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The Relationship and Interconnection of Morals and Metaphysics in the Philosophy of Ziya Gökalp

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Abstract: This study explores the ethical and metaphysical dimensions of Gökalp's social and political teachings, highlighting their analytical and normative elements rooted in moral philosophy. Gökalp argued that the societal morality is insufficient and advocated for the development of scientific ethics, emphasizing the equal importance of pursuing goodness and truth. Metaphysical discussions in his work address unresolved issues across three domains: the value and limits of knowledge, the nature of matter and life, and the existence of God and the soul's relationship with the universe. The research aims to bridge the gap in understanding Gökalp's integration of ethical norms with metaphysical inquiries. Using textual analysis of his writings, the study reveals Gökalp's efforts to align ethical frameworks with scientific and metaphysical thought, offering insights into the philosophical underpinnings of his social and political ideology. These findings contribute to broader discussions on the interplay between ethics, metaphysics, and societal development.

Keywords: Ziya Gökalp, Philosophy, Western Philosophers, Logic, Ethics, Metaphysics, Belief.

1. Introduction

While establishing his moral philosophy, Ziya Gökalp paid attention to another important issue, studied the thoughts of thinkers he considered important in this regard, and clarified his own opinion and where he stood. This issue is the nature of the relationship between morality and metaphysics. Although the relationship between morality and metaphysics is universal, that is, important for all communities and all moral philosophies, it is extremely important in the region where Gökalp lived, especially for the nation in which he lived. Because the Turks, as a people who have been considered one of the most important representatives of the Islamic world for centuries, have defined their morality and goodness within the framework of what religion has commanded and judged. They tried to understand and experience the essence of their duty. For these reasons, Gökalp first tried to understand the relationship between metaphysics and morality, and then tried to show where the connection between religion and morality should be placed as a type of metaphysics.

According to Ziya Gökalp, despite the fact that it is often claimed to the contrary, metaphysical assumptions, earthly or heavenly beliefs, are very much connected with morality and behavior, and these metaphysical assumptions have a very strong influence on morality and behavior. The evidence for this, he cites, is that every person observes around him people whose philosophical and religious beliefs govern their behavior and morality [1:732]. For example, he says, the beliefs that "Everything is written on our foreheads" or "Man is completely free" do not affect human actions. Similarly, the

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influence of beliefs that “Everything in the universe arises by chance” or “The universe is subject to the power of reason” on morality and actions cannot be denied. As noted above, even if it is acknowledged that these assumptions are part of moral beliefs and do not constitute the basis for accepting morality, the influence of metaphysical assumptions on morality cannot be ignored.

2. Materials and Methods

Here Gökalp immediately tries to clarify one point, because he does not want his views on this subject to spread to other subjects, or even to be misinterpreted. In his opinion, the existence of a relationship between ethics and metaphysics is not like the existence of a relationship between metaphysics and science. The two should never be confused. This is because, says Gökalp, the purpose of science and the purpose of ethics are different [1:732]. Indeed, the purpose of science is knowledge, knowledge; the purpose of ethics is action. It is wrong to reflect one's metaphysical beliefs in scientific activity, because what one wants to achieve is knowledge that is not purified by any metaphysical beliefs. However, metaphysical assumptions, that is, beliefs (earthly or heavenly), affect a person's behavior and actions in any situation.

This, of course, affects what you consider to be right and wrong. Therefore, Gökalp believes that it is not appropriate to deny or ignore the influence of metaphysical assumptions when dealing with moral philosophy. On the other hand, when studying the history of philosophy, all moral philosophers up to Kant have combined ethics and metaphysics [1:732 and 3:142]. For example, he says: “The whole of Plato's ethics exists at the maximum level previously established by Pythagoras; the moral concept of the Stoics follows logically from their metaphysical concept of the universe, and Spinoza called his main work on metaphysics ‘Ethics’ [1:732]. So it seems that we can see that ethics are transmitted from generation to generation and that they can be traced back to ancient historical times.

Gökalp argues that all philosophers, up to Kant, distinguished between ethics and metaphysics [1:733]. In his opinion, Kant, by separating metaphysics and ethics, although they did not separate them, completely distanced himself from the traditional concept of ethics. However, despite all his efforts, he realized that in order to complete the ethics he had built, he had to include some axioms in his system, and he had to include metaphysical assumptions such as inherent freedom, the immortality of the soul, and God.

3. Results

Philosophy defined the inner nature of nature as the subject of metaphysics. While the sciences spoke of visible beings, philosophy was forced to speak of metaphysics in order to understand the reality of these visible beings. Metaphysics initially began with the human heart and investigated the source of conscious phenomena at the intersection with science. Starting from where metaphysics was forced to remain silent, it addressed the subjects of subject and object. Since metaphysics deals with the reflection of objects in consciousness, it also feels that their origin is consciousness. While the sciences have a materialistic perspective in examining visible beings, metaphysics has taken an idealistic path, addressing the invisible reality behind visible beings. While the sciences reveal material determinism and development, metaphysics deals with spiritual determinism and development.

It investigated whether qualities, like metaphysical quantities, can also cause determinism and development. When metaphysics, like the sciences, acquired a positive character in relation to experience, it separated from philosophy and philosophy was forced to chart a new course for itself. Thus philosophy found its treasure of value. Value does not increase or decrease quantitatively, nor is it inactive like quality. Value is a tangible nature that has reached the necessary maturity. Although this nature of its nature does not have external existence, its existence in its mind is sufficient. It is an effective idea

and force. This idea and force first begin in the mind, then acquire a spiritual identity, and then external reality. Philosophy is obliged to express and evaluate ideals in a way that is consistent with science and metaphysics, unless they contradict what it values. According to Gökalp, it is the mother of sciences, consisting of general logic, but later, having mixed with metaphysics, it was considered as a general aesthetic.

But today, philosophy, which has withdrawn into its own sphere, has taken on the task of appreciating political, legal and spiritual values. Today, philosophy is seen as a general morality. The method of philosophy today is not discovery and analysis, but appreciation and demonstration [2:1-7]. Indeed, one must also be aware of the harm that moral values can cause today. For example, if morality were based entirely on metaphysical or religious foundations, then as soon as these beliefs were lost or abandoned, moral beliefs would have to disappear with them, and such a situation would be prone to great disasters. For these reasons, although Gökalp accepted that morality is influenced by metaphysics, we can see from his works that he believed that moral thought based on metaphysical elements should be avoided as much as possible.

4. Discussion

According to Gökalp, after Kant, the question arises: "Is there a connection between morality and metaphysics?" He now asks: "What should be the relationship between morality and metaphysics?" So, now the question arises: "Should morality be completely subordinate to metaphysics?" or "Should we try to remove morality from the influence of metaphysics as much as possible?" Debates have taken place. According to Gökalp, the winning approach after Kant is the second approach. Because, he says, Descartes showed us the most logical path, which is to start from the most known and work towards the least known, and that is why ethics should follow this path. He believes that ethics, while it has some dark spots, is a much more open and tolerant field than metaphysics.

For example, even if the nature of the soul and God is unknown, we must know our duties to the society in which we live. In fact, even if metaphysical or religious assumptions are abandoned, moral assumptions do not completely lose their force. The fact that even the irreligious can be pure, and sometimes, on the contrary, the religious can be impure, is evidence of this. On the other hand, it is subject to metaphysics. In addition, he spoke about the attributes of God and the duties of man before God. He followed Pascal's faithful views on achieving knowledge of God, and Pascal, who put forward the ideas, "It is not the mind that perceives God, but the heart.

This is the meaning of faith" [1:450]. He proved that reaching God is not through the mind, but through the heart, that is, through faith. Ziya Gökalp also expressed his thoughts on the immortality of the soul. He put forward the ideas of Bergson and William James in solving this issue. He discussed the immortality of the soul by evaluating metaphysical arguments, Spinozist arguments, and moral arguments. Gökalp emphasized that the immortality of the soul cannot be solved by rational approaches.

5. Conclusion

Ziya Gökalp, one of the most important figures in modern Turkish intellectual life in the 20th century, produced important and remarkable works on Turkish society and culture during the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the republic. Gökalp is a thinker philosopher who tries to find solutions to the problems of society with a practical goal rather than a philosopher who puts forward theoretical ideas. He was a multifaceted thinker who paid attention to national feelings, historical consciousness, science, philosophy, sociology, economics, etc. He was a multifaceted thinker. Gökalp's division of knowledge into two, creative knowledge and created knowledge, creative knowledge is the active methods used by science in the study of truths. Created knowledge is all knowledge discovered through creative knowledge. Gökalp's philosophy is discussed under the headings of education and morality, based on the difference between morality

and metaphysics. The goal of education is to educate "national personalities". Education is related to the adaptation of the individual to his cosmic environment. Gökalp, beyond being a simple theorist, aimed to build a bridge between knowledge and life through his teachings. He sought to create a philosophical education system based on debate, responsibility, freedom, and competition, from elementary school to higher education.

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