

Analysis and Study on the Principles and Requirements of Allameh Tabatabaie's Cognitive Theory in Religious Language

Maryam Sharifpour¹, Mohammad Mohammadrezaie^{2*}, Ali Alamolhoda³,
Naser Mohammadi³

1. PhD graduate of Payame Noor University.

2. Professor of Tehran University

3. Associate professor of Payame Noor University.

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Abstract

Philosophy of language is one of the important topics in philosophical researches, and religious language is one of the important discussions in philosophy of religion. Various theories in religious language are divided into two categories: cognitive and non-cognitive theories. Having explored his works, one realizes that Allameh Tabatabaie's theory in religious language can be regarded among the cognitive theories, specially his great Qur'anic exegesis *Al-Mizan*, because he considered all of the religious propositions as depicting the reality. Based on these principles, he believed that the meanings of the divine names and attributes are like the meanings of the creatures' names, however with a proportionate difference. Of course, on another occasion he has tendency to hold the position of "proving without any simile", due to the limitations of reason in refuting restriction and fault in God and the possibility of gaining knowledge about God. However he doesn't regard it as the requirement for negative theology, even he believes one must attribute these meanings to God, however, knowing that these meanings aren't without fault. Among the prerequisites of his theory are the denial of anthropomorphism and the refusal of the non-cognitive theories.

Keywords: Religious language, cognitive, tradition, paraphrase, Allameh Tabatabaie.

*Corresponding Author: mmrezai391@yahoo.com

The Qur'anic Narrative Hermeneutics in Mystical Interpretation

Zahra Abyar^{1}, Ghasem Purhassan², Yoness Ahmadi³*

1. PhD student of Religious Studies, University of Religions and Denominations, Qom

2. Associate professor and faculty member at the Allame-Tabatabaei University

3. PhD student of Religious Studies, University of Religions and Denominations, Qom

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Abstract

Mystical interpretation is one of the interpretative ways which is based on preconceptions like mysteriousness of revelation and of the religious language, the necessity of discovering the intention of the Qur'anic verses, and paying attention to the spirit and truth of a reliable remark. In other words, the most important bases of the mystical interpretation are the realization of the inner meaning and the heart of the speech. Muslim philosophers and mystics have used the mysteriousness of the religious language in order to discover the inner meanings of the Qur'anic stories or to find out the hidden aspects of the religious texts through the "narrative hermeneutics". This study, based on Ricoeur's principles, examines the characteristics of the narrative hermeneutics with a descriptive-analytic methodology in the works of the Muslim philosophers and mystics. The results show that the narrative hermeneutics offers a new reading in this respect through a new approach to religious narratives. Moreover, its characteristics of possessing mystery and, multi-meaningfulness, and the realization of inner meaning result in new meaning invention as well as the language strengthening. Meta-historicity and timelessness plot a new arena that converts the natural-mathematical time into the human time which is eternal; in this manner narratives no longer belong to certain people and cultures but they can rather travel into other worlds and times. Studying these narratives and stories in the mystical interpretation indicates that their main purpose is not to transfer simple, superficial meanings but rather hidden, unknown meanings. The narrative hermeneutics can thus help decode multiple-layers of meaning.

Keywords: Narrative hermeneutics, mystical interpretation, Quran, stories.

*Corresponding Author: Abyar.z114@gmail.com

The Relationship between Religious Belief and Praxis : John Cottingham's View on the Priority of Religious Praxis over Religious Belief with Emphasis on Pascal's View

Mehdi Ghafourian^{1}, Amirabbas Alizamani²*

1. PhD Student of Philosophy, Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch, Tehran

2. Associate Professor, Faculty of Theology, University of Tehran

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Abstract

Cottingham in following Pascal believes that we cannot analyze religion in a rational manner in principle because it talks about a transcendent being which is above our rational faculties and it uses a symbolic, allegoric and metaphoric language and some narratives. Thus it is impossible to prove or deny the existence of God by only rational arguments. Nevertheless Cottingham, inspired by Pascal, uses a practical argument for showing the rationality of the belief in God; not for proving the existence of God, because he believes that religion is more than mere theoretical doctrines. So the way of encountering God is practical not theoretical because humans cannot find God in theory; that is we can understand the rationality of religious beliefs and feel the presence of God by the help of the emotions and practical involvement with religious doctrines. Therefore if we want to change ourselves, we must carry out religious and spiritual practices.

Keywords: Cottingham, Pascal, theism, religion, praxis, interior change, emotion.

* Corresponding Author: mehdi3ph@yahoo.com

The Study of Hegel's Critiques of Schleiermacher's Religious Experience

Nader Samimi^{1*}, *Reza Gandomi*²

1. MSc at the University of Tehran

2. Associate Professor of Philosophy of Religion, University of Tehran

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Abstract

Being a frequently discussed topic through recent centuries, religious experience is one of the special subjects that include a wide variety of definitions in the theories of those who believe in it. However, intuitive nature of religious experience is the same element in all these definitions. As a fairly coherent theory, religious experience was first propounded by Schleiermacher. Schleiermacher defines religious experience as “the feeling of absolute dependence”. On the contrary to the rational and moral approaches to religion, Schleiermacher establishes a new trend whose foundation is feelings and emotions. This approach seeks a new condition and brings forth new results that deeply influence the comprehension of religion and God. As a case in this point, the negative approach to the comprehension of the essence and features of God can be mentioned as the consequence of religious experience of Schleiermacher. In Hegel's opinion religion and philosophy share the same content and both of them are phases of soul's consciousness. In his opinion, God's existence and divine essence can be understood only through thinking. Grounded on his own idea about the impossibility of immediate recognition, Hegel criticizes Schleiermacher's intuition idea and believes that atheology that is based on feelings is unable of offering a comprehensive description of God and religion. These critiques are based on Hegel's definition of religion and his description of the way of gaining awareness. Central to Hegel's criticism of Schleiermacher's religious experience is the impossibility of gaining immediate knowledge and personal understanding of the religious element in religious experience.

Keywords: Religious experience, theology, Hegel, Schleiermacher, rationalism.

* Corresponding Author: samimi.nader@yahoo.com

Maimonides' and Qazi Saeed Qomi's Negative Theology: A Consideration and Criticism

Hamedeh Khadem Jahromi^{1}, Narges Rajabi²*

1. Assistant professor of Islamic Studies, Payam-e Noor University

2. Master student of Philosophy and Islamic Theology

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Abstract

Problems, like our knowledge of God, speaking of him, the ways to win his proximity him , and his names and attributes, have been generally matters of controversy. This leads some to positive theology and some others to negative theology. Those who support negative theology believe that we can talk about God's acts and attributes just negatively. Maimonides considers the negative descriptions as the true and perfect descriptions of God. Therefore he says that God is absolutely perfect; he is neither like creatures nor has any partners. Qazi Saeid too strongly disagrees with idea of ascribing names and attributes to God's essence. He believes in the pure transcendence of God. However putting too much emphasis on transcendence and pure reliance on negative attitude make it impossible to talk about God in a real and meaningful way.

Keywords: Negative theology, Maimonides, Qazi Saeid Qomi, transcendence, anthropomorphism.

* Corresponding Author: hamedehkhadem@yahoo.com

The Possibility of the Introduction of Free-Thinking in Research as an Ethical Issue Based on the Islamic Sources

*Mohammad-Reza Jabbaran**

Assistant Professor at "Ethics Department" of the Islamic Research institute for Culture and Thought (IICT)

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Abstract

Free-thinking was first introduced by positivists in the methodology of research. They believed that a researcher in the humanities, as in natural sciences, should be independent of any influences of whatsoever values and preferences. The advocates of the interpretive and critical approaches disagreed with this theory in general or in part, by introducing a wide range of topics. This dialogue in the methodology of research still retains its warmth. What makes this issue, from the point of view of ethics, deserve the attention of the authors –and the nature of the subject and purpose of the issue of free-thinking provides the opportunity – is the possible to plan for free-thinking as an ethical issue and to recommend free-thinking as a moral norm. Since the subject of free-thinking means the values that a researcher can keep himself away from their sphere of influence during his research process, despite the long discussions on the different research approaches, is still ambiguous and controversial. The need for a reliable reference to determine such values is the third involved element in the possibility of the ethical presentation of this issue. This article is an attempt to determine the controllable values in the process of research from the perspective of the Islamic sources. Through this effort, it has been proven that by preservation and treatment, human beings can keep themselves away from the effects of ignorance, fear, greed, and prejudice as the universal and inclusive obstacles of free-thinking.

Keywords: free-thinking, the ethical plan, ignorance, fear, greed, prejudice.

* mdrjbn@gmail.com

The Universality of God's Praise by the Creatures in the Epistemic Configuration of Religious Thoughts

Ghobaad Mohammadi Sheikhi^{1}, Tayyebe Fereydoonpoor²*

1. Assistant professor at the Department of the Islamic Sciences, Yasooj University

2. M.A. student of Islamic philosophy and Theology, Yasooj University

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Abstract

The issue of the almighty God's praise by all the creatures is one of the novel teachings of the Holy Qur'an. The inanimate, at first glance, seem to lack conscience. To alter this view, the almighty God, in His holy book of guidance (the Holy Koran), has invited humans' attention, a number of times, to the consciousness of other phenomena and their paying homage to the creator. God's praise by the creatures is the ramification of their sentience and consciousness. . Therefore, the almighty God's praise-givers are not just human beings, but also all the inanimate, animate, and vegetative beings as well as some human beings and similar creatures – who praise God consciously and obediently. All components of the universe are non-willingly or unconsciously the exact manifestation of the divine invocation" Sobuh-un Qoddus" in a deterministic created world system and willingly or consciously express this divine invocation in the free-willed and conscious world system. The present research is to present a clear explanation of the two types of praise and asserts that the kind of praise the Holy Qur'an depicts is diverse, full of liveliness, consciousness and is fully optional and willful. This study deals with the already-mentioned assertion, on the basis of the qur'anic verses and the traditions, however, with a philosophical focus.

Keywords: praise by the creatures, sentience of the inanimate, general praise, innate poverty.

* Corresponding Author: gms1349@gmail.com

The Problem of Defining Religion and the Meaning of Aqalli (Minimal) and Aksari (Maximal) in Religion

*Abdorrahim Soleimani**

Assistant professor of Mofid University of Qom

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Abstract

What is religion? This question can be answered by taking two different approaches: the intra-religious approach and the extra-religious approach. The first view defines a true religion based on an intra-religious criterion; such a definition does not include everyone. However, based on the second approach, the definition of religion should be universal and all-inclusive. Since it is difficult to find something common to all religions, some have benefited from the family resemblance to define religion; such a definition is, however, not an all-inclusive definition. The aim of this article is to prove that only a conceptual definition of religion is possible, and not an essentialist one. Since religion is in contrast to atheism, so with an intra-religious definition, religion can be defined as "belief in a better world" or according to the Qur'an as "belief in the world of Unseen ". Since the existing religions are unique and confined to their own kinds; Islam, then, can be defined according to the theological definition as "God's plan for man's salvation." The relationship between these two definitions is such as the relationship between the minimal and maximal or the relationship between imperfect right and perfect right.

Keywords: Religion, definition of religion, extra-religious definition, intra-religious definition.

* soleimani38@gmail.com

The Study of the Theory of the Non-Existence of Evil through a Philosophical Approach Based on the Viewpoint of Mulla Sadra

Gorbanali Karimzadeh Gharamaleki *

Assistant Professor, Department of Islamic Philosophy and Theology, Tabriz University

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Abstract

The problem of evil is considered as one of the fundamental problems in the theological systems, particularly in the Islamic philosophy. The problem of evil is sometimes proposed as the evidence to reject the existence of God, and sometimes as an incompatible issue with some of the attributes of God such as justice, benevolence, omnipotence. Most of the philosophers and theologians have endeavored to find a solution to the different aspects of evil. One of the approaches is the ontological analysis in which the evil is perceived as non-existent, either as the lack of essence or the lack of the perfection of the essence (non-existence theory of evil). Among the scholars, this view has many pros and cons. Sadr al-Motaahelin has proposed two positions in this regard. In his early philosophical works, especially in *Asfar*, he defended the non-existence theory of evil and regarded it as discursive, and in analyzing and answering some of the philosophical and theological issues such as the relation of the problem of evil with the attributes of God, the perfect system, fate and destiny, and the perceptual evil, he has benefited from this theory. From the interpretation of the book *Usul-e-Kafi* which is among the latest writings of Sadra, it is concluded that he has deviated from his theory. Explaining, criticizing, and investigating the ideas of the proponents and opponents of this view are among the new findings of the present paper.

Keywords: evil, good, essential, accidental, philosophical, conventional, none-existence of evil.

* g.karimzadeh@tabrizu.ac.ir

A Comparative Study on Reincarnation in the View of Paul Twitchell and Rajneesh Osho

Mohammad Hossein Kiani *

Baqir al-'Olum Research Center

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Abstract

The ideas of Paul Twitchell and Rajneesh Osho can be compared with each other in several ways. By the comparison of these ideas, we will achieve two similar points and also two different points. The two similar points are: First, both of them held to the same sense of reincarnation and acknowledged the unilateral influence of Karma on the cycle of life; second, both of them acknowledged the importance of proof for reincarnation, relying on "reminding theory" and also their own spiritual experiences. The different aspects are as follows: first, they have two different approaches to reincarnation. It means that Twitchell highlights the reminding theory and holds to the importance of self-knowledge. By emphasizing this principle that "The only way to know yourself is to observe yourself" he pays a special attention to the reminding theory. On the contrary, Osho who gives a particular attention to the pain which comes from the repeated cycles of life believes that the most important thing is freedom from pain and that happiness is the criterion for the relief from pain. Second, Twitchell by drawing an ontological system believes that the way to salvation from reincarnation is to withdraw from the mental worlds and to enter into the spiritual worlds. This kind of entering and exiting has different consequences, the freedom from reincarnation being the most important among them. On the other hand, Osho believes that the freedom from reincarnation will be achieved only by the realization of Nirvana and the unity with Brahman. In this paper we realize that despite the similarities and differences, reincarnation has a fundamental importance in their thinking.

Keywords: spiritual experience, reminding memories, self-knowledge, pain and suffering.

* Kiani61@yahoo.com