

CRITIQUE OF METAPHYSICS IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF GHAZALI AND KANT

[GAZALİ VE KANT FELSEFELERİNDE METAFİZİK ELEŞTİRİSİ]

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ABSTRACT

Our study aims to deal with different and similar conditions between Ghazali and Kant, as characters that can show two different thinking forms and two different cultural structures in their thoughts, in context of the same subject. We will deal with *why* and *how* that the approaches of both thinkers to the subject *transcendental dialectic* occur by passing through which stages and try to display that both cultural world incline to this subject by which *aim*.

Keywords: Ghazali, Kant, metaphysics, transcendental dialectic, a priori, a posteriori, critical philosophy.

ÖZET

Çalışmamız, iki ayrı düşünme biçimi ve iki ayrı kültürel yapıyı, düşünmelerinde gösterebilen ilişkiler olarak Gazali ve Kant arasındaki benzer ve farklı durumları, aynı konu başlığında ele almak amaçladır. Her iki düşünürün de *a kantsal diyalektik* konusuna yaklaşımlarını, hangi amaçlardan geçerek gerçekleştirdiklerini, *niçini* ve *nasıl* ile birlikte ele alacak ve her iki kültür dünyasındaki hangi amaç ile bu konuya ele aldıklarını göstermeye çalışacağız.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Gazali, Kant, metafizik, a kantsal diyalektik, önsel, sonsal, ele tiri felsefe.

INTRODUCTION

There is a thinking conception constituting itself and also a civilization improving throughout it for every culture. Attempt of understanding and giving meaning itself for existence called human being actualizes around the form of mentality, and this thinking ability shapes its imaginations and its point of view to the truth. This case brings in a manner of life, which is the form of perception the world, and assists in continuation of its existence to itself. Any act which is not aim-based, in the final analysis, cannot be lasting and modifier on people. This is cause, it should be understood that the advancement of humanity comes true by systematic thinking on behalf of philosophy.

In this writing, we will try to show the approaches of Eastern and Western culture to the question and how the difference of that approaches. However, no matter what, if the question is the same, the consequence is the partial same, too. But their points of views are different because of the difference in living manners of both cultures. Ghazali's critique of metaphysics is derived from difficulties in the application of thinking form coming from a foreign culture to the present one (Ghazali, 1972, p. Preface), whereas Kant's critiques base on the objection to reasonings contrary to absoluteness and naturalness of philosophy. (Kant, 1929, p. Preface)

On the one hand Ghazali and on the other hand Kant, as two volunteers who are different people but subservient for purpose in all respects, have not only criticized metaphysics by their own cultural point of views and positions, but has tried to show why metaphysics could not make judgment concerning their fields as well. In this respect, we will systematically deal with extremely difficult and extremely complicated discussions presented by Ghazali and Kant, by caring to how both philosophers have approached to critique of metaphysics according as their point of views to philosophy.¹

¹ There are two books telling about the relation between Ghazali and Kant comparatively. M. Amin Abdullah's work (1992) is a thesis study on moral views of both thinkers and it is quite far from the subject, whereas A. Mohamad Falahi's work (2003) is, though it is insufficient, useful to researchers.

THE CONCEPT OF TRANSCENDENTAL DIALECTIC

Kant calls metaphysics as *the battlefield of these endless controversies* (Kant, 1929, p. Aviii) and he expresses the statements belong to this field as the logic of antinomies. The term dialectic is commentated with meaning used in sophistic and eristic philosophies, but not in Plato and Hegel. (Kant, 1929, p. B86) Here, dialectic is both the form of paralogsism in which reason falls cyclically and the form of indication of the wrong in order to correct it. He exposes the reason to be in paradox, by proving the impossibility of opposite of both thesis and antithesis. The term dialectic in the Aristotelian meaning can be explained as the art of getting the exact knowledge from premises based on assumptions. To make critique of philosophy with this method used by Ghazali as well arises from the nature of theological thinking. For theological statements has been called *dialectic* but not *apodictic*, because of being intended for debate and based on acceptance respect to philosophy, that is, included the *accepted premises*. (Aristotle, 2002, p. 71a5-10)

Reason for Kant's using the attribute *transcendental* is related to using except for all sense perceptions, in other words, related to pure imaginations in which there are no imaginations concerning sensations. These imaginations are not given to us by any experiences, for they are informations presented by pure reason in a priori; human beings get these informations by their mental procedures.

THE RELATION BETWEEN DIALECTIC AND METAPHYSICS

The relation between dialectic and metaphysics begins with reasonings about theories of knowledge by Socrates and Plato. There exists dialectic in the basis of these reasonings and by this art; mental things are stated within certain rules. Plato has endeavoured to arrive at the world of ideas by dialectical reasoning, and thus he has founded dialectic as the only philosophical method. But Aristotle, although he has considered *dialectic* as a phase of way leading on the truth, has qualified the method leading on the exact knowledge as *apodictic* and he has called dialectic as an *endoxa* which is the science of assumption. Aristotle has meant syllogistical proof or apodictic demonstration for the form of syllogism whose premises consist of the first principles or exact things.

According to Aristotle, the apodictic premise differs from the dialectical, because the apodictic premise is the assertion of one of two contradictory statements, whereas the dialectical premise depends on the adversary choice between two contradictories. But this will make no difference to the production of a syllogism in either case. Therefore a syllogistic premise without qualification will be an affirmation or denial of something concerning something else in the way we have described; it will be apodictic, if it is true and obtained through the first principles of its science; while a dialectical premises is the giving of a choice between two contradictories, when a man is proceeding by question, but when he is syllogizing it is the assertion of that which is apparent and generally admitted. The nature then of a premise and the difference between syllogistic, apodictic, and dialectical premises, may be taken as sufficiently defined by us in relation to our present need, but will be stated accurately in the sequel. (Aristotle, 1989, p. 24a20-b15)

He applies to this method leading on the exact and true knowledge by ignoring the sophistic and eristic form of prof like Plato. That method, at the same time, will be the only method which to constitute the basis of metaphysical propositions. Aristotle's thoughts on the doctrine of categories and the mind principles are related to as the subject of ontology as the science of logic, that is to say, the mind principles are identical to being principles. But Aristotle do not use dialectic method in metaphysics, instead of it, he use apodictic method that he suppose to consist of the exact premises. Because apodictic method reaches to true knowledge from *archaea* which are the first principles.

Dialectical method is definitely dealt with *the logic of illusion*. The reason is that Kant counts dialectic as the method of sophistic and eristic philosophies that show a strong defense in sharp contrast to the truth during the debate. This sort of dialectic appears to us as the art which legitimizes itself by exaggerated grammatical statements and which wants to verify itself by defeating its opponent. Yet, according to Kant, such a situation is in opposition to the nature of truth and it is convicted to be the logic of illusion. The sense of Peripatetic philosophy has gathered up support to itself in Islamic world, and consequently, it has raised great philosophers like Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes. As soon as the study of philosophy was introduced into Islamic circles, a

violent tension between religion and it was bound to exist (Hourani, 1976, p. 2) and this tension was calmed in favour of religion, with prevailing religion against philosophy.

GHAZALI AND UNCERTAINTY OF METAPHYSICS

With regard to Ghazali's side, we are seen that this discussion method is often used by theologians. For the most fundamental duty is to convince to everyone the authenticity of the statements mentioned in their holy texts. Then, such a tendency of convincing should inhold the logic of affirmation and refutation. The assertion of Peripatetic philosophy is that the inquiries concerning the realm of existence can make with three methods called sophistic, dialectic and apodictic dealt with the truth. The logical texture grounded by metaphysics during given the first principles is that the truth is merely acquired by apodictic reasoning established from the exact premises. (Alfarabi, 1990, p. 131-2) The negation of metaphysics as the science of the first principles by Ghazali and other religious scholars is owing to that it makes some statements about theology by the the principles of pure reason. Because metaphysician philosophers have asserted that the truth could only be comprehended, and in this sense, they have propounded that the only valid method in understanding the existenece at all points by using demonstrative epistemology was apodictic syllogisms.

Ghazali's aim is to make some inquiry concerning to show that they could not keep on theological field their attitudes about demonstration which they have seen as the only method. (Ghazali, 1972, p. 2nd Preamble) Ghazali tries to prove that the method used by metaphysicians is incoherent in acquiring the informations on transcendental field, by giving examples from themselves. Ghazali claims that philosophers has actually not held to apodictic method, or rather not applied this method to other fields. Even though it is necessary a *middle term* in apodictic method, metaphysicians did not perform it. For instance, since there is not a middle term declared that the knowledge of God is necessary, the statements of philosophers are in contradiction with themselves.

Ghazali has concentrated on the incoherence of philosophers's comments concerning metaphysics and after remarked on what the real subject of metaphysics is existence, since existence is in the

most general sense God, he said that the real subject of metaphysics was God. (Ghazali, 1961, p. 7) Besides, soul and freedom are also subjects of metaphysics. According to Ghazali, the comments suggested by philosophers on metaphysics, which he describes as a field that human mind cannot know, are mostly incorrect. Because knowledges belong to metaphysics can just give something dominating to metaphysical field, and that is the logos of God. Apodictic method used by Perpatetics can only give a definite judgment amongst beings inclusive of the subject of the natural sciences. Yet beyond the physics cannot be known by applying syllogism regarding the visible beings to this field.

Ghazali also criticizes metaphysicians on seeing the concepts of the science of logic as the real beings. For, according to Aristotelian thought, to exist is to be individualized, that is, to be substance from a certain viewpoint, because of enabling itself with concept in order to be the first category in the logic. Accordingly, metaphysicians, due to the defense the truth of concepts, have been mistaken in their some statements, especially speeches on God. For instance, if there is a being for possibility, then it is required to be a being for impossibility, but any impossibility cannot correspond to the real being. For Ghazali, to have a prudence under the guidance of the mind about transcendental field and to show this as the truth itself is absurd. (Ghazali, 1972, p. 17th Question) The primary aim of his objections is to prevent the theological field from metaphysicians who have filled with suspicions by relying on their minds when they expressed divine rules declared by God. Putting forward that philosophers have deceived people through their suspicious thoughts by hyding the truth informed by revelation, Ghazali states that it cannot be spoken of theological field within the limits of pure reason. In particular, the subjects of the existence and unity of God, the eternity of the universe, and resurrection are the subjects which Ghazali has completely seen philosophers through the incoherence.

THE STUATION OF METAPHYSICS IN KANT'S CRITICAL PHILOSOPHY

The most serious critiques of philosophy in the west were made by Kant. According to him, when the usage of pure reason employs as *organon* but it is treated as *canon* whose the real purpose, the subject of debate becomes dialectic. (Kant, 1929, p. A61) That is, it is given name *transcendental analytic* to the part of logic belongs to the truth field that pure reason tries to deal with synthetical,

and *transcendental dialectic* to the part of logic called making synthetical judgment belongs to the field whose truth cannot be understood with reason, when the name of rational research related to the truth immediately. (Kant, 1929, p. A64 / B88) Kant, while drawn the limits of reason, exposed which kind of knowledge could be acquired by principles of reason. According to him, things which to knowledge by reason are knowledges which to acquire by experience. Kant sees metaphysics as a battlefield and points out that there is no possible for our judgments belong to this field by principles of reason.

For Kant, reason thinks within certain categories and has knowledge. God, soul and freedom those are mainly metaphysical questions have unobtainable attributes by pure reason itself, because these concepts are not clear for reason, even entirely closed. Knowing power of reason is limited with corresponding concepts to phenomena. After separated knowledge as *a priori* and *a posteriori*, Kant subjects it to distinction as *analytic* and *synthetic*. That is, we get knowledges immediate firstly, by experience secondarily, and something requires adding any information to subject in order to be knowledge, in other words, our knowledges must consist of empiric and synthetic judgments. Since claiming to give the first principles, metaphysical propositions must consist of synthetic and a priori judgment to be knowledge. But according to Kant, there is no contingency for synthetic a priori knowledge for metaphysical propositions. The possibility of such knowledge depends on perception of reason thing in itself, by going beyond experience. However, it is impossible to get knowledge for reason on anything closed to perception. Nevertheless, Kant offers that reason keeps itself from thinking, even though he sees metaphysics as an illusion of reason. (Kant, 1929, p. B307-8)²

Under these circumstances known as antinomies of reason, the relation of metaphysics to the field of being in itself beyond the factual thing would not state anything else farther than illusion. According to Kant, without sensibility no object would be given to us, without understanding no object would be thought. Kant postulates from that well-known proposition, which is basis on his critiques: "Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind." (Kant, 1929, p. A51 / B75) This idea is based on what there were a priori categories of sensibilities as well

² Kant speaks of dialectic as the logic of illusion in the following way: "We have already entitled dialectic in general a *logic of illusion*. This does not mean a doctrine of *probability*; for probability is truth, known however on insufficient grounds, and the knowledge of which, though thus imperfect, is not on that account deceptive; and such doctrine, accordingly, is not to be separated from the analytic part of logic. Still less justification have we for regarding *appearance* and *illusion* as being identical. For truth or illusion is not in the object, in so far as it is intuited, but in the judgment about it, in so far as it is thought. (Kant, 1929, p. B350)

as reason. Space and time, which are two forms of sensibilities, both limit the human mind and show that reason will be occupied in pseudo ideas, in the meantime relating to transcendental field. (Kant, 1929, p. B37ff.)

Dialectic seemed as the logic of illusion, according to Kant, since only proposes the counterfactual thinking, does not state the possible. It is clear that dialectic analyses lead us to knowledge of the assumption but not knowledge of the truth. Since every metaphysics has absoluteness essentially, never can be in attempt by with no reason in order to reach to this aim. But reason, which contains any act of thinking, can only understand as far as something is posited in the mind, it can be nothing but the mode in which the mind is affected through its own activity and so is affected by itself. (Kant, 1929, p. B67) If reason were comprehended the essence of being called thing in itself, it could immediately comprehend notions, such as God, soul and freedom. But such a comprehension, according to Kant, is not anything else than assumption, and this leads metaphysician to error.

Criticizing metaphysics, Kant does entirely not regard it as an unsubstantial and useless thing; on the contrary, metaphysics is an important for Kant as well. Kant makes an effort to substitute epistemological metaphysics to ontological metaphysics. If misleading expressions of ontology and logic clean out metaphysics, both metaphysics and logic go with themselves epistemology. Eventually, Kant's aforesaid efforts cleaning out metaphysics caused to meet the metaphysics of morals. Kant says that there exists a free will separated from determinist rules of the nature, that is, such an idea is the real as which is based upon the volition power of human. This situation would assist to accept the only being, namely God, which to provide to arrive at the highest good and afterwards to be and free and felicity. (Kant, 1889 and 2002)

CONCLUSION

We tried to show the important of critiques of metaphysics in Eastern and Western intellectual world, by dealing with thinkers of both cultures who is notable for their critiques in this field. Whereas Ghazali made a critique of metaphysics intended for the defense of religion not for the absoluteness of philosophy, Kant criticized incorrect views of metaphysics and endeavored to

express that beyond the experience is closed for us. In this sense, from the viewpoints of Ghazali and Kant, statements belonging to the world beyond physics are fictions and represent a field that the human mind does not afford. But both philosopher never did deny metaphysics, on the contrary, they esteemed it. Their critiques is aimed that views on metaphysical field cannot be known by which metaphysicians expressed it. In this paper we displayed the difficulties of survival for metaphysics which is caught between religion and philosophy, and criticized seriously by them. Eventually, both thinkers have approached to metaphysics from their own point of views and they have evaluated it so.

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