

Nietzsche's Critical Position on Religion

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Received. 11/09/2022 Accepted 12/11/2022

Abstract:

Nietzsche based his understanding of religion on reality, which is the opposite of the cognitive conception. Furthermore, Nietzsche argued that there is nothing more dangerous to anyone than the mind that deceives him with his superior ability to know everything, which is considered as the opposite of reality. The latter is perceived both as an obstacle to life and hampers alongside being a barrier in the face of human nature and impedes its spontaneous course, just as the clergy were the first to create sacred values far from reality and considered deviating from them an unforgivable sin.

Keywords: Nietzsche's . Religion . human nature

1.Introduction:

The truth is that existence is no longer thought to follow logical, rational laws, as rational philosophers have done since Kant. This trend reaches its apex in its denial of reason when Nietzsche argues that vitality takes precedence over reason and demands a rethinking of all values. Existing morality are characterized by decay and devastation¹. Because it is founded on the denial of existence and veers dangerously

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close to absolutism, Rather, it offends the human being, whom "Nietzsche" considers a disease, in the words of Gilles Deleuze. Nietzsche says: "In the past, the mind used to love the word duty as if it were the most sacred right to it, and now it has to find even in this redeemed right what leads to arbitrariness and illusion, so that through the exhaustion of its love, it can seize its freedom."² Nietzsche rejects the past categorically and unequivocally, using all of his might to contradict it and revolt against its ideas, perceptions, and idols. He opposes rationality and the primacy of mind over reality. He was vehement in his condemnation of "Socrates," "Plato," and "Aristotle." The philosophical concepts that they exalt and glorify are nothing more than illusions that have been utilized in a way that benefits them. Nothing is more hazardous to a person than a mind that deceives him with its greater knowledge of everything. The mind is not required to verify man's existence, and it deceives him into believing that the cosmos is regulated by certain laws that can be confirmed. Existence is a constant state of flux and transformation, with little room for stability. He specifically criticizes Socrates in this passage as he was the first to sanctify the mind and place his whole trust in it, so tying human happiness to it. And, according to Nietzsche, Socrates' thought marks the beginning of the breakdown of Greek philosophy. Early natural philosophers such as "Thales," "Heraclitus," and "Enbadocles" flourished in Greek philosophy. Unlike the views of "Socrates" and "Plato," which are no longer pure; what "Plato" said is a "mix" of past concepts that lacks originality. The greatest sort of intellect known to man is instinct. As a result, Nietzsche shifted his thoughts to the will of life, diving into it and urging every human being to live a complete existence. As a celebration of life itself just as his position on reason was unambiguous, so was his opinion on religion, with a degree of harshness unknown in the history of philosophy. He waged a ferocious war against Plato's philosophy and all the philosophies that followed it and were influenced by it throughout the history of Western thought, because the death of the Christian god is primarily the death of the philosopher's god, who dwells in their philosophical systems and doctrines regardless of their diversity. To what extent is Nietzsche's opinion on religion inextricably linked to his position on most other philosophical questions, particularly metaphysics?

1- Christianity and Judaism in Nietzsche's philosophy

Nietzsche had great audacity that many philosophers did not have in his time, and in eras before and after him, because he was an adversary of both Christianity and Judaism, despite the fact that Nietzsche does not distinguish much between the two

because they primarily revert back to the same source. It is untrue that Christianity came to destroy and transcend Judaism. It is, on the contrary, it's very outcome, as well as its inevitable and necessary conclusion³. According to him, a Christian is simply a Jew with a more open faith. However, his criticism of Judaism and Christianity stems from his general criticism of the religious spirit, given that the religions that have prevailed until now are among the main reasons that have chained humans and kept them to a low degree, in that they have over-preserved much of what should have been destroyed⁴. On the other hand, it all comes back to his affinity to all things Greek. For him, the Greek lifestyle is far superior to that of Christianity and Judaism because, unlike the two religions, Greek beliefs did not obstruct the development of natural powers in man. Nietzsche compares the concept of God in various religions and concludes that there is a great difference between them all, necessitating man's elimination of them all, but he focuses particularly on the conception of divinity in Christianity and Judaism; this perception is linked to man's desire to punish himself and is also bound to his feeling of guilt. Because this desire and feeling are embedded in the very idea of God, it depicts Him (God) in a completely different way to man, and ascribes to Him commands that obstruct human nature's spontaneous evolution. Nietzsche emphasizes that there is no requirement for a relationship between the awareness of divinity and the fight against human nature. The Greeks, for example, deified what is human and possibly animal in them, and the concept of sin and guilt vanishes; they do not condemn themselves or diminish their worth, as is the case with Christianity⁵. Nietzsche says: "The Christian concept of God, as a god of the sick, God as a spider, God as a spirit, is one of the most corrupt concepts of God, ever formed on earth, and, in addition, it represents perhaps the lowest level in the downward course of evolution of the typology of gods; God inferior to become a contradiction to life, instead of being its glorified manifestation, and its consolidating eternity. In the concept of God, the enmity to life, to nature, and to the will to live is declared and propagated. In God, nothingness is deified, and the will of nothingness is sanctified"⁶. Thus, irrespective of the temperament of the prophets and the peoples to which they belong, the Jewish vision, which was initially the basis of Christianity, has created another world that is distinct from ours, and its infection has been spread to the rest of the religions. In Judaism, the other world has been viewed as an escape from persecution in our world. The Jews are the most unique people in world history: faces with the question of existence or non-existence, with an absolute and unshakable conviction, they favoured that existence at any price: and this price was to falsify all nature, to falsify all that is natural and real, and to falsify all the inner

world. . They gradually overturned religion, worship, morals, history and psychology in an irreversible way, contrary to their natural values⁷. Therefore, Nietzsche does not hesitate to declare that the Jews are the most sinister people in history⁸ because they were a clerical people par excellence, despised by all other races, and only at the hands of the Jewish clergy, the great era of Israel's history became a period of decadence. Exile from Egypt, and prolonged misfortunes shaped as eternal punishment for the great period in which the priest was worth nothing⁹. Especially since the priests were more cunning in shifting the concept of opposing God from its genuine meaning to its incorrect connotation; it came to mean opposing the priest and the law, and going as far as to call it a sin¹⁰. According to Nietzsche, every priesthood is a reaction to life, a technique for controlling the will to power that incites it under the dubious title of "educating" and "cultivating," which only means "domesticating" it and punishing it from within: by holding it accountable for being itself, that is, for being "Alive". "Life" is everything we found ourselves prior to the human or "humanized" class, which we name "creation" of better or "good" or "ideal" morals, from the animalistic burial of impulses, motives, freedoms, wishes, hopes, energies, pleasure, intelligence, and rights¹¹. As a result, the clergy or priests were the first to develop sacred ideals that are far removed from reality and human existence, and to regard breaking them as an unforgivable sin; they are the ones who championed the idea of splitting the world into a real world and an illusory or visible world, this can only come at the behest of decadence, and it is only the beginning of a declining life¹². Indeed, the infection of this separation has extended across all areas of science and philosophy in all phases of human thought, so religion is merely a partial and peculiar case of ascetic ideals that have spilled into art, philosophy, science, and even atheism itself, according to Nietzsche¹³. During a particular historical period, austere priests were able to foster strong sense of authority in slaves, allowing them to eventually overtake their masters; they promised the slaves eternal salvation if they believed in God and followed his orders and rites to the point where, according to Nietzsche, the process of value reversal began among the Jews. They were the first to change slave morals; the good used to be the noble, the strong, the beautiful, and the beloved of God, but it came to be the weak, the lowly, the miserable, and the full of sins, And because they were the peoples that experienced persecution following the fall of their previous state, it was inevitable for their spirits to be filled with wrath and vengeance, or what became known as "the slaughter", the accumulation of which led to their uprising against their Roman masters. There was a terrible conflict between Jews and Romans, which reached its most extreme and brutal manifestations in Christianity, which, according to

Nietzsche, is nothing more than a version of Judaism: it is its heir in principles, and its greatest leaders are Jews, such as Saint Peter and Saint Paul¹⁴. As a result, the slave morality that they preached was nothing more than the reaction of the weak to the strong, and was generally nihilistic, denying the existence and abandoning anything that resists human nature. "Ethics has in common with religious judgment the belief in realities that are nothing," Nietzsche writes. Morality is nothing more than an interpretation - or, more precisely, an incorrect understanding of some phenomenon. Ethical judgment, like religious judgment, leads to ignorance in which there is no idea of the real itself, no separation between reality and the imagined, and the truth on this level represents nothing but what we call illusions today¹⁵. In another place, he states, "In order to remove the hidden, unrevealed, unwitnessed anguish from the universe and honestly denied, one was virtually driven to invent deities and intermediary beings, at every height and under every sink, something in short, walking around." Even without invisibility, he sees even in the dark and would not miss a painful scene of immense value. Today, we may require the assistance of other inventions, such as life as a mystery or life as a knowledge problem¹⁶.

The cleric is not an endangered religious pattern, but rather a value machine developed after a timeless moral evolution that affected all types of animal sleeping in the human race and still eats all souls to this day. As a result, current criticism aimed at opposing the priest's discourse has no effect on his authority. This criticism is tainted with the virus of ascetic ideals, and Nietzsche saw Kant's accomplishment as a theological success. The priest no longer has a distinct theological shape, but rather dwells in all of humanity's aspirations, from morals to art, and from philosophy to science. The priest had invaded the lair of the "desire for meaning" that haunts the human animal, that his wretched life has significance, in the words of Fathi al-Maskini. And as long as the priest is successful in supplying meaning, he will poison life and make it into an accusation¹⁷. Nietzsche says: "The original Church, as it is known, was resisting the clever in favor of the weak. How could a clever war against whims be expected from it? The Church fights caprice by amputating it, in every sense of the word."¹⁸ Religious interpretation tends to conflate rationale and interpretation, as well as truth, value, and, ultimately, "breaking" and "community." Abstinence from interpretation is thus the most harmful ascetic demand that religions impose on the moral individual who has dominated the meaning of existence on Earth for a few thousand years. Nietzsche cautions us that the philosopher's future task will be to uncover ascetic cunning, no matter how veiled it is¹⁹. True, it is impossible to break free from religious

interpretation, so we must replace it with another, more proper interpretation, because life itself is an interpretation, an inherent fight between meaning and non-meaning. As a result, we must distinguish between the healthy interpretation and the rationale based on not discriminating between "meaning" and "pain."²⁰

2- The Philosophical Dimension of Nietzsche's Critique of The Idea of God and Kant's Philosophy

From a philosophical standpoint, perhaps what concerns the researcher in Nietzsche's religious philosophy are the consequences of saying the death of God, on the one hand, that the human position on religion is usually determined primarily by the perception of the possible relationship between this person and this God. According to Nietzsche, the death of God clearly indicates the end of the domination of all metaphysical conceptions of God throughout the history of human thinking, particularly from Plato to Christian doctrines. It is a hallmark of the Western mind's birth of "nihilism," which states that there are no everlasting truths and no eternal purpose or absolute meaning for human existence, hence all that exists in life is banality. Higher values, in Nietzsche's words, lose their value; that is, nihilism emerges from the eventual triumph of some values that Nietzsche regards as more false over other, more sublime and original values. In this view, nihilism is regarded as an illness or degeneration unique to European culture during the period of its history, the stage of God's death and the loss of values. From the first event, every ontological sense of the truth receded, and from the second, all greed for the establishment of the ideal world was reversed. It indicates the decline of the idols of classical man at once such as God, truth, reason, virtue, goodness...etc²¹. Human life has no absolute meaning as long as there is no God. As a result, "Heidegger" does not hesitate to state that the term "death of God" may be a theological statement of undermining higher values, as "the core of values" and "death of God" are the two key words used by nihilism. This leads to the realization that nihilism is founded only on "Theft." That is, in the expression "death of God," the deity represents the true and immortal universe as opposed to the world of error and transience. The dominance of consciousness and reason replaces God's supremacy in the cosmos²²; in the sense that the problem is no longer related to God, but to the fact of his death. Death represents the transfer of power and sovereignty from God to man. And then the human animal became forced to rely on itself without any hope. Rather, he urged him to find for him, in a painful and heroic way, clear answers on the path he takes in life.

The idea of a merciful God who is sympathetic to the sick and compassionate to the helpless human being "is one of the most corrupt conceptions on earth. What can a God benefit others by not experiencing rage, vengeance, envy, sarcasm, cunning, or violence? ; A God who is unaware of the power of victory and destructive destruction?

In fact, it serves no purpose because he is humble; he is only a good God to the sick and disabled. He counsels soul peace and the abandonment of hatred, as well as forgiveness and love for both friend and foe. He preaches civility nonstop and retreats to the cave of subjective ideals. As a result, he advocated vehemently that his contemporaries take on the task of re-evaluating all values, a duty that has become essential and impending, given that modern man's intellect is no longer capable of bearing such teachings that devalue life. As a result, his attempt to re-evaluate values by investigating the nature of religions, as well as the psychology of their founders, in terms of their genuine purposes, intentions, methods used to lead and deceive people, and their underlying goals that lack innocence. The Genealogy analysis greatly aided him in proving that Judaism is nothing more than a pattern of morals based on hatred and self-loathing and that everything in it is founded on weakness and dark impulses inhabited by vengeance. Hatred can never be a source of the morality of the will to power because it stems from a sense of powerlessness, therefore it is only a reaction to a specific reality, but the ethics of masters stems from the will to establish itself and its sense of success.

Nietzsche wishes to turn our attention to the importance of human freedom as a prerequisite for establishing values so that he will be able to break all the restrictions and illusions resulting from moral, religious, and philosophical doctrines, and then feel the life and strength through which he can realize existence in a more correct way. Life is about growth, progress, and becoming, and it has nothing to do with what idealistic religions and ideologies preach from the metaphysical table.

¹ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Idols Fade Away*. Translated by Hassan Abu Ruqiah, Muhammad Al-Naji, Africa Al-Sharq, 1st edition, 1996. Pg. 41

² Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Translated by Felix Fares, Alexandria, Al-Basir Newspaper Press, 1938. Pg. 18

³ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Enemy of Christ*. Translated by George Michael Deeb. House of Dialogue, 2nd floor. p 71

⁴ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Beyond Good and Evil*. Translated by Moussa Wahba. Al-Farabi House. p 97

⁵ Zakaria, Fouad. Nietzsche. House of Knowledge in Egypt. i 2. p. 135

⁶ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Enemy of Christ*. Translated by George Michael Deeb. House of Dialogue, 2nd floor. p 58

⁷ Ibid. pp. 71-72

⁸ Ibid. p 72

⁹ Ibid. p 78

¹⁰ Ibid. p 80

¹¹ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *In the Genealogy of Ethics*. Translated by Fathi Al-Maskini. Reviewed by Muhammad Mahjoub. Sinatra House, National Center for Translation, Tunis 2010. 1st Edition. Introduction. p. 9

¹² Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Idols Fade Away*. Translated by Hassan Bourqiah, Muhammad Al-Naji. Africa the East 1996. 1st Edition. p 32

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- ¹³ Nietzsche, Friedrich. In the Genealogy of Ethics. Translated by Fathi Al-Maskini. p 24
- ¹⁴ Badawi, Abdul Rahman. Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Volume 2, The Arab Foundation for Studies and Publishing, Beirut, 1984. 1st Edition. 512-513
- ¹⁵ Nietzsche, Friedrich. Idols Fade Away. Translated by Hassan Bourqiah, Muhammad Al-Naji. Africa the East 1996. 1st Edition. p 57
- ¹⁶ Nietzsche, Friedrich. In the Genealogy of Ethics. Translated by Fathi Al-Maskini. p. 95-96
- ¹⁷ The Meadow Itself. Introduction. p. 16
- ¹⁸ Nietzsche, Friedrich. Idols Fade Away. p 36
- ¹⁹ Nietzsche, Friedrich. In the Genealogy of Ethics. Translated by Fathi Al-Maskini. Introduction. pg 17
- ²⁰ Ibid. Introduction. p. 16
- ²¹ Al-Maskini, Fathi. The Philosophy of the Deputies. Dar Al-Tali'a, Lebanon 1997. 1st Edition. p35
- ²² Dhaifallah, Fawzia. Nietzsche's Basic Words Within the Heideggerian Reading. Kalima for publishing and distribution. Tunisia 2015. i1. p 264

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- 6) Nietzsche, Fredrick .In the Genealogy of Ethics. Translated by Fathi Al-Maskini. Reviewed by Muhammad Mahjoub. Sinatra House, National Center for Translation, Tunis 2010. 1st Edition.
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