arab philosophers spoke about two truths, the one of faith and that of the reason and they gave priority to the second one. At that time a problem arose because theological theses on the creation of the world and the immortality of the soul had not been proved from the philosophical reason and they did not have a scientific character.

This forced St. Thomas Aquinas to give a solution.

According to him, the reason should be in service of faith and a way to discover Christian revelation was to merge the rationality of the philosopher with the faith of the theologian; therefore, in this case we can also notice a connection between philosophy and religion. He also submitted his five philosophical proofs for the existence of Lord through reason.

The first one was based at Aristotle's physics.

The second was based at the sequence of cause and effect.

The third was based at the existence of random beings.

The fourth was based at the ascertainment of the measuring scales for the finite beings.

The fifth talks about the purpose of the universe.

All of these prove that God's existence can be demonstrated reasonably.

Four centuries later, Blaise Pascal would become one of the philosophers most in love with christianity.

He considered faith related with the intuitions of the heart and stated that God was sensitive in heart not in reason, thus he considered faith related with the intuitions of the heart rather than the reason, even though in one of his works "Thoughts" he expresses himself in amazement: "What? Do we agree that the sky and birds prove the existence of God? No. Does your religion say this? No.(Pascal ,2005).

He explained the fact that God has a sensitive heart by saying that God Himself wanted the divine truths to enter from the heart to the soul and not from the soul to the heart.

According to him faith was separated from reason; he considered them as two separate spheres where man should choose one. Thus, briefly, you can not stay at both of the spheres at the same time.

3. Contemporaries and (Metaphysical Issues)

Nowadays philosophy and religion are considered somewhat faded and people are not intending to experience metaphysics, poetry, the pleasant, due to the fact that the overdevelopment of technology has transformed man into a lazy, consuming and thus a one-dimensional being.

Having everything ready, easy to be consumed, people are killing their metaphysical part, their spiritual part, their real existence, the deepest one, they are transforming their human nature without having a metaphysic formation to feed the roots of their souls and to see the world in a more human and meaningful aspect.

Being apart from religion, philosophy and literature people lose their meaningful sense of life, its purpose, thus, everything can lead them to the absurdity, because they can not give life a meaning being spiritually poor.

Religion and philosophy are undoubtedly the two main factors which can help people not to wander within the frameworks of their meaninglessness of life; they give him life and the vision to see life with humanity.

The philosophy of the nineteenth century is considered to be a schizophrenic philosophy, according to the contemporary philosophers, based on the problems posed by the philosophers of the time, trying to avoid the most remarkable problems of the time.

During the nineteenth century, the well-known German philosopher Nietzsche stated the phrase "The Lord is dead". Many researchers have argued this phrase based on the fact that during the period in which he lived, the development of industry happened, thus a development of science, which played a role in the lifestyle of the people of that period, diminishing faith in God and increasing faith in science.

Another possible interpretation may be the fact that Nietzsche himself stresses when he speaks about his contemporaries, whose hypocrisy implies that they actually live as "The Lord was really dead"; This is mentioned in the part of the legend of the crazy man, who was looking for God, the same God that he and his contemporaries murdered. And it is concluded with the phrase "What are all these churches unless they are graves and funeral monuments of God?"(Sinani 2002).

So we can say that, after this period people have become less religious, avoiding more and more the faith in God. This departure from the faith has led contemporary man to a spiritual collapse and for this reason he considers himself lost and hopeless, because he always needs his union with God.

It's no wonder that the well-known French philosopher Blaise Pascal wrote "There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of every person, and it can never be filled by any created thing, but only by God the Creator, made known through Jesus Christ". This means that people always need God.

In the book of Fethullah Gülen "Love and Tolerance" we also can find a meaningful sentence which refers to true happiness, specifically its source, quoting "True happiness comes from inside, along our deepest connections to God and it becomes an eternal life in heaven...but this is our happiness" Gylen,2007. This quote is followed by another quote cited by Muhammed Lutfi "Our hearts are your throne, dear King! Welcome to our hearts!(Gylen,2007).

Therefore, nowadays we can notice that people are getting away from religion, from faith and this escape from humanity, from dignity, from metaphysics, from what turns people to real persons, what makes them more comprehensible and set them away from every existential doubt about life and its problems, and make them lose all the above if they do not tend toward metaphysics and religion.

The tendency toward the sacred releases man from the constraints of spiritual poverty which comes as a result of the escape from religion and philosophy.

Another contemporary philosopher who noticed this escape from metaphysics or from the thought was Martin Hajdegger who quoted "The escape from willfulness is a disturbing friend who intervenes everywhere in today's world, because today everything is learned with the most economical way and after a few moments it is also easily forgotten...the increasing shortage of thoughts relies on a process which attacks the most intimate substance of today's man, who escape form the thought.

This escape also explains our absence of thoughts. But, this presupposes that people do not want to see or accept the thought. Furthermore, contemporary man want to deny it apparently. (Sinani 2006). This is considered to be escape from willfulness which comes as a result of the poverty of the metaphysical part of a person.

So we can notice that people are becoming more and more incomprehensible in the sense that they are not trying to be metaphysic anymore, they also face many problems fighting with the absurd part of their life.

Contemporary man is trying to stay away from religion, he does not like it anymore, thus impoverishing his spiritual part so his being.

Philosophy and religion are fading nowadays, especially religion due to the fact that people are not seeking it very

little. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries there are a lot of intellectuals who are staying away from religion, keeping a critic and antagonistic attitude towards it.

Ludwig Feuerbach was one of them, who thought that religion was a heavenly idealism.

People idealize heaven and in this way they create religion, so it is man's attitude towards heaven and other phenomena that make a religion to be created.

Feuerbach thought that religion was created from man's fear of the power of nature which threatened man's life.

God is nothing more than what people want Him to be.

According to him God has a natural source of his existence as God .

That is why many ancient tribes prayed to nature or to natural sources such as to the waterfalls, to the wind and to the animals such as fish, cows and the woods.

They thought that these were supernatural sources, thus sacred.

Sigmund Freud

He had an atheistic point of view regarding religion.

However he studies the ancient African and Antient Greek tribes and according to him, as a conclusion, all religions have a natural source, phenomena of nature.

Religion, according to Freud, originates from the psychological relationship between the child and his father.

The atheism of great thinkers is directly expressed and originates at the ancient times from Epicurus, Democritus, Anaxagoras, Protagoras and it continues until the present days with other well-known philosophers such as Friedrich Nietzsche, Ludwig Feuerbach, Bertrand Russell, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre.

Historically there have always been pros and cons regarding religion, but we can notice an essential difference between atheism of the ancient period and atheism of the present days, because before Christ more metaphysical arguments existed, which denied or doubted the existence of God, whereas nowadays atheism comes as a result of the emptiness of the existence, of its metaphysical part.

Let us hope that contemporary man will not allow himself to fall into the hands of one-dimensionalism, but to overcome himself as Nietzsche states, to become supernatural and metaphysical, thus realizing his essence.

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