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Bergson's Freedom: A Dualistic Interpretation

Mohammad Anbarsooz¹

Ph.D Student of Philosophy, University of Tabriz, Iran

Yoosef Nozohoor

Associated Professor of Philosophy, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Iran

Abstract

When studying Henri Bergson's works, one can understand that as he proceeds from theoretical philosophy to applied philosophy, he criticizes deterministic view in favor of freedom and establishes foundations of this attitude. He is of the view that by obtaining true knowledge, we would achieve practical purposes including dynamic religion, open society and, more importantly, freedom. Bergson establishes his epistemological and metaphysical foundations in a way that he provides an appropriate base for the realization of freedom in open society. This study attempts to interpret Bergson's idea about freedom in light of his dualistic system, and by referring to the place of freedom within the dualistic system, it also attempts to explain Bergson's conception of freedom and show how and why freedom would be realized. Furthermore, this paper seeks to show that freedom would be realized by disregarding the wrong parts of Bergson's dualism in relation to dynamic religion, with the help of intuitive knowledge which takes duration into account and in an open society, while closed society, static religion and the epistemological attitude which rely on intelligence and have a spatial approach to time would hinder the occurrence of freedom. Thus the cognitive basis of conceiving free will is considered in the light of a dualistic approach in which the positive side (life) realizes the freedom, while the negative side (matter) causes determinism.

Keywords: Bergson, dualism, freedom, determinism, life.

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1. Corresponding Author. Mohammad_anbarsooz@yahoo.com/ nozohour1212@gmail.com.

Introduction

The concept of freedom which makes sense in relation to human will, that is "free will", has been one of the most discussed themes by philosophers for centuries. Philosophers frequently have discussed this concept and few philosophers can be found ignoring such a controversial subject matter. Since the background of the subject cannot be elaborated here, in order to illustrate the importance of the discussion about freedom only three philosophers from three main historical eras will be mentioned. In ancient time, Plato believed that "a man is free if he is governed by reason, but a slave if he is ruled by desires and passions" (Bunnin & Yu, 2004, p.271). But in the history of philosophy most important debates about freedom should be searched in modern philosophy and especially in the works of Kant. He defines freedom as "the autonomy or self-determination of rational beings and considers the reality of freedom an indubitable, albeit an inexplicable, fact, and places it at the fulcrum of his entire system, theoretical as well as practical" (Runes, 1942, p.112). Discussion about freedom has been yet a matter of debate, and specifically in contemporary times it has been at the center of existentialists' attention. "Humans are free, and the reality and nature of freedom is a major concern for existentialists" (Lacey, 1996, p.109)

Basically, most philosophers whose doctrines take precedent over freedom mention the basic instinct of human beings over freedom of will. In other words, they consider instantaneous origin and the inner feeling of free will to enter this discussion. Therefore, "The doctrine of freedom of will or free will is derives from the natural feeling that we can choose what we do according to the dictates of our own soul, without being compelled, and that in the conditions of our action we could have acted otherwise" (Bunnin & Yu, 2004, p.271). To illustrate the meaning of freedom, a variety of terms and words have been used which slightly differs from each other, but on the whole, freedom is a concept against determinism. Determinism is a doctrine based on which we could not do anything other than what we have done. In other words, our acts are, in advance, caused by determined factors. Since determinism pays attention to causes which determine human actions, some name this doctrine as causal determinism. According to Lacey (1996), "causal determinism says that everything that happens is caused; it allows that our choices and actions are effective as links in the causal chain" (Lacey, 1996,

p.120). In other words, every choice and act in the causal chain is determined by other causes. For this reason acting freely is impossible.

These two main attitudes toward human acts are often not radically adopted by philosophers in the form of two distinct groups of adherents of absolute freedom or advocates of absolute determinism, but the majority of philosophers consider human acts and their decisions as a result of both determining factors and free choices. Generally, the minority believing in absolute determinism are called incompatibilists, namely extreme determinists, those who think human free will is in contrast with the universal causality which is ruling the world. Incompatibilists hold that universal determinism is totally in contrast with the concept of free will and the two notions would never become compatible with each other; actually **“incompatibilism maintains that determinism precludes freedom”** (Audi, 1999, p.327). On the other hand, soft determinists who are referred as compatibilists believe that universal causality does not entirely affect human acts and while most of the prior conditions to human act are under influence of external causal factors, yet there is the possibility for human to make different decisions or choices other than probable ones (Lacey, 1996).

The issue of free will versus determinism has a strong connection with the concept of time. One of the views defending individual freedom is libertarianism **which “asserts that people are free and responsible and, a fortiori, that the past does not determine a unique future”** (Audi, 1999, p.327). In this claim there is a clear relationship between freedom and responsibility, on the one hand, and different parts of time on the other. Determinists, likewise, in spite of the strong disagreement with advocates of freedom, take the concept of time into consideration and define freedom and determinism by the relation that past has with future. For instance, one of the derivative forms of determinism is fatalism **which “holds that the future is fixed irrespective of our attempts to affect it”** (Lacey, 1996, p.119).

The concepts of past and future can be introduced as the two principal components in the definition of determinism, for by definition, it based on the definition, **“implies that at any time the future is already fixed and unique, with no possibility of alternative development”** (Audi, 1999, p.326). Another important point about the contrast between freedom and determinism is that the latter is a

rational subject, which means a mechanistic intellect to which Bergson gives the name of intelligence, but the desire for freedom is rooted much more in human inner world and his instinctive inclinations. Accordingly, it is said that “while free will is supported by our everyday consciousness, determinism gains its ground in science” (Bunnin & Yu, 2004, p.272).

Since the core concern of our discussion is freedom, explanation of the meaning of freedom seems necessary. For analyzing the important components of the concept of freedom it should be said that “two elements are common to most interpretations of “free”. First, freedom requires an absence of determination or certain sorts of determination, and second, one acts and chooses freely only of these endeavors are, properly speaking, one’s own” (Audi, 1999, p.326). According to these two principal elements in the definition of freedom two positive and negative meanings of freedom could be derived. “negative freedom, or freedom from, is the power to act in the absence of external constraint, coercion, or compulsion; and positive freedom, or freedom to, is the power to choose one’s own goals and course of conduct among alternatives” (Bunnin & Yu, 2004, p.271).

Freedom has a direct relationship as well with responsibility as it does with time; that is, “an agent’s responsibility for an action requires that the agent, the act, or the relevant decision be free”. Because of this, “the free will problem centers on these questions: does moral responsibility require any sort of practical freedom? If so, what sort? Are people practically free? Is practical freedom consist with the antecedent determination of actions, thoughts, and character?” (Audi, 1999, p.326). According to above contents, this study by giving an overall explanation of Bergson's philosophical thoughts and according to his dualistic system is attempting to generally illustrate his conception of freedom, especially in response to these questions as well as in relation to the concepts of time and intuition. Furthermore, we will represent that firstly, Bergson's freedom would not be grasped without a correct perception of his dualistic system. Secondly, in practical philosophy Bergson's freedom would not be brought into reality without appropriate conditions and without avoiding the misleading aspects of this dualistic system.

Dualistic foundations of Bergson's philosophy

Discussion about freedom is categorized in practical philosophy. Consequently, without regarding a philosopher's content of theoretical philosophy, it would be impossible to debate the concept of freedom and address the practical part of the philosopher thought. Bergson is a philosopher whose philosophical system is very coherent and consistent; so that we should consider his discussion about practical philosophy as a result of his theoretical attitude. Bergson's philosophical ideas, as he himself asserts, is dualistic. He in the seventh edition of his book *Matter and Memory* says: **“This book affirms the reality of spirit and the reality of matter, and tries to determine the relation of the one to the other by the study of a define example, that of memory. It is, then, frankly dualistic”** (Bergson, 1970, p.xi). In his interpretation of Bergson's philosophy, Russell who frequently emphasizes the feature of duality in the philosophy, when explaining the duality mentions that **“Bergson's philosophy, unlike most of the systems of the past, is dualistic”** (Russell, 1914, p.2).

The question arisen here is that where exactly the value of Bergson's dualism resides in and what differs his ideas from the dualism of others like Descartes. By criticizing the dualism of past systems, Bergson is attempting to show that the problem of dualistic philosophers before him is having spatial approach and **disregarding time as duration. He believes that “the mistake of ordinary dualism is that it starts from the spatial point of view: it puts on the one hand matter with its modifications in space, on the other unextended sensations in consciousness. Hence the impossibility of understanding how the spirit acts upon the body or the body upon the spirit”** (Bergson, 1970, p.294). **The writer of this paper is going to explain Bergson's dualism in terms of pairs which are categorized in groups of theoretical contrasts or practical ones, and from here, will address the Bergson's attitude toward freedom and necessity.**

The above-mentioned contrasts are nearly apparent in all Bergson's works. For instance **“Time and Free Will, Bergson's first book, ... offers a relatively straightforward, more-or-less accessible account of the contrast between duree (duration) and space, inner versus outer, freedom versus determinism, and so on”** (Barnard, 2011, p.71). One of the core issues of the book *Matter and Memory* is the contrast between material awareness and internal awareness which presupposes

the contrast between matter and life. *Creative Evolution* deals with the contrast between intelligence and intuition. *Two sources of Morality and religion*, likewise, deals with the pursuits of the dualities in the areas related to religion, morality and human soul. It is noteworthy that in Bergson's viewpoint who generally “sought to forge a new theory of life” (Kelly, 2010, p.3), “the opposition of the two principles, in dualism in general, resolves itself into the threefold opposition of the inextended and the extended, quality and quantity, freedom and necessity” (Bergson, 1970, p.325).

Bergson's dualistic view in theoretical part of his philosophical system is rooted in the concept of time. He adopts two types of time as one of the main aspect of his duality. The first time is the time used in natural or positive sciences which is a quantitative and scientific one and is at the center of mathematicians' and physicians' attention. The other time is the one we perceive inside our souls, and indeed it is not but a real duration and continuation. Actually, his meaning by time is the real time used in philosophy, while the unreal time is only applied in positive sciences.

He with this specific interpretation of time adds a new concept to philosophers' concepts and stands against the philosophers before him. To describe time, he introduces the concept of continuation and holds that continuation is the key to apprehend reality which is the main goal of human knowledge. The other kind of time is spatial time in which dynamism is ignored and Bergson considers it for philosophy deviating and illusive. Accordingly, he views duration and spatial time as two opposing things. That is, spatial time is quantitative and is apprehended by intelligence, while duration is qualitative perceived by intuitive method. From here, another contrast between material objects and conscious states appears and as Bergson acknowledges “there are two kinds of multiplicity: that of material objects, to which the conception of number is immediately applicable; and the multiplicity of states of consciousness, which cannot be regarded as numerical without the help of some symbolical representation, in which a necessary element is *space*” (Bergson, 1913, p.87).

Bergson's theoretical dualism about the object of knowledge is presented with the help of the contrast between matter and life as about time it is represented with the help of the contrast between duration and spatial time, in the case of method

his dualism can be apprehended in relation to the contrast between quantity and quality and finally, his dualism on the method of achieving knowledge is presented by the contrast between intelligence and intuition. As mentioned before, duration, is a continuous and dynamic time and can be perceived by intuition and indeed **“intuition in Bergson is always an intuition of the most simple idea, which is duration” (Lawlor, 2003, p.64)** and is in contrast with intelligence. **“The intellect aims, first of all, at constructing. This fabrication as exercised exclusively on inert matter, in this sense, that even if it makes use of organized material, it treats it as inert, without troubling about the life which animated it” (Bergson, 1944, p.169).** Thus, intellect is a state of brain related to matter while intuition is something internal¹. Therefore, in addition to reaching the dualism between consciousness and brain (or nervous system) from the dualism between life and matter (Bernet, 2010, p.55), he also rejects materialism and declares that **“we maintain, as against materialism, that perception overflows infinitely the cerebral state” (Bergson, 1970, p.236).**

Regarding Bergson's philosophical foundations, choosing one side of each contrast in theoretical philosophy would lead to the presence of one of the sides in practical philosophy. Accordingly, picking out the material side and using intellect, would turn human soul into a close soul². He likewise in social arena depicts a contrast between open society and close society³, so that dynamic religion rules the first society and static religion⁴ rules the latter society. Also, in morality considering intelligence in relation to matter would lead to a close morality and considering the method of intuition which takes life and duration into account would lead to the **realization of open morality. “The former (purely static morality) is characteristic of a whole group of habits which are, in man, the counterpart of certain instincts in animals; ... The latter (purely dynamic morality) is inspiration, intuition, emotion, susceptible of analysis into ideas” (Bergson, 1935, p.50).**

Bergson's conception of life is the dynamic aspect of it and its relation with

1. In this case Bergson's readers may encounter the concept of instinct and get confused/doubtful about what its role is in the process of human knowledge.

See also: Fell, Elena, 2012, *Duration, Temporality, Self*, p.71; Bergson, 1944, *Creative Evolution*, pp.182-194.

2. See also: Bergson, 1935, pp.26-28.

3. See also: Bergson, 1935, pp.230-234.

4. See also: Bergson, 1935, pp.171-181.

Creative Evolution. Accordingly, it could briefly be related that in *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, he “describes two sources of morality: intellect and instinct – or reason and intuition” (Jones, 2002, p.61). Hence, choosing every side of Bergson's theoretical contrasts, would bring about a specific condition in practical areas, including morality, religion, society and human soul. The above-mentioned contents depicts a system of thought which still has a piece of the puzzle absent. That is, it is a system which explains dual oppositions and suggests the results of selecting every side, but the missing link in the system depends on the issue of choice. Briefly explained, it should be determined whether we could freely choose and form society when encountering the theoretical conflicts, or depending on the society we live in, we are just obliged to select one side in the contrasts. In the scope of morality, for instance, Bergson believes that “between the first morality and the second, lies the whole distance between repose and movement” (Bergson, 1935, p.45). Thus, it is necessary to discuss freedom in order to show the place of contrasts between freedom and determination from Bergson's perspective.

The contrast between determination and freedom

As mentioned before, when dealing with the issues of determinism and freedom, there are three approaches, namely hard determinism, advocating absolute freedom (libertarianism) and the third approach adopts the possibility of both of them. Bergson is of the third view and attempts to illustrate the possibility of freedom and its place in human life by refusing the two extreme views. And in the next stage, he shows mistakes of the two approaches and especially he holds that the mistake of determinists is due to their wrong conception of duration. He, afterwards, depicts the features of freedom and its influence on human life and finally he discusses that how human is able to increase freedom and hinder the dominance of determination in life.

Generally, Bergson and his followers pay a special attention to the subject of freedom and indeed “Bergsonism is ... a philosophy that celebrates human freedom and creativity, both in ourselves and others” (Barnard, 2011, p.99). On the other hand, our evidence to this claim that Bergson is not an advocate of absolute freedom and attaches relative importance to determination is his direct remark in *Matter and Memory* when writing: “Whether we consider it (freedom) in time or space, freedom always seems to have its roots deep in necessity and to

be intimately organized with it” (Bergson, 1970, p.332). From this remark it can be concluded that Bergson's approach pays also attention to determination, when, for instance, speaks of sense perceptions, he explicitly maintains that **“nobody has ever contended that we were free, under given conditions, to hear any note or perceive any color we liked”** (Bergson, 1913, p.146). According to this remark it is certain that Bergson in pursuing his dualism, views human a bewildered being wandering on the path between determination and freedom and believes that **“necessity and freedom are present in the universe in the form of mutual dependency”** (Fell, 2012, p.53).

The writer of this paper holds the view that if Bergson leaves room for determinism and does not totally reject it, it probably is because of the respect that Bergson shows for scientific viewpoint (specially for Herbert Spencer's approach). As previously mentioned, Bergson, in one hand, was of the view that freedom is rooted in consciousness and that necessity is rooted in positive sciences, on the other hand he did not want (or could not) completely reject findings of sciences. Accordingly, he **“argued against the materialism, mechanism, and positivism of the Sorbonne without ignoring the achievements of modern sciences”** (Barnard, 2011, p.xvii).

In spite of the above interpretations, Bergson in his most important work on freedom, that is *Time and Free will* rejects both absolute standpoints and believes that their mistake is due to a wrong understanding of time. He about this subject expresses that **“all the difficulty arises from the fact that both parties picture the deliberation under the form of an oscillation in space, while it really consists in a dynamic progress in which the self and its motives, like real living beings, are in a constant state of becoming”** (Bergson, 1913, p.183). As mentioned in previous paragraph, Bergson rejects absolute freedom because of the very reason that we are unable to make choices freely in the scope of sense perceptions. Now it is illustrated that he, likewise, believes that adherent to determinism is due to a wrong understanding about time and disregarding duration. He also thinks that **“determinism is undercut once it is recognized that duree is, in its very nature, a dynamic, ever-new, ceaselessly changing, glowing, temporal reality whose every essence is freedom and unforeseeable creativity”** (Barnard, 2011, p.51). Therefore, now we should point to Bergson's main reason in rejection of absolute determinism, namely his interpretation about duration as a dynamic time which is

against the spatial interpretation of time. From here, it will be proved that how he establishes the foundations of his conception of freedom.

The realization of freedom within duration

It is not far from truth if we consider *Time and Free will* as the work in which Bergson attempts to demonstrate the role of spatial approach to time in believing **determinism. According to Bergson's belief in this work “by invading the series of our psychic states, by introducing space into our perception of duration, it corrupts at its very source our feeling of outer and inner change, of movement, and of freedom” (Bergson, 1913, p.74).**

This misleading mistake is due to the method which is named by Bergson superficial psychology. Bergson maintains that **“all its efforts will only bring into clearer light the absurdity of the fundamental hypothesis by which it spread out time in space and put succession at the very center of simultaneity” (ibid, p.139).** Regarding this reference, it is illustrated that the problem of freedom and rejection of determinism would be resolved when one adopts a true approach toward time. Even some interpreters have gone beyond this view and come to the conclusion **that essentially Bergson’s “doctrine of time is necessary for his vindication of freedom” (Russell, 1914, p.13).**

Therefore, spatial time versus duration should be considered as the most important contrasts in Bergson's dualism to reject determinism and demonstrate freedom. He thinks that those who deny freedom, have assumed time and space as the same things (Bergson, 1913, p.230), and indeed, essentially, the issue of freedom was arisen because duration as a dynamic and continuous flowingness, in one hand, and spatial time or temporal sequence, on the other hand, though are of two different areas, were assumed as one (Moulard-Leonard, 2008, p.15). Thus, this conclusion will be certain that the main mistake of determinists resides in the wrong conception they have in mind about duration (Bergson, 1913, p.173).

The question here is that which characteristic of Bergson's time or duration is so influential and noteworthy that could guarantee human freedom and how this doctrine could be demonstrated. To respond briefly, the flowingness of duration and its relationship with human life which is a self-conscious subject, can release us from both determinism and the belief in individual absolute freedom

(libertarianism). He, **in disagreement with these two standpoints, asserts that** “it seemed to us that a third course lay open. This is to replace ourselves in pure duration, of which the flow is continuous and in which we pass insensibly from one state to another: a continuity which is really lived, but artificially decomposed for the greater convenience of customary **knowledge**” (Bergson, 1970, p.243).

With this approach not only freedom is demonstrated, but also its self-evidence for every individual will be accepted. Because, according to Bergson and regarding his foundations in considering time, instead of dividing time into past, present and future and introducing present and future as something determined in the past when defining determinism, we should look at time as permanent flowingness and dynamism which cannot be divided. Indeed our past, present and future are inseparable. Actually, this division is applied by instrumental intellect or intelligence, by so doing, intelligence wants to take practical and instrumental advantages. **Bergson, on the contrary, believes that “the free act takes place in time which is flowing and not in time which has already flown. Freedom is therefore a fact, and among the facts which we observe there is non-clearer”** (Bergson, 1913, p. 221).

Features of freedom

In general terms, when regarding Bergson's dualism, if the contrasts are truly taken into account, the more we move to the correct side of this spectrum and epistemologically grasp the world within duration, the freer we become. Conversely, if we take spatial approach and rely on intellect as an instrument for knowledge, we would become more deterministic. Briefly, the one who is a **determinist “led to a mechanical conception of the self”** (*ibid*, p.171). On the contrary, freedom rejects such mechanical interpretation and it is something **renewable which is “derived from human life”** (Radhakrishnan, 1919, p.278). This interpretation indicates that human being, although might become involved in determinism as taking an incorrect epistemological point of view, yet if one adopts a correct epistemological foundation, would definitely understand that **“there is the room in the universe for a freedom of the human will, a definite creative activity, delivering us from the bonds of grim necessity and fate in which the physical sciences and the associationist psychology alike would bind us”** (Gunn, 1920, p.35). Since the mistake made by determinism is now revealed and the foundation of

freedom is fixed, it is time to scrutinize the core characteristics of Bergson's freedom.

The main epistemological feature of Bergson's freedom is that in light of a correct conception of time as duration, determination would become invalid and freedom would be demonstrated. The other epistemological characteristic of Bergson's freedom is that it should be conceived by the method of intuition instead of intellect or linguistic approach.

Previously, it is showed that determinism and refutation of free will is due to a misleading and incorrect epistemological approach. This viewpoint, instead of choosing an intuitive approach which is immediate and based on inner consciousness, adopts a misleading linguistic approach in order to achieve discourse and provide validity to express its viewpoint. Bergson asserted that **“it is only an inaccurate psychology, misled by language, which will show us the soul determined”** (Bergson, 1913, p.165). On the other hand, it is not at all necessary to appeal to language for expressing and defending our freedom which leads us to **fallacy, but “we perceive that we, in ourselves, are centers of indetermination enjoying freedom, and capable of creative activity”** (Gunn, 1920, p.36).

The very important point is that Bergson truly understood that time has been formulated within society and society seeks practical aspects, and therefore has an instrumental point of view. Thus, if we wish to express freedom, which is an internal subject and comes from our consciousness, through language we would definitely make mistake and if we accept the linguistic argument, we will adopt determination¹. **In his view “the self, infallible when it affirms its immediate experiences, feels itself free and says so; but, as soon as it tries to explain its freedom to itself, it no longer perceives itself except by a kind of refraction through space”** (Bergson, 1913, p.183).

This feature, of course, is not a weak point for Bergson's conception of freedom. For Bergson, by acknowledging the validity of intuition and immediate perception,

1. This indicates that Bergson strongly agrees with those analytic philosopher who believe that many philosophical problems are due to linguistic errors. When dealing with determinism and advocating freedom, he not only does not try to prove freedom through linguistic argument, but also he believes that such attempt is impossible and hold Thus, “any positive definition of freedom will ensure the victory of determinism” (Bergson, 1913, p.220).

provides validity to his belief about freedom. From his perspective, the method of intellect which is based on a linguistic instrument may be more common, but the real validity should be sought in the scope of intuitive knowledge which is a certain, immediate and based on internal self-conscious knowledge. Being unable to express freedom through language does not mean that freedom is invalid; But, on the contrary, this idea's reliance on intuition, confirms the validity of his conception of **freedom. Consequently “our inability to provide any rigorous explanation of our inherent freedom does not, however, imply that a free act is a “capricious, unreasonable action”; instead, the freedom that we have to act and to decide is something which we know immediately from within” (Barnard, 2011, p.57).**

From above explanations which are based on Bergson's view, it can be concluded that he does not believe in absolute freedom; and according to this, **freedom is a matter of degree and “freedom, thus understood, is not absolute, as a radically libertarian philosophy would have it; it admits of degrees” (Bergson, 1913, p.166).** Thence, human being is wandering on the path between determination and freedom and could increase or decrease his freedom depending on how much he lives according to knowledge. Knowledge is the main factor which can keep us far from deterministic acts and be a guidance to a free action in the course of life. The more we act according to consciousness coming from true approach to duration, the freer we will be able to act. And the extent to which we adhere to intelligence and take an instrumental view, the life would become more deterministic. Indeed **“the degree of freedom of an action depends on whether we have got ‘back into ourselves’ and away from the superficial public realm, away, quite literally, from our ‘outer face’” (Mullarkey, 1999, p. 44).**

The knowledge which leads human to freedom and is formed in light of an intuitive approach to time is the true and real knowledge, contrary to this is the knowledge obtained by intellect, something instrumental because of the very reason that it tries to exploit the world, which has caused a big mistake in history of philosophy. In practical life, spatial viewpoint needs nature to provide welfare and it is of no problem. Nevertheless, considering spiritual subjects such as **freedom results in illusion like that of the determinists’; but when considering spiritual subjects this standpoint would lead to the illusion which determinist are involved in. Therefore, in Bergson's view “the act will be so much the freer the more**

the dynamic series with which it is connected tends to be the fundamental self” (Bergson, 1913, p.167).

Conclusion

1. Bergson is a philosopher who explicitly has a dualistic approach to philosophical issues and without having a good grasp of this approach, comprehending his philosophy would be impossible. The most important bases in Bergson's dualism are the two confrontation with time and two ways of understanding the essence of **time. Bergson names his conception of time ‘duration’ and he views it as an indivisible time, which can be perceived by intuition and has a relationship with life. Contrary to this time is spatial time which is grasped by intellect and in Bergson's view, this very conception of time has brought about big mistakes in history of philosophy.**

2. When discussing about freedom versus determinism, Bergson is not an advocate of individual absolute freedom but believes that adopting determinism is due to a misunderstanding which is caused by such factors as materialistic and mechanistic approaches to the world, spatial time, intelligence and linguistic errors. On the other hand, duration, human's inner consciousness, an intuitive perception of the world as a flowing world lead us to the idea of human freedom and its clarity in the world.

3. If we have a good grasp of the contrasts represented by Bergson in his dualistic system, we will acknowledge that he regards one side of this duality as real and valid, while the other, he ascertains, as a result of an incorrect epistemological foundation, causing error and misunderstanding. The foundation of freedom in Bergson's thought and the main reason in believing either freedom or determination is the belief's epistemological base. Also the main reason contributing to a sound knowledge is a good perception of time which is in contrast with most philosophers' misunderstanding. Regarding the contrasts of Bergson's system, the more we move to the true side which enjoys more correctness and validity, the more we believe in freedom in theoretical scope. Therefore, Bergson neither accepts determination nor is an advocate of absolute freedom but regards freedom as something undeniable in human existence and the world.

4. The main feature of Bergson's freedom is that its source is human internal

consciousness, and, instead of dealing with linguistic arguments, it is obtained intuitively and in relation to human life. In the practical scope of society the most significant outcome of such approach is that open morality and dynamic religion would take the place of closed morality and static religion; this is something which free spirits obtain and without admitting freedom, it could never be put into practice. Hence, the foundation of achieving freedom is admitting it on the basis of a sound and correct epistemological ground which this foundation, in turn, relies on a valid intuitive knowledge of time as duration.



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