The Explanation of the Relationship between Religion and Philosophy Based on Concreteness of Absolute Spirit in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*

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Abstract

According to *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, the religion and philosophy are considered as important stages of the history of consciousness, and the absolute spirit is to become self-conscious of itself, as spirit, in the process of genesis of these two stages. The central issue of the present article is answering the following questions: "What relationship does Hegel establish between delicacies of religion and philosophy?" "Are religion and philosophy considered, in his thought, as double truths for each of which separate realms exist or these two are different stages of one single truth that express the spirit's self-consciousness of itself in two stages?" To answer these questions, the writer attempts to show, through a descriptive-analytical method, how Hegel offers a theoretical explanation for substituting the image of national and ethnic religion for

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its traditional image by making the absolute affair to the ethnic spirit. Besides, it shows how Hegel – unlike the transcendental philosophy and exalted philosophy – on the one hand turns God and absolute spirit from non-understandable ideas to cognitive and conceptual ones, and on the other hand, removes – in this way – the duality of the realm between religion and philosophy and establishes an internal relationship between them. Through creating a dialectic relationship between religion and philosophy, he finds the possibility to remove the contrast between the myth and the realm of systematic knowledge. And by making it close to the framework of system of knowledge, he introduces the myth not in contrast to rational knowledge, but as the outset of the way whose truth the rational knowledge is going to explain.

Keywords

religion, philosophy, ethnic religion, God, double truth.
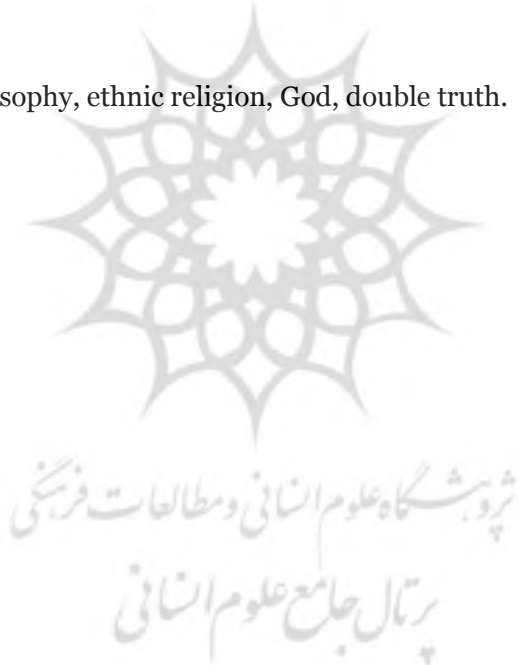
Introduction

From his youth, Hegel was thinking of religion and its role in human's life, especially its relationship to philosophy, culture and ethnic spirit. In his view, religion must answer all needs of life and create a harmony among all human spheres, i.e. subject and object, 'I' and 'other', and finally, between human and God. Hegel's image of religion can be investigated in three general periods: (1) the period of Tubingen and Bern (1788-1796) wherein Hegel speaks, under the influence of Greek religion, of 'ethnic religion' instead of celestial religion. (2) Frankfurt period (1796-1800), wherein Hegel is under the influence of Kant's *The Critique of Practical Reason.* It is in that period that he establishes a good relationship with Christianity, and some of the Christian concepts appear in his religious thought. (3) In Jena period (1801-1807), Hegel somehow considers the two previous periods in his complete thought. In *The Phenomenology of Spirit,* for instance, he attempts, on the one hand, to reconcile between national and ethnic spirits and present a theoretical explanation for them. And on the other hand, he attempts to make God and absolute spirit concrete in the human inter-subjectivity (a) to enter – unlike subjective idealism – God and, consequently, religion into the cognitive sphere and the system of knowledge and (b) to pull out – unlike Frankfurt period – philosophy from being subordinate to religion and faith, putting it above religion. The present article tries to explain Hegel's perception of religion, based on *The Phenomenology of Spirit,* as one of the spheres of theoretical cognition, and speak of ethnic and national religions by creating a relationship between God and human community. And then, using this medium, he tries to harmonize religion with philosophy and myth with rationality. It is according to this image that one can explain Hegel's view on negation of double truth and consider philosophy as the essence and truth of religion.

Numerous articles have been written on Hegel's image of religion. For instance, the article entitled "The Relationship between Religion and the State in Hegel's Philosophical System" written by Hassan Mehrnia was published in Journal of Wisdom and Philosophy in 1390 SH. In that article, religion has not been researched as an independent subject, and the writer tries to analyze the relationship between religion and the state in Hegel's thought. From the same writer, we see an article, published in the Journal of New Religious Thought in 1391 SH, entitled "Explanation and Critique of Hegel's Religious Thought". A large part of the article deals with an explanation of the historical change in Hegel's view in his various works regarding religion, and finally, it criticizes his view about Islam. An article written by Ali Asghar Mosleh, entitled "The Historical View of Religion in Hegel's Thought", was published in the Journal of Inquiries of Philosophy of Religion in 1391 SH. In that article, the main axis is the book entitled *Lectures on Philosophy of Religion,* and the writer attempts to study Hegel's historical view on historical genesis of religion and the process of historical evolution of religion from the primitive religions to absolute religion. In the present study, neither we study religion in view of its relationship to [another] religion, nor do we aim at studying the historical change of religion and critique of Hegel's view on Islam. Rather, what the writer attempts to explain is the situation of religion in *The Phenomenology of Spirit* and the logic of genesis of the absolute religion in the system of phenomenology, and how this religion is developed.

1. God's Concreteness in the Ethnic Spirit and Negation of a Transcendental image of God

To make religion in Hegel's view explainable, we must reveal Hegel's concept of God, because in Hegel's thought, religion is conceived as a

system of beliefs appeared through the manifestation of spirit for itself. Thus, to present a right image of Hegelian religion, we must be familiar with the concept of God and the concrete absolute spirit Hegel presents. To explain his idea of concrete divinity, he goes to Christianity. According to Hegel's interpretation, to reach from an abstract transcendental God to a concrete God, the doctrine of incarnation will be a key component. He believes that in Christianity the Exalted God relinquishes His abstract essence and non-actuality through incarnation (Hegel, 1807, p. 516) and enters the real world and history. But Hegel believes that the mere Christian image of God, incarnated in a certain person, is still abstract, with no unity with this worldly life. Thus, for removing the abstractness from the divine essence, it is essential for the incarnated God to die and breath, instead of getting life within the person of the Christ, this time in the Christian community and in every Christian individual, connecting his life from a certain person to the whole Christian community.[1] "Death turns from the meaning it directly conveys, from not being an individual affair, to the generality of a spirit living in his nation" (Hegel, 1807, p. 521). After the death of the incarnated God, the self-consciousness of the father god turns into the general self-consciousness or the community of worshippers. For God to be able to incarnated, instead of an individual man like the Christ, in humanity, "must die as an image to be qualified to appear in the form of a thought that is considered as united with the deepest human thought" (Hegel, 1807, p. 521). Hegel believes that God's incarnation in the Christ as the only

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1. The human's promotion towards God is done through religion, which is done – indeed – by Christianity, and its complete relationship necessitates worldly communities with inner and secular freedoms. Thus, religion as 'merely' a spiritual community necessitates its completion by the state as the earthly divinity (Desmond, 2003, p. 167).

example of the absolute essence, must die to become something that other human beings can have a share in it. In this way, for the clear religion, this divine re-rising after the Christ's death requires our activity. When the man gains such a situation in the system of phenomenology, God turns into the inhibiting spirit guiding us. He is not just the God who died once, but the spirit inhibiting in His society, "dies everyday in this nation and rises" (Hegel, 1807, p. 521).[1] And as Desmond says, this concreteness of God in another [person] is considered inner and essential for God (Desmond, 2003, p. 167).

It is important to pay attention to the point that, by making divinity concrete as the essence of religion, Hegel does not intend to eliminate divinity and lead *The Phenomenology of Spirit* to end in negating divinity. Rather, what he has in mind is to promote the exalted and ineffective divinity and the Christian monastic religion – which is above the everyday life – into the quite objective and effective divinity in the history of consciousness. In a complicated form, Hegel is going to revive spirit in the concrete realm that can be effectively revived in life. Accordingly, Kojdve's assumption that "The whole evolution of the Christian world is nothing except progress towards atheistic consciousness" (Kojdve, 1980, p. 57) is wrong,[2] because God's death in Christianity does not mean the dissolution of the concept of God. Consciousness, according to the interpretation of it offered by Hegel, is not in a way that it leads to atheism in the end of history. Rather, with the interpretation Hegel offers from God and – meanwhile – from the Christian God, it becomes clear that the

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1. As Ruckmore says, "For Hegel, the men are spirits that one can… perceive as reason in the social-historical framework." (Ruckmore, 1997, p. 205).

2. Our presence in the world as a free man is not possible only if we accept the idea of death and, consequently, Godlessness (Kojdve, 1980, p. 57).

Christian God appears in a new guise; and it is not the case that God is lost completely from the realm of the modern philosophy. In this way, after dying in the world, the incarnated God of the clear religion as the essence of religion, i.e. the community of the believers, becomes alive (Hegel, 1807, p. 519).[1] Although Hegel emphasizes that 'for the clear religion, the Christ's death is not just a historical death, but the death of God Himself', this death is itself the zenith of the process through which God becomes alive as spirit in institutional arrangements and human community. In this way, the Christ's death is a way through which God comes out of the abstract state.[2] And, due to being placed inside the human arrangements and ethnic spirit, the spirit becomes self-conscious and Kant's transcendental religion and the exalted religion of Christianity turns into the living spirited religion that is effective in social arrangements and manages the humans' social life.

2. Genesis of Ethnic and National Religion, with God's Concreteness in Ethnic Spirit

With this explanation, it becomes clear that religion must not be imagined as an exalted and transcendental affair from the ethnic spirit; rather, as Hegel describes religion, it is the very relationship between subjective consciousness and God. As Hegel frequently refers to it in

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1. As Houlgate says, God's death is not the dissolution of the divine concept; rather, it is constructive of the divine life as well. (Houlgate, 2013, p. 183).

2. Our manipulation of God's incarnation and death is nothing except our permission for God to become spirit inside us. God's spiritual uprising in us necessitates that we be open to His sacrifice (Houlgate, 2013, p. 184). In this way, God and sprit cannot be reduced to humanity. The spirit is something that manifests itself inside us. Although spirit as the essence is not something detached from us as phenomena, what logically exists and must be noted is that the essence is the foundation of phenomena and is logically prior.

The Phenomenology of Spirit, the component inside religion that makes it valuable as religion is not presenting an image of God as a being above the ethnic spirit. In his view, religion is the experience of union of the ethnic spirit with God and 'rising' of the ethnic spirit to the position of divinity. All the manners, symbols and representations present in the religious rites are the service of creating and embodiment of such an experience. Accordingly, as Chiereghin offers in his interpretation of *The Phenomenology of Spirit* regarding Hegel's image of the essence of religion, he believes that "religion originates from the community of the believers" (Chiereghin, 2009, p. 66).[1] It is due to origination of religion from the ethnic spirit that religion shifts from a personal affair towards a concrete and social truth. Religion in Hegel's view is not such that deals, like traditional religion, with abstract discussions. What Hegel expects from religion is to explain the relationship that God establishes, in becoming concrete, with the man; that is, to report the very relationship of God in becoming spirit, which is knowing Himself in His coming out of self. Accordingly, in *The Phenomenology,* the dialectic unity of the absolute spirit with inter-subjectivity and the human's community is introduced as the simple content of the absolute religion (Hegel, 1807, p. 505).[2] In fact, the absolute spirit as the essence of religion is nothing except the formation of the ethnic spirit, and the process of formation of the national and ethnic spirit displays the essential aspect of religion (ibid, 517). As Kain rightly declares in this regard, "Transition of consciousness into 'religion' is not an effort for going beyond the culture and entering the ontological

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1. The genesis of religion has no exalted status in the religious community and it is not the case that it establishes relations with the religious community in an authoritative way (Desmond, 2003, p. 167).

2. As Stern explains, Hegel, on the minute of religion, adopts our position as the phenomenological supervisor (Stern, 2002, p. 151).

metaphysical sphere; rather, it is returning to its inner side, moving towards more cultural depths and finding a deeper truth" (Kain, 2005, p. 199). In *The Phenomenology of Spirit,* he explains the absolute religion as the very God's consciousness and that of the absolute spirit about themselves (Hegel, 1807, p. 505). On the other hand, in *The Phenomenology* and his other works*,* including the "Philosophy of Spirit" in *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, when explaining the religion of revelation, he claims that God as the foundation of the religion of revelation is God up to the point that He achieves self-consciousness of Himself between the man and the men's consciousness of it (Hegel, 1817, p. 473). In this way, God's consciousness as the essence of religion is possible just when God makes Himself concrete in the human terms and actualizes Himself inside the ethnic spirit. The spirit, whom we have called divine spirit up to now, is not a spirit beyond the stars or the universe, for God is present everywhere and is present in the spirit quite like spirit. God is a living God who is effective, active and present in the spirit (Hegel, 1895, p. 33). Due to this perception of God and ethnic religion in Hegel's view, Znoj maintains, in his book entitle *Mlady Hegel Naprahu Moderny,* that before Hegel, religion was not an effective and living element in human society, and God and religion were doctrinal teachings just in the individuals' minds, with no positive effect in objective terms. He maintains "It was Hegel who was seeking for a living religion, a religion that was more powerful, more institutional and more internal that can affect people's daily life" (Znoj, 1990, p. 27). Of course, we must note that Hegel does not intend to reduce religion into human atoms by making it concrete in ethnic spirit and lower it in the spiritless human terms. Rather, he maintains that religion is not the product of human innovation, but the product of the divine spirit, the effect of the divine affair, and can be explained as suggestive of fruitful rising of the divine affair inside the human (Hegel, 1895, p. 33).

Due to the objective image of religion, Hegel puts his position in contrast to Kant's opinion.[1] Kant, due to appropriating the sphere of faith to the realm of reason and negating desire and feeling from it, creates a gap between specifying religious faith and human's social life, and emphasizes the subjective reason just by negating human's desires and motivations. Accordingly, faith cannot explain the subject-object relationship and merely turns into something that is unable to resolve the individual moral issues. But Hegel does not consider religion as something individual and believes that religion is explicable outside the individual subject and in the objective world. Hegel stands against this Kant's assumption and declares that religion does not include just the realm of the subjective reason; rather, the true religion affects our heart, feeling and will as well (Hegel, 1793, p. 5). Of course, Hegel seriously criticizes the subjective image of reason in *The Phenomenology* and believes that reason is something social in essence and can be specified inside social and intersubjective institutions (see Hegel, 1807, pp. 404-406). In this way, if we rightly understand the Hegelian image of reason, then religion will be conforming to the rationality that is essentially social and conventional. Accordingly, religion – in addition to being related to the realm of subject by emphasizing Kantian subjective practical reason, is passive due to being rooted in the human's heart and feeling, and considers the objective aspect in itself as well. In this way, religion turns from an individual affair into a social affair

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1. Kant considered religion and God as facts that are objectified in the pure reason of the individual subject. In that view, religion is considered as a completely mental component that lacks objective bases. In describing the framework of faith, he believes that faith is valid and sufficient just from the subjective viewpoint, and is invalid from the objective viewpoint (Pasternack, 2011, p. 296). In his thought, the 'purely practical reason' is the only realm wherein religion is discussed (Kant, 2004, p. 207).

crystalized in the faithful community. Belief in national[1] and civil religion preoccupied Hegel's mind before Jena period when he wrote *The Phenomenology of Spirit.* The major issue for Hegel in Tubingen and Bern period was how to formulate the typical principles of the modern civil religion (Beiser, 2005, p. 230).

It is due to such a perception of religion that regarding faith, Hegel tends to the belief that he must go away from faith in the individual state running between the individual man and his God, searching for it in human community. Faith is an element that appears in the inter-subjectivity of religious community, i.e. in *Ummah.* In this regard, he writes:

"The absolute essence of faith is not essentially an abstract essence placed beyond the faithful consciousness. Rather, it is the spirit of the believers' community... for this essence to be the spirit of the *Ummah* in this state, the action of the *Ummah* is essentially minute. This essence can only be created through the consciousness of this spirit of the *Ummah*" (Hegel, 1807, 381).

Here, Hegel refers more rigorously and more explicitly to the ethnicity of religious faith that essentially contains ethnicity of religion as well. In this section of the text, he believes that religious faith is not an abstract essence with a community beyond the subject's consciousness, in a way that it can be considered as explicable just in an exalted state. Rather, for Hegel, the religious faith is an essentially

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1. In Germany, Christianity – with religious reformation – made somehow a synthesis with nationalist aspects of the Germans, and the Protestants was understood as the national religion in Germany. Thus, the main goal and the philosophy of enlightenment, especially its German branch, is not dissolution of religion. Rather, the philosophy of enlightenment attempts with all power to establish and deepen religion as a sublime meaning (Cassirer, 1932, p. 236).

social affair generated inside the religious community (*Ummah*), and this structure of the religious community strengthens the essence of faith and objectifies it.

3. Promotion of Religion from a Doctrinal Matter into a Cognitive Matter in Hegel's Thought

Before Jena period, Hegel showed less interest in religious beliefs and decided to accept Kant's thought about the practical faith. His little interest in religious teachings was not related to the meaning, truth and cognitive aspect of religion. Rather, it originated from the credit and value of those teachings for the society and the state. This is while in Jena period, Hegel considers the main concern of the chapter on religion in *The Phenomenology* to be 'knowing God and absolute spirit', and pursues the theoretical aspect in the chapter on religion. Accordingly, he deals with religion in the section on 'reason' and tries to present in this way the theoretical foundations of absolute cognition in religion and philosophy. Hegel introduces *The Phenomenology of Spirit,* of which the religion is also a minute, as emergence of knowledge in general or in science (Hegel, 1807, p. 54). Hegel considers religion as realized in the light of embodiment of absolute spirit in human community and believes that God initially turns into 'actualized self-consciousness' only through embodiment in the religious society (Siep, 2014, p. 223) and in this way, He achieves His highest essence for the first time. Thus, God's embodiment in the religious community is described as knowledge that is considered the cognitive order of reality and – at the same time – "pure thought and, thus, the pure individuality of the spirit" (ibid). This assumption of Hegel is in contrast to that of Kant and Descartes. Unlike Kant, Hegel limits consciousness to make room for faith. He expands consciousness to the extent that it also contains faith and, by entering

faith inside himself, he enters it into the system of knowledge, introducing faith as a stage of consciousness. Thus, Kant enters reason into his limits to save faith from harms by limiting it in its own framework.[1] The common point between Hegel and Kant is that both consider faith as a rational matter and enter it in their system as an essential stage of rationality. However, it is necessary to note that Hegel is considerably different from Kant.

Descartes and Kant both consider faith as outside the realm of knowledge, for it is out of the empirical world. In Kant's view, the concepts outside the experience, like those concepts related to the sphere of faith, become much ambiguous due to losing their relationship with the time and place (Pasternack, 2011, p. 519). Since faith is an ambiguous matter, Descartes sends it out of the realm of knowledge and Kant places faith in the realm of practical reason, instead of theoretical reason, because the faith is something out of the phenomenal sphere and in the realm of numen. Hegel's critique of persons such as Descartes, who had driven faith out of the domain of knowledge due to its being ambiguous, is that we cannot drive faith out of the system of knowledge just because it deals with ambiguous and mysterious affairs. He believes that although the faith deals with imaginal matters, this does not show that we must place them out of the system of knowledge. In Hegel's view, "the religious faith is not in general stone or the like; rather, what is within the religious faith is exclusively the essence of pure thinking" (Hegel, 1807, p. 384). In this way,

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1. In this regard, Kant writes in *Critique of Pure Reason,* "I had to deny knowledge to make room for the faith." In explaining this point, he says, "The dogmatism of metaphysics, i.e. the pre-judgement that one can go forth in metaphysics without critique of reason, is the true source for any disbelief, and such a disbelief is always very dogmatic" (Kant, 1785, p. 56).

Hegel criticizes the image beyond the cognitive system of religion and the related matters. He even goes further and declares that religion, after philosophy, is something through which consciousness can face the absolute and seek to understand it rationally. The religious faith "in its certitude is a simple relationship with its absolute equivalent, the knowledge that does not mix things such as letters, paper and copiers with its consciousness of the absolute essence, and does not place such things between that absolute essence and itself" (Hegel, 1807, p. 385). Accordingly, it becomes clear that Hegel intends to promote the religious faith into the position of concept, not to deny it or drive it out of the circle of knowledge.

With this explanation, Hegel goes to the critique of Enlightenment. Enlightenment drives religious doctrines out of the realm of knowledge and considers them as superstitious and non-scientific matters that never can be understood with the logic of science. The thought of Enlightenment considers religion as something founded on historical and random truths. For instance, "Enlightenment feeds on wrong accounts and interpretations. The religious faith attempts to base its foundations on certain matters, and when it feels weak in facing the Enlightenment, it turns to historical instances." (Hegel, 1807, p. 384). Enlightenment intends to generalize the pure insight. In other words, Enlightenment is seeking to understand all realities on the basis of general objectifications, i.e. concepts; and anything that eludes the conceptual arrangements cannot, in Enlightenment's view, have a place in the system of knowledge. This very unilateral focus causes Hegel to consider the principle of enlightenment as pure insight. "The pure insight considers faith as something in contrast with that pure insight, i.e. with reason and truth" (Hegel, 1807, p. 375). Hegel is seeking to criticize the Enlightenment's assumption that just what is inserted in the domain of subjective and

mental concepts can have scientific value. He maintains that the scientific value of any element is not dependent on the fact that it is included in the conceptual terms of the individual subject and, as Hegel says, in the pure insight. Rather, the structure of knowledge is beyond the structure of individual mind. The structure of knowledge is considered as a whole, and the structure of individual mind is just imaginable as one minute of it (see: Hegel, 1807, p. 73). And there are some matters such as art, religion, morality, law and politics that, despite their relation with the realm of knowledge, do not fit in this structure of individual mind, and we cannot explain them on the basis of the logic of individual mind. The basic drawback of Enlightenment, in Hegel's view, is that it explains just some part of the 'whole' system of knowledge, i.e. the finite subject, while the subjective reason is just one aspect of the arrangements of knowledge in *The Phenomenology of Spirit,* and the Enlightenment ignores that non-subjective aspects of the system of knowledge whom religion explain.

4. Myth as a Minute of Knowledge

In this way, Hegel does not consider the language of myth in opposition to the language of science; rather, in his view, the language of myth is a part of the language of science. He maintains that we must not consider the language of myth as a truth opposed to the truth of rational speculation. In his view, the mythical language is a minute of speculative thought and the element of knowledge. In fact, Hegel does not only put the myth in contrast to knowledge and speculative reason, but also he believes that the myth as the language of religion is one of the most important minutes of *The Phenomenology of Spirit,* wherein the element of knowledge and speculative reason expands its truth and becomes conscious of itself as the self-conscious knowledge. Here is where Hegel identifies the intermediated knowledge with the

religious consciousness that manifests itself in the mythical and allegorical language (Hegel, 1807, p. 507). Besides, since on the one hand he identifies the myth with the intermediated knowledge and, one the other hand, links the element of knowledge with concept,[1] relates – with one mediator – the myth with 'the concept' as the essence and foundation of the system of knowledge. Hegel's position is in contrast to Enlightenment thought. The agendum of Enlightenment was de-enchantment of the world, dissolution of myths and establishment of knowledge instead of fancying (Adorno, 2002, p. 29).[2] Kant considered myth as the superstition and in opposition to being scientific. In Kant's view, the mythical doctrines of the historical faith are neither inconsistent with the pure rational doctrines nor are they proper to be considered as mediators for the rational faith. Sometimes, such as the time of victimizing Isaac, inheritance of the first sin, incarnation and atonement, it opposed the historical religion (Pasternack, 2011, p. 526) and negated the historical and mythical rites as being superstitious.

To criticize Kant's position that the mythical doctrine of religion is superstitious and is never recognizable with the scientific

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1. Knowledge must organize itself just through the special life of concept (Hegel, 1807, p. 71). What is important in acquiring knowledge is taking over the exhausting effort of concept. This exhausting effort calls for paying attention to concept as it is, paying attention to objectifications of being in oneself, being for oneself, being equal to oneself and the like (Hegel, 1807, p. 75).

2. As Idealists such as Kant and Fichte believed that since religious doctrines are by themselves related to the world and never revealed to the subject as phenomenon, the theoretical reason cannot offer an acquired cognition of these matters. Accordingly, Kant tied up the feet of science to make room for the faith, and the faith appeared where the science was limited, and outside the limits of knowledge, the faith rose.

logic,[1] and to clarify that the myth is not only related to the sphere of cognition but also is beyond it and is – after the philosophical knowledge – the most perfect stage that achieves the scientific cognition free from itself, Hegel maintains that the historical appearances of religious doctrines suggest the cognitive truths presented in the mythical, mysterious and allegorical forms. When there is no territorial difference between the myth and reason and both of them are related to the various stages of the system of knowledge, Hegel can easily describe, in *Lectures on Philosophy of Religion*, the rational philosophy as equal with mythical and religious theology (Hegel, I, 1984, p. 84), which makes – in various stages – the absolute spirit conscious of itself. Besides, to establish an internal relationship between theology and philosophy and to unify the myth with knowledge, he goes further and introduces philosophy as a type of worship. "Philosophy is, indeed, nothing except a form of worship"[2]

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1. Kant, pretending to drive out the numenal matters such as faith from the domain of reason, has a wrong perception of reason. This is because what he conceived as reason was more similar to understanding [faculty] than to reason. Accordingly, faith experiences enlightenment as superstition and "as non-reason and evil intention" (Hegel, 1807, p. 379). This feature – the faith's being outside the realm of knowledge – allowed Enlightenment to accuse the age of faith of following superstition and ignorance. When Enlightenment knows itself as the whole truth and denies the objective content that faith considers as absolute and as the truth of existence, the Enlightenment thought turns into something that – in faith's view – is something null and useless. Accordingly, "Faith experiences Enlightenment as a discourse that does not know what it says, and when it speaks of the priests' deceptions, it has no understanding of the subject. The Enlightenment speaks of these as if the tricky priests have introduced – through sorcery – something absolutely strange or different and as the essence of consciousness, and at the same time, it says that it is the essence of consciousness, it says that consciousness believes in it and has trust in it" (Hegel, 1807, p. 381).

2. Philosophy is a form of worship, but a typically different form of worship.

(ibid, p. 153). That is, worship in the language of myth and the truth of philosophical knowledge follows one single truth in various stages. Accordingly, he uses the mythical doctrine of the Christ's incarnation in the chapter on religion and, by creating a logic based on this mysterious and mythical doctrine, explains the process of concreteness of the absolute spirit in the human being. He believes that what Enlightenment does not notice about the age of faith is that the historical affair or the historical event in Christianity has a sense or, in other words, any historical event has a historical philosophy that Enlightenment does not understand (Hegel, 1807, p. 384). That is, the incarnation or the Christ's coming to this world, the fact that God has incarnated Himself in the Jesus Christ, the passions of Jesus Christ and the ensuing evolutions are, for Hegel, historical events. This history, however, is for the Christian believer and the pious person as mysterious and mythical meaning that must be understood. This is while the Enlightenment considers the Christ's coming to this world and his passions as well as his being crossed, his burial and his Ascend to the heavens as mythical and allegorical matters that are in contrast to the realm of the historical knowledge.

5. Negation of the Double Truth in Hegelian Thought and Assuming Philosophy as the Truth of Religion

After clarification of the fact that Hegel considers religion as a cognitive truth and explains it inside the process of the genesis of the system of knowledge, his position on the relationship between religion and philosophy can be guessed. Hegel would not have the problem of those who considered religion and philosophy as double truth and then, when they wanted to explain the relationship between those two, were confused. This is because with his explanation about religion, he eliminates the ground for doubling the truth in his thought and

considers them as a unique truth with no essential difference between them. Of course, before entering Jena, Hegel had a quite difference opinion in this regard. He would explain, somehow, the relationship between religion and philosophy in a realm that Kant had created in his critiques. During the years of his settlement in Frankfurt, he offered an opinion quite contrary to the Jena period and placed, in the mysticism of that era, the faith above the reason. In *Fragments of a Philosophical System,* Hegel claimed that:

"Philosophy must be quiet before religion, for it is an intellectual process and, thus, it involves confrontation with non-intellectual processes and also a confrontation between the mind of the thinker and the subject of thought. Philosophy must show the finitude of all finite things and demand their integration through reason. In particular, it must recognize the illusions created by its own infinity and thus leave the true infinity beyond its borders (Hegel, 1907, p. 179).

In *The Young Hegel,* after quoting these statements from Hegel, Lukacs says, "Thus, the task of philosophy is self-falling in favor of religion" (Lukacs, 1977, p. 280). Lukacs continues as follows: "In his book entitled *Der Geist des Christentums und Sein Schicksal,* Hegel stresses on religion as the zenith of philosophy more vigorously" (ibid, p. 275). Accordingly, in *Der Geist des Christentums* and before writing *The Phenomenology of Spirit,* Hegel places love above reason and believes what causes the man to infiltrate into the most fundamental realm of existence is the concept of 'love', because love makes the foundation of the universe familiar for the man by uniting the man with God. Accordingly, in *Der Geist des Christentums,* Hegel considers the zenith of faith – which he describes as essentially a romantic matter – a minute that makes the circle of the man's perfection close together. In Hegel's view, this realm cannot be

assumed as the realm of the relationship between the man's rationalized thought and the universe. Rather, it is a living territory that can be covered by the living love (Hegel, 1907, pp. 129-130).[1]

Hegel's first critique about priority of religion in comparison to philosophy appears in the treatise *Faith and Knowledge* (1802). In that book, he claims that philosophy has made itself the handmaid of a faith once more [2](Hegel, 1977, p. 55), and goes to the critique of the idea that 'faith is the handmaid' in the Enlightenment thought and Kant's subjective idealism. In his view, not only has the Enlightenment made reason – in a more proper way – superior to religion, but also has been able to propose a new form of anti-rationalism. This is because the superficial critique of Enlightenment leaves faith untouched, in a way that with this critique, the philosophy has inclined towards faith more (ibid, p. 56). This is while philosophy in Hegel's thought is not the handmaid of religious faith and has no duty to put itself at the service of religious faith and conceptualize its internal features. "In a sense, Hegel takes religious faith more seriously than many Enlightenment thinkers, because he considers it the fundamental aspect of deep-thinking consciousness. This is because he thinks that, otherwise, rationalism itself will become unimportant and unilateral" (Stern, 1990, p.

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1. In his early works, there is – most probably – nothing except religion to allow people to reconcile in history with the fate. But upon his entrance to Jena, Hegel gave more importance to philosophy. It is philosophy that allows the absolute reason to be self-conscious. And in any great philosophical system, it seems that in an artistic work, reason has been presented for itself in a complete form (Hyppolite, 1974, p. 59).
2. Here, Hegel says 'once more, philosophy becomes the handmaid of faith' because earlier, in Middle Ages, other philosophers such as Thomas Aquinas had such an attitude. He had said that we must put other sciences 'obligatorily at the service of theology' (Aquinas, 1947, p. 5), and 'turn the philosophy into the language of religion and the servant and assistant for affairs of faith' (Aquinas, 1947, p. 6).

270). In this way, the Hegelian assumption of the relationship between philosophy and religion is in contrast to the thought of individuals such as Descartes and some other theologians of the Middle Ages, who regarded religion above philosophy and put aside reason in case it was in opposition to religion (Descartes, 1390 SH, p. 302).

To take philosophy out of the position of a handmaid, Hegel first turns the authoritative image of religion – wherein the man was sentenced to have belief in it without having a conceptual knowledge of it – into a flexible image of it, wherein religion has not authoritative state and the essence of religion finds itself in the intersubjective consciousness. In this way, in Hegel's thought, religion is not a mysterious meta-phenomenal matter beyond the speculative knowledge, with no access from reason to it. Rather, religion has turned into an essentially speculative matter and instead of a contrast between its truth and the truth of philosophical knowledge, it becomes a part of the system of knowledge, the zenith of which is considered to be philosophy. With this, Hegel gives a new identity to religion, wherein there is no exalted and despotic relationship. Rather, religion has turned into a theoretical matter that is explicable in the arrangements of the rational concepts. Religion is a method through which all human beings directly become aware of truth (Hegel, 1984, p. 180). In this way, instead of making the philosophical knowledge, as a quite human matter, subordinate to the logic existing in the realm of religion as a divine matter, he enters religion – with a new interpretation of it – into the logic of a realm that is – in principle – related to the realm of consciousness and is a theoretical matter. In this perception, religion is understood as a minute of consciousness in the light of which, the absolute spirit is explicable in a speculative form (Hegel, 1807, p. 507). In this way, religion enters a furnace created by the essence of consciousness and, this time, the heaven of religion

comes down to the features of the earth of consciousness and, consequently, to the features of philosophy, and is understood in a path that ends in the philosophical knowledge as the absolute judge and the highest reconciliation of the spirit (Desmond, 2003, p. 171).[1]

Considering that Hegel introduces philosophy as the zenith of the knowledge in the chapter on religion in *The Phenomenology of Spirit,* he discards the image of the philosophy's being handmaid and the priority of religion over philosophy. In such a condition, religion cannot be considered as the leader of the philosophy and it never must be assumed that philosophy seeks to justify the destinations that the religious consciousness is seeking to fix them. This is because in phenomenology, the religious consciousness is considered as the allegorical and esoteric stage of the knowledge of the absolute spirit about its being spirit. For Hegel, the absolute spirit conceptually becomes conscious of its being spirit just in the stage of the philosophical knowledge, and gets clearly and conceptually, in the stage of philosophy, what it had gotten imperfectly and allegorically in the stage of religion. Thus, philosophy is prior to religion, and he explains and reveals the truth and structure of religious consciousness from the conceptual and rational perspectives. Accordingly, he claims

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1. It is essential to note that in the chapter on religion in *The Phenomenology of Spirit,* Hegel is not seeking to give rational reasons for the Christian doctrines. What makes him interested in religion is the existence of religious conceptual facilities that enable him to realize the ultimate end of *The Phenomenology of Spirit* – i.e. the spirit's self-consciousness of its being spirit. In the chapter on religion, he attempts to make a logic based on faith and, on the basis of the logic originated from religious concepts, make spirit one step closer to self-consciousness. In this way, in *The Phenomenology of Spirit,* religion is not discussed for justifying the Christian doctrines; rather, a logical account of the arrangements existing in the ethnic spirit and the national religion in Germany is considered.

that the self-consciousness of the absolute spirit, that the religion and philosophical knowledge pursue, becomes for itself in its ultimate turning point (philosophy) and achieves the knowledge of being inside self. (Hegel, 1807, p. 522). This is while that self-consciousness has not promoted, in the stage of religion, to an inner and clear matter due to being allegorical, and remains as another matter for the consciousness of the worshipper (Hegel, 1807, p. 523). In interpreting this section of the text of *The Phenomenology,* Houlgate says, "It is due to this strangeness that the religious self-consciousness does not feel complete unity and reconciliation with the absolute existence, and the complete reconciliation is expected as something in the far future" (Houlgate, 2013, p. 185).

Accordingly, Hegel believes that in religious consciousness, our knowledge of the thing is not complete yet, because the religion's encounter with truth does not go beyond the level of stating ethnic religious emotions, and finds out the truth in view of collective fancies. This thing must be known not only in terms of immediacy of existence and in terms of objectification, but also as the essence and inner matter, i.e. as 'self' (Hegel, 1807, p. 527). This is while the same unity is known by the philosophy not through religious emotions, but through the knowledge and philosophical thought. The duty of philosophy, in the position of the deeper thinking or self-conscious form of religion, is substituting the concepts for representations. He maintains that the spirit's becoming self-conscious of its being spirit has already occurred in the clear religion in an initial form, but this time in the stage of philosophical knowledge, it is proposed in a deeper form (Houlgate, 2013, p. 186). And this reconciliation that existed in the clear religion in the form of 'in itself' is proposed in the philosophical knowledge somehow 'for itself' as well.

This reconciliation of consciousness with self-consciousness

shows itself as something emerged from dual aspects: once in the religious spirit, and once in the self-consciousness as it is. Their distinction from one another is that one, i.e. the religious spirit, is the very reconciliation when it is 'in itself'; but this one, i.e. self-consciousness, is the very reconciliation when it is 'for itself'" (Hegel, 1807, p. 528).

Hegel believes that we must not assume that the philosophical knowledge alters the things that are intuited or felt and chooses the path that is quite opposite to the religious viewpoint. Rather, the only thing done here is that what is initially ambiguous is given explicitness through the philosophical knowledge (Siep, 2014, p. 221). Accordingly, a single mission, i.e. the spirit's self-consciousness of its being spirit, is introduced for religion and philosophy. With this explanation, it becomes clear that we are not facing with two essentially different truths[1] between which we cannot establish relationship. Rather, by turning religion into a cognitive matter, religion and philosophy take on a single truth, because both are related to the realm of cognition and system of knowledge. Accordingly, Pinkard believes that philosophy is not in opposition to religion, but

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1. This image of philosophy and its relationship with religion is in contrast to images such as Thomas Aquinas' thought that considered religion and philosophy as double truths. Hegel, in opposition to Aquinas' image, believes that both religion and reason have one single origin. In his view, religion and reason are the various minutes and stages of an absolute spirit that recognizes itself in the history of consciousness in these two minutes and becomes aware of itself as spirit (see Hegel, 1807, pp. 727-528). Of course, religion and philosophy are not exalted and transcendental ways existing in the Christian philosophy and Kant and Fichte's abstract idealism. Rather, Hegelian religion and philosophy are concrete stages that God, concreted in human, could realize those two stages and become self-conscious in those two.

they are the truth of religion; and what religion seeks is finally attained in philosophy (Pinkard, 2002, p. 453). Hegel maintains that the reason for identity of the truth of religion and philosophy is the unity of their subject, and says since religion and philosophy have the same subject, one cannot consider them as double truths each of which related to separate realms (Hegel, I, 1984, p. 152).

Besides, he sees no difference between philosophy and theology from the viewpoint of subject matter, because he – as published in a short article in the critical magazine – establishes the image of God as the essence of religion on the zenith of philosophy. There, he writes, "God is the container of all matters, and just He is the origin of existence and cognition" (Beiser, 2005, p. 231). Accordingly, Hegel says, "When philosophy understands itself, it understands religion as well. And when it understands religion, it understands itself (Hegel, I, 1984, pp. 152-153).

Conclusion

From what we said, it is concluded that Hegel, in *The Phenomenology of Spirit,* unites the chapter of religion and philosophy, and considers those two chapters of *The Phenomenology* as different stages of the spirit's self-consciousness of its being spirit and maintains that philosophy is the truth of religion. Following this belief, he inclines to removing the contrast between knowledge and myth, and by entering it into the system of knowledge, instead of placing the myth in contrast to rationality, he introduces it as an important stage of rationality. And through this, in *The Phenomenology of Spirit,* he negates the image of the double truth in regard with religion and philosophy. To explain his position regarding the two chapters of religion and philosophy in *The Phenomenology,* he has to firstly substitute the revolutionary and new images of absolute spirit and God

for the traditional image of God and, through this, infiltrate into the issue of the relationship between religion and philosophy and explain their relationship. For this purpose, Hegel establishes an ontological relationship between God and the absolute spirit and the human community; and by establishing an internal relationship between God and human beings, he substitute the ethnic and national religion for the exalted and transcendental religion. Here, Hegel succeeds to enter God in the intersubjective arrangements to enter God and the absolute spirit from the non-cognitive state into the realm of cognition and the system of knowledge, establishing a unity between the realm of religion and philosophy – which was formerly considered in the Christian philosophy of the divine religion and the natural and human philosophies – and establishing an internal relationship between the realms of religion and philosophy.
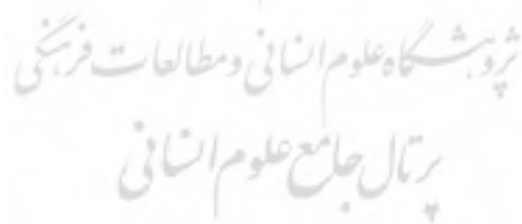
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