

## Epistemological and Psychological Explanation of Religious Cynic

### تبیین معرفت‌شناسانه و روان‌شناسانه شکاک دیندار

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#### Abstract

*Although cynicism is generally considered anti-religious, in fact, it is inseparable from the true faith of religion. There are two types of cynicism: the first one is being faithful and the second one is being atheistic. An epistemological and psychological study of faith have viewed the essential element of faith. True religious faith is the wisdom of restlessness. Cynicism is what energizes the faith. In this article with library method it is shown that faith expands with faith. Cynicism is neither offensive nor erroneous nor a guilt; rather it is a component of religious faith.*

#### چکیده

شک، هر چند که عموماً ضد دینی تلقی می‌شود، ولی در واقع شک از ایمان راستین دینی جدایی‌ناپذیر است. به شک می‌توان دو گونه نگریست: یکی مؤمنانه و دیگری ملحدانه. بررسی معرفت‌شناسانه و روان‌شناسانه شک مؤمنانه، نمایانگر این است که شک دینی عنصر ضروری ایمان است. ایمان راستین دینی حکمت بی‌قراری و قرار است. شک پویایی ایمان است. در این مقاله، با روش کتابخانه‌ای به این مبحث پرداخته شده و روشن شده که ایمان با شک مؤمنانه بسط و گسترش می‌یابد. شک‌ورزی نه توهین‌آمیز است و نه خط‌آمیز و نه گناه محسوب می‌شود. بلکه مؤلفه ایمان دینی است.

**Keywords:** *The Holy Quran, Cynicism, Certainty, Religion Faith, Epistemology, Psychology.*

**کلمات کلیدی:** قرآن، شک، یقین، ایمان دینی، معرفت‌شناسی، روان‌شناسی.

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### **Introduction**

It is very crude to think that the essence of knowledge is obtained easily. If we open many certainties, we will find that it is nothing but compound ignorance. The road, although very difficult and uneven, is walkable. This road is associated with pests and all kinds of diseases and difficulties. One of these pests is cynicism, which is not optional. It should be noted that cynicism can be done in two different ways and based on two different assumptions:

#### **A) Atheistic cynicism**

This kind of cynicism is based on a premise that says that it is impossible to obtain religious knowledge, and this is religious skepticism. The religious skeptic claims that there is no hope for the possibility of religious knowledge due to the many obstacles that stand in the way of acquiring religious knowledge. The founder and pioneer of religious skepticism in the new era is David Hume (Flew, 1961: 272-273). By denying the principle of causality, Hume founded religious skepticism and eventually came to the conclusion that a book written on theology and which should be set on fire is nothing but sophistry and deception (Brown, 1996: 69). Religious skepticism borders on and leads to atheism. The atheist confesses to denying God. Friedrich Nietzsche is the leader of the new theology and is considered the founder of the school of death of God. The atheist skeptic denies the existence of God and has a religiously and emotionally hostile attitude towards religious truths. Of course, in the meantime, cynicism has the same ruling when it becomes obsessive and entertains a person. This skepticism has no epistemological basis. As we can see, some people enjoy doubting things and

consider hesitation as the last home of their thinking. This is a dangerous condition (Motahhari, nd: 57).

#### **B) Faithful cynicism**

The presupposition of this kind of cynicism is the possibility of obtaining religious knowledge; that man seeks to discover truth and certainty. The skeptical religious seeks certainty. As an atheist, he does not deny the existence of God and is not emotionally hostile to religious truths. Rather, he has great passion and eagerness for God. He tries to overcome cynicism in spite of cynicism. The emergence of cynicisms and suspicions when human beings want to solve problems is a natural and normal thing, and it is this skepticism that drives human beings towards human research. Therefore, we consider this kind of cynicism sacred (Motahhari, nd: 56).

Therefore, any human being who occasionally becomes skeptical cannot be called a skeptic in a philosophical sense. In the field of psychological faith, it should be said that cynicism is one of the characteristics of every human being, and of course, the cynicism that an experienced human being has, cannot be considered a theoretical cynicism, because this kind of cynicism requires caution and foresight to avoid undesirable consequences and actions and not the state of mind of thinkers who can be called skeptical (Mahdavi, 1997: 10). It should be said that faithful cynicism is a kind of active cynicism and it is desirable, whether it is epistemological or psychological cynicism.

#### **Cynicism, Skepticism, Skeptic**

"Cynicism" or "doubt" means vacillation, perplexity and irresolution in the vote. The word is from the Latin

root "dubito" and its Greek root is duo (= two = second). Cynicism is a kind of sensual state and has a future and process and is considered as an inherent deviation of man. It may appear within some minutes and disappear later; because it is not optional. Of course, the cynicism may not be fleeting, but it will become permanent. Such a person is called a skeptic. The skeptic is unusual. A person who doubts something once is not called a skeptic. But skepticism is a kind of attitude and approach. It is an epistemological approach and, of course, has its own principles, issues and tools. The skeptic in the field of epistemology claims that "the acquisition of knowledge is impossible." (Dancy, 1986: 7) This approach and school, which is based on the impossibility of knowledge, may be a state of sensuality and suspicion, not hesitation and cynicism.

### **Types of skeptics**

Skeptics in the field of epistemology can be included in three categories: (Dancy, 1986: 8)

#### **First category**

Skeptics through reasoning: This group of skeptics prove the transformation of knowledge through reasoning. The result of their argument is that knowledge is impossible and no one knows, because basically no one can know.

#### **The second category**

Interrogative skeptics (through questions): These skeptics enter through interrogations. In the face of any knowledge that another claims, they ask how you know. The skeptic repeats his question long enough and continues to ask until the person's answers are finished. In the end, he concludes that science is baseless and baseless science is not a science.

#### **The third category**

Skeptic through perception: This type of skepticism, which is also considered a disease, is called temperament skepticism. He says that people who claim knowledge are naive and reach imaginary knowledge with simple and weak criteria; knowledge, on the other hand, requires stronger evidence that is far beyond the reach of ordinary people.

#### **Widespread skepticism and regional skepticism**

The skepticism of some skeptics is widespread; in such a way that no limits are immune from their suspicion, and on the contrary, some other skeptics specify a specific area and region for suspicion. The limitations of regional skepticism are: (Dancy, 1986: 8)

- Ethics
- Future
- Other minds
- Perceptual skepticism
- Religion and religious propositions

What we are aiming at in this discussion is regional skepticism in the realm of religion and religious propositions.

#### **Psychological certainty and epistemological certainty**

Certainty is a word that can both describe mental state and be attributed to propositions and beliefs. Certainty can be divided into two types: epistemology and psychology. When we say person S is certain, we are talking about psychological certainty, and when we say proposition P is certainty, we are talking about epistemological certainty (Klein, 1992: 62).

Psychological certainty is a kind of mental state of peace and tranquility that affects the human soul. This mental

state is not good or bad, but it is coming and not coming, it has weakness and intensity, and it causes spiritual persuasion. But epistemological or logical or conceptual certainty is mental persuasion. In fact, if four types of science and knowledge are obtained, we have achieved epistemological certainty:

1. That man knows A is B.
2. There is no possibility of its deterioration.
3. That a person knows that it is impossible A is not B.
4. There can be no possibility of its deterioration.

A connection can be made between these two types of certainty (Rollins, 1967: 2/67). But there is no necessary connection between the two. It can be said that there is a generality and peculiarity in some respect between these two. Many human beliefs are psychological, and contrary to certainty, epistemology is declining at any moment, even if it is repeated many times. The more one feels supported and empowered, the more certainty will be gained and, in turn, the less anxious one will be. In the meantime, faith as a religious belief can describe the religious state of mind and also the religious knowledge can be attributed to a religious proposition.

### **The link between certainty and cynicism**

The discussion of certainty has inevitably been linked to the discussion of cynicism, and in fact many theories that have been put forward about certainty have been opposed to skepticism or to avoid falling into the abyss of skepticism. For this reason, faith, as a religious belief, is linked to the discussion of cynicism, and the religious person trembles as to whether

his faith is really attributed to epistemological certainty or psychological one. Can he call himself religious if he is in doubt?

### **Faith**

The lexical analysis of the word faith can be useful in explaining different approaches to the category of faith. If we know the word faith from the Latin root *fiducia*, faith will be from carnality and mental states. But if we know it from the Latin root *fides*, faith will be of the type of science and awareness and certainty. Faith in the second sense is called conceptual or epistemological or propositional faith, and faith in the first sense is called non-propositional or spiritual faith.

### **Two different approaches to faith**

In general, there are two views and attitudes about faith, each of which has different followers: a propositional belief and psychological.

### **Propositional belief**

According to this view, faith is a kind of cognition and awareness. In this sense, faith is, firstly, a category of knowledge and, secondly, it always belongs to a proposition and not to an external being. For example, I believe that "God exists" belongs to my faith (Swinburn, 1999: 105). According to this approach, faith is not a certain belief. Epistemological certainty; that is, beliefs can be conclusively proven with the help of evidence and proofs. According to this view, the believer considers the possibility of the truth of the statement of "God exists" and other principles of religious beliefs to be certain. Even if the possibility of definitive proof of a belief is ruled out. From a phenomenological point of view, the

believer considers the truth of his beliefs to be certain.

### **Epistemological foundations of a propositional belief**

The predominant tendency of religious philosophers and rational believers is natural theology. The philosophers of the religion of the epistemological system have tried to prove the existence of God and other principles of religious beliefs by providing some evidences. In the Christian world, St. Thomas Aquinas, William Lane Craing, Dallas Willard, and Robert Adams were among the naturalistic theologians with a natural theological approach.

In the world of Islamic theology, despite some differences, they have a natural approach to the issue of faith. Fārābī and Avicenna and their school followers had a special tendency towards this school. They have divided human knowledge into obvious and theoretical. Of course, there is a difference of opinion about axioms between them. Farabi divides axioms into four types: acceptances, commons, sensations and first sensibilities (Farabi, 1408: 108). But Avicenna divides the axioms into eight types: principles and observations, which are themselves three categories: sensations that are known by the sense of appearance, concrete propositions with the inner senses, self-knowledge, experiences, successions, theories and conjectures (Avicenna, 1403: 299-213).

Natural theology is based on the epistemological view of Foundationalism. Foundationalism divide human beliefs into two categories: Foundational beliefs; Basic beliefs; Property basic beliefs that do not need to be confirmed and justified by other beliefs. The other is superstructure beliefs and non-basic

beliefs that need to be confirmed by other beliefs and, in their justification, reach out to other beliefs (Dancy, 1999: 54-53). In this epistemological view, believers' beliefs are based on infallible basic beliefs. The Foundationalism see themselves as the opposite of skepticism and believe that they have opened the knot of the riddle of the justification of knowledge and have fallen out of the trap of skepticism. The tradition of natural theology has had its ups and downs throughout history. Steven, M. Cahn said that no reason can provide knowledge to God as it is in natural theology (Geivettandsweetman, 1997: 246-257).

Doubting the principle of causality, which is the cornerstone of all the arguments of rational theology, Hume took a serious objection and founded a new religious skepticism. As Kant left the field of theoretical reason and organized Hume's religious skepticism (Barbour, 1983: 87-91).

### **Areas of Cynicism Based on Foundationalism Epistemology**

According to the Foundationalism epistemological view, on which natural theology or rational theology is based, cynicism is possible and certainty is rare. Here believers may doubt in religious beliefs. Cases that may cast cynicism on religious beliefs include:

**A. Problem of evil:** Studies on evils - both natural and moral - show that they always cause human suffering (Kedes, 1998: 466). One of the cases in which religious beliefs are doubted is when a person experiences a bitter and unfortunate event in life in which that unfortunate event directly or indirectly puts one of the religious beliefs in the place of controversy. Antony Flew (Geivett and Sweet Man, 1997: 246-245) and William, L. Rowe are among

the philosophers who emphasized the issue of evil, claiming that there was nowhere in the world to believe in God.

**B. Physical and physiological Problems:** Another case of cynicism is when a person is confronted with views that consider the origin of religion to be a physical and psychological matter. Some have even said that there is a gland in the body that when its secretion exceeds a certain level, a person is ready to become a believer and religious. Durkheim's psychological theory is one of the examples that has turned to atheism on this basis (Hick, 1992: 82-88). Man is very sensitive to his deception and suffers a lot from the fact that he would be a toy of one of the glands of his body. For this reason, a religious person may be skeptical for a moment when he or she hears a view of its physiological and psychological origins. As the new skepticism began with Descartes (1550-1650 AD).

Descartes mentioned the evil spirit hypothesis that there was nothing but me and the evil beliefs that instilled in me those beliefs.

**C. Insufficiency of evidence:** The fact that the arguments in natural theology are incapable of proving the existence of God, and that these arguments are not sufficient, leads to atheism. If one realizes that religious propositions are not rationally provable, one may become skeptical. Under the pretext of the complexity of the proofs of God and the lack of sufficient evidence, he suggests stopping and remaining silent about God. Husky agrees with Hume on the suspension of metaphysical issues. In his opinion, we should keep ourselves suspended from what is outside the period of inquiry, and is atheist (Copleston, 1997: 8/125).

**D. The case of proof of God is not closed:** Some arguments that prove the existence of God, especially arguments

that begin with concepts that have nothing to do with the world of sense and matter, their case with the rationalists has never been ended. At the top of these arguments is the argument of necessity and possibility, which, according to Mirza Mehdi Ashtiani, has been interpreted so far. This issue has caused the believer to be confused in the midst of these inexhaustible arguments and to doubt in his heart (Ashtiani, 1973: 407-411).

**E. Conflict of evidence:** Sometimes, by creating suspicion, there may be a conflict in the religious person's point of view. This contradiction leads to his astonishment and hesitation (Avicenna, 1418: 63). Cynicism even causes man to doubt the necessary and obvious things. Science is obvious and necessary for a person if there is no cynicism (Muzaffar, 2009: 22)<sup>1</sup>.

**F. The evolution of religious beliefs**  
When man sees the evolution of religious beliefs throughout history, he becomes skeptical. If I knew that the idea that is considered a kind of heresy today was once one of the necessities of religion, I would gradually doubt. The fact that religious scholars differ in their inferences about the rulings and beliefs of religion and become conflicted over time makes man epistemologically skeptical and doubts in their beliefs.

### 1. Reformed epistemology

This view was due to widespread skepticism that arose over the Foundationalism theory. Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstroff are two representatives of this

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1. the deceased Muzaffar considers the obvious and necessary as evident for all if the following issues are observed: 1- attention, 2- the health of mind, 3- the health of senses, 4- lack of cynicism and, 5- action without thinking (Muzaffar, 2009: 22)

epistemological movement. In short, they believe that "belief in God is really fundamental." Belief in God is a justified belief and does not arise from any other belief. Those who believe in reformed epistemology reject the Strong fundamentalism and turn to a kind of moderate fundamentalism (Peterson, 1991: 122). In this view, there is no need to provide evidence to prove God. Rather, believing in God requires no evidence. Religious people experience the presence and possession of God (ibid: 127).

Belief in the innate nature of theology in Islamic culture can be very similar to this theory. As Allameh Tabatabai also presents his account of the argument of the righteous, he tries to consider the existence of God as independent of reason and as an obvious proposition (Mulla Sadra, 2004: 6/14-15).

This view, which has been presented in defense of religion and religious beliefs, has been repeatedly criticized and challenged. The lack of any evidence in believing in God is hardly compensated. Except for the certainty and will of the person, for which conditions must also be provided. A reformed epistemologist can never remove cynicism from man; just as a believer, when reading the Bible, deeply feels that God is speaking to him, or after a hardship, realizes that God is not pleased with his act, or that he feels that God has forgiven him (Fa'ali, 1998: 298), as the believer may feel that God does not answer him in various difficulties or pressures. Whatever he prays for, he does not hear the answer; this can cause him to doubt in his beliefs. If there is no need to

prove God, emotions and feelings may cast cynicism on the religious faith at any moment.

## 2. Prudential account of religious belief

Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) is the pioneer of this way of thinking. He was opposed to rationalism and paid great attention to the human heart. According to him, human intellect is incapable of making decisions about God. But the heart has the ability to clarify man's duty toward it. He said that the heart has its own reasons and the intellect does not know those reasons (Pascal, 1941: 83). He sometimes commanded to shut down the intellect in believing. He distinguished between the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, and the God of philosophers and thinkers (Peterson, 1993: 277). Thus, Pascal made a fundamental distinction between intellectual and philosophical activity and religious faith and he believed that whatever the results of philosophical research are, they do not affect a firm religious faith. This cautious person should follow the heart and bow before it. So from Pascal's point of view:

**Firstly:** rational - philosophical arguments are ineffective in religious faith. God cannot be proved for rational reasons. Nor can He be denied.

**Secondly:** Now that there is no evidence to prove God, we must turn to the heart and accept the power of the heart in the face of the power of reason, so that God's grace may be included us in this way.

**Thirdly:** The reason for the heart is the same as betting. Now that the intellect has no reason for God, the heart rules; by betting on the other side, which is less dangerous, between the two branches of the existence and non-existence of God. If

God exists, neither the believer nor the atheist will be harmed. So there is a difference between a monotheist and an atheist in the presence of God. Therefore, the condition of expediency and caution is to choose the positive part that if it is true, we have benefited and if it is false, we have not suffered (Goetz, 1993: 475-484).

Therefore, the result of Pascal's wager is in the interest of man. William James continued Pascal's theory of betting. On the other hand, the theory of Pascal and James, both of which rely on feelings and emotions and underestimate reason and reasoning, was rebuked by William K. Clifford (1845-1879).

The English mathematician articulated the essential idea of strong rationalism: "It is a mistake to believe in anything based on inadequate evidence always, everywhere, and for everyone. Suppose a person accepts an idea as a child or later, and he keeps this idea safe and sound from any cynicisms growing in his mind... and he considers asking questions that disturb that idea to be infidel. The life of such a person is a great sin against humanity." (Peterson, 1991: 34)

According to Clifford, researching the evidence of an opinion is not something that can be done once and for all and has a definite validity. Cynicism should never be prevented because either that cynicism can be really dispelled based on previous research or the cynicism proves that those studies were not complete (Peterson, 1991: 34).

It is clear that faith based on interpretation is an expediency of religious beliefs full of cynicism. Betting discusses the issue of divine existence as a kind of mystery that can only be positioned on the basis of calculation and risk. We have to bet on our lives. Although Pascal tries to give a rational form of personal confidence by

presenting a metaphorical concept of God, it is clear that risk-taking is always accompanied by cynicism.

"The vetoing subject of your faith is this: It is better to risk losing the truth than the chance of error." says William James. He is like the believers, and he risk everything he has. Just as believers support the other opposing field and the opposite point, advising skepticism as a duty to find sufficient evidence for religion is tantamount to saying that surrendering in the presence of a religious hypothesis, which says it may be right (Hick, 1993: 125).

Moving in the direction of betting and gambling requires a kind of cynicism, apprehension and anxiety. Betting on life, that there is a God, even if we bet firmly and believe, we still remain skeptical and have to wait for enlightenment. The result of betting is in the future. According to Clifford, accepting a belief without a reason has dire consequences; like a sailor who goes to the ocean with a group of passengers without assurance of the strength and health of a ship and drown in the middle of the way. The root of this unfortunate incident lies in the fact that he had no right to do so without good reason (Peterson, 1991: 34).

### 3. Fideism

Fideism is a movement that has had a direct impact on the philosophy of religion and religious epistemology from the teachings of Ludwig Wittgenstein. According to him, without the ability to support our beliefs with evidence, we believe and this is normal (Wittgenstein, 2004: 98). Wittgenstein says that if there is evidence, it will actually ruin our whole work. Religious knowledge is not based on rational or natural consciousness, but only on faith. He says:



"According to what we have learned, we behave 'like this' and 'without theorizing' and 'reasoning'<sup>1</sup>" (Wittgenstein, 2004: 71).

The thought of testing and evaluating faith by rational and external criteria is a gross error<sup>2</sup>. S. Kierkegaard (1813-1885), a Danish thinker, harshly ridicules those who explore the truth of religion objectively with the help of evidence. According to him, a person who is really concerned about his condition never puts his existence in danger until, after further study and finding more evidence, he decides whether to place God in his faith or not, but such a person knows well that he has lost every moment that is without God (Kierkegaard, 1941: 178).

The Fideism does not blindly and stubbornly reject reason, but points out that first of all, giving evidence is based on fundamental assumptions, and one argument results from another. Since this process cannot be continued forever, it should lead to fundamental assumptions somewhere; that is, beliefs that do not need to be proven. According to the Fideism, from the point of view of the sincere believer, the most fundamental assumptions are

1. The child learns to believe in many things, that is, to act in accordance with these beliefs. More or less a system of beliefs is formed in which some things remain unshakable and some are more or less subject to change. What remains constant is not fixed because it is inherently obvious or proven, but what is around it keeps it constant (Wittgenstein, 2004: 70).

2. What is remarkable about Wittgenstein is how we act in many of our behaviors. He does not accept the traditional notion that all behaviors with our meaning precede the theory and points us to behaviors that are mostly animal and primitive reactions and are associated with instinct rather than reason and theorizing (Wittgenstein, 2004: 140).

religious faith, which is the basis of personal life. Second, if we measure the word of God by logic or science, we are in fact worshipping science and logic, not God (Peterson, 1991: 37-38).

Kierkegaard believed that in faith one should act contrary to reason. His motto was that one cannot believe in rational matters at all. His famous example is the story of Abraham and his son Ishmael (in his words, Isaac). He tells him that both Abraham and Ishmael, without the slightest resistance and even mental turmoil with mere submission, immediately rose to obey God's command and did not ask God for any explanation; because they knew that God is beyond logic. In theoretical issues and in practical issues, neither ethics nor logic can bind religion (Kierkegaard, 1995: 71-82).

According to Kierkegaard, from the point of view of reason, faith cannot be preferred to faith, and objective knowledge about God must give way to mental knowledge about the human condition (Brown, 1996: 131).

According to him, belief is inversely related to reasoning. The fewer the reasons, the better. Faith and reason are contradictory (ibid: 130). Another thinker who viewed faith from an internal, empirical, and emotional perspective and was influenced by Fideism ideas was Paul Tillich (1865-1965). Tillich says: Faith is the state of final attachment of man and his ultimate concern (Tillich, 1996: 16).

Faith is the ultimate attachment belonging to an ultimate being, and everyone enjoys this kind of attachment; that is, he belongs to God, but in the storm of life, he neglects it and has interested in an imaginary element such as wealth and "Everyone in his ultimate attachment is actually attached to God whether he knows it or not" (Hick,

1967: 3/166) the religious faith of Fideism relies on the will and is separated from reason and is compatible with skepticism.

Kierkegaard's Fideism was a sharp attack on Hegel's philosophical method. Therefore, some believe that Kierkegaard represents the bankruptcy of Western philosophy (Brown, 1996: 124). Fideism is a completely skeptical approach. "If I want to be safe in the valley of faith, I must always hang on to that objective uncertainty," says Kierkegaard. (Peterson, 1991: 38).

Thus, Fideism explicitly states that faith is consensual with cynicism, and the believer must first doubt in order to find faith in himself. Because Kierkegaard believes that for being faithful one should abandon intellect, it is clear that skepticism and faith make peace together. Therefore, it is said that Kierkegaard is an example of the idea of religious skepticism in the nineteenth century (Copleston, 1997: 7/320-339).

This view is a combination of complete skepticism about human knowledge in the realm of religious knowledge, with recourse to knowledge obtained through faith, not rational reason. The teachings of Bultmann, who promote radical skepticism, also say: It is not possible to understand what Jesus was like, but we can only know that he lived and died (Brown, 1996: 191).

Another point is that the faith of believers can be criticized. Because, as we have mentioned, believers explicitly say that one should act contrary to reason in faith. In other words, Fideism has an irrational but anti-rationalist approach.

### **Faith and the result of religious epistemological approaches**

The concept that comes from faith based on this epistemological and propositional approach has the following elements:

#### **A. Dogmatism**

An epistemological approach sticks hard to religion and propositional faith, and does not let it go. He considers reality to be fixed and non-fluid, and there can be no change in ideas. You cannot change your mind and give up. Propositional beliefs, or "a belief that", are inherently attributed to the proposition and are a testament to the proof of God. While achieving such a belief through reason is not possible; because basically the reasons cannot lead to the result that leads to a definite and absolute religious belief for all the wise at all times. At least religious epistemologists have failed to do so.

#### **B. Prejudice**

Belief is an idea about reality, and reality is what must be proven conclusively through rational and epistemological methods.

#### **C. Religious knowledge**

According to epistemological approaches, religious knowledge is a true and justified belief. Religious belief is epistemic when it justifies the rationality of religion in a rational way, and hence the truth of a religious belief is guaranteed.

#### **D. Denial of skepticism**

When knowledge belongs to everything, including religion, it is knowledge as long as it is true and justified. The element of truth is not the case in the belief. If the religious belief wants to give its place to religious knowledge and take on the color and smell of knowledge, it has to pass a long way (Fa'ali, 1998: 272).

#### **E. He understands to believe**

The Fideism tries to bring the dubious and skeptical issues to a convincing solution in an epistemic way in order to

understand and finally to believe and become a believer. According to religious epistemological approaches, it can be found that the epistemological and doctrinal view to faith never seeks peace and the believer never loses his effort. It is almost impossible for a believer to reach absolute rational persuasion only through the apparatus of religious epistemology.

The philosophy of religion, based on this conception of faith, has the task of justifying the rationality of religious beliefs. This type of philosophy of religion examines and evaluates religious beliefs epistemologically. This assessment, even in the majority of rationalism, has not been able to solve all the problems and answer all of them. What is important is to strive for reaching certainty, even if it fails to achieve this rare intellectual commodity.

#### **Distinguishing the position of definition and research in religious knowledge**

Religious knowledge should be divided into two categories of definition and research:

One has to do with the position that the believer should have his own characteristics based on epistemological approaches. Natural theology, modified epistemology, a cautious interpretation of religious belief and Fideism, according to which the believer must have his own characteristics, which we mentioned above. As we say in philosophy, "knowledge to the present situation is as it exists", this definition is related to position. That is, by definition, there should be knowledge toward general conditions, but philosophies that have been emerged abroad do not fully adhere to such a definition, and so it is in faith. If we

have to look at religious knowledge based on the different approaches we have mentioned as a definition and we have to look at it, it is far from a position of realization. It is in the position of realization that religious knowledge manifests itself and leads to religious faith. Achieving religious knowledge through reasons that lead to such definite and absolute faith does not seem possible.

All of these epistemological approaches that we have described have gaps that call into question religious knowledge. Thus, in the realm of the classical conception of faith, which is epistemic in nature and belongs to a series of religious propositions and beliefs, we are in fact confronted with a religious skeptic who has the following characteristics:

#### **A. The position of the new religious man**

The existential position of the new religious man is generally more in line with the position of the skeptical religious being; that is, man who lacks the certainty of knowledge. If you measure the faith of the people with philosophical and theological tests, you will see that most of them are no more than suspicions, and that is the saying of Abu Ali Sina, who said: Most of people's certainties are compressed suspicions. That is, it is suspicion, but because suspicion is based on suspicion, people think they are certainty! When will it be known that it is not certainty? When they encounter a serious obstacle. It is then that the strength of these certainties becomes apparent." (Soroush, 1997: 261)

People's certainty is not a certainty that resists against strong suspicions and arguments of the opposition, and therefore, in the strict sense of the word, they are not certain at all, they are even more suspicious than cynicism. Because

in the epistemological interpretation of standard faith, certainty is defined so high that it does not reach the position of realization of religious faith.

### **B. Uncertainty and inviolability of the reasons for proving the existence of God**

Accordingly, religious faith is not attainable in the realm of epistemic faith and propositions based on objective reasoning. That is, in his opinion, definite and absolute religious knowledge cannot be achieved through reason and argument. The fact that the case of any of the proofs of God has not been conclusively closed is itself a proof of the fact that their certainty and inviolability are questioned from a religious point of view. If the truth is manifested in the same way for all human beings, or if it is possible that every statement about the facts is true, then everyone will believe in it. As everyone believes that 2 multiply 2 equals 4, and on the other hand, if we could not rationally prove the inaccuracy of a statement, no one would believe it. The fact that we can now believe or not believe in propositions is due to the fact that these propositions can neither be proved rationally nor refuted (Malekian, 2006: 163).

### **C. Denial of peace of mind**

Assuming that we achieve rational persuasion, rational persuasion does not necessarily lead to peace of mind. Being influenced and changed in the face of some adversity and suffering, puts the believer in a special state of existence that destroys his peace. Whenever we find peace in something and lose sight of it, we are psychologically confident. Psychological certainty is an inner peace that manifests itself with an external inaction. Man can be sure of an acceptable proposition. Psychological

certainties are not necessarily epistemological. Just as epistemological certainties do not necessarily follow psychological certainties.

### **D. development of hermeneutics and exegeses**

Exegeses is concerned with reality, and hermeneutics relates to a variety of religious propositions. We offer different interpretations of external events and different interpretations within the scope of religious propositions (hermeneutics). This causes him to snatch the certainty of the believer and increase his hesitation.

### **E. Cynicism in rationality**

For at least a century, the rationality we are proud of has been in cynicism, which itself shakes the foundation of the epistemological approach to faith. Thus, there are widespread skepticisms in epistemological approaches and propositions to faith, and it has a tremendous effect on religious faith as a researcher, opening the way for the skeptical believer.

### **Existential and non-propositional approach to faith**

The flaws and shortcomings of the propositional approach to faith on the one hand and a kind of boredom of attributing absolute originality to science and knowledge and neglect of other aspects of human existence on the other hand, caused a shift from a propositional view to faith and a tendency to existential and non-propositional view to faith<sup>1</sup>. In this approach, faith is a mental state

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1. Religion in the West is a dichotomous element that sometimes emphasizes the epistemological dimension of its teachings and beliefs, and sometimes its emotional and inner

and a humane approach. In this sense, faith is a matter of trust, confidence or belief. With the difference that "I believe in you" means I have put someone in my spiritual support and "I am confident with you" means I am at peace with you and "I trust in you" means I put my problems on you. Here belonging of faith is the human being. Faith is a kind of "trust observing a person".

Luther, the founder of the Church Reformation, sees faith as trust in God. According to him, belief has two uses: one means believing a proposition and the other means believing in someone, and faith, contrary to Aquinas' idea, is of the type of believing in someone and not believing in a proposition (Hick, 1967: 7/166)<sup>1</sup>.

"Luther's meaning of faith is trust in God, is analyzed in terms of what he wants to say," says Swinburn.

First, we consider God to be benevolent.

Second, in the natural world we find things that are not in harmony with God's benevolence. Like illness and suffering.

Third, the issue of trusting in God is quite serious. In such a case we say we

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aspects dazzles the views. In the late eighteenth century, after much criticism to the propositional approach of religion, philosophers of religion instead of emphasizing the epistemological perspective, mentioned intuitive and emotional attitudes toward religion. Since then, thinkers have strayed from theoretical and doctrinal definitions and considered empirical, emotional, intuitive, and even moral factors to be important in religion.

1. When we say "I believe it is a white flower," we call it a (belief-that) or a (propositional belief); because after that there is always a proposition and the conjunction "that" is mediated between the belief and the proposition. This kind of belief is inherently attributable to the proposition and broadly to the object, but when we say "I believe in you," then belief is a kind of trust, and it means that I trust you. (Belief in) will not be of the knowledge type.

trust in God (Swinburn, 1999: 110). This view of faith is a mystical approach to religion. Believers of this view want to put aside reason for God experience God from mystical experiences. Friedrich Schleiermacher and Rudolf Otto argued that religious experience is a feeling, not knowledge.

Rudolf Otto describes the religious experience as a complex set of emotions: "The mysterious lightning secret can sometimes enter like a breeze, and fill the soul with serenity from the deepest layers of worship. This feeling may become a more stable and enduring state of mind, and may continue like a slip and vibrate with fear and submission." (Otto, 1958: 12)

According to this approach, a person has a special trust in God and commits himself to Him. Here faith is the act of the will. A special state of being that encompasses the whole of human existence. It is assumed that faith implies certainty and great emotional passion. In this non-existential and non-propositional faith, which is formed on the axis of trust, confidence and believe, several characteristics can be traced:

**First**, as we have said here, faith is based on trust between two distinct persons or beings. That is, a person trusts in someone. The relationship between two distinct beings is of the "I-you" type, not "I-it" (Bumber, 1970: 53-85).

**Second:** Faith is a complete and trustworthy trust that involves a kind of existential and emotional conflict. The believer finds himself mingled with him. This conflict is general and includes all the existential aspects of the individual (Macquarie, 1998: 105) and leads to a kind of existential transformation and annihilation, and this is a state beyond reason and knowledge.

**Third:** This kind of faith is out of necessity; the poor need the rich. Absolute poverty versus absolute richness. A need that, if it is not met, threatens human existence, and of course within this faith, there is also the belief that the need will be met; "O mankind! Ye are the poor in your relation to Allah. And Allah! He is the Absolute, the Owner of Praise" Fātir: 15).<sup>1</sup> Of course, the peak of this need is nothing but Him. In the true faith, there is no god but God, and trust in Him is for Himself and not to satisfy a need other than Him. Trust in God is not a tool trust, but it is in itself and for Him. They worship Him not out of greed for heaven or out of fear of hell, but because they love Him Ibn Arabī, nd: 1/11). Rābi'a al-'Adawiyya says: "O God! If I worship You out of fear of Hell, burn me in Hell, and if I worship You in the hope of Paradise, forbid it for me, and if I worship You for You, bless me its beauty." And he also says: "O God! Give everything You have granted me in this world to Your enemies and give everything You have shared in the Hereafter to Your friends so that You will be enough for me." (Attar, 1975: 1/73).

Mystics call this faith "love". Ibn Arabī says: "I turn to the religion of love, its caravan wherever goes, I go with it, my religion and faith is love and affection." It is clear that in this model of faith, the relationship between the believer and God is the relationship between lover and beloved.

**Fourth:** This faith is formed on the one hand on the axis of feelings and emotions, and on the other hand, it is the manifestation of God behind the scenes. God is ambiguously manifested and

met. It is a quality that must be discovered in the human experience of the world and the glory of his visit that goes beyond the real world and leads to the observation of the eternal realm and the exemplary world (Hick, 1993: 184). In the face of man with God, it evokes very deep and transformative emotions that are associated with three types of deep feelings: (Peterson, 1991: 23-25, Narāghī, 1999: 63)

**First:** the feeling of belonging and deep dependence of human existence to God. In the face of Him, man perceives himself as non-existent in the face of absolute existence. Man is a lowly being, whose everything is from a sublime being.

**Second:** the feeling of a kind of deep and shocking fear. The awesomeness of Transcendental God puts the deepest layers of human existence into terrifying tremors and evokes a transformative fear in him.

**Third:** There is a feeling of impatient longing and great love for that other being. This great enthusiasm pervades human existence. It is clear that the basic element of this kind of faith is a certainty, which is the result of religious experience. If a person is in a position to establish a perceptual relationship with God and holy beings, he is in a mental state that makes him aware of the truths. This kind of certainty is the result of a kind of seeing. New religious people and the masses seem to be less likely to find themselves in such a situation. They are deprived of such experience and consequently of such certainty. However, everyone fears being in such a situation. But not everyone is in the same situation.

A few may be in that position, but the majority are not in that position, and those who are in that position are not in the same position. Some are anxious to get to that position and others are not.

١. يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ [فاطر/١٥].

Psychologists generally believe that not everyone has the same talent for believing. In some people it is less and in some people it is more. Therefore, not all human beings can be expected to believe in the same way.

Just as helping the poor is a moral-religious value, but some who are born in miserliness and stinginess help a little with difficulty, but those who are born in generous families, do not need to fight themselves to help the poor. Research shows that children's religiosity is strongly influenced by the behavior of parents and the religious orientation of the school and their upbringing environment (Brown, 1987: 194).

#### **Religious beliefs are devotional beliefs**

Religious beliefs are part of devotional beliefs. In fact, we worship like one or more people and we have taken a series of beliefs from them. The general public is less free to choose. Before any decision and choice is made, the religious person is born and raised in the context of a particular religious tradition, and his mentality is formed in accordance with that tradition, and his religious feeling is also determined within that framework. Hence, they naturally learn and practice in the context of that tradition. So, according to the culture and tradition in which you live, a person also achieves his religious life and behavior and learns a series of beliefs. In fact, his set of beliefs is more inherited, and if these beliefs and convictions that are taken from a person are stopped, we will have no definite reason for the benefit or loss of the people. In such a way that if we do not want to be devout and argue with them, we will not have a definite or even indefinite reason for their benefit and loss. Therefore, the certainty of most

people is a common and ordinary certainty, inherited from the family and inherited from the parents. So this certainty cannot defend these beliefs. Because its support is a series of causes and not reasons.

#### **Critique of devotional beliefs**

The spirit of devotion-escaping and free thinking are the most important characteristics of a modern man. That is, he does not like to say A is B because someone has said it. That is why arguing in religious beliefs is a common phenomenon. Criticism of devotional beliefs can be raised in three positions: (Malekian, 2006: 159-160).

**First**, the source that has authority for me is rightly or unjustly? Throughout history, many have asked us to take them as our role models, but did they really have that right or not?

**Second**, is the interpretation of the words of this authority an interpretation in accordance with his intentions or not?

**Third**, that critique is when we see that there is a discrepancy between what we believe in in terms of worship and what we have in terms of reasoning. This also opens the door to criticism that the right should be given to this or that?

#### **The skeptical believer**

Can a religious person still be considered religious when he is in cynicism?

It is clear that atheist cynicism is an exaggeration. It is an intentional, wise, and atheist cynicism, and such a person cannot be considered religious. Even a person whose method and character is this and cynicism has been gradually strengthened by his will cannot be a believer. Such a cynicism is incompatible with faith and religious prohibition also belongs to such a

cynicism; “The (true) believers are those only who believe in Allah and His messenger and afterward doubt not” (Hujurāt: 1),<sup>1</sup> “And he had no warrant whatsoever against them, save that We would know him who believeth in the Hereafter from him who is in doubt thereof; and thy Lord (O Muhammad) takes note of all things.” Sāba’: 21)<sup>2</sup>

When we refer to the scriptures, it seems that the verses themselves are in conflict with each other. In some verses, faith can be accompanied with uncertainty: “He said: Dost thou not believe? Abraham said: Yea, but (I ask) in order that my heart may be at ease” (Baqarah: 260)<sup>3</sup>. God said to Abraham, “Have you not yet believed?” Abraham replied, “Yes I believe, but calm my heart?” While in the verse: “save that We would know him who believeth in the Hereafter from him who is in doubt thereof” (Sāba’: 11)<sup>4</sup>

He does not consider faith to be gathered with cynicism. This is an apparent conflict, not a real one. But a skeptic can also be a believer; this means that the believer doubts about some of his beliefs for a moment. Because cynicism, unlike skepticism, is not a deliberate and wise thing, and even if it is intentional and wise, it is the motivator of human beings towards research and the prelude to attaining certainty, faith and confidence. Moreover, something that is not

voluntary cannot be subject to intellectual or religious prohibition.

Prohibition refers to something that deals with something voluntary. When something is out of our will, it cannot belong to the prohibition. Even if it is the intentional suspicion, it can still be gathered by faith in the religious beliefs that lead to the actuality and order; because it is a passage to certainty.

According to Martyr Motahhari, such a state of cynicism is the prelude to perfection. This cynicism is a good and necessary passage, but it is not a stop and a home (Motahhari, nd: 56). Imam Mohammad al-Ghazali followed the same path. He began from cynicism to reach knowledge and certainty. Of course, he considered the way to reach certainty not as reason and intellect, but as an inner discovery and personal certainty that can be achieved with divine light (Ghazali, 1983: 27). If we consider certainty to be part of faith, whether in the philosophical and epistemological sense or in the psychological sense, the vast majority of people will be infidels and atheists, because their certainty is not in the strict sense of the word certainty and may be shaken. It is not possible to expect such faith from people and it is unreasonable and unrealistic. Most people's certainties are suspicions. But does this suspicion diminish the value of faith? No, because these beliefs are acceptable to God. Therefore, the faith of most believers is accompanied with cynicism; because the same beliefs must be preserved and strengthened, as in the psychology, forgetfulness is considered the condition of memory, here too the condition of certainty is cynicism, and the certainty is certainty that is accompanied with cynicism.

According to Islamic theology, even if we refer to the Qur'an, we find a lack

١. إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا [حجرات/١٥].

٢. وَمَا كَانَ لَهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَأْتِيهِمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ. مِمَّنْ هُوَ مِنْهَا فِي شَكٍّ [سبا/٢١].

٣. قَالَ أَوْ لَمْ تُؤْمِنُ قَالَ بَلَىٰ وَ لَكِن لِّيَطْمَئِنَّ قَلْبِي [بقره/٢٦٠].

٤. وَمَا كَانَ لَهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَأْتِيهِمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ. مِمَّنْ هُوَ مِنْهَا فِي شَكٍّ [سبا/٢١].



of absolute certainty in faith. For example, in the Qur'an, the term suspicion is widely used. Expressions such as "may be" have been used extensively in the Qur'an, which belongs to the same concept. Therefore, faith in this sense is completely embraced by cynicism, and the value of the believer is that he does not give up the requirements of his faith in spite of cynicism, unless something stronger emerges. The believer is not threatened by any change and he calms down. The believer is always on the path and knows slowly. Every belief he has is a home on the way to the truth, and since he never feels himself at his destination, he is always ready to move towards it, and the believer is always on his way to the truth. He always transforms himself. He constantly finds himself evolving and fluid.

### Conclusion

The hidden part of the believer is restless and is constantly on the move to calmness. The believer is always in search of the truth. Cynicism and criticism are the factors that perpetuate the dynamism and growth of faith. A faith that does not accompany cynicism will not be able to survive. The believer can take a skeptical stance while making a practical commitment to religious belief. However, faithful cynicism is neither offensive nor erroneous nor sinful, but it is perfectly compatible with religious faith and is even a component of religious faith.

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