

KANT ON REASON, MORALITY AND RELIGION

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
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DECLARATION

I, **Almira Omarova**, do hereby declare that the dissertation entitled *Kant on Reason, Morality and Religion* in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my original research work. The dissertation has not been submitted in part or in full to any other university or elsewhere to obtain any other degree.

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INTRODUCTION

Morality and religion have always influenced the formation of the value-semantic relationship of man towards the world. In fact, an important place in the philosophical interpretation of the world is the problem of values and the value relationship of man to the world. All philosophers from antiquity to the present, one way or another, in their treatises tried to adequately understand the essence of that relationship in question. On the one hand, the person's value attitude to the world is connected, anyhow, with the world of obligation, and on the other hand - the value interpretation of the world is always connected with the world of being, that is, the essential understanding of the world of obligation and its role in the system of cognitive and practical human activity. Discarding all conventions, we can say that Kant was the philosopher who most acutely posed this problem in his works. He clearly shows that pure reason provides knowledge of the essence of reality as such; while practical reason ensures knowledge of the values of being. The conclusion to which Kant came is reduced to the fact that practical reason, i.e. moral consciousness becomes dominant and determinant in relation to pure reason. As a result, he formulates the statement of the "categorical imperative" or moral law, which should become the basic principle of the life of every person. It is obvious that the value relationship of man to the world in philosophy can be understood through the juxtaposition of opposites, such as subjective and objective, positive and negative, good and evil.

By affirming the priority of unconditional values, morality and religion limit the discretion of immorality and atheism, warding off the danger of rolling down to moral nihilism. True morality and religion always lead to ideals that go beyond empirical reality in everyday life. It is impossible to preserve a true morality by completely rejecting a religion, just as it is impossible to be truly religious, while being immoral.

In ethics, Kant attempts to find *a priori* ground for morality. It must be a universal principle (the law for all). The universal law of morality is possible and necessary; Kant insists that there is something in the world, the existence of which contains both the highest goal and the highest value. This something is a man. Such a

law, like the *a priori* principle of the ultimate goal, Kant calls a categorical imperative (obligatory order): everyone, regardless of his position in society, must act so that his act could do general good or, differently speaking - that the will of the individual could become a universal legislation. But, one way or another, morality and faith allows man to enter a world that is closed to science. Therefore, Kant said, “I had to suspend knowledge in order to make room for belief.”¹

Kant’s ethics explicitly shows us when exactly can a person afford to have bliss in his life. The pursuit of happiness can be introduced into life only through faith, on the basis of morality, and not on any speculative ground. It should be understood that the foundation of any religion is morality that has already been expressed in God's commandments too; they are nothing but moral laws. If we consider religion as the basis of morality, then we can define that it must be perceived rationally.

The study of religion from the standpoint of scientific thinking without any references to theology was made possible by Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). Since, he gave an important clue for the alignment of philosophy that reason has a stronger argument than those possessed by church’s doctrine or scripture. However, the matters of religion were touched upon by all the significant thinkers of the past and the present, the successful mastery of this heritage would become the foundation for practical and philosophical substantiation of religion.

Kant whose philosophical views have been formed solely within the framework of Protestantism and Pietism², however, while expanding on his philosophy of religion, he does it through the prism of moral progress and notions of moral self-perfection for man. Not an atheist in the strict sense of the word, but coming from deeply religious family, Kant nonetheless believed that a moral consciousness focuses on strict adherence to duty; this to a much greater extent determines the true meaning of human life in comparison with the religious one. Therefore, looking at the future, he wrote about the possibility of the onset of such a time when faith in God will lose its importance and the main guideline for a person

¹ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 25.

² A 17th century religious movement originating in Germany in reaction to formalism and intellectualism and personal religious experience. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-religion/> Accessed on: 13/07/2017, 22.00 pm.

will be moral patterns and principles. Fundamentally, Kant tried to scientifically substantiate the characteristics of Protestant theologians' conviction of independence of faith in relation to knowledge. According to Protestant understanding, the religious faith is not theoretical, but mainly a practical human function, and therefore it is to be justified differently, but not as a theoretical knowledge of the world.

If we go over Kant's critical philosophy, we will see that Kant has greatly expanded and deepened the boundaries of the philosophical analysis of religious issues, paying special attention to the study of sociological and philosophical roots of religion. Following Hume, Kant without overriding the traditionally established conviction of the foundation of faith lying in the person's fear before the all-destructive nature that opposes it, and then Kant sets the task of a keen philosophical analysis of the very phenomenon of person's nature and faith itself. In his work *Religion within the Boundaries of Bare Reason*, he sees the synthesis between religion and morality in their socio-philosophical framing.

Tracing the historical stages of the formation and development of religion, Kant identifies two main types of religion: statutory, and natural religion (religion of reason), defined as a "moral religion". A human connects hope to happiness and well-being not with his own freedom, but exclusively with the grace and favor of God. Kant dislikes the functional, and even to some extent, mercantile attitude that is established between a man and God; he argued on the insolvency of a man to fully comprehend his freedom. In this relationship, Kant sees the echoes of paganism, where the principle "quid pro quo" (something for something) was fundamental in the relation between the person and God. The highest and most perfect faith, according to Kant, is the faith of the reason. This faith does not shift responsibility to God, nor to any other supernatural forces. The person himself must be responsible for all the vicissitudes of his destiny, for his thoughts, aspirations and good or evil deeds.

Religion of reason, therefore, is the religion of the good and moral perfection in man. The main regulator of moral behavior is conscience, which Kant characterizes as a fear that has been pushed deep into the self-consciousness of a person. In religion of reason, God becomes an ideal, the highest moral principle, capable of helping a per

son to reveal his own potentialities, to illuminate his life path with that of vivifying rays, to clearly and uncompromisingly define the boundaries of good and evil principles in human nature.

An inquiry concerning the reconciliation of materialism and idealism, a compromise between the two, as well as the combination in one system of heterogeneous, opposing philosophical terms it seems are the essential part of Kant's critical philosophy. In this dissertation, a descriptive and critical analysis of Kant's philosophy of religion in the light of its moral assessment and rational justification sets before us a number of tasks in order to conceive a comprehensible understanding of that reconciliation between an ideal and material worlds.

In the present dissertation, I am highlighting that the Kantian philosophy of religion has rather made a large path in its development and therefore we could try to reveal the patterns and principles of this path.

So, Kant's philosophy of religion is an attempt to build a "religious philosophy" primarily based on his own understanding of morality and on the principles of critical idealism in that form, which has been developed in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Since, all subsequent works of Kant to a greater or lesser extent also affect the religious and philosophical significance of critical idealism, then in a more systematic study it is necessary, respectively, to introduce them into the range of texts under consideration. Kant's philosophy of religion is a single project. Every religious and philosophical thought are present in his later works that have been mentioning in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

The possibility of considering a religion from different positions of philosophical approach has become Kant's main goal. He tries to show that our practical reason that reveals what our duty is in fact broader than the theoretical one and does not depend on it. As per Kant, the theoretically improvable ideas of God and the immortality of the soul are of practical importance, since a man, although a carrier of universal reason is at the same time an earthly being that has his end, thus he needs support for his choice in favor of moral behavior.

The main questions that I am mainly dealing with in this dissertation are related with a) complex outlook between morality, religion and reason, b) I will also be throwing light on the questions that bring together Kant's perception of the notion of theoretical and practical reason, his transcendental idealism and I will try to respond to the questions that are being raised in the relation between morality and religion. Specifically, I am trying to raise concerns over questions such as how does Kant reconcile our freedom with that of religious dogmas and canons? how is it possible to bring together the inventions of the Enlightenment and theology, spreading among the enlightened Europe? How are they affecting human behavior if we are really concerned about being religious, worshipping, believing in some kind of Higher Being? It is interesting to see how Kant has given answers to these questions and how he has come to his main conclusions about what is religion within the boundaries of bare reason. So this dissertation intends to investigate the relationship present between moral and religious affairs within the framework of the topic *Kant on Reason, Morality and Religion*.

While making appeals to Kant's major work on reason, morality and religion, this study intends to focus on his one much later works, such as his final works on reconciliation between morality and religion, namely *Religion within the Boundaries of Bare Reason*.

This dissertation work besides the introduction and conclusion chapters is divided into three chapters. There are many sections to each chapter. The first chapter namely, "Kant's Moral Philosophy: the Principles and Key Concepts Related to Human Freedom", tries to describe and analyze the prominent ethical conceptions in Kant's moral philosophy. While analyzing Kant's ethics and its categories of will, goodwill, categorical imperative and Kant's conception of the highest good, this chapter makes reference to his main works namely, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, *Critique of Practical Reason* and *Religion within of Boundaries of Mere Reason*.

In the first chapter, while defining a person's free will one must rely on reason; only then the will becomes free. Reason is the founder of "free will" and its legislator. However, there is a question, as to what is the inner motive, incentive for free will since, Kant says that it is not possible to deduce the free will from man's

sensual nature. Meantime, there is another query as to how the will becomes not only free, but also a good will? After all, a man, striving to achieve his personal interests and needs, also relies on the “will”, but this will does not automatically become either good or moral. Kant believes that initially the will is neither evil nor good, it is becoming either evil or good. In that regard, he introduces his concept of the “radical evil” that is rooted in a person's inclination towards resolving contradictions between duty and the sensual nature of a man in favor of the latter. The word “radical” here stands not in the sense of extremeness, but in the sense of fundamental rootedness. In fact, Kant's “radical evil” is very close to the biblical “original sin” or “the fall of man” that is a man's instability before temptations, entrenched in him from ages. In this regard, Kant points out that,

The human being is *evil*, can signify nothing other than this: He is conscious of the moral law and yet has admitted the (occasional) deviation from it into his maxim...we may call this basis a natural propensity to evil, and, since it must yet always be something of which one is oneself guilty, we may even call it a *radical*, innate *evil* in human nature (yet nonetheless brought upon us by ourselves)...This evil is *radical*, because it corrupts the basis of all maxims. At the same time, as a natural propensity, it also cannot be extirpated through human powers, because this could be done only through good maxims; yet if the supreme subjective basis of all maxims is presupposed as corrupted, this cannot occur. But it must nonetheless be possible to outweigh this propensity, because it is found in the human being as a freely acting being.³

When a person pursues his personal benefit, he does not become evil yet. But when he elevates this principle to the absolute and the law, he necessarily becomes evil, and his “will” cannot become good. A man, says Kant, being a rational and sensible one puts forth the concept of good. Good presents a certain spiritual reality while reason is what constitutes it. It is transcendental indeed. The will that is oriented towards good as such, not only becomes goodwill, but is autonomous, self-sufficient and genuinely free. The good is a value that is able to exclude evil as such or limit its scope. Kant indicates that it is conceivable only when moral incentive becomes the inner motive of action for a person.

Therefore, I argue that the “will” being free and pure is indeed pure practical reason. Pre-Kantian thinkers, the first Christian theologians and philosophers substantiated the thesis of free will as a cause of original sin and the moral fall of a

³ Kant, *Religion*, pp. 35-40.

man in sum. Kant fundamentally re-evaluates the freedom of the “will”, seeing in it, above all, a deep, transcendental source of morality. He asserted that animals do not have the will. Thus, the man differs from an animal not only by the presence of the will, but also by the presence of free will.

Further, an adequate understanding of Kant's doctrine of freedom needs to fully take into account his statements about the original, objective inclinations inherent in human nature. These inclinations are the predisposition to animality of the human being as a living being; to the humanity of him as a living and at the same time rational being; to his personality, of a being who is rational and at the same time capable of imputation. The given list of inclinations inherent in human nature indicates that Kant fully takes into account the objective determinacy of the human being, the determinacy, which for the most part characterizes a man as a phenomenon of nature, subordinated to its laws.

Are we really here in this universe to belong to a certain religion in order to be moral or behave morally? Or what is the true nature of religion and faith? What resolutions are there for reconciling freedom and religious dogmas, what has Kant proposed in his religious philosophy? The second chapter is devoted solely to answer the above questions and as well as examine and justify Kant’s philosophy of religion. First of all, while re-examining philosophical deliberations on religion this study also makes reference of Spinoza’s and Hume’s philosophical views. The similarities and differences of certain views on religion, both in Spinoza and Hume are in consonance with Kant’s religious philosophy.

Spinoza, like Kant, sought to show that philosophy and religion are fundamentally different. However, both of them have provided a space for the religious branch in the field of philosophy. Spinoza’s general reflections are quite simple and for that matter, he indicates that philosophy always operates at the level of mind and reason, whereas a religion operates exclusively within one’s imagination and representation. The goal of philosophy is truth, while religion achieves only obedience and subordination. Philosophy is based on reason, and religion uses obedience for fear and superstition. Spinoza as Kant has made a scientific criticism of the Bible.

As for Hume, religion is exclusively a matter of faith and revelation. But if this is so, then only one question is of interest to science, namely: why does a person psychologically need religious ideas and religious consciousness? Hume's philosophy clearly poses the problem of psychological research of religious consciousness and the conditions for changing positive religions in the life of mankind. Religion, by Hume, has a root in the very nature of a man, in his feelings and affects, in his natural moral impulses. The change of positive religious beliefs depends on the development of the human spirit, moral feelings and aspirations of a man.

As for the subject of the existence of God, verifying Kant's stand is very crucial. On the one hand, Kant does not claim the existence of God, as an objective reality and he does not proceed from this objectivity. On the other hand, Kant does not only exclude, but even positively hints at the existence of God, makes the possibility of his existence part of his worldview system. Throughout his critical philosophy, the question of God is always present as an inevitable "ideal" for transcendental dialectics.

As it is, Kant believes that faith in God is connected with the moral convictions and actions of man, without which "sincere faith" is out of question. But it is impossible for a person to realize a moral imperative in all its categoricalness: the personal maximum of the moral person's act can never have the power of a universal law in the literal sense. Otherwise, man would have to act as if he were not himself. For instance, can one protect a woman from a hooligan not out of the feelings of anger toward him and not out of a feeling of pity for a woman, not out of sympathy for people in general or not out of a desire for justice, but from the mere conviction of pure practical reason, rejecting all, even completely positive passion, inclination? According to a strict moral imperative, if an interest is at the heart of an act, the will cannot be free, and the law – moral.

Therefore, Kant proposes to consider the law of free will "as commands of the Supreme Being because we can hope for the highest good (to strive for which is our duty under the moral law) only from a morally perfect (holy and beneficent) and

omnipotent will.”⁴ This is just one of the moments of Kant's substantiation for the moral proof of God's existence.

Ethical assessment of religion incorporates many aspects, such as the classification of religions. While briefly discussing the question of ethical classification of religions, Kant is dividing up religion into natural religion (that is “pure religion of reason”) and revelation (“ecclesiastical faith”). According to him, the concept of the divine commandment is primary in the religions of revelation which only then is perceived by a man as a moral duty. In natural religions, the concept of duty is primary, which only then recognizes as the divine commandment. That is we are analyzing the notion of “pure religion of reason”, that according to Kant governs by reason and by its sustained moral maxims. I am distinguishing between the historical/statutory religions and the notion of “pure religion of reason”. Since, Kant insists that historical religions are full of miracles and prophecies. It is to be analyzed how religious faiths restrict human freedom and will. I have also tried to review the compatibility between the statutory religion and “moral religion”. It is also consequential to give an impartial analysis of Kant's argument for the existence God.

In the last chapter, I am summarizing on Kant's moral philosophy and religion. Above all, while delving into the question as to what is an ethical community for Kant, how does he determine the attributes of the ethical community? This work tries to delineate, the idea of commonwealth which are governed by the laws of virtue or Kingdom of God upon Earth.

Further, I am highlighting the specific outcomes of the relationship between morality and religion. Kant argues upon the autonomy of ethics that is presented in his philosophy; he is substantiating morality by means of its own objective possibilities, deriving morality's main content from the inherent imperative of obligation, which extends its influence to all living beings. The autonomy of the ethical theory is treated here in two ways. First, “morality is in need neither of the idea of another being above him in order for him to cognize his duty, nor, in order for him to observe it, of an incentive other than the law itself”⁵ that is, in essence, declares itself as an autonomous, independent of all other hypothetically presupposed sources of moral

⁴ Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 134.

⁵ Kant, *Religion*, p. 1.

representations of a man such as sociocultural, supersensible and psycho-emotional etc. Therefore, for Kant, true morality, in principle and in fact, is really independent not only from the external influence of earthly authorities – be it society, state institutions, authorities, customs or prejudices, but also from the inner spiritual motives of the individual, supported by the influence of religion and the church, from supersensible phenomena, in other words, from all that cannot be explained rationally, and even more so from the fluctuations between good and evil principles.

Secondly, in Kant's autonomy of ethics, morality is not simply detached from faith and religion, but in fact, it itself tries to rise towards them and become a kind of ethical religiosity, without worshipping dogmatic injunctions, nevertheless fully armed with the authority of the moral law, that understood as unconditional imperative of duty. And since, blind obedience to duty is clearly incompatible with the possibilities of human nature Kant thought that it would be possible to reunite it with the idea of happiness. Although, I am arguing that the autonomy of ethics is not possible due to the fact that human's behavior cannot be estimated from the single perspective only and as a human is not yet perfect in his moral deeds. Even though, by asserting freedom, a person acts as the creator of his own moral world that is he himself prescribes the law of action. In the context of loud demands for human rights and his freedom, Kant categorically by claiming his categorical imperative insists on responsibility that demands to act, so that maximum action could become, the principle of universal legislation. Not an action that is "consistent with duty", but the action that is "out of a sense of duty" - that's what has a truly moral value. A person is truly moral only when he performs his duty not for the sake of some external goal, but for the sake of duty. None of the spontaneous feelings such as benevolence, sympathy, compassion in them is not yet a true virtue. For these spiritual impulses can push a man not only to the path of good, but also to the commission of evil. Kant recognizes the motives of philanthropy as moral when they not only express the psychic propensities of a man, but when they are placed under the control of duty and are defined by the moral law as their objective criterion. The only moral motive will be one that strictly reminds us of our own unworthiness, in which there is nothing that would flatter people and would encourage self-conceit and complacency in us.

CHAPTER – 1

Kant’s Moral Philosophy: the Principles and Key Concepts Related to Human Freedom

1.1 Introduction to Kant’s Moral Philosophy

Many philosophers have compared Immanuel Kant’s ideas with that of the discoveries of Copernicus, which challenged the prevailing dominant worldview about our universe, since his crucial ideas on reason, morality and religion were going to become causes for revolution in philosophy, itself. Namely, if we refer to John R. Silber, he indicates that “the Copernican Revolution in the *Critique of Pure Reason* consists in the recognition of the knower’s contribution to the knowledge of objects. While, in the *Critique of Practical Reason* the Copernican Revolution consists in the discovery that the object of moral volition – the good – is determined by the will of the moral agent and that the good does not determine the will of the moral agent.”⁶ If it was after Copernicus that we began to think of earth as rotating around the sun, then Kant who was stimulated by such a notion began to wonder as to around which doctrines and concepts, a philosophical knowledge could be arranged. Kant asserts that the whole world of phenomena depends on human ‘reason’, which is understood in one of Kant’s main philosophical works - the *Critique of Pure Reason* [*First Critique* hereafter] as pure reason that is free from the impact of external prejudices. The reason itself has to be understood as the source of self-knowledge, since, Kant believed that philosophy is obliged to answer at least, four questions such as - What can I know? What ought I to do? What may I hope?⁷ and What is man?⁸. In fact, it enables one to investigate pretensions and boundaries of ‘the reason’ itself through our better assessment of faculties. The first three questions are formulated in the *First Critique* and the fourth question has been developed in his lectures on logic. Kant has eventually given answers to these questions in several of his philosophical works throughout his life. The first question he related it to metaphysics, the second to morality, third to religion and fourth to anthropology. So, if we give these questions

⁶ Silber. “The Importance of the Highest Good in Kant’s Ethics,” p. 182.

⁷ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 635.

⁸ Abbott, *Kant’s Introduction to Logic and his Essay on the Mistaken Subtlety of the Four Figures*, p. 15.

an analytical and philosophical direction, it turns out that Kant tried to define: 1) what are the sources of human knowledge; 2) scopes of the possible and useful application of any knowledge and finally; 3) the boundaries of the reason itself.

Another of Kant's general philosophical works *Critique of Practical Reason* [*Second Critique* hereafter] was dedicated to the problems of morality. He has made a distinction between pure and practical reason having noted that our pure reason acts in accordance with concepts which have been determined by it and it is *a priori*. In the case of practical reason, Kant says that it acts in accordance with our good will. Inasmuch as, we must remain moral beings, good will dictates us to postulate and perceive certain things in ourselves as knowable, for example - our freedom and God, and this is precisely why Kant insists that practical reason has precedence over the pure.

In fact, there are many broad concepts in Kant's entire moral philosophy that needs to be examined; therefore we will take a brief look at his key ethical categories in order to understand our intentions behind examining his philosophical insights concerning religion itself and particularly the relation between morality and religion. Mostly, here, we would be focusing on Kant's main ideas of good will, categorical imperative, Kant's conception of the highest good and after that we would like to consider Kant's views on freedom, good and evil principles and the notion of radical evil.

Kant's focal distinctions on moral philosophy are also found in his other works on ethics: *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* [*Groundwork* hereafter] and *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* [*Religion* hereafter].

Kant believes that the moral categories are not derived from experience; they are *a priori* and laid in human's reason. In his moral philosophy, Kant explores the most important and complex concepts of morality such as goodwill, freedom, duty, conscience, happiness and virtue, the highest good and many other. We would be looking at the concepts of goodwill, categorical imperative and the highest good insofar that the mentioned concepts are the sustained notions and they can be an obligation to promote the highest good and would be an important component in

Kant's ethics while introducing the universal moral law which has to be supplemented by the highest good as well.⁹

So, the initial notion of Kant's ethics is an autonomous goodwill, which he also calls as an unconditional good. Goodwill is a prerequisite, the motive of a theoretical and practical choice of a person in the sphere of morality. It is the free choice of man, the source of human dignity, which separates him as a person from other beings of an intelligible world.¹⁰ However, in my view, such freedom also carries danger: since the will of man can be subordinated not only to reason, but also to feelings, therefore there cannot be a complete guarantee of moral actions. Moral development is necessary in the process of upbringing and self-education of a person, but, since it is impossible to envisage everything in life, according to Kant, people can be subjected to inclinations and aspirations for doing good and evil deeds.

In order to explain the autonomy of goodwill Kant appeals to the concept of freedom. The concept of freedom in Kant is directly related to the notion of duty. Only duty gives the act a moral character, duty is the only moral motive. Kant in detail examines the notion of duty and considers the various types of human duty: duty to himself and duties of respect to others.¹¹ There are many desires in a person and Kant asks questions whether their execution would lead to happiness? Another complex problem is the happiness of another, because no one can force him to be happy and imagine what another person understands by this. Despite the complexity and sensitivity of the approach to happiness as the most important ethical category, Kant nevertheless examines it in detail and, ultimately, connects happiness with the human's virtues.¹²

While considering the issues of one's own perfection of man, Kant is categorical in having emphasized that this is the goal and at the same time the duty of everyone. The perfection of man does not consist in the fact that he received some features as a gift from nature, but in that which can be the result of his efforts and actions in accordance with his reason. In this respect, Kant highlights the two points: i) striving for the physical perfection of man as a natural being and ii) increasing his

⁹ Simmons, "Kant's Highest Good: Albatross, Keystone, Achilles Heel," p. 361.

¹⁰ Kant, *Groundwork*, pp. 9-21.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-11.

¹² Silber, "The Importance of the Highest Good in Kant's Ethics," p. 190.

moral perfection in a purely moral sense.¹³ But for Kant moral perfection is an absolute priority. He writes: “the greatest moral perfection of man is as follows: to fulfill his duty according to the reasons of duty (so that the law was not only the rule, but also the motive of actions).”¹⁴ This extremely important position of Kant's ethics requires from man not only a moral act, but also a moral motive for action, because a person can perform a “good deed”, for example, either for reasons of self-interest or based on immoral grounds.

Concerning the duties of respect to others, Kant also identifies mutual obligations: love, friendship, and those that can assist to the happiness of others, but do not require reciprocity - the duty of charity, gratitude, participation and respect. At the same time, Kant emphasizes that, in the final analysis, the duties of respect to others is a person's duty to himself, the fulfillment of which helps to move towards one's own perfection. Such a gradual, progressive movement towards perfection is the man's most perfect duty to himself.

On the basis of a critical analysis of human's cognition and behavior, Kant tries to find a law of morality, which is subordinate to reason. He believes that if the reason and feelings are in harmony, then there is no conflict between them, otherwise the person should give preference to the reason. According to Kant, to act morally is to act reasonably, even if sometimes by coercion of will. Therefore, the principles of human behavior are never determined empirically, but always rely on the activity of reason and exist *a priori* and do not depend on experimental data.

The establishment of reasonable human relations is possible on the basis of duties of a man to fulfill the moral law, which is valid for every individual under any circumstance. Along with general practical principles, as Kant points out, there are always a lot of particular rules, so he divides practical principles into i) maxims and ii) imperatives. Maxims are personal, subjective principles of behavior, that is, those considerations or motives that induce a person to act, and refer to specific individuals. For example, the maximum of *take revenge for any insult* can be implemented in different ways depending on a variety of objective and subjective conditions. Or a person's duty to care for one's own health can suggest different ways to achieve this

¹³ Ibid., pp. 58-81.

¹⁴ Kant, *Groundwork*, pp. 9-21.

goal. The imperative is an objective principle of behavior, a moral law, significant for all. Kant identifies two types of imperatives: hypothetical and categorical. The categorical imperative is an objective, universal, unconditional, necessary moral law execution of which is the duty of every man without any exception. This law is one for all, but Kant gives it in his work through several formulations. One of them says that although maxims are subjective principles of behavior, they too must always have universal significance. In this case, the categorical imperative is: “act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that become a universal law.”¹⁵ Another formulation is related to Kant's conception of the person as an absolute and unconditional value that stands above all: “treat others how you wish to be treated.”¹⁶

Despite all the meanings of Kant's moral laws, he certainly understands the difficulties of its implementation. For example, a person's duty not to lie or not to steal in a real situation can be difficult to implement: for example, a lie out of philanthropy or stealing a piece of bread by a person dying of hunger. All this is possible in life, and Kant considers these contradictions in his works, introducing some peculiar additions, which he calls *casuistical question*. Kant comes to the conclusion that in such situations one should never give out his act for moral, and always be precise in the definitions - morality is morality, law is the law. Since morality is unconditional, it is universal legislation, then there is not, and there can be no cases of morally justified deviation from it.

Despite such a rational approach to the problem of morality, Kant recognizes that human remains the greatest mystery of the universe, and in the conclusion of the *Critique of Practical Reason* he writes:

Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and reverence, the more frequently and persistently one's meditation deals with them: *the starry sky above me and the moral law within me.*¹⁷

We must highlight some of Kant's achievements in moral philosophy as follows:¹⁸ 1) He created a deep, interesting ethical theory on the basis of scientific generalization

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 119.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 51.

¹⁷ Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 203.

¹⁸ Guyer and Wood, *the Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant: Notes and Fragments*, pp. 405-478.

and respect for moral consciousness; 2) substantiated the thesis on autonomy of morality, which is valuable in itself and happens to be law, and not derived from external principles; 3) proposed a theoretical basis for the organization of a reasonable life of man, having formulated a moral law, which is obligatory for execution by every intelligent being; 4) justified in a new way the principle of the self-worth of each individual, which under no circumstances can be a means to achieve any goals whatsoever; 5) emphasized the importance of the interrelation between morality and scientific knowledge on the basis of unity of practical and theoretical reason.

Kant proposed the concept of autonomous ethics, according to which the moral principles of a human being exist independently of the surrounding environment and must be inextricably linked with each other. He considered a human being as the highest worth in an intelligible world. Each person has a sense of dignity, which he carefully protects. But, another person also has his sense of dignity. Accordingly, a person has the freedom to choose actions in the context of understanding the feelings of another person. The thing is that Kant in *Religion* has developed the idea of ethical community¹⁹ where people are under the common laws of virtue and morality and Kant's proposed 'moral religion' would live and coexist altogether and would have done good deeds according to the sense of duty to himself and duties of respect to others. However, in my view, this Kant's conception of an ethical community at first sight appears as *utopia*. To say that all human actions are evaluated based on the concepts of good and evil according to Kant is plausible. Therefore Kant, in order to understand human beings' behavior by means of the relation to another, had developed his concept of categorical imperative. The categorical imperative is a strict necessity for applying the basic principles that determine a human behavior. It commands us to act morally, no matter how these actions affect our personal well-being. Kant believes that we must be moral for the sake of morality and virtuous for the sake of virtue; the fulfillment of a debt is in itself the goal of a good behavior. Moreover, only such a person who does good not because of happy inclinations in his nature, but exclusively for reasons of duty, can be called completely moral; morality rather defeats such inclinations rather than going along with them, and among the incentives of virtuous action there should be no natural inclination to such deeds. The categorical imperative, which is not

¹⁹ Kant, *Religion*, p. 109.

prepossessed neither by the will of God or by the pursuit of happiness, but extracted by practical reason from its own depths, is possible only under the assumption of freedom and autonomy of our good will, and the irrefutable fact of its existence gives one the right to look at himself as a free and an independent doer.

In fact, Kant's moral philosophy is aimed at achieving happiness and the highest good. In this sense, Lance Simmons in his article entitled "Kant's Highest Good: Albatross, Keystone, Achilles Heel" asserts that:

The highest good lays at or near the surface of many his ethical discussions. Concern for the highest good runs through all *Three Critiques*, and the highest good is the sustained focus of attention throughout the dialectic of pure practical reason in the *Critique of Practical Reason*. There is thus good reason to suppose that the highest good is at the heart of Kantian ethics.²⁰

1.2 The Study of the Concept of Freedom

So, in this chapter we will be focusing on one of the main questions concerning human freedom in Kant's philosophy. In this regard, I will try to identify, what are key concepts of freedom itself? How do we recognize ourselves as becoming transcendently free? Since, Kant's insights on freedom are very broad; therefore, we shall focus only on some particular questions. Yet, in order to clarify human's freedom as such, we will be inquiring into the issues of good and evil principles, while also trying to understand Kant's notion of radical evil in order to get the whole picture of Kant's philosophical views on religion.

Kant in his *Groundwork*²¹ solely offers a practical substantiation of freedom. That is, freedom in its practical sense is understood by Kant as the independence of "performing of action" from the compulsions of sensuality, i.e., the possession of a person's ability to determine himself spontaneously without any compulsion from sensory inclinations. However, this definition is again purely negative, a positive interpretation of practical freedom presupposes the definition of activity by its own law of will, presupposes autonomy of will. In the history of philosophical thought, always there was a confrontation between classical determinism and indeterminism in solving the problem of freedom. Philosophical determinism considers any phenomenon as- the result of the action of certain causes that led to its emergence,

²⁰ Ibid., p. 355.

²¹ Kant, *Groundwork*, pp. 63-79.

just as one phenomenon itself can be investigated as the cause of other phenomenon. However, philosophical positions here can differ significantly from each other, especially when it comes to the ultimate causes of the conditionality of the world. In the history of philosophy, many philosophers, consider that the existence of the world have natural causes, while others, have its creators such as God or the world mind. And even if God itself by virtue of its transcendence is beyond the principles of determinism, nevertheless the world created by it is subordinated to determinism. Otherwise, it would be impossible to rationally think anything and clearly say neither of God, nor about the world at all.²²

Thus, whether idealistic or materialistic philosophical system based on the principles of rational explanation of the existence, necessarily acknowledges determinism. Even indeterminism, which is considered as an alternative to determinism, is usually based either on the denial of any type characteristic of determinism, or on the denial of the universal objective nature of any principle, for example, the principle of causality.

Most often, the objective nature of any type of connections and mutual relations in the sphere of social processes, human existence, conditioned by freedom of choice is denied. Such a position can be traced in Kant: from his point of view, rigid and necessary connections prevail in nature (though they are brought into the constructive activity of our understanding), and human behavior is a field of free choice and internal moral legislation. Kant sought to develop a concept of freedom that, without denying the determinism of all the empirical processes taking place in time, simultaneously would leave the possibility of treating a man as a source of spontaneous causality. Kant intended to develop his philosophy as a teaching which, without entering anywhere in conflict with the principles of determinism, encompassing the whole range of sensory phenomena of the empirical world, would *save* at the same time, according to Kant, the possibility of freedom and free choice in human behavior. For that matter, in the part of entitled III. *Kantianism and Consequentialism* of Wood's edition of the *Groundwork* Shelly Kagan referring to David Cummiskey, *Kantian Consequentialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,

²² <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/determinism-causal/> Accessed on: 25.02.2017, 17.35 pm.

1996); and Richard Hare, *Could Kant Have Been a Utilitarian?* in his *Sorting Out Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) emphasized:

I will note, however, that Kant's own discussion of freedom is made complicated by his unargued assumption of incompatibilism – the claim that freedom is incompatible with determinism.²³

The crux of the problem lies in the fact that if we consider everything that is happening in the world from the point of view of experience and theoretical explanations, then we will not find any freedom as such; where everything is a consequence of the determined causality. In any situation, a person evaluates the pros and cons for possible actions and decides upon what to do. However, at the same time he cannot simultaneously think about his decision as already determinate and he will not be able to avoid the need to make a decision - on his actions, here and now. As Kant points, our actions must be based on 'ideas of freedom and free choices'. Therefore practically, we are always free to act. In fact, I would note that there can be two forms of freedom such as i) freedom to act, the only means for existing in an intelligible world; and ii) initial freedom, bound up by our moral laws and reasons, itself. For example, if I was aware of the troubles that pushed my friend to act badly in order to get rid of those troubles, i do not know whether I would support her decisions being an old friend or I would not. Here I have two options: I either support her according to my independent (by free Kant meant 'free power of choice') power of choice-making or I would choose not to support her; in the sense that it is not good as per the reasonable moral laws. Here we can see that the 'concept of freedom' itself, is controversial while comprehending any situation. Still, let us imagine what would happen if everybody thought and acted according to the moral laws? We might come closer to Kant's ethical community and attain highest good without any obstacles.

In order to understand human freedom, Kant aimed at getting appropriate answers to the questions of ethics, morality, reason and religion. Ultimate statements made by Kant on moral philosophy, let us reflect upon moral laws that surround us and shed light on the universal and absolute; to find if they are just commands of supreme power.

²³ Kant, *Groundwork*, p. 153.

Kant in *Groundwork* argues that the comprehension of freedom itself is impossible; there is a groundlessness faced with freedom as such. Kant says: “freedom can never be comprehended”²⁴. However, on the other hand Kant’s insights on freedom seem controversial, due to the fact that freedom itself directly depends on humans actions which can be both good and evil in their nature. Kant in his *First Critique* reiterates that everything in our world is rather pre-determined, but does not result from our free actions.

...everything that happens presupposes a previous state, upon which it follows without exception according to a rule. But now the previous state itself must be something that has happened (come to be in a time when it previously was not), since if it had been at every time, then its consequence could not have just arisen, but would always have been. Thus the causality of the cause through which something happens is always something that has happened, which according to the law of nature presupposes once again a previous state and its causality, and this in the same way a still earlier state, and so on... Thus the proposition that all causality is possible only in accordance with laws of nature, when taken in its unlimited universality, contradicts itself, and therefore this causality cannot be assumed to be the only one.²⁵

In other words, how can this determined causality be possible? In my thinking, Kant’s definition of freedom as a chain of causal determinations is incomplete and there has to be an alternative point of view in order to define what the freedom and free will are. Here, we might look at the phenomenon of “freedom” not only from the perspective of philosophy, but I suggest looking at the notion of “freedom” from scientific point of view as well. It has to be noted, that mostly Kant adhered to the premise prevailing in the minds of the overwhelming majority of scientists and philosophers of the past and present times, the essence of which was that everything in nature is strictly determined. The statement that a strict cause-and-effect necessity prevails in nature, generally, has been considered as a prerequisite and a prejudiced position; it is not possible to justify it moreover. The proposition that everything in the world is strictly determined appeared, apparently, among the adherents of Galilean science²⁶, before the eyes of which this grandiose idealization that is an integral picture of nature first appeared, where all phenomena cling to each other, forming in a continuous chain of causality.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 75.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 484.

²⁶ Sankowski, “Some Problems about Determinism and Freedom,” p. 292.

The difficulty and ambiguous nature of determined causality is due to the variety of positions both in philosophy and in science as well. Philosophical and scientific determinism considers any phenomenon as the result of the action of certain causes that led to its emergence, just as the phenomenon itself can be investigated as the cause of other phenomena. At the same time, the philosophical positions here can differ significantly from each other, especially when it comes to the ultimate causes of the conditionality of the world. In some philosophers, the existence of the world is connected with natural causes; others have its creators such as God or the world mind. And even if God himself/itself by virtue of his transcendence is beyond the principles of determinism, nevertheless the world created by him/it is so necessarily subordinated. Otherwise, neither of God, nor of the world at all, it would be impossible to rationally and clearly think and say anything. At the same time, of course, in the religious picture of the world there must necessarily be a miracle, the inexplicable will of God, invading the usual order of things. However, even this Divine invasion cannot be considered as nondeterministic, for in it, according to the theologians and religious philosophers, there is always a higher meaning and expediency. Thus, any, whether idealistic or materialistic philosophical system built on the principles of rational explanation of the existence, necessarily recognizes the consistent nature of the general conditioning of phenomena and processes in the world. Even indeterminism, which is considered as an alternative to determinism, is usually based either on the denial of any characteristic of determinism, or on the denial of the universal objective nature of any principle, for example, the principle of causality.²⁷ More often, the objective nature of the relations and mutual influences in the social processes of human life caused by the freedom of choice are being denied. This position is characteristic to Kant: from his point of view, in nature there are strong and necessary links and human behavior is a field of free choice and internal moral legislation.

However, since the last quarter of the nineteenth century, indeterminism has been fueled not only by philosophical research, but also by scientific discourses. For instance, Laplace's determinism arose not so much on the basis of natural philosophical reflections, but rather on the basis of scientific achievements of the

²⁷ Shanks, "Quantum Mechanics and Determinism," pp. 20-37.

seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which led to the formation of a picture of the world in the image and likeness of Newton's classical mechanics. Laplace understood freedom as a cognized necessity.²⁸ However, the biggest drawback of Laplace's determinism is the inevitably fatalism resulting from it: if all phenomena and events are unambiguously and necessarily determined by past causes, then there is no freedom of choice at the moment. We are absolutely rigidly determined in our behavior by the past.

Kant in the *First and Second Critiques*²⁹ tried to resolve the contradictions between free will of man and causal determinations. The essence of this solution is as follows: he indicates that a person has a sense of free will and associated with its actions - responsibility. This responsibility lies in convincing that there is a choice between this or that act and only the person determines the result of the choice. On the other hand, if we begin to analyze this or that act with the help of our reason, then we will be able to find the cause of this or that preference.

Only the world of thoughts, decisions and commitments determine behavior without accidents. In a position where a strong causal necessity has primarily prevailed in nature can only be a promise and a biased position; it cannot be proved indeed. Moreover, in everyday experience, it would seem that such a position is refuted at every step: we constantly face with all sorts of accidents.

Proceeding from the premise that the processes of thinking in general are subject to the laws of the physical world, it is increasingly difficult for us to uphold the view that the human mind is able to function in a non-deterministic manner, as the principle of free will implies. Moreover, as we expand our knowledge of psychology, we gradually realize that many of our emotions, desires and psychological traits can be explained with the help of exact sciences, referring for example to genetics, to physiology and so on. There are some problems with this argument. The first of these (perhaps least important) is the following: the conclusion that the physical world is completely deterministic is by no means obvious. The second is that without any evidence it is supposed that the processes occurring in the humans' brain must have a causal explanation of the physical type, by which I mean an explanation in the light of

²⁸ Stone, "Chaos, Prediction and Laplacean Determinism," pp. 123-131.

²⁹ Pereboom, "Kant on Transcendental Freedom," pp. 537-567.

physics and biochemistry. Of course, the material world can be described with the help of exact sciences, but it is quite another matter to assert that physical facts are the only possible or absolute facts. The most serious flaw in this argument is that it completely ignores other possible explanations for free will. Freedom is not an accident, but purposefulness. We consider ourselves free, because we can form beliefs through the processes of logical thinking. We can consciously allow one picture of events (in the light of achieving goals or satisfying desires) to prevail over other, alternative pictures. I decide to stay at home and go to bed early, because I am tired, or decide to visit a friend, despite the fatigue, because I am very lonely. The choice is not random, but purposeful. It does not matter whether it is possible to trace our choice up to the special state of brain activity that accompanies this or that decision. Another important thing is whether there is a causal explanation for this choice, given the purposefulness of the decision that I actually took. If our actions really were completely determined, then we would have to come to a completely mechanistic understanding of the nature of a man. This understanding not only undermines our understanding of free will; it also excludes the possibility of rational evaluation of evidence and arguments. Our conviction that determinism is correct (or erroneous) is in itself a product of the mechanistic process and not a rational reasoning. However, the fact that the truth of mechanistic determinism undermines our notion of a rationally thinking and freely choosing personality is not yet a decisive argument against it.

Therefore, to avoid such conclusions Kant has created his famous doctrine of empirical and intelligible worlds. If an empirical world is completely subordinated to the causality then freedom itself is impossible. However, we cannot avoid a “free will”, inasmuch as it is a necessary condition for moral law and yet it was drawn by Kant in his *First Critique*:

Therefore, it is the moral law of which we become conscious directly (as soon as we draft maxims of the will for ourselves), which first offers itself to us, and which inasmuch as reason exhibits it as a determining basis not to be outweighed by any sensible conditions and indeed entirely independent of them leads straight to the concept of freedom.

According to Kant, the freedom is a “thing in itself”, i.e. it is rooted in an intelligible world. He says in *Critique of Practical Reason*:

For it is our reason itself which cognizes itself through the supreme and unconditioned practical law and cognizes the being, the being which is conscious of this law (our own person) as belonging to the pure world of understanding, and in so doing even determines the way in which, as such, this being can be active.³⁰

The preceding thoughts implies that first of all Kant identifies the practical reason as supreme in comparison with theoretical reason and secondly, the universal laws which are embedded into the pure practical reason having guided with the postulates of an intelligible world would not be vulnerable to the extent that of doing deeds since freedom itself is the product of our practical reason. Kant removes the concept of freedom from the boundaries of natural causality. In this sense, we must ask then how can freedom and morality be possible? Kant explains that while inquiring the issues of freedom as such, he, first of all separated the problems of freedom as a moral and practical task from freedom as independence in a world of natural necessity. The consequence of this division is the removal of many *invalid issues* of freedom, which mainly grow from the unity of the natural and spiritual, sensual and moral factors. Kant deliberately separates freedom from the nature and principles of determinism with its laws of necessity and makes a natural transition to the universal sphere of reason. For that matter, we need to have a look on positive and negative features of freedom itself. If we are talking about negative freedom, then in this case the following question arises: from what a person should be independent in order to be free? “To be free” means first of all independence from nature. Thus, it is implied that human activity can initially be independent, independent of purely natural processes. That is, a person in his behavior is able to overcome dependence on natural processes that have a regular character. Freedom in its negative understanding is inevitably contrasted with the inherent nature of necessity. Independence from nature can also be understood in the sense that all our internal decisions are independent of necessity as such, which even in antiquity relied on as the basis for the realization of human destiny. This independence from necessity implies not only natural processes, but also historical ones, which have their own regularity. Nature and history in their compatibility form what we call the world. Freedom in its negative sense means independence from a world that includes society. With such negative understanding, the requirement to be independent in relation to God arises. The God, the world and a man form the totality of everything. Thus, the problem of freedom, even only in its

³⁰ Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 134.

negative dimension, involves in its content the comprehension of nature and history, the human personality and society, as well as the theological formulation of certain issues. As soon as a person lives among all things as a whole, then he is present not simply in nature and history, but also in relation to the world and God. If the question of human freedom refers us to the comprehension of everything as a whole, then it turns out to be a purely philosophical question. However, the very subject of a negative understanding of freedom is inevitably narrow, since negativity always involves a limitation. It is evident that philosophy cannot pretend to comprehend all things at once and finally.

The question of freedom being the question of the metaphysical order includes the comprehension of the meaning of freedom in its positive dimension. Unlike negative freedom, that is withdrawal from all kinds of coercion, the positive freedom means the ability to self-determination, to be free for anything. To the positive content of freedom, Kant refers freedom in the cosmological sense and freedom in its practical understanding. Freedom in its cosmological sense is freedom as absolute spontaneity or the transcendental idea of freedom. Freedom in its practical understanding means autonomy of will, the ability to itself to give the law of action. The fact that, in addition to negative and positive freedom, there is also the transcendental as absolute spontaneity, which is relying on practical understanding, includes into the affairs of freedom the relationship between practical and theoretical reason. It is for Kant, for the first time, definitely and radically links the problem of freedom with the basic problems of metaphysics. Kant emphasized that namely in the reason there is a common and super individual principles which were considered as the pledge of objectivity and the limitation of individual discretion or volition. Here, we can conclude that Kant's task was more complex than just a logical solution of the problem of freedom: he has sought to reveal the actual freedom of man as a moral person. That is why Kant removed freedom beyond of the bounds of theoretical reason. Although practical reason itself is not something completely different from the theoretical. Kant has mentioned on another *cut of reason*, a reason that is demanding to be indispensable in its implementation; in the realm of freedom that is in the sphere of morality. Since, pure (theoretical) reason operates with abstractions and pure forms and freedom is possible only as intelligible, i.e. speculative and possible freedom. But, according to Kant, freedom must guarantee a highly moral society which is free

from inclinations, egoistic interests, so finding a form of its practical realization in which all these ideals could be realized is undoubtedly more important than purely theoretical deliberations. The human being, according to Kant, as a carrier of freedom, belongs simultaneously to the two: empirical and intelligible worlds. The first one is the world of nature, the world of empirical events, space and time and necessity; another is the world of noumenal which goes beyond space and time. The intelligible world is conceivable only in terms of practical reason, the world of freedom. Freedom, for Kant is not pointlessness, but the ability of an intelligent being to establish for itself the law as a necessity and universal.

Kant conjectures that freedom does not precede morality as its initial premise, but it is an expression of a specific nature of moral obligation. Also our power of 'free choice' is not the same as transcendental freedom; we might think that our transcendental freedom also can result into actions. In *Religion* Kant says that transcendental freedom need not involve this ability:

There is no difficulty in reconciling the concept of freedom with the idea of God as a necessary being, for freedom does not consist in the contingency of an action (in its not being determined through any ground at all) i.e. not indeterminism ([the thesis] that God must be equally capable of doing good or evil, if his action is to be called free) but in absolute spontaneity. The latter is at risk only with pre-determinism, where the determining ground of an action lies in antecedent time, so that the action is no longer in my power but in the hands of nature, which determines me irresistibly; since in God no temporal sequence is thinkable, this difficulty has no place. God cannot do otherwise than what is morally good or right. Still, God is free - and presumably, transcendently free - by virtue of the fact that God is absolutely spontaneous in the production of action. That is, the determining ground for action lies solely within the divine self, which entails that action, is not determined by preceding conditions. This suggests that transcendental freedom does not essentially involve the ability to do otherwise.³¹

Kant contends that reconciliation between empirical determinism and transcendental freedom might be provided by *transcendental idealism*. Some questions that need some understanding, such as, whether the transcendental freedom itself, is impossible or whether the fundamental nature of noumenal causality precludes transcendental freedom? Probably, the problem of freedom is purely a transcendental problem; therefore, the study of freedom is to be transcendental also; neither physiology, nor psychology will be able to solve it. The point at hand is that the concept of freedom is an unavoidable problem emerging out of pure reason, due to

³¹ Ibid., p. 71.

which, the concept of God and immortality of soul acquire their objective reality and significance. However, we need to agree with the position that transcendental freedom cannot be positively conceivable to us, since we cannot form a positive perception of the fundamental causal powers that would constitute it. In fact, Kant says that our reason is not being able to explain how freedom is possible. He solely shows how we can comprehend it without falling into the contradictions. Therefore, an evidence for a possibility of freedom is what Kant seeks in his practical reason.

In *Groundwork* Kant determines the concept of freedom as the key point to explain the autonomy of the will.³² In fact, a categorical imperative develops the idea of will; however it demands something in between, in order to connect the free will of a human being and a moral law. So, this something would be the concept of freedom. Through the concept of freedom, Kant revealed a characteristic nature of human reason, in its responsibility; it carries forth a mismatch between the demands of nature and of its level of capabilities.

All attempts to solve the life issues are a metaphysical ladder of human existence. Therefore, Kant seeks a solution in the search for a new metaphysics. His philosophy denies speculative metaphysics in order to give chance to metaphysics of moral and to confine the possibilities of speculative metaphysics; so the practical reason would develop the way it has to be.

In my opinion, Kant had fundamentally worked on the principle of freedom as an exercise of free choice and free actions that are not dependent on demands of either sensual or empirical world. Neither sense, nor nature, but reason itself determines moral actions of a human being. The need for freedom is so great that, if there would be a choice between death and slavery, the majority, Kant believes, would prefer to die. After all, the free will of every human being is a product of his own aspirations, inclinations, and being consistent with his own ideas of well-being.³³

Thus, Kant finds freedom as an essential characteristic of human beings, which elevates him above the animal world. Freedom is rather the sphere of internal, than the external; it can be called as the sense of human dignity and human autonomy.

³² Ibid., pp. 63-64.

³³ Pereboom, "Kant on Transcendental Freedom," pp. 537-567.

Freedom thus, is not in the intelligible world yet, but it declared itself above the animal world as an accessory of the reason.

In fact, in many respects Kant's ethics was at the apex of moral philosophy, of modern times. Kant's whole practical philosophy is devoted to human practice and its correlation to the realm of freedom and also moral law is one of the essential problems of understanding Kantian practical philosophy in general.³⁴ Indeed, moral behavior requires not only an awareness of the obligation, but also the practical fulfillment of duty. Morality, according to Kant, cannot be regarded only as a way to achieve some result. Kant draws attention to the fact that in morality a person must himself be conscious of the necessity (ought) of certain actions and to urge himself to do this. Kant develops the doctrine of the autonomy of morality³⁵: by affirming freedom, when man acts as the creator of his own moral world, he himself prescribes the law of action. Kant notes that morality significantly differs from religion; even though *God*, according to Kant is a guarantee of the coincidence of happiness and duty, but for Kant it is important that morality itself is completely autonomous and born not of faith, but in itself. Thus, we might say that Kant's thoughts on autonomous ethics are profound and morality should be of absolute character, and moral norms that bear the absolute character certainly need to implement them for their own sake and not for the sake of awards, which are sometimes assumed. Thus, morality must be of a general and absolute character, and nothing here is to be stimulated. However, Kant's theory of autonomous ethics still needs more consideration and examination.

As we know, Kant has identified the idea of freedom as the postulate of practical reason.³⁶ In fact, Kant's postulates are fundamentally important provisions; one might even say that the postulates are the pivot points of his both practical and theoretical philosophy. In them, indeed, the specific character of the Kantian terminological language has fully manifested itself. It has to be noticed that often many researches of Kant accuse him either in atheism or in the shakiness of the foundations of his moral philosophy.

³⁴ Silber, *Kant's Ethics: The Good, Freedom, and the Will*, pp. 46-63.

³⁵ Kant, *Groundwork*, pp. 63-64.

³⁶ Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 5.

By definition, the absolute can only be in the singular sense. In Kant's philosophy, what is absolute is the moral law; it was as an expression of the idea of freedom. This is the starting point from which all the thinking (intellection) starts. It is also the boundary of reason. It is the core around which the entire structures of transcendental subject are formed. That is, the very presence of moral laws speaks about the possibility of freely following them, i.e. to act morally. The assumption of such an opportunity entails the recognition of humans' free will which is not dependent on any external motives. The inner restriction of sensory inclinations by moral prescriptions generates a moral feeling that is the only feeling *a priori* recognized in its certainty. It is the moral sense (conscience) that usually makes a decision about the moral value of actions. Abstract formulation of the moral law is being worthy of happiness that was understood by Kant as a universal moral principle.

From this one can assume that Kant does not proceed from epistemology to ethics, as it may seem in the chronology of his works, but it happened in the opposite direction, that is from the ethics to epistemology. In such a way, it appears that Kant's entire philosophical work can be described as one ambitious attempt, to justify a tranquility, absoluteness in morality and an attempt to justify morality within absolute boundary; freedom here plays a mediatory function in order to retain the connection between morality and reason.³⁷ Yet, Kant insists that only 'reason' can provide 'morality' with an objective of necessity and universality. Empirical knowledge cannot provide us the concept of necessity and universality, since any inductive generalization can never reach its fullness. In addition to this, by means of empirical knowledge we always comprehend only a phenomenon.³⁸ Since, he came to the conclusion that everything in nature is knowable only by means of mathematical science - and what cannot be known by means of natural science, is no longer a nature.³⁹ Here is the argument: "By nature (in the empirical sense of the word) we mean the coherence of appearances in their existence according to necessary rules, that is, according to laws. These are certain laws - and they are *a priori* - which make nature possible in the first place."⁴⁰ Kant's nature has no noumenal existence; it is

³⁷ Bruxvoort Lipscomb and Krueger, *Kant's Moral Metaphysics: God, Freedom, and Immortality*, pp. 233-254.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 231.

³⁹ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 230-231.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 231.

nothing more than the complex of all phenomena, the legitimacy of things in space and time. This does not mean that the laws of nature are subjective and arbitrary. On the contrary, Kant seeks to justify the objectivity of natural laws, the necessity and universality of mathematical and natural science knowledge. From this it follows that, nature itself cannot be the last certifying basis of experience, and from an experience it is not possible to deduce the idea of universality or necessity of the moral law.

Kant wanted to find an objective and universal basis to formulate a rule for man's behavior which is not impervious to the subjective inclinations and passions, and intended to seek the right criterion of good and evil. Then, for an absolute morality, according to Kant who considered ethics as the highest form of philosophy, we precisely need a law of the universality and necessity. Such a basis, Kant says, can be found only in reason itself which has higher faculty of desire, and it is not passive, it is by being active and having constitutive capacity that provides one with a concept of universality and necessity. And the model, the standard of universality and necessity may only be a moral law. In that matter, Kant defends the absolute character of morality by formulating a categorical imperative of moral behavior, the governance of which is obligatory for everyone. The moral behavior of a person is based on the principle of obligation (you ought to do this and only if you want to remain as a human), but this principle cannot be accepted by you under coercion, you accept it freely and do not act freely in egoistic, but in altruistic interests. Kant explores the antinomies, the mismatch of the ideal and reality, affirms the freedom of will, the existence of God and the immortality of the soul as the last hope for the realization of the moral law in the other world. Moreover, he does not deny the existence of relative moral values embodied in hypothetical imperatives, that is, those rules that are desirable, but not at all mandatory. At the same time, the moral law may have its valid use only in the field of pure freedom, because only there the reason legislates itself.

Kant posits in relation to the notion of "good" that which appears as absolute we are referring to a foundation of the moral law, we need to discuss "evil" as well since it is a deviation from moral law. The very presence of evil, gives impetus to the primacy of good. In other words it is an experience, which will provide us with an opportunity to know what good actually is. It seems to us that we are dealing with the

evil continuously. However, this does not mean that the argument favors the logical and always in the same order of good and evil.

Logically, good does not depend on evil, but the evil is dependent on good inasmuch Kant believed that the action is to be performed must be such that the subjective principle that directs it must have a universal application. “Good”, according to Kant, is something universal, true and unconditional, like the universal laws of nature. Therefore, “good” is absolute, while “evil” is relative. For that matter, Kant’s peculiarity lies in the fact that he proclaimed as an absolute, not as substance, not as consciousness and even not as absolute spirit or being, but he proclaimed “good”,⁴¹ as an absolute the highest good.

1.3 The Notion of Good and Evil: A Struggle between Them

The questions about good and evil are one of the oldest problems of mankind and debates on these ethical questions will always be there. The subject of research is on problems that are associated with it, the search for new ethical truths. Therefore, they have never lost their importance, both for man and for the whole world.

Attraction to *good* and always *doing good* are represented by certain principles which are imposed by norms, which in turn were caused by particular conditions. Moral norms, which should serve as a regulative component of human’s behavior, are perceived as external as, sometimes detached from life. Therefore, it seems unrealistic and at times unnecessary. So, good and evil principles exist objectively as a phenomenon in the realm of reason; not only as a theoretical construct forming the conceptual apparatus for the theory of ethics. The notions of good and evil are the most fundamental concepts of morality.

In fact, principles surrounding the distinction between good and evil are such that everyone sooner or later asks themselves what they are. Such questions are not being considered as the exclusive domain of philosophy; on the contrary, they are very vital questions. The issues related to good and evil principles become philosophical ones when we raise questions on the origin of good and evil in humans’ nature.

⁴¹ Holzhey and Mudroch, *Historical Dictionary of Kant and Kantianism*, p. 139.

In my view, in the *First*⁴² and *Second Critiques*⁴³ Kant sought to determine what the “truth” is in theory of knowledge? Following Kant, we gather that “the truth” must be measured by the notion of good; for that matter, a good principle should be the ultimate truth. Since, truth is “objective” in its nature, so the main attention in the study of the problem of truth should be given to the knowledge of man himself and the laws of his reason. As Kant has convincingly shown, there cannot be a universal criterion of truth. All that a person has are the formal laws of logic. But Kant argues that these laws are built on the basis of *a priori* forms of reason. Are human’s knowledge the product of sensory perception or is it the fruit of mental activity? The concepts, for comprehending by human being is taken from the world that surrounds him, was a reason offered by Kant on the basis of *a priori* forms of reason that allowed getting itself out of this impasse. In the future, virtually any study in this area, one way or another, relied on the theory of aesthetics developed by Kant.

As we explore more on the origin of good and evil principles found in man’s nature we also look at issues- i) if the moral law defines our free will, ii) then how is evil made possible and how is it entrenched in human nature? Does a principle of evil rest on the fact that what we follow as opposed to moral duty by giving into to our sensual desires, that which influences us externally, poses risk to losing our intelligible freedom? These important questions in the later period of Kant’s philosophical path had a completely different angle, rather than in the *Second Critique*⁴⁴ where he comes to the glum conclusion of the origin of evil residing in human nature, which was pretty puzzling for Kant's contemporaries. However, he has had a decisive influence on the formation of ethical concepts in the classical German philosophy.

Kant begins explaining in *Religion* very pessimistically, extolling the end of humanity and pointing out the fact that this world is evil and it absorbs everything despite the beginning of our world being for good reasons. Here is the fragment, from the first part of *Religion*, which is entitled with “Concerning the indwelling of the evil

⁴² Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 5-33.

⁴³ Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, Introduction, XXI.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 32-40.

principle alongside the good or of the radical evil in human nature”⁴⁵, Kant derisively notes as we can see in the passage below:

the world lieth in evil is a complaint as old history, even as old as the older art of poetric fiction; indeed, just as old as that oldest among all fictions, the religion of the priests. All allow that the world began with something good: with the Golden age, with life in Paradise, or an even happier life in communion with heavenly beings. But then they make this happiness disappear like a dream, and they spitefully hasten the decline into evil in an accelerating fall, so that now we live in the final age; the Last Day and the destruction of the world are knocking at the door...⁴⁶

Here we can see that, our inclinations are deplorable and moving towards an end; towards mankind’s end. It means that inclinations toward evil are really to be found in man’s nature. It seems like we will never get rid of evil inclinations we must rather hope for good towards the end after a struggle between good and evil principles. In order to understand, why our inclinations move towards evil, but not to the good, it is necessary to look at the question of propensity to the good in humans’ nature.

On approaching, the issue of origins of good in human nature, a subjective ground is sought for determining discretion in *Religion*. Kant studies, the original predispositions what is good, in human nature. That is, for Kant, predispositions of the good are ‘inherent’, so far as they are necessary for the possibility of human nature. Here, he distinguishes three types of properties that characterize the human as such: 1) the predisposition to the animality of the human being as a living being; 2) to the humanity of him as a living and at the same time rational being; 3) to his personality, of a being who is rational and at the same time capable of imputation.⁴⁷

These properties describe the human as a natural, cultural being and an individual. As we shall see here now, there are three forms of definition of “discretion”.

i) The predisposition to animality in human being may be brought under the general title of a physical and merely mechanical self-love, i.e., a kind of self-love for which reason is not required.⁴⁸ Here, the terms of physical and merely mechanical

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 45-73.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 45.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 50.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 51.

self-love appears as an instinct. Therefore, we may say that as natural being, man is under the influence of his instincts that helps him to be with other living beings.

ii) The predispositions to humanity can be brought under the general title of a self-love which is physical and yet involves comparison (for which reason is required): that is, only in comparison with others does one judge how happy or unhappy he or she is.⁴⁹ That is, here everyone is equal; there is no superiority over nobody; here we can see the point of “equality with others”. Yet, the practical reason resides in the social relations which are directed toward adaptation of the social environment.

For the expression of free human individuality, Kant uses the concept of personality. The predisposition to personality is its susceptibility to respect moral law; in itself a sufficient incentive to the power of choice.⁵⁰ Here, the human being is the moral person. Being guided with respect towards the moral law in our actions, there is the possibility of cultivating a good character in us.

One of the many predispositions lying in people, which nature uses, is their antagonism in society. Under social antagonism, Kant expands on the ‘malevolent sociability’ of people, i.e. the human’s inclinations, on the one hand, to communicate with similar fellows. On the other, the desire to be alone, and conforming everything according to reason. Through ambition, lust for power or avarice, a person creates situation with other people, whom he hates and without them he is not able to survive.

Kant emphasizes that a person wants to live a carefree and fun life. However, nature pushes him to come out of the condition of inactive contentment, and dip himself into work and also experience difficulties in order to find a reasonable means of getting rid of these difficulties. Without this, predispositions of mankind would forever remain underdeveloped. Consequently, the antagonism between people is a natural remedy to ensure the fullest development of the human race.⁵¹

According to Kant, a moral law is the motive behind judgments of reason, and the morally good is the one who makes the moral law his maxim. In case, if a human

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 51.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 52.

⁵¹ Timmermann, “Kantian Dilemmas? Moral Conflict in Kant’s Ethical Theory,” pp. 38-50.

refuses the moral law, but if he/she recognizes other motives as maxim then he/she might consider himself as evil. It is remarkable that the fundamental attitude which is inherent in human from his birth⁵², is indifferent to moral law, that is, he would be neither good nor evil. At the same time, one's ways of thinking also would never be simultaneously good and evil. As Kant pointed out, freedom cannot be indifferent toward good or evil principles; it always comes from incentives that cannot be neutral.⁵³ Moreover, human's behavior itself is not being considered either as good or evil, however very "Gesinnung"⁵⁴ is an innate condition of reason.

Hence the statement *man is evil* simply means that a person who, though comprehends the moral law, however still measures his maxim with something different from its incentives. The statement "human is evil by nature" does not mean that this quality derives from the concept of the human species, but only what it is supposed to be in his nature as the subjective necessity in a human being, it had intertwined with the nature of a human, in connection with what the universality of evil looks like. That is we hint to the fact that there is a personal choice that each of us makes whether to stand on the side of good or on the side of evil. In fact, we are trying to solve this issue throughout our life. For each of us, the potential of good is open, just like the potential of evil. And a person can never be sure that he has finally taken the side of good, because at any moment he can slide to the side of evil, destruction, violence and etc. Moreover, we can never do evil deeds at all. Not always these are obvious, conscious things. Sometimes a person puts his destructive instincts in an attractive shell, masking with love or care betrayal, violence and deception. Therefore, Kant insists on moral development that is a constant internal work in order to understand what we are actually doing.

The statement *human is evil by nature* means, there is present in his nature some potential of to be evil due to the fact that he is free. Moreover, this potential is not simply some logical possibility of being evil, but there is some tendency in man's nature to drift towards the evil. Thus, contrary to reason, the will is determined also

⁵² Bruxvoort Lipscomb and Krueger, *Kant's Moral Metaphysics: God, Freedom, and Immortality*, pp. 162-163.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 83-110.

⁵⁴ Gesinnung is a common ground, itself a maxim, of all particular maxims, Michalson, *Kant's Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason: A Critical Guide*, p. 82.

by authority, tradition, and social norms. In other words, Kant does not proceed from a position where a person has in his actual nature had some evil intent from which it gets manifested in his actions. The evil is always the product of free discretion, and overcoming the evil is possible only through supremacy of reason over the will. Thus, the propensity to evil is to be considered as the initial and as natural, because as Kant indicates it was always there as an output of our free choice and those maxims, right from birth.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, from practical perspective, the propensity to evil in man can arise as a result of human's own faults as well.

However, Kant points out that a natural inclination to the evil cannot be destroyed by human's forces, as this could only happen with the help of the good maxims, which is not possible if a higher subjective ground of all maxims is not attained. That is for Kant, evil consists in the fact that the "individual will" of the moral subject chooses a maximum for himself that does not correspond to a moral law. Thus, a person with an "evil will" becomes the one who prefers a maximum that does not coincide with the moral law. Kant cites three reasons why the will of man becomes evil. The first reason is human weakness, which prevents following the moral law. The second reason is the motivation of a man that is if the pursuing of the moral law does not come from obligation, but from an immoral motivation, for example, one's own convenience. And the last, the third reason is the pursuit of evil maxims. So, evil, in Kant's understanding, becomes such a maxim that does not agree with the moral law. Thus, he paid attention to the moral law and to the very course of thought, which the moral subject adhered to. Kant's these judgments about nature lead us to the conclusion that Kant sees the emergence of evil not as an ontological imperfection, but in a man's misuse of his freedom. From these statements, Kant concludes that "there is no propensity to moral evil; for this evil must arise from freedom and a physical propensity (which is based on sensible impulses) to any use of freedom, whether for good or evil, is a contradiction."⁵⁶ Therefore, the question of how does an evil person make himself good, Kant declared it to be beyond our comprehension.

Kant's discussion on the possibility of restoring good predispositions in human nature did not meet its true end. As evidenced by Kant, "and so far the human

⁵⁵ Kant, *Religion*, p. 52.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

being, who despite of a corrupted heart yet always possesses a good will, a hope of a return to the good from which he has strayed still remains.”⁵⁷

If a person, in a moral sense either has to be good or evil, the definition of it should result from his free discretions. Otherwise, it cannot be credited to mitigate his guilt. Therefore, he could be neither morally good, nor morally evil, and he would have been deprived of any responsibility. For Kant, the statement that a person is good from his birth, just means that his initial predispositions are good. The person himself is good not for particular reasons, he becomes good or evil, depending on how he takes into his maxims the incentives, which are incorporated in his predispositions.

The development of natural predispositions and morality, itself leads a man to implement his natural functions while living with the social group, improvising his nature through art, culture, science, civilization and morality. In order to reach this goal, the human being should subordinate his sensuality to the morality. Kant believes that, human being by using all his abilities which are in his nature should subordinate them to his predispositions as well. Here, domain of reason is required, however the reason should not subordinate the sensuality entirely, and they must be equal. Therefore, one main goal of every human being and society is to educate the personality, to bring up an individual that is free in his actions and at the same time will be able to care for himself while trying to be a part of society and keep his inner values intact.

Consequently, Kant admits the existence of two opposing principles in man in general: 1) human being as a biological creature and 2) as a rational being. The development of personality is understood as an inherent struggle with the causes of evil, the struggle between good and evil principles, which are rooted in human nature and in his inherent subjective grounds. So, it means that the struggle between good and evil principles in the development of predispositions to humanity can be estimated by comparing with the other types of Kant’s predisposition. However, it has to be noted that with overdeveloping, these inclinations can turn into an unjust desire to achieve superiority over others. Practically, I think, it is evident that jealousy and rivalry can degenerate into the vices of hostility, envy, ingratitude, gloating and etc.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 65.

So, the predispositions for humanity must possess the ability to perceive respect for moral law as a sufficient motive of discretion.

Kant identified the goals, conditions and content of the process of moral development of the human beings. Here, Kant implies the importance of an enlightenment as it is. The enlightenment takes a person out from the state of nature, makes the human being - moral, and attaches to his freedom and being - reasonable actions. In his article *An Answer to the Question: "What is Enlightenment?"* Kant describes the main goals of *enlightenment* itself; yet, he again shows the importance of human's freedom and reason in *reformation and change of mindset*:

Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one's own understanding without the guidance of another. This immaturity is self-incurred if its cause is not lack of understanding, but lack of resolution and courage to use it without the guidance of another. The motto of enlightenment is therefore: *Sapere aude!* Have courage to use your own understanding!

For enlightenment of this kind, all that is needed is freedom. And the freedom in question is the most innocuous form of all-freedom to make public use of one's reason in all matters.⁵⁸

Here, Kant meant that the only condition for the realization of the goal of enlightenment aimed at transforming the way of thinking is freedom. Under freedom, he understands the freedom of judgment, the freedom of the independent use of the intellect/reason and calls it the main task of the new enlightened society. Meanwhile, Kant considers the restriction of freedom of judgment as a restriction of freedom in general, that is, unfreedom and declares it the main crime before society and humanity. In this regard, Kant recommended to enlightened monarchs, who were striving to create an enlightened society and wishing to embody the will of the enlightened people, to avoid such dogmatic policies, namely, to grant complete freedom in religious affairs.

So, Kant on one hand says that humans are evil by nature, on the other hand identifies human's personality with that of a moral being. These opposing intrinsic human characteristics contradict each other, and they are mutually exclusive. The validity of this contradictory relationship is determined by the development of the

⁵⁸ Kant, *An Answer to the Question: "What is Enlightenment?"* p. 1.

person which occurs as struggle against evil causes, as struggle between good and evil principles, they are rooted in human nature, in his inherent subjective grounds. The good principles in human nature are not just limited to the voice of conscience that always makes its presence felt:

Considered in themselves natural inclinations are good, i.e. not reprehensible, and to want to extirpate them would not only be futile, but harmful and blameworthy as well; we must rather only curb them, so that they will not wear each other out but will instead be harmonized into a whole called happiness.⁵⁹

Moral evil is rooted in the attitude, which opposes the moral law. Accordingly, the moral good presupposes a fundamentally different attitude to facilitate the implementation of the moral law. The struggle between the principles of good and evil therefore unfolds in the reason, in the conscious actions of human behavior. Yet, the struggle determines the development of the world or of human's development into a different person. Good and evil in this case objectified; they are superhuman powers, which constitute a dual basis for the world.

The great poet Goethe, a contemporary of Kant, was very close to this philosophy. In the tragedy *Faust*⁶⁰ he showed the struggle between good and evil principles, as the driving force of development, changes, and dynamics of life. In the prologue, the author poses a question: what is human in this magnificent, harmonious and perfect universe? Here, we notice that he was putting the same questions forward as Kant. As a person begins to think, how much ever he has to suffer from overthinking, he begins to understand the absurdity of many social institutions, laws, customs, prejudices and then he understands that social ills are not embedded or accepted or made so by nature or universe, but by himself. In Goethe's philosophy, the idea of the dialectical unity of opposites is one of the leading points. We come to terms with Goethe when he mentions about struggle between good and evil principles, whereby a harmony in the world is established, and in the clash of ideas, the truth prevails. The poet constantly reminds us about this in *Faust*. Two heroes of the tragedy: Faust and Rafael who clearly demonstrate this dialectic between positive and negative unity. In *Faust* the epitome of good and evil is one Faust, a doctor and a scientist, who dreams of acquiring all the knowledge of the universe.

⁵⁹Kant, *Religion*, p. 78.

⁶⁰Goethe, *Faust*.

Goethe calls for the good and Faust is drawn to the path of scientific knowledge in order to reach good. Then is the struggle between good and evil eternally coming? An absolute power, man's stupidity and hypocrisy are evil. While love, knowledge, justice stand for what is good. It is true that a struggle between good and evil is eternal, so it will last forever and eternal problem of every person is to which side he must remain: good or evil?

1.4 The Nature of Radical Evil

While raising the question of radical evil in human nature one must look for the answers in discretion itself. Discretion literally means free behavior (of all living beings without exception), independence of will. In Kant's philosophy this concept designates practical freedom in contrast to the transcendental, which is a purely *a priori* concept. Practical freedom has a sensual nature, but in man it differs from the behavior of animals in that it is not subordinated to instincts, for a man himself internally, reasonably determines his actions.

In fact, in Kant's moral philosophy, the cause of the emergence of radical evil is the propensity to commit evil is in the nature of man himself. But due to free will and reason, a person, from his point of view, can, contrary to evil in nature, follow the moral law. For Kant, the essence of radical evil is the violation of the integrity of the whole existing order or, in other words, the destruction of all maxims. He also insisted on the reasonable nature of a man, which can protect him from committing radical evil.

So, it means that the source of evil Kant sees in the corruption of the very human's free will. Some of man's actions are consistent with the moral laws, while others represent a deviation from them, such as evil deeds. What are the possible subjective grounds of deviation from incentives acquired from the moral requirements and categorical imperative as well? It might be because of the propensity of humans to confuse the moral and non-moral incentives. Not less important is the propensity to commit to acts in accordance with a sense of debt. There are other subjective grounds which are empirically stated, giving way to deviation in our behavior from the moral laws. It includes, first and foremost, a human sensibility, which encourages people to make difference between, good and evil deeds. The sensibility as an essential

characteristic of the individual finds its necessary expression in self-love. Is not self-love, egoism then, a major cause of moral evil? In this regard Kant says:

Surely we must presuppose in all this, that there is still a germ of goodness left in its entire purity, a germ that cannot be extirpated and corrupted. And its certainty cannot be a self-love, which when adopted as the principle of all our maxims is precisely the source of all evil.⁶¹

One of the sources of radical evil, Kant considered *egoism* that like sensibility relates to the empirical world. Therefore, it is *caused* and does not belong to the sphere of a free discretion; it belongs to one of the many characteristics of human species. As for the deviation from the moral law, it was a manifestation of discretion and could not have been as a consequence of circumstances preceding him in time (and therefore it is empirical), the chain of which constitutes a variety of determined causes, and therefore, in principle, it excludes one's discretion. In this sense, I think that Kant's reflections on *egoism issues* in man's nature are in constant contradiction with the norms of his categorical imperative. For that matter, if we call Kant's categorical imperative as a universal, I think it would not be enough, since the main clues of his conception of categorical imperative is not the result of any discourse. Moreover, Kant ranked the categorical imperative above the world having stressed its importance first of all in reciprocal relations between people. However, practically, as we can acquire from the daily life, such notion as true respect to another is one of the complex issues due to the many external and internal reasons. So, we can conclude that Kant meant *egoism* as one of the stems of radical evil as the desire to own happiness and self-love.

Meanwhile, as Kant constantly insists, there are no such reasons in the world that could stop a person from being free or act freely. Consequently, evil actions arise only from the notion of radical evil. Here, it has become evident why Kant turned to the concept of transcendental subject, which according to him comes from being a "thing in itself", of things which are not knowable, and which are beyond space and time. Through, the concept of transcendental human subject turns into the "thing in itself". The Kantian thesis suggests no comprehensible ground for radical evil in human nature. Kant consistently emphasized this conclusion:

⁶¹ Kant, *Religion*, p. 66.

Evil can have originated only from moral evil (not just from the limitations of our nature), yet the original predisposition (which none other than the human being himself could have corrupted, if this corruption is to be imputed to him) is a predisposition to the good; there is no conceivable ground for us, therefore from which moral evil could have come us.⁶²

As a real basis of religion, in accordance with biblical teaching, Kant considers a radical evil in human nature- a contradiction between the requirements of moral law versus chaotic desires of sensual nature; which do not obey to the superior principle. This, in turn, implies the need for deliverance or salvation and in this Kant sees the essence of any religion. Particularly, Kant argued the necessity of Christianity. Those moral ideas which were preached by Christ will not contradict with reason if a historical religion did not exist, above a moral one. The form of religion, which was proposed by Kant, was not that of repentance and faith, but was only a rational proof. What contradicts reason is declared by Kant to be false or insignificant part of religious experience. The beginnings of a moral religion lay hidden in the human's reason, and its purpose is 'moral development/improvement of a person. Yet, in Kant's *Religion* there is not a single word about the spiritual transfiguration of human itself, the resurrection and etc. Kant's understanding of religion has been oriented only to the earthly existence of humans. Since we accept the 'religion of reason' throughout the whole earth, according to Kant, the Kingdom of God will come. However, this question will be developed in further chapters.

The problem of *radical evil* was formulated by Kant in his *Religion*.⁶³ The notions of good and evil are two opposing concepts and for their better understanding Kant makes a statement on the essence of evil and how it might suffer from ontological adequacy, that is, it just might be a sheer lack of any good principle. If good and evil are opposites, then that which is opposed to the good, should be a kind of counteracting force and not just our ignorance or our lack of ability to penetrate into the true nature of good. An evidence of the existence of this opposite force lies, in the fact, that I am worried about the moral law within *I*, which puts pressure on the very core of my self-identity. And, ultimately detracts from my own self-esteem and self-love. Meaning, there is something in the nature of *I* which is opposed to moral law, which gives preference to the 'pathological' interests before the moral law. Kant emphasizes upon *a priori* than empirical nature to this predisposition of evil: as long

⁶² Ibid., p. 64.

⁶³ Kant, *Religion*, pp. 45-73.

as *I* have free existence, I cannot simply objectify what I must consider as good (saying, for example, that it is part of my nature, for which I do not have any responsibility); the fact that *I* feel morally responsible for my evil, shows that, in a timeless transcendental act I have already freely chosen my own inner character, by preferring to side with evil than with good.⁶⁴

Speaking about the nature of human, Kant indicates at a special character which is not identical with usual concept of nature. By human nature, Kant implies a subjective ground of application of his freedom. But this ground must emerge from within, to relate with morality, in turn an act of freedom.⁶⁵

Kant, in *Religion*⁶⁶ points out that in relation to people who are evil by nature, the evil retains its affiliation: this person adopted evil thoughts not under the influence of bad circumstances; evil lies in his very nature. At the same time, he (like any human being) is responsible for this radical character. This necessarily implies that an inner, timeless and transcendental act had driven the evil inside him making it the main characteristic of his life. The transcendental, *a priori* nature of this act means that he could not be motivated by pathological (empirical) circumstances; the initial choice of being evil had to be purely an ethical act, which incorporates evil deeds into an ethical principle. Kant tries to separate the notions of disposition and inclination, showing the primacy of this disposition to evil in man, which are rooted in the very depths of the human essence, for it turns out that this disposition to evil itself is not just some human inclinations in themselves, but something deeper and is the basis of certain inclinations, which in their turn can become the ground of concrete actions in the intelligible world. At the same time, Kant emphasizes that we shall not understand the statement as human is evil by nature so that a person is already born that way, and therefore cannot bear any responsibility for this primordial inclination. Such an interpretation would be incorrect and harmful, as it would open wide scope for justifying morally evil deeds, i.e. it would eliminate all moral laws as such. Actually, in the latter case, we could not have talk about evil at all, since moral evil implies the freedom of the will of human, and the natural inclination to evil, which would

⁶⁴ Kant, *Religion*, pp. 45-50.

⁶⁵ Otherwise, there might appear an external reason, which determines an act of freedom and then we will not be able to speak of evil or good in terms of morality.

⁶⁶ Kant, *Religion*, p. 55.

determine human actions, would eliminate this freedom. For the same reason, Kant also stresses that we cannot lay the blame for this primordial evil on sensuality.

In order to identify moral maxims which might be the reason for evil and evil behavior of humans⁶⁷ first of all, we need to comprehend what is the content of nature.⁶⁸ However, this is not a sensual human nature⁶⁹, but that higher nature, which is determined by the free activity of our practical reason, on the basis of which we define ourselves to be good or evil. The difficulty lies in the fact that such a subjective basis of application of his freedom must emerge from ones discretion so that it is not wrongly imputed to emerge guilt, and then we would not be called good or evil. There is no precedent action in the objective world. The resolution of this difficulty, for Kant⁷⁰, lies in the fact that the basis of evil resides not in any object or in any natural incentives, but only in the rule, that is, in particular maxim. Thus, the defining basis of evil are not on our sensual inclinations, but prior to these inclinations there are rules or maxims, contrary to the moral law, chosen arbitrarily. Here we would like to trace some points concerning the maxims in general. In order to understand, we need to first investigate what is the (*Gesinnung*⁷¹) *fundamental attitude* as a concept that has become truly central to *Religion* and precisely in connection with the issue of evil in human nature. The *fundamental attitude* for Kant is, first, a certain characteristic of the will and, secondly, it is closely associated with another concept of maxim, important for Kant's moral philosophy, i.e. subjective principle of will. We need to understand how *fundamental attitude* gets connected with maxims, whether it is a maxim (maxims) itself or, rather, it is some ground for the adoption of maxims. The *fundamental attitude* is nothing more than “the first subjective basis for the adoption of maxims”⁷² and directed toward application of freedom in general. This is such a maxim that determines the acceptance of all other maxims. In other words, it is the basis of our will and determines whether our actions are moral or not. The question of the good or evil principles cannot be resolved by appealing only to the external side of one’s actions (whether they are compatible with the moral law or not). We are always

⁶⁷ Human here considered as a subject of morally evil maxims.

⁶⁸ Kant redefines philosophical concept of human nature by arguing that it is substantial subjectivity where the will and freedom are a necessary expression of it.

⁶⁹ By human nature here means a subjective basis of application of his freedom under the rule of objective moral laws, which precedes to all the actions in the tangible world.

⁷⁰ Kant, *Religion*, p. 61.

⁷¹ Kant, *Religion*, p. XVIII.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 62.

forced to appeal also to the *fundamental attitude* that underlies the maxims to be fulfilled. And here is a place found for the radical evil in human, but again, evil should not be sought in the maxims themselves only. Man, according to Kant, belongs to the two worlds at the same time: intelligible and sensuous, hence there are the two completely different motives of his deeds: respect for the moral law (characterizing a person as an intelligent being) and the desire to satisfy his needs (characterizing a person as a sensuous being). However, as a citizen of the sensuous world, a person is attached to the motives of sensuality and takes them into his maxims. Following Kant, if a person could have been considered 'to have respect' towards law as a sufficient incentive and would act always only out of respect to the law, he would be morally good. However, humans proceeds out of their sensory needs extremely rarely and such a behavior is essentially identical with that of an animal's behavior and not to the behavior of a rational being. Therefore, Kant points out that a person takes into his maxims, simultaneously, both the motive of respect towards the moral law and the motive for satisfying sensuous needs. But both these motives cannot be equivalent. One of them will obey the other. And the question, thus, is reduced to which of them will prevail. And if the motive of sensuality is the predominant motive (which, according to Kant, is peculiar to all, even the best, representatives of the human race), then such a person can be considered as evil:

The human being (even the worst) does not repudiate the moral law, whatever his maxims, in rebellious attitude by revoking obedience to it. The law rather imposes itself on him irresistibly, because of his moral predisposition; and if no other incentive were at work against it, he would also incorporate it into his supreme maxim as sufficient determination of his power of choice, i.e. he would be morally good. He is, however, also dependent on the incentives of his sensuous nature because of his equally innocent natural predisposition and he incorporates them too into his maxim (according to the subjective principle of self-love).⁷³

This disposition of a person to substitute the moral order of following maxims is what Kant calls the radical evil of human nature. Thus, people are evil by nature not because their freedom is objectively determined by the sensual incentives, but on the contrary, people are evil because they freely defined discretion over their reasons to choose evil maxims, which are realized by following sensory incentives. Thus, there is no reason to question why people are evil; they are so, on the basis of choosing of evil maxims for themselves.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 58.

Evil in itself has no basis for existence beyond human's discretion. Here, we must ask ourselves a seemingly simple question: if the principle of evil itself does not consist of implementing our sensual desires, then how can evil be adopted by our discretion? Adopting what is evil, knowingly or mistakenly by humans is possible because it leads him to some good; that he chooses for himself based on the misguided principle of good. But this, by no means is matched with Kant's position earlier on the principle of the highest good due to a governing moral law. This law helps to determine ones free will to do good at all times, even if a person, in reality, happens to choose maxims opposing these moral laws. Can we then say that a person is evil by nature precisely because he was first free to choose for himself, does this show that the very essence of evil is rooted in human's freedom? Kant claims that:

*the human being is by nature good, or he is by nature evil, this only means that he holds within himself a first ground (to us inscrutable) for the adoption of good or evil (unlawful) maxims, and that he holds this ground qua human, universally – in such a way, therefore, that by his maxims he expresses at the same time the character of his species.*⁷⁴

From this passage we can say that the reason as to why we choose good or evil maxims can in no way be ascertained due to the fact that human beings belong at once to both the worlds. The contradictions, where human beings are both pure natural creature and also belong to an intelligible world, are substantiated by being an individual and having an individuality and free choice as well. In fact, an evil person is aware of the fact that he is committing evil, but he makes a choice, guided by considerations more weighty than morality that is evil maxims in his nature.

Despite the fact that adoption of a good maxim is necessary, and must become objective within itself, but it happens only when free will, the only universal subjective basis of human's self-determination resorts to good or to evil principles.

Some contemporary philosophers have worked on radical evil that we shall now take a look at. According to Caswell, through a radical evil, it is possible for human being to reach the highest good. He says:

the theory of radical evil is an explication of the a priori interaction of morality with worldliness, which makes clear and determinate the move from

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 47.

the moral law to the duty to promote the highest good, and which will in turn justify the move from morality to religion.⁷⁵

Caswell's statement sounds plausible and is more comprehensible, in the sense that a human being must have a finite end and this end must be the highest good.

Another renowned philosopher, Stephen R. Grimm argues that, the cause of radical evil in man's nature lies either in their anthropological nature or in the fact that they are dependent on the community. In this case, Grimm says:

In order to understand Kant's doctrine of radical evil we need to consider his anthropological analysis of the human person. In particular, we need to see how Kant thinks our composite human nature - as subject to both sensual inclinations and rational imperatives - creates a fertile ground for rebellion and sin which we all, for reasons ultimately mysterious to even Kant, choose to partake in. Moreover, I have tried to show that this account is preferable to Wood's because (a) it takes Kant's rigorism seriously, and (b) it can accommodate the importance of unsociable sociability in Kant's thought, without requiring that we recognize unsociable sociability as the source of radical evil.⁷⁶

In contrary, Paul Formosa in his article "Kant on the Radical Evil of Human Nature", claimed that "there has been much controversy in the secondary literature over what exactly Kant's argument for radical evil is, or whether he even can or does offer any such argument"⁷⁷. He notes that Kant has tried to give an appropriate argument for his radical evil in Part I, section- III. However, the argument is still not very clear. Formosa further says:

Does Kant deliver on the promised proof elsewhere in the text? He does not, at least explicitly, seem to do so. Kant does give parts of the required proof, but fails to explicitly bring the matter to any definite conclusion. Indeed Kant often goes out of his way to discuss humanity's evil propensity only as an unproven possibility, often prefacing his remarks with a hypothetical "if" clause, although it is also clear that he thinks our evil propensity is not only conceptually possible, but actually describes our human condition.⁷⁸

In conclusion, we can say that, the base for radical evil is seldom rooted in human's freedom, by the virtue of which, it is impossible to establish Kant's community of ethics, which could have led to exercising what is good. For Kant, an ideal community would have been a unified humanity with one state system, and practicing

⁷⁵Caswell, "Kant's Conception of the Highest Good, the *Gesinnung*, and the theory of Radical Evil," p. 207.

⁷⁶ Grimm, "Kant's Argument for Radical Evil," p. 173.

⁷⁷ Formosa, "Kant on the Radical Evil of Human Nature," pp. 227-228.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 228.

a single religion.⁷⁹ However, a historical, statutory religion, or ecclesiastical faith that existed before does not meet the requirements of universality. Only a moral religion based on reason, would have corresponded to Kant's request for universality. These questions will be developed in further chapters.

⁷⁹ Kant, *Religion*, p. 151.

CHAPTER - 2

Kant's Philosophy of Religion

2.1 Philosophical Debates around the Conception of Religion

One of the merits of studying Kant's concept of religion was that he sought to prove how the content of religion is practically no different from morality, since it also concerns duty in general. He added that the religion differs from morality by form only, by letting the moral law have influence on human will not directly, but through the idea of God. It should be taken into account, Kant said, that this idea of the *Higher Being* was created by reason itself. Another of Kant's achievement in religious studies has been due to the fact that he separated *religion from theology*. Into the content of the latter, he included all historical religions, including *Christianity as ecclesiastical faith*.

For Kant, it was important that, in spite of all possible disputes about God, God exists only for the person who believes in him. Here we can notice that he laid sole importance on hope and further we will try to trace Kant's own philosophical understanding of the notion of *hope*.

As already mentioned above Kant's work *Religion* is specifically devoted to the philosophical study of religion; Kant revealed the essence of religion and found it in the morality; instead of pursuing a historical religion he solely offered his conception of *moral religion* which can lead a person towards moral development and also towards the *highest good*.

So, in this subsection we will focus on Kant's philosophy of religion, since there remained after him many ideas concerning religious attribute around God, miracles, immortality of the soul, faith and many others. Therefore, we can dare say that Kant's philosophy of religion, can declare itself as a separate branch in the history of philosophy itself.

Before entering into Kant's philosophy of religion, let us look at the philosophical ideas on religion that came before the Kantian philosophy, in order to get a holistic picture of the situation during the enlightenment. It becomes necessary

to identify the similarities and differences underlying the teachings on religion by certain philosophers of 17th century through comparison. Particularly, we intend to examine the germs of, 'the philosophy of religion' found in Spinoza's and Hume's philosophical ideas, since they have made several crucial statements concerning religion and caused further developments to happen in the history of philosophy. At first glance, it is difficult to judge Kant's impression of their statements on religion; however we can find many similarities and differences between Kant's and the after mentioned philosopher's work.

2.1.1 Spinoza

Baruch Spinoza was a renowned philosopher of the 17th century whose philosophy laid the foundations for development of a philosophy for religion, at length. Spinoza, while drawing much attention in his writings, towards religion and the phenomenon of God, simultaneously makes theistic (however, he was a pantheist), arguments. However, diverse the philosophical legacy of the great Dutch theorist be, we are mainly concerned with the problems of substance. It is in its substance, that Spinoza tries to prove the existence of God. While trying to understand what is the ultimate basis for the existence of the universe, the philosopher makes his famous conclusion about a single, indivisible, eternal, infinite (causal sui) substance⁸⁰ - having noted that in it lies the unity of essence and existence. Spinoza insists that beyond such substance there is no material and spiritual formations.

As Spinoza says, the substance is indestructible; it is not limited by any temporal parameters, and is as if out of time. Following the arguments of Spinoza on the existence of a very orthodox idea of God, on a single meaning and necessarily on existence of the substance⁸¹, it is difficult to understand whether substance undergoes any changes in its being or not. The answer to this question is most likely in the negative, but not in the sense of whether the world does not change or not, but in the sense of whether substance loses any of its qualities or not. According to Spinoza, the substance is both God and nature. Calling the substance as both God and nature, the philosopher initially, purely terminologically gave rise to an ambiguous understanding

⁸⁰ Oppy and Trakakis, *Early Modern Philosophy of Religion. The History of Western Philosophy of Religion*, p. 145.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

of what his position on the philosophy of religion is, in general. However, we are going to put emphasis upon the conceptual apparatus in his work, and his ways of expressing thoughts in a very scholastic style of the narrative.

For Spinoza, the study of origin, nature, and role of religion in social life has been expounded in one of his main works entitled *Theological-Political Treatise*⁸². In fact, the idea of God prevails throughout his philosophy, and yet theologians accused Spinoza of being atheistic, since Spinoza's God was not personified with will and reason. Spinoza just as Kant refused to build a morality based on church's theology. Thus, here we can trace a similarity between Spinoza and Kant wherein they reject morality based on fear of external or internal punishment. The representation of God as a certain judge, monarch or father is false for Spinoza. His teachings called upon mankind to feel God's presence in nature, because nature itself is 'God'. In fact, Spinoza's teachings on God have pantheistic orientation, since there are no clearly formulated provisions on dissolution of God in nature. The coincidence of God and nature does not mean that God is dissolved in nature and is present in every manifestation of God. In fact, Spinoza was one of the first philosophers who sought to destroy Descartes's theory of dualism, challenging the independence of mind and body from each other. Spinoza saw nature as the only infinite substance. A person cannot be regarded as a point of contact between the mind and the body since Spinoza claimed that the *nature* with its infinite number of attributes cannot be reasoned out as extension and thinking parts. Consequently, it is pointless to present a person as the meeting point of a mind and body substances, as Descartes did. Spinoza asserted that a man is a whole bodily and spiritual being. Hence, we can identify Spinoza's main conclusion that since nature itself is integral, it is illogical to perceive a person as a union of independent substances of the mind and body. Spinoza agreed with Descartes on the leading position of intuitive cognition. Intuition not only provides great opportunities for self-knowledge, but also helps to know the essence of the world through self-knowledge. Speaking about the possibility to know the world, Spinoza spoke of the similarity of ideas and things; this was due to the fact that both the idea and the thing are different sides of a single substance – *nature*.⁸³

⁸² Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, pp. XVI-XXXI.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

In *Theological-Political Treatise*, Spinoza intended to prove two theses: 1) religion can provide people with complete freedom of thought; 2) the government, without prejudice for the state, meanwhile can provide people the same freedom. In the process of proving the first thesis, Spinoza discusses the problems of prophecy, the 'selectivity' of the Jewish people, the peculiarities of the natural and prophetic knowledge of the divine law, miracles, and divinity of the Bible. Spinoza believes that the Bible does not really matter in order to know the truth. For him, authority lies only in reason, but not in the Holy Scripture.⁸⁴ He defined the prophecy as man's inner knowledge which has been revealed to him by God. The first prophecy is the natural knowledge inherent in the soul of every man, for it is authentic knowledge, and its source is God. In Scripture, we find only two ways of communicating God with people: voice and vision (direct intercourse with God is found only in Christ), in the form of hallucinations or dreams, hence prophecies occur only through imagination; Spinoza insisted that the gift of prophecy has not belonged exclusively to Jews only; in what sense were they a people, chosen by God for bliss? Since, everything is done according to predetermined laws, that is, according to the divine commands, then all people are God's chosen people, and the difference is only in the purpose for which they are elected. Spinoza identified two kinds of blessings: the first one is the knowledge of things in their original principles and the true virtue, which, therefore, cannot be the property of only one person, and the blessings, the achievement of which depends on the external reasons that is life in safety and good health. So, the best means to achieve the last benefits is the formation of a community governed by laws, and its foundation in a certain area; a nation possessing the best laws will have the best means to achieve the benefits of the second type. The election of the Jews as chosen nation could only aim at this kind of good that is laws given to them by Moses, although they were taught of love to God and virtue, but at the same time they had in mind the external benefits arising from the execution of laws. While the Jews kept these laws, their election and their kingdom lasted, but with the destruction of the latter they ceased to be elected people.

Yet, Spinoza queried what the basis for religious rituals is and what is the knowledge of sacred history? Then, he explains that the religious rites, found in the Old Testament, were established only for the Jews and are adapted only to the

⁸⁴ Ibid., pp. 97-117.

interests of their kingdom, therefore they have nothing to do with the true good, their goal was to unite the Jews into one state and for the Jews they lost value with the fall of their kingdom. Christian rites have a similar goal: to unite all Christians in to one church. The truths of the Holy Scripture boil down to the fact that there is a God, that is, a *Being* which created the whole world, which controls and cares for people who are pious and virtuous, but punishes the wicked. These truths Holy Scripture does not prove, but only confirms by stories from the history of the Jews, to make them more obvious to the rude and ignorant people. Therefore, only those stories of the Holy Scripture are useful, which reinforce piety and obedience in man's soul, and it will be useful to read these stories, who pay attention to the instruction that follows from them; for a person who understands eternal truths and therefore virtuous, it is not necessarily reading the Holy Scriptures and believing in his stories, hence the belief in miracles that do not in any way make us understand the existence of God, his nature and divine providence. In order to decide whether the whole Bible represents the word of God or not Spinoza subjects the Holy Scripture to the historical research.

So, the historical study of the Bible leads Spinoza to the conclusion that it cannot be regarded as God's word dictated by God himself. But this does not prevent the Bible from remaining the word of God in the true meaning of this word, that is, in the sense that the true religion is preached in it; Scripture does not require interpretation, but it needs obedience and yet, it provides people free thinking.⁸⁵

For Spinoza's views on nature of religion, its place and significance in the society are devoid of orthodoxy and are distinguished with a number of philosophical criticisms. He was well aware of the role of religion in society and negatively assessed the practice of using it by the state for its own mercenary purposes:

It may indeed be the highest secret of monarchical government and utterly essential to it, to keep men deceived, and to disguise the fear that sways them with the specious name of religion, so that they will fight for their servitude as if they were fighting for their own deliverance, and will not think it humiliating but supremely glorious to spill their blood and sacrifice their lives for the glorification of a single man.⁸⁶

According to Spinoza, religion is made up by ignorance of people, barbarism and fear before the unknown. It can be seen, from what has been said above where he

⁸⁵ Ibid., pp.13-97.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 54.

points out quite clearly the epistemological roots of this form of social consciousness. From quite materialistic grounds, he explained the ritual aspects of the functioning of the church⁸⁷ having stressed that the execution of practical religious prescriptions dictated by the church being a religious institution especially those concerning human relations leads to the destruction of the state.

At the same time, one could not fail to see the inconsistency in Spinoza's thoughts on religion. He believed that in conditions when the overwhelming majority of the population is illiterate, superstitions are widely spread in the society, religion promotes the strengthening of the moral foundations of people's joint life, creates a minimum of moral culture, without which neither individuals nor society could have survived. He, just like Kant, has stressed upon the importance of a 'true religion', which in fact identified itself closely with that of 'wisdom'. Yet on the other hand, Spinoza interpreted, from these moral positions the preaching's of Jesus Christ, whom he regarded as a real historical personality.

It is important to remember that Spinoza, like each of us, was a man belonging to his own time period. It is always extremely difficult even at the level of consciousness to break out of the dominant beliefs. In Spinoza's teaching there are plenty of contradictory and ambiguous arguments and we initially would ask why, for instance, materialism and idealism, the exaltation of God and its criticism have combined so easily here. Reading the work of this extraordinary personality, we involuntarily catch ourselves in thinking that there are, as it were, two interrelated and at the same time different layers of thoughts.⁸⁸ On the one hand, in Spinoza's philosophy of religion and God, appear in their traditional understanding (Holy Scripture, Jesus Christ, angels, prophets and etc.). On the other, God has a completely different status. It is a substance that is both God and nature. And although, in the first case, the views and approaches of the philosopher on many positions are differing, and even contradict official religious attitudes, his thoughts are of a religious nature. In the second case, Spinoza declares himself as a philosopher, who expresses ideas that contradict both to religion and idealism in general. Therefore, all sorts of attempts to look at his philosophical heritage as purely idealistic or purely materialistic suffer with that of a lack of objectivity. The concepts of Spinoza are not as simple as it

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. XVII.

⁸⁸ Ibid., pp. XVI-XXXIII.

might seem at first glance. It is very original, interesting enough, moderately deep but quite contradictory in itself.

2.1.2 Hume

David Hume is another well-known English philosopher and psychologist. Many of Hume's contemporaries denounced his writings as works of skepticism and atheism. The philosophical heritage left behind by Hume, is significant and important such that we have had an interest in his work, up till now. With his skeptical method and diligence to test, justify and prove everything, Hume created a real revolution in the theoretical sciences, and laid the foundation for a new philosophical school; that ranks highly among the great names of the most eminent philosophers and psychologists. For instance, it is enough to mention John Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer, Auguste Comte and finally, Immanuel Kant. Kant considered as an ordinary opponent to Hume since he refuted the theory of causality established by the Scottish philosopher; but it is also certain that both the content and the method of expounding Hume's philosophy led Kant to create his doctrine;⁸⁹ moreover, in the teachings of both philosophers, we can find much in common. The very purpose of Kant's main work *Critique of Pure Reason* is essentially the same Hume's goal in *The Treatise of Human Nature*. Kant's criticism and Hume's skepticism by means of differentiation in particular, however converge in the main - in an effort to indicate the limits of our knowledge in the world of phenomena that gets revealed to us through experience. The following example from Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* can clearly bring to us what Hume intended to come up with:

The greatest and perhaps the only benefit of all philosophy of pure reason seems therefore to be only negative; for it serves not, as an organon, to expand its domain but, as a discipline, to limit it, and instead of discovering truth it only claims the modest merit of preventing error.⁹⁰

Hume's criticism of religion is the most progressive part of his teaching. The following Hume's work had the most positive value for criticizing religion such as *The Natural History of Religion* and *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*.

Being subjective idealist, Hume was skeptical of religion and his arguments mostly was affected and at first sight opposed to the deist's philosophy of religion of

⁸⁹ Winegar, "Kant's criticisms of Hume's Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion," pp. 888-889.

⁹⁰ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 629.

17-18th century.⁹¹ He denied the statement that God or divine intelligence created a world, and therefore the world is logical and expedient. Following Hume, the world existing in our perception is ordered by our own reason. Hume rejected deism; he did not see religion as a rational and moral basis and denied the possibility of proving the existence of God as well. The basis of ethics is not a religion, but a feeling; religion rests on instincts and fear of death.

However, many researches on Hume insist that he has not questioned religious truths as it is, but questioned their validity. It means that Hume at first glance endorsed the deist's criticism of religion of revelation and arguments of the existence of 'God', but he did not spare the deist's philosophy of religion. This is similar to what Hume tries to do in his theory of knowledge. If we go through his theory of knowledge, we can see that in the beginning he joined the criticism of rationalism, which was subjected to his empiricists, and soon Hume disproved the concept of empiricists themselves. So, taking Locke's empiricism as the starting point, Hume came to the conclusion that the scope of true knowledge is much narrower than the rationalists asserted.⁹² In fact, a significant part of the statements, which, according to these philosophers, can be done on the basis of observation and reason are built simply on irrational psychological habits. Among the representations that the reason takes for granted there are such fundamental concepts as *substance* and *casuality*. Empiricists maintained that only knowledge based on experience can be true. But, Hume pointed out that no one has ever seen or experienced what we call *casuality*. For example, we see how a billiard ball rolls to the place where another ball lies. Then we hear a knock and see that the first ball has stopped, and the second has rolled. If we do this experiment several times, the result will be the same. And we say that the movement of the first ball served as the *reason* for the movement of the second. But in fact, we have not seen anything like that. We saw only a series of phenomena that our reason perceived as *casuality*. This conclusion of a person observing a number of externally interconnected phenomena is not based on empirical observation. This is more the result of a psychological habit. Thus, as the empiricists themselves claim, this is not rational knowledge.

⁹¹ Oppy and Trakakis, *Early Modern Philosophy of Religion. The History of Western Philosophy of Religion*, p. 249.

⁹² <https://alexjdelaney.wordpress.com/2013/02/06/empiricism-from-locke-to-hume/> Accessed on: 12/04/2017, 22.30 pm.

The deists could not retain their positions of the philosophy of religion in the light of Hume's criticism in the theory of knowledge. Definitely, if metaphysical cognition is not possible, then the rationalistic theory of God is also impossible since *deism* being the religious and philosophical doctrine, according to which God is the rational and initial cause of the world⁹³ refused most of the supernatural phenomena, divine revelation and religious dogmatism and any mystical existence of God. And yet, criticism of empirical rationalism put an end to deism itself. If there is no truly rational beginning in the *casuality*, the deistic proof of God's existence loses meaning, namely, that someone had to serve as the cause of the existence of this world. Hume finally concluded, in substance and causality we cannot base our knowledge; meanwhile, the first thesis of rational theology is the thesis of the substantiality of God, and its main conclusions are based on the principle of causality. But if this principle is not important and necessary for reasoning, it means that the old cosmological as well as the newest physic-theological evidence for the existence of God may collapse. Moreover, in these proofs, the causality itself is also problematic, since it must connect a cause that is not commensurate with the consequence: God and creation. If, in empirical argumentation, Hume has already discovered the factor of faith, then all the more he probably had to find it in religion as well. Without denying the truth of religion, he only claimed that it was a matter of faith but not the knowledge. In particular, his criticism was about to turn against the philosophical religion of the Enlightenment, which had a pretension to be a science itself.

In fact, Hume has not limited himself in criticism of religion alone. It is known that Hume being a skeptic, his theory of knowledge pointed out the groundlessness of a number of epistemological conclusions; thus he tried to explain them from a psychological point of view. Therefore, he applied a psychological explanation to religion also, and using an associative method reproduced the history of religion's origin having noted that appealing to imaginary means of achieving happiness arouses pleasant hopes in people, which, in turn, entail a state of no less illusory satisfaction. Within the framework of this psychological mechanism, the practice of constant requests and prayers of people addressed to the forces of nature, their appeals for help to rivers, forest thickets, the moon, the sun and etc. develops. So fetishism develops

⁹³ <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/enlightenment/> Accessed on: 12.04.2017, 23.30 pm.

there, and later - polytheism, which is later replaced by the religion of monotheism.⁹⁴ Hume was guided by the conviction that the origin of religion itself was not a matter of chance, as at first glance was imagined by the superficial protagonists of the Enlightenment; religion is also not a simple invention of priests and masters to retain power over the crowd, it is an indispensable product of the development of the human psyche. Thus Hume initiated the psychological and historical study of religion.⁹⁵

In the *Natural History of Religion*⁹⁶, Hume argues that the initial form of religious beliefs was polytheism or idolatry, which was later replaced by monotheism. The psychological foundation of religion is, Hume believed, fear and hope - fear of terrible events and phenomena and the hope of the possibility of their avoidance. To such conclusions, Hume was led by the study of reports on archaic people and historical facts. Hume had not agreed with the opinion that primitive man had a natural religious feeling.

With his skeptical, at the same time theoretical and cognitive beliefs, we presume that Hume had to come up with original and curious views, and questions on the relation of religion and ethics. Indeed, while being concerned with philosophy of religion, he rejected the possibility of making the idea of God, the immortality of the soul and free will as the subject of scientific substantiation and proof. An evidence of the existence of God is related either to the idea of its substantiality or to the idea of its relation to the world as cause to action. In view of the purely psychological and subjective significance of these ideas, there can be no question of their objective application, in the sense of substantiating the idea of divine being.

Religion, Hume believes, is exclusively a matter of faith and revelation. But if this is so, then only one question is of interest to science, namely: how does a person need religious ideas, religious consciousness from the psychological point of view? In that matter, Hume's philosophy is among the first, which clearly poses the problem of psychological research of religious consciousness, and the conditions for changing religions through ought life of mankind. Religion, in his opinion, has a root in the very nature of man, in his feelings and affects, in his natural moral impulses. The

⁹⁴ Hume, *Natural History of Religion*, p. 15.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-18.

change of positive religious beliefs depends on the development of the human spirit, moral feelings and aspirations of man. With such convictions, we can consider Hume as an adherent and ardent defender of the broadest religious tolerance, even reaching a complete indifference, since Hume thought that for a person who has attained higher moral development, the religious dogmas of moral activity become redundant.

Kant, like Hume, expressed the idea that without experience there would be no cognition. However, he was convinced that reason should not simply passively collect sensory data, but actively organize them in accordance with their own principles of interpretation.

Kant agrees with Hume in criticizing the classical argument about God as the initial substance. He also believes that the concept of causality applies only to the perceived experience, but presumes that it comes from the categories inherent in human reason, but not from the habit of connecting phenomena with each other. We cannot have any experience with regards to the world as a whole, for which any category of primacy could be applied, since the concept of cause can be used only within the series of events, connected by temporal relationships, and not for entire series.

2.2. Kant on Religion

2.2.1 Concepts of “Pure Religion of Reason” and “Ecclesiastical Faith”

To introduce this section we will now try to discern an understanding of the notion of religion, in accordance with Kant from the historical and philosophical prospects. To present Kant’s teachings on religion, we would consider the issues, namely the impact of his study on religion to theology and entire philosophical thought. Kant’s *Religion within the Boundaries of Bare Reason*, is specifically dedicated to a certain concept of “religion” and to its philosophical deliberations. In this work philosophical ideas about religion are generalized and developed. The philosopher proceeds from the premise that morality does not need religion. Here we shall reiterate the passage from the Preface to the first edition of *Religion*:

Hence on its own behalf morality in no way needs religion (whether objectively, as regard willing, or subjectively, as regards capability) but is rather self-sufficient by virtue of practical reason⁹⁷.

However, Kant insists that all things in an intelligible world are finite, therefore there has to be another agent like religion, which can justify that ‘finiteness’ of all moral beings. Thus, in the next passage of the Preface to the first edition of *Religion* Kant writes:

Morality thus inevitably leads to religion, and through religion it extends itself to the idea of mighty moral lawgiver outside the human being, in whose will the ultimate end (of the creation of the world) is what can and at the same ought to be the ultimate human being. If morality recognizes in the holiness of its law, the holiness of an object worthy of the highest respect, at the level of religion it represents an object of worship in the highest cause that brings this law to fruition, and thus morality appears in its majesty.⁹⁸

The statement that I will try to justify below boils down to the point that the impact of Kant's teachings on religion was somehow ambiguous. On the one hand, Kant's philosophical insights on religion was a cause for developing of an entire theological school, which were following the idea about a moral religion, and on the other the transcendental orientation of Kant's philosophy impelled the Protestant theologians to put to offer a perspective on solutions for the so-called religious *a priori*. The problem of religious *a priori* involves consideration of the phenomenon of religion from the perspective of the theory of knowledge, referring to the epistemological method of Kant. In its pure form, it means the analysis of religion on the path of pure formalism, without introducing moments of psychological or historical consideration in its content. Kant's notion of *a priori* in relation to religion means that premise of the human reason underlies in all the diversity of religious phenomena, and the problem of religious *a priori* is formulated as follows: how is religious consciousness possibly *a priori*?⁹⁹ However, the Protestant theologians refused Kant's religious deliberations on rational arguments to substantiate the ideas of God's being, freedom and immortality as well and particularly Kant's criticism on the categorical structure of human's reason having claimed on *absoluteness* of Christian God and its dogmas.

As seen in the first chapter, Kant begins his philosophy of religion with a description of the existing propensity in a human being to evil, in spite of his

⁹⁷ Kant, *Religion*, p. 33.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 35-36.

⁹⁹ O'Neill, "Kant on Reason and Religion," p. 290.

propensity to the good. It means that the moral imperative is subordinated to the egoistic interests, instead of realizing the natural desire to the bliss in accordance with the commandment of duty. This perversion of the hierarchy of incentives Kant called a radical evil. However, despite the radical evil, a propensity to do good still persists in humans' nature. The personification of this kind of principle is 'Christ' who is the example of a godly person as such. Christ, therefore, is not a contemplation of a new person, but just an example of the change of mindset that overcomes the propensity to do evil under the impact of duty. This change of mindset everyone should carry out on his or her own way.

Overcoming the propensity to do evil in terms of history for Kant is only possible through the base of a community under the laws of virtue. An ethical community under the laws of virtue, which according to Kant must be a church, it is different from the commonwealth and its laws. The establishment of the Church as an ethical community Kant calls the founding of a Kingdom of God on Earth.¹⁰⁰ Historical religions including the Christian churches, from Kant's point of view, are suitable only to the extent that they contribute to the founding of a community under the laws of virtue. All other religious contents are of the secondary importance. In accordance with this, the relationship between morality and religion is this that morality is not based on any historically given religion, but on the contrary, religion is based on morality.

We can see that Kant rejects all elements of spontaneity¹⁰¹ in relation to God and human being. For Kant, the idea of the presence of the divine content in the human nature is equal to the idea of mystical aspects. Particularly, Kant meant here the cases with that of deification of a person as *Christ* or those who are supposedly the messengers of the God. It is evident that in the history of religion there were many discourses on the nature of deification of man in the sense that if we consider them either God's messenger with divine nature or just human being who has been deified

¹⁰⁰ Kant, *Religion*, p. 106.

¹⁰¹ <http://www.philosophy-dictionary.org/Kant-Dictionary/SPONTANEITY/> Accessed on: 24/04/2017, 23.00 pm. For Kant, spontaneity is one of the "two fundamental sources of the mind [from which] our knowledge springs", the other being receptivity, the capacity of receiving representations. He defines spontaneity as "the power of knowing an object through these [given] representations" it is "spontaneity in the production of concepts". Intuition and concepts constitute the elements of all our knowledge, with spontaneity being the power to employ concepts, and receptivity that of receiving intuitions. *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 85.

being born a simple man then how for instance *Jesus Christ* can be considered as God. He rather has to be named as God man. However, there are also many disputes on nature of *Jesus Christ*. So, Kant says that after elimination of mystical elements from religions and emphasizing the finiteness of humans' existence besides moral imperative nothing will remain in religion.

So, there are many protestant theologians who had accepted and further developed Kant's conception on religion, which made a great contribution to the Protestant theology of Eastern culture. Particularly, we would like to look at Albrecht Ritschl's conception of religion¹⁰², which was expanded under the influence of Kant's philosophy of religion.

Ritschl follows the Kantian idea of the Kingdom of God as a 'community under the laws of virtue'. Here, if Kant speaks about the many laws of virtue, then Ritschl concentrates his attention only on the law of love. So, Ritschl agrees with Kant that the moral purpose of the religious community founded by Jesus has to organize humanity in the act of motivating love. Theology of Ritschl is similar with Kant's clue that religion here is fundamentally considered as a practical function of a particular person and its necessity can only be understood from the practical needs of the human being. However, this does not mean that human's needs might generate a religion. Ritschl's theory teaches that an objective evidence of a supersensory power is significant for a person and can be perceived as a revelation only to the extent that they are consistent with the value concepts and ideal aspirations of the human person. In this sense, that the practical justification of religion is insufficient in itself. An indication of practical needs and the correlation of religion with value judgments might lead some of us to the idea that religion is a thing not really universally necessary, but wholly individual. So, it is evident that the practical premises of Ritschlian theology can provoke a rejection of religion and transition to indifference.

¹⁰² Albrecht Ritschl, (born March 25, 1822, Berlin-died March 20, 1889, Gottingen, Ger.), a German Lutheran theologian who showed both the religious and ethical relevance of the Christian faith by synthesizing the teaching of the Scriptures and the Protestant Reformation with some aspects of modern knowledge. Most of the results of Ritschl's scholarship were presented in his major work, "*Die christliche Lehre von der Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*" (*The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*), 3 vol. (1870-74). <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Albrecht-Ritschl>. Accessed on: 22/04/2017, 15.30 pm.

After this short introduction, I intend to describe what pure religion of reason according to Kant is and I will try to determine the peculiarity of this phenomenon in Kant's philosophy of religion.

In fact, Kant distinguishes between *pure religion of reason*¹⁰³ and *ecclesiastical faith*. We are guided by our will to act based on either purely moral or by statutory laws. Our Divine will is deep seated in a person, which generates a consciousness of moral laws that sanction the presence or concept of Deity. When this kind of religion exists because of pure reason it recognizes the power of moral goals then it is called purely moral. If we accept the statutory laws, then their execution will constitute a statutory religion only. Statutory religious laws (dogmas), as Kant points out¹⁰⁴, can only retain their significance as a tribute to the cultural tradition, but they are not necessary in themselves (as revelation). Again we have to reiterate that Kant insisted the real basis of all true religion - the moral law. That is why, Kant stresses, the true worship of God, which is important for every person, should be based only on moral laws. If the statutory laws (that is, a particular concrete dogmas and cult) are suitable or may not be suitable for every person, then the moral laws must be inherent in every person as a free being; beyond morality. The comprehension of the statutory laws is no longer possible through reason, but it can be possible only by means of revelation. It can be given to everyone individually, secretly or publicly, so that it is distributed in tradition or scripture. Such a religion is based on historical faith, and not on the belief of pure reason.

Statutory divine laws, like statutory religion, can be accepted. But in themselves they are not obligatory and can be recognized only as the revelation of the divine will. These laws can only contain in themselves a means for the promotion and dissemination of historical religion.

Moral legislation, through which the God's will is originally imprinted in human's heart, is a necessary condition for all *true religion* and creates it. Therefore, the true worship of God, which has a universal significance for every person, should be based only on moral legislation; the ecclesiastical legislation presupposing revelation can only be regarded as accidental, as such it is suitable or may not be

¹⁰³ Kant calls it differently as true religion, moral religion, and pure religion of reason.

¹⁰⁴ Kant, *Religion*, p. 109.

suitable for every person, and therefore it cannot be considered obligatory for people in general.

In *pure religion of reason*, the concept of the divine will determined by purely moral laws, allows one to think only of one God, and therefore, only one religion, which is purely moral. There is only one *true religion*; however there can be different kinds of faith as well. For many churches, separated from each other in view of the characteristics of their faith, there can still be one and the same religion. Therefore, according to Kant, it is more appropriate to say: this person of this or that religion is Jewish, Mohammedan, Christian, Catholic, Lutheran, rather than claiming that he professes one or another religion. *Moral religion* is a constant desire for a morally good lifestyle; the fulfillment of duties in relation to people (to oneself and others) is the fulfillment of divine commandments. The ecclesiastical faith is limited to one kind of people and cannot serve as the basis of a universal world religion, and cannot be considered as *true religion*. The notion that statutory faith is essential for service to God and represents the highest condition of divine favor to man is the illusion of any religion, a delusion that identifies the idea of a thing with itself. Following such an illusion is a false belief, idolatry (superstitious delusion) that is imaginary worship, counteracting the true service that God requires of us. The subjective basis of the illusion of religion is anthropomorphism, by virtue of which we create ourselves a God who can easily be persuaded. The illusion of religious self-delusion, as Kant says, is the moral death of reason, without which, there can be no religion as such.

2.2.2 The Compatibility between “Pure Religion of Reason” and “Ecclesiastical Faith”

For Kant, an enlightened person must live by means of his own reasons, freeing himself from the statutory dogmas, unjustified prohibitions and timidity before authorities whether political or religious.

The philosophical considerations of religion *within the limits of reason alone*, doesn't intend to disprove religion, but to extract rational content from religious beliefs and myths, and thereby give a person rational religion; jointly with a reasonable state and legal order, a rational religion would help a person to become

what he is by nature and lead a virtuous life, be tolerant, overcome dogmatism and fanaticism, end the confessional dictatorship in matters of faith and intolerance.

As mentioned before rational, true religion is a moral religion; religion is based on reason as the basis for moral behavior, helps a person understand his duties as a categorical imperative, as a divine commandment, as an unconditional demand in all circumstances to fulfill a moral duty. So, Kant's enlightenment criticism of religion affirms the independence of man and human's reason, which reforms historical religion and gives it a reasonable appearance, however it recognizes the social usefulness of natural or rational religion as the basis of the moral order in society.

The approach that Kant uses, laid the foundation for a new theology. It cannot be denied that he developed several important religious teachings, in particular, the reality of God, the immortality of the soul and the freedom of the human being. However in contrast to classical theologians, who while comprehending God's nature were relying on the revelation as the knowledge of knowing about God, Kant following Descartes, placed man at the center of his system as a rational being. His method presupposed a movement not from revelation to reason, but from reason to revelation. Thus, Kant continued to implement the enlightenment program by defining a purely rational faith.

But one important innovation breaks Kant's connection with the age of Enlightenment. Unlike his predecessors, he did not mean the abstract reason. Fundamental importance for religion has a special dimension of human existence that is originally built up in us moral values, directly related to the practical side of the reason. Therefore, Kant has been defending only those metaphysical postulates that he considered necessary to characterize this dimension (God, immortality and freedom). Expanding his methodology, he provided a God only with that of attributes that he needed as a custodian of morality. As a result, Kant could not claim to know the divine nature, which goes beyond the moral dimension. For him, theology was not the basis of morality, as is customary in classical Christianity. On the contrary, it has become its derivative.

Kant did not intend to abolish religion; he tried to reconstruct it, turning it into rational faith.¹⁰⁵ This religion was built around a person in the sense that it was placed in the center of something that a person must rely on and believe in, if the person wants to fulfill his sense of duty, and if he wants to provide his cultural achievements with lasting value.

But this faith and hope were compatible with Christian ethics, and were apparently based on it. For Kant, one of the strengths of the moral teaching of Christ was that it tempered the self-conceit and self-esteem with that of humility.

However, the precept of Christian ethics that a person should love his neighbor as himself was so pure and uncompromising that it destroyed the confidence in the person's ability to obey due to the fact that for a basic moral law (existing objectively in the human spirit), dogmas and religious attributes do not matter. Nevertheless, the teaching of Christ helped to restore this confidence, by means of giving the humans an opportunity to hope that if when do everything in our power, then we will be helped by force from another source, regardless of whether we know how this will happen, or not.

So, Kant in his *Religion* explores the correlation between ‘pure religion’ and ‘ecclesiastical faith’ and asserts that:

The only faith that can found a universal church is pure religious faith, for it is a plain rational faith which can be convincingly communicated to everyone, whereas a historical faith, merely based on facts, can extend its influence no further than the tidings relevant to a judgment on its credibility can reach. Yet due to a peculiar weakness of human nature, pure faith can never be relied on as much as it deserves, that is [enough] to found a Church on it alone.¹⁰⁶

Meanwhile, the ecclesiastical faith precedes the pure religious faith and according to Kant should serve the moral formation of the believer; in fact, pure religion of reason goes before the moral church faith, since it is its foundation and sets its goals. Without “moral law in me” a pure Christian Biblical faith for Kant would have no content. In this way, the church’s faith is given to a person in order to historically, as a narrative and statutory, as a community of believers, lead him to a pure religious faith.

¹⁰⁵ Palmquist, “Kant’s Religious Argument for the Existence of God,” pp. 7-11.

¹⁰⁶ Kant, *Religion*, pp. 112-113.

Here is another passage, which seems interesting where Kant says that:

For the theoretical element of ecclesiastical faith cannot be of moral interest to us, if it does not work toward the fulfillment of all human duties as divine commands (which constitutes the essential of every religion). [...] We shall also find that this is how all types of faith – ancient and new, some written down in holy books – have always been treated, and that rational and thoughtful teachers of the people have kept on interpreting them until, gradually, they brought them, as regards their essential content, in agreement with the universal principles of moral faith.¹⁰⁷

Here, Kant attempts to disclose the truly *sophian*¹⁰⁸ nature and essence of faith, justifying its exclusivity in the system of world outlook and social practice. His faith, founded solely on moral principles, neither functionally nor objectively intersects with revelation or knowledge. At the same time, being independent of the doctrinal faith of theological thinking and the ‘church faith’ based on the confessional statutes, moral faith, as true philosophical faith, is in fact religious faith, for philosophy itself, according to Kant, is inconceivable without the recognition of the Creator.

The formal distinction between pure religious faith and ecclesiastical faith is largely eliminated by the moral principle that unites them. Both of these, representing a product of pure practical reason, demonstrate an absolute confidence of dwelling of a moral law. The latter becomes essentially the criterion of the highest truth. Morality and the faith cultivated on its basis do not discredit knowledge at all (including scientific). They, as Kant tries to show, only establish its boundaries and sphere of competence. Unlike knowledge, that is oriented to the world of phenomena, faith as an instrument of *a priori* perception is a sort of *guiding thread* where theoretical (speculative) thinking is powerless, since, there is Kant's position that is widely known, “I had to suspend knowledge in order to make room for belief”,¹⁰⁹ which he expressed in the Preface to the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Kant explains this limitation by the need to *take away* from the speculative reason its claim to transcendental knowledge in order to concede the existence of God, freedom and immortality for the purpose of the necessary practical application of the reason.¹¹⁰ The

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., pp. 118-119.

¹⁰⁸ *Sophia* (Greek for ‘wisdom’) is a central idea in Hellenistic philosophy and religion, Platonism, Gnosticism, orthodox Christianity, Esoteric, and Christian mysticism. Sophiology is a philosophical concept regarding wisdom, as well as a theological concept regarding the wisdom of the biblical God.

¹⁰⁹ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 25.

¹¹⁰ <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-reason/> Accessed on: 02/05/2017, 10.30 pm.

refusal of faith from claims for objective authenticity is completely compensated by the advantage of personal conviction of the subject and a sense of moral obligation fulfilled by him.

Kant indicates that historical faith is based on facts and influences in accordance with the conditions of time and place of its proclamation, pure religion of reason can be convincingly communicated to everyone at any place and time. The statutory church's faith is compulsory, the moral is free; the historical faith is "dead in itself", i.e. in itself considered as a confession, does not contain moral value, and moral faith is "vital faith".¹¹¹ As per Kant, in history there was a constant struggle between these faiths.

2.3. Kant's Argument for the Existence of God

While considering the notion of religion we have been tracing issues of the existence of God as we know in daily life, the moral proof of existence of God, is one of the most important theological backstops of monotheism. Kant was not just giving space to the idea that is God but tries to assert that God is also a transcendently free being. Therefore, its presence in human's perception is justifiable. Here is the passage from the article of one of the renowned philosophers of modern times - Pereboom who says,

God is free - and presumably, transcendently free - by virtue of the fact that God is absolutely spontaneous in the production of action. That is, the determining ground for action lies solely within the divine self, which entails that action, is not determined by preceding conditions. This suggests that transcendental freedom does not essentially involve the ability to do otherwise. Kant would seem to be a source rather than a leeway incompatibilist, stressing that the key notion of freedom is not the ability to do otherwise, but rather being the undetermined source of one's actions.¹¹²

In our view, considering the God as a transcendently free being would allow us to make a difference between human's rational moral obligations and religion itself. Every religion by having an image of particular kind of God dictates to us concrete patterns of behavior in society. So, according to a particular religion and divine God's commands, we are definitely following those or other dogmas as patterns of behavior. So, Kant admits to giving some space to existence of God and

¹¹¹ Kant, *Religion*, pp. 113-120.

¹¹² Pereboom, "Kant on Transcendental Freedom," pp. 537-567.

religious faith, miracles and sacredness to be able to explain human behavior in general. Since, there are no other images similar to supreme or absolute power, namely God, who could estimate man's behavior (of course except for moral obligations as a regulator). However, in the Preface to the first edition of *Religion* Kant emphasizes that morality itself is self-sufficient and it does not need any religious content in it:

So far as morality based on the conception of the human being as one who is free but who also, just because of that, binds himself through his reason to unconditional laws, it is in need neither of the idea of another being above him in order that he recognize his duty, nor that he observe it, of an incentive other than the law itself...hence on its own behalf morality in no way needs religion (whether objectively, as regard willing, or subjectively, as regards capability) but is rather self-sufficient by virtue of practical reason.¹¹³

It means that, almost all theoretical methods of comprehension (cosmological, ontological, teleological, and others) of God's existence which have been proposed by theologians is theoretically untenable; however, the need for the existence of God might be justified within practical reason and morality, based on the concept of the categorical imperative.

In many Scriptures a moral argument of God's existence is presented much easier than in Kant, and can be expressed in the following argument: without faith in God, people are no longer afraid of sin, but there are highly moral people; it is probably because of the presence of God in their conscience. Here, Kant develops a statement that if there is no creator or another supreme power, then there would be no order in an intelligible world, and moral obligations and principles would lose their objective value/worth. Practically, it happens due to the fact that often honest and good people in their earthly life have not been getting the reward just because they are honest and good, and the villains are not necessarily being punished by virtue of moral justice, therefore a great day of Judgment¹¹⁴ should take place there having rewarding the righteous and punishing the wicked. People tend to the happiness, but they also have a sense of moral obligation. The sense of moral obligation (i.e. a special moral sense) makes people think that the universe is ordered in accordance with the principles of morality. If there is an objective moral order in the world, then

¹¹³ Kant, *Religion*, p. 33.

¹¹⁴ The King James Version of the *Holy Bible*. Downloaded from www.holybooks.com, p. 564. Accessed on: 20/05/2017, 13.00 pm.

only God may establish and maintain this order. Inasmuch as people are not able to independently achieve harmony between happiness and duty, only God as a perfect moral being can create a harmony between them.

Another question as to why Kant develops an argument upon immortality of the soul? At first glance, he seeks to understand how human behavior and actions shape up over time, in the course of history, in a series of generations? In order to evaluate all the long-term consequences of human behavior and actions, Kant points out that if human being somehow must remain at all times, including in the eternity after his physical death. For that purpose, humans must possess an immortal soul, which in turn has the ability to see and morally estimating the events in his life. If the soul of a human will be able to contemplate the fullness of the actions committed by the person actions during his life on earth, then during the great day of 'Judgment', he will know exactly for what he should get a punishment.

For the completion of a truly fair trial most incorruptible and impartial judge is needed. So, only God can be the judge. The essence of God is to be recognized as the main and supportive norm for moral behavior. The voice of God sounds in our conscience and awakens in us the good and evil principles, a moral responsibility and duty as well. All these points must be considered as not arising from the commandments of God conditions embodied in the Bible, but as conditions, which are consistent solely with the principles of autonomous humans' reason.

In the history of Protestant theology, we have acknowledged Kant as a critic of the natural theology. The natural theology had tried by means of rational arguments to justify the idea of the existence of God, freedom and immortality of the soul. Kant's criticism is based on his theory of the categorical structure of the human mind. The categories and forms of contemplation - space and time - are part of the final structure of the finite human being, and therefore they are significant in the sense of the relatedness between the finite things. If we go beyond these categories, concepts such as causality, substance, quality and quantity lose their significance. The categories can be used only in the world of phenomena, i.e. things that are in space and time. The notions such as God, freedom and infinity, in contrast, cannot be regarded as forms of reason's structures, as it was possible in the framework of natural theology. Thus,

from the perspective of the critical orientation it is not possible to actualize God as the root cause or universal substance.

As Kant asserts, an ethical good does not lead to the bliss, to which a person seeks by nature. This means that there must be retribution beyond this world, and the guarantor of this retribution is to be God. From the categorical imperative, the requirement peculiar to human nature is the desire to feel bliss from the perspective of his moral dignity. In this context, we shall say that Kant's concept of the highest good is specific. Therefore, the condition for the attainability of the highest good is postulating the existence of God. Since, only a dominant force over the whole moral being will be able to guarantee the consistency between the moral claims and the natural course of things, so that the person would be involved to the bliss solely to the extent of his dignity. Thus, the assumption of the existence of God as a condition for the highest good in this world is not an assertive knowledge, but it is a problematic assumption as well. Therefore, it would be correct to say that Kant deliberately had minimized the connection between a reasoned morality and postulate of the existence of God in order to not destroy his principle of the autonomy of reason in his moral law. Because, as he claims: "morality in no way needs religion (whether objectively, as regard willing, or subjectively, as regards capability) but is rather self-sufficient by virtue of practical reason."¹¹⁵ It means that Kant has given an important role to the autonomy of morality. Under autonomy of morality Kant ascribes to it a pre-experience that is *a priori* status; not moral principles should be brought into line with the facts of human existence, but, on the contrary, human existence itself must become the embodiment of initially self-evident moral principles. Kant also attaches moral values to his conclusions, believing that behavior is moral only when it is motivated solely by respect for the moral law (categorical imperative) and free from corrupted motives such as self-love, the pursuit of happiness and other perversions.¹¹⁶

So, Kant's critical philosophy in the light of the Enlightenment is based on reason. It is critical in relation to metaphysics and natural theology, with the content of the ideas of the immortality of the soul, the emergence of the world and the existence of God. These ideas are often thought of as constructs that stand out for knowledge, but in fact they are not. This is pure speculation. For instance, proving the

¹¹⁵ Kant, *Religion*, p. 33.

¹¹⁶ Kant, *Groundwork*, p. 58.

existence of God is not possible according to Kant, due to the fact that there are transcendental categories, which might not be comprehensible, and as we know Kant called them “thing in itself”. However, with their help, from the experimental data, knowledge is formed that does not concern the “thing-in-itself”, but only its phenomena. Here lies the boundary for comprehension, which Kant's theory of knowledge forbids to pass, if we do not want to accept science for pseudoscience. God refers to the no comprehensible “things in themselves”. Kant showed the inconsistency of traditional evidence of the existence of God: they do not prove the existence of God. There are things that one cannot know about and that one can only believe in. Faith and knowledge are completely different areas of spiritual life. The ideas on the existence of God and the immortality of the soul belong to the domain of faith, but not knowledge.

For Kant, such a statement is not an excuse for discarding religion as superfluous, but demanding to reveal how a religion and the church, based on their premises and opportunities, are able to contribute to the creation and protection of life worthy for a person. It is here, in the sphere of action for practical reason, that Kant seeks basis for explaining the “religion”, its place in public life: true religion, according to Kant, is a moral religion; that is knowledge of all our duties as divine commands.

The question, whether one gathers the ability to follow a debt to do good is left open to Kant. He introduces God as the postulate of practical reason, i.e. as means of education for good. The religion, according to Kant, existing within the limits of reason alone turns out to be nothing but morality. Kant insisted that of all the church activity, only the moral service to God, understood as the free adherence of man to the higher principle of morality, is important. Religion has justified insofar as it serves morality, and not vice versa.

2.4 Justification of Kant's Concept of “Moral Religion”

The aim of this subsection is an attempt to justify Kant's conception of moral religion. When we speak of Kant's idea of moral religion, it does not exactly mean that Kant established a new type of religion. His main ideas were concerned with moral development of human beings, who according to Kant were stuck in their religious

delusions and cannot exactly comprehend the whole essence of human's freedom and free will. Kant called upon to follow a moral religion and adhere to a faith, which would lead a person to his/her bright future (or as Kant says, to the highest good) and moral development as well. So, in order to define and justify Kant's conception of 'moral religion', first of all, we need to look at the notion of faith in Kant's interpretation.

In Kant's teachings, there is no place for faith, which might replace knowledge and in this sense, Kant is opposed to fideism. He criticizes all kinds of faith, which are supplemented with miracles and marvels. Thus, Kant voluntarily or unwittingly comes into conflict with theology (both contemporary and future), as well as with non-religious forms of blind faith.

Kant was a sincere Christian, implacably referring to atheism. At the same time, without any reservations, he must be recognized as one of the critics and destroyers of the dominant and historical religious worldview. Kant was destroying historical/statutory religion not as an opponent, but as a serious and sincere devotee, who presents to the religious consciousness moral demands that were beyond its power, with the passionate protection of such a God, whose faith would not limit the freedom of man and also would not take away his moral dignity from him.

At the same time, Kant retains the category of faith in his critical philosophy and tries to establish a new line of philosophical understanding, different from that of which is present in theology, on the one hand, and in historical psychology, on the other. Kant wrote that at the heart of his three main works, there are three fundamental questions: "What can I know?" (*Critique of Pure Reason*¹¹⁷), "What ought I to do?" (*Critique of Practical Reason*) and "What may I Hope?" (*Religion within the Boundaries of Bare Reason*). The third one of these questions accurately delineates the problem of faith, as it figures within Kant's critical philosophy. Kant's act would look more consistent; had he excluded the category of faith at all from his teachings and in its place used a concept of hope.

The three fundamental questions with which Kant dismantles the content of his philosophy are crucial. In addition to it, prerequisite for a conscious orientation in this

¹¹⁷ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 635.

world is, according to Kant, not only an honest answer to each of these questions, but also the very order in which they are put. To ask the question “What ought I to do?” is legitimate only when we find some convincing answer to the question “What can I know?” for without understanding the boundaries of reliable knowledge, one cannot value the independent meaning of obligation/duty and unconditional moral choice. An even more serious mistake will be the transformation of the answer to the question “What may I hope?” in the condition for solving the problem “What ought I to do?” that is, an attempt to premise faith upon duty.

This is the decisive point in the Kantian philosophical understanding of faith. The object of faith (whether be it a God or something else) cannot be an object of calculation, a kind of reference point by which the individual could verify his actions in advance. In practical action a person is obliged to rely entirely on the consciousness of the moral law, present in him. Faith as a condition for individual choice spoils the purity of the moral incentives and Kant insists on this categorically; if it has the right to exist, then it can only exist as a comforting mentality of a person who has already taken a decision at his own risk.

So, moral faith: it is not knowledge like experience and is not speculation, that is, it does not try to justify ontologically anything, nor does it try to synthesize the object of experience; behind it there are no subjective factors, but only a pure moral consciousness, proceeding from considerations of freedom and duty. Therefore, Kant also calls moral faith free.

Moral faith appeals to a person as a free being, which capable of using his freedom in the interests of humans as a free being. In the aspect of moral faith, a person falls out of the natural space and is transferred to the sphere of due freedom.

The moral maxim requires him to limit freedom in order to again and again assert himself as a free intelligent being; it does not require external coercion, but it demands self-coercion. Moral faith certainly believes in those absolute things that must exist, because there is a moral consciousness: freedom, soul, God as an absolutely good holy being, as an unattainable limit of man's moral search.

So, while defining what moral religion is in fact, Kant had reduced the idea of religion to the notion of true or pure religion, that is, religion, which is identical to

morality. Primitively, then a pure religion and cult as oil and water are not miscible; therefore, moral content should break surface by getting rid of the water. Kant is concerned about morality, that is, what results from humans' freedom, from his freedom to do good deeds and have a morally good way of thinking. Kant says that one should rely neither on God, nor on his benevolence and grace, for this leads to an imaginary inner experience and superstition, but one must rely on his own strength only. A person should not be guided by fear and hope, as the traditional cult calls upon, but he has to be guided by his goodwill. A person should not believe in miracles, for this is moral falsehood, but he has to believe in morality itself. Serving God as if it exceeds the good way of life is false, but we have to adhere to morality. Confession of dogmas, observance of church ritual and discipline are all nothing more than an illusion in which a person dwells. Hermits and celibacy makes people useless for life. So, Kant having introduced the main features of moral religion as an agent that must be guided by the very notion of freedom itself and free will concludes that moral religion should be free of all these illusions.

2.5 Certain Outcomes of Kant's Philosophy of Religion

We may call Kant's *moral faith as orientating towards the moral development of human beings*. Why does Kant pay attention to the supersensible things? From scientific knowledge there is no way to achieve super sensibility. Even that particular mystical faculty of perception, which as a true feeling, must give immediate assurance of the existence of supersensory forces, even that is rejected by Kant on the grounds that it cannot be found in the field of humans' experience. Is it called a supernatural revelation or, together with mystics and representatives of sensationalism, a supersensible faculty of perception, for Kant it is only an imagination or, at best, dreaminess. The final, universally valid and necessary solution to the question of whether these representations, issued for revelations or for supersensible perceptions, should be considered true and divine, can only be obtained through reason, but, of course, not only by means of theoretical, by means of practical reason indeed. The certain content of the idea of a supersensible world must be brought to the *moral court* and studied from the point of view of the correspondence of faith to reason. The autonomous will can recognize a commandment as divine only because this commandment is moral, and the will itself is filled with faith of the reality of a moral

world order conditioned by God. Perhaps, that is why, Kant puts the notion of moral theology in the place of theological morality: *a priori* belief of practical reason determines the metaphysics of the supersensible, the apex of which is the idea of God. However, the philosophy of religion would be limited to these postulates of moral belief only if it had no other source of belief than pure practical reason.

The philosophy of religion is not a description of the actual, so infinitely diverse, religious life of humans. It is also not a scientific justification for any of the religious teachings. Its task is to determine what in religious life is due solely to reason, that is, practical postulates. If each of the existing religions, because of its historical origin, includes empirical elements, then the philosophy of religion should disclose which of the dogmas are imposed on religious teachings by purely moral faith. As for the metaphysics of nature, it was necessary to borrow from the experience of general concepts of motion, in order to bring it under categories, so the philosophy of religion must state the basic fact of religious life in order to correlate it with moral faith. While analyzing this fact, the starting point for Kant is the basic relation of the empirical person to the moral law. In our minds, the moral law exists in the form of a categorical imperative, a requirement that certainly *ought to be* fulfilled, but which is not unconditionally fulfilled. The imperative nature of the moral law would be impossible if the person had perfected this requirement. Therefore, the concept *ought to* give the moral faith the belief in the possibility of the execution of the law and at the same time the consciousness of its non-fulfillment in the experience. For a person, there is no moral consciousness without awareness of one's own moral imperfection and one's own moral defectiveness. From this the necessary and universal need of the reason to get rid of this imperfection develops, but it is recognized in the most moral knowledge as an inalienable characteristic of human nature, and therefore this need turns into a desire to find redemption that releases a person from this imperfection.

Thus, the need for redemption turns out to be an essential part of the overall human organization as a product of practical reason. In it, Kant sees the main fact of religious life. Proceeding from this, the inner closeness of Kantian philosophy of religion to Christianity becomes evident, for Christianity is that religion which most clearly and convincingly brought into consciousness this true germ of all religious life

and laid it in the foundation of all its dogmatic teaching. Therefore, the religious and philosophical concept of Kant is constructed in such a way as to show in what sense the basic ideas of Christianity should be understood on the basis of reason alone, and also interprets them as the application of a purely moral faith to the fact of the need for redemption. Kant's starting point here is the philosophical comprehension of that doctrine, which is the most striking expression of the need for redemption that is the doctrine of sin.

The fact of need for redemption is undoubtedly rooted somewhere in the ambiguity of human's nature, by virtue of which the natural mechanism with its desire for well-being is in constant conflict with that of moral laws. But the pursuit of well-being, arising under the influence of sensible incentives, can in no case be *evil*, because *evil*, just like *good*, denotes a moral criterion and has no meaning in motives. Predicates *good* and *evil* are inapplicable neither in the intelligible world, nor in the sensible world, if we consider these worlds separately. Where there is only one moral value or only one natural law, there is neither good nor evil there.

The fall of a man cannot be understood as a single fact. The biblical account of the fall is to be seen as a symbolic expression of our awareness about this fact. But moral faith, which contradicts empirical and intelligible worlds, must in the latter see the cause of all manifestations of evil which appears in the first. Although a person cannot understand the relationship of these two characters at all, nevertheless this faith acquires a great power for him. Due to this power, the man is convinced that the blame for the fundamental evil lies in his very nature. Hence, the task of religious life follows itself. It consists in the struggle of good and evil principles in man, in a struggle that must ultimately end in the victory of a good beginning existing in us in the form of an absolute consciousness of duty.

We can conclude that Kant considered the need for redemption to be a necessary aspiration of the human's reason and, as a result of thorough reflection; he finds and shows those forms that the distinctive features of the Christian doctrine are identical to these forms¹¹⁸. It means that he has given an important role to the rational knowledge. But at the same time he considers religious life not an imaginary but a necessary result of the activity of moral reason and, in particular, understands that

¹¹⁸ Oppy and Trakakis, *Early Modern Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 277-288.

Christianity, as the highest product of the development of religious life, in its basic content the true germ of this life has been found and in its dogmas ideas arising from the very reasonable faith has been presented.

In *Religion* Kant has identified both Christian and a rational element of faith as equal.¹¹⁹ He had to ask: why are the foundations of a reasonable faith clothed not in a purely moral form but in a positive form of dogmas? The reason for this, Kant answers, is the moral weakness of human nature. Man is unable to follow only moral motives, as long as it appears before him solely in the unshakable grandeur of the moral law. He is not able to fulfill the latter, until he understands it only as a law prescribed to him. This law becomes for him the power due to the fact that people imagined it to be in the form of the divine commandments.

So, the main outcome that comes from Kant's philosophy of religion is that religion is useful and reasonable only as a way to justify and sanction the moral laws. Its value is only to be a moral teaching and a means of moral improvement of the individual through the development of a sense of duty. Unlike empirically known things, moral principles are *a priori*: they do not depend on experience, they are known to all without attracting experience, and their foundation is outside the sphere of the sensory. These principles are a natural moral law, through the execution of which, perhaps, the highest good is attainable.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 114.

CHAPTER – 3

An Examination of Kant’s Moral Philosophy and Religion

3.1 What is Ethical Community or Invisible (True, Universal) Church?

If one asks what is it that Kant has been seeking while introducing his concept of *moral religion*, the answer would be evident in many historical religions and statutory faiths in their functions that have goals for uniting people under the common laws and commandments. Since, mostly, religion itself is based not on a critical analysis, but on sacred traditions, dogmas, authority of the church fathers, so, presumably the foundations of which can be undermined anytime and we also can trace that many historical religions have vanished despite their strong dogmas and canons. In fact, Kant by developing and scrutinizing- vice and virtue in human’s behavior has come to the conclusion that morality inevitably leads to religion. It is through the means of overcoming evil principles and establishing an ethical community, namely a Kingdom of God in order to spread the moral values among the people, and promoting moral development as the sole means of prevailing human’s dominance in the animal kingdom. In this case, Kant says:

It is already a beginning of the dominion of the good principle and a sign “that the Kingdom of God is at hand”...we have also seen that such a community, as a Kingdom of God, can be undertaken by human beings only through religion, and finally, that in order for religion to be public (a requisite for a community), this Kingdom is represented in the visible form of the church, the founding of which therefore devolves on human beings as a work which is entrusted to them and can be required of them.¹²⁰

From this perspective, Kant distinguishes an ethical community, as the unification of people under the leadership of the laws of virtue. He says that the ethical community is a unity of people guided by divine commandments. Such a community based on divine moral legislation is a church that might not be the subject of possible experience and therefore is called an *invisible church*¹²¹ which is aimed at spreading and preserving a *natural religion*¹²² in society.

¹²⁰ Kant, *Religion*, p. 151.

¹²¹ Stroud, “Rhetoric and Moral Progress in Kant’s Ethical Community,” pp. 334-343.

¹²² Kant, *Religion*, p. 153.

Kant points to the natural religion that the humans' reason can discover it in itself as a moral law that induces a person to freedom or as a *voice of conscience* that confronts a person in the case of immoral acts and motivations and forces him to overcome his propensities and choose a duty whatever the struggle against oneself is (more precisely, with the natural principles in itself in the name of a rational beginning), it would not be difficult. It means the religion that comes from pure practical reason does not require organizational forms and statutes; it is fixed in heart's desire to follow all human obligations, but not in a formula or ritual.

Kant while evolving and explaining his notion of moral religion mostly was concerned with *Christianity*¹²³ and its historical development as well as its various branches as a basis for his philosophy of religion. Therefore, due to the diversity of Christian religious branches,¹²⁴ Kant indicates that a dialogue between different *Christian confessions* will be possible if each of them will moderate their fundamentalist claims and cease to consider themselves as a true church, and this is possible precisely by understanding its own imperfection in terms of a mismatch with the true (invisible) Church, and the same problem is related with other non-Christian confessions. It turns out that all churches (confessions) are equal before God precisely because of their imperfection just like all people are equal before God.

So, in this context, the concept of the *universal Church*, substantiated by Kant in *Religion*¹²⁵, has a significant constructive potential. This concept is aimed at creating a tolerant and moral religious environment that would be able to unite all believing people of goodwill. And it does not matter within which religious organization they identify themselves: the main thing is that the key goal of their community's activities is the moral education and moral development of followers oriented to the values which are common to all mankind.

By giving a purely ethical interpretation of religion, Kant defines the pure idea of the church as a community of people based on the moral law. Only such a church, according to Kant, corresponds to the *religion of reason*. At first sight, the outstanding humanistic significance of this Kant's idea lies in the fact that the *religion of reason* is

¹²³ Lilla, "Kant's Theological-Political Revolution," pp. 422-434.

¹²⁴ Kant, *Religion*, pp. 155-164.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

called upon to unite all people of goodwill regardless of their confessional or national affiliation. In fact, Kant's concept has a huge potential for reconciliation between faith and reason. "I had to suspend knowledge in order to make room for belief"¹²⁶ – this line can indicate Kant's trembling attitude towards *faith* and why he endeavored to justify *the faith* and it is evident that it is in order to get rid of clashes between of the two above mentioned phenomenon. Simultaneously Kant rigidly contrasts the phenomena of faith and knowledge¹²⁷, believing that the reason is not able to cognize things which are beyond our mind, the transcendent, and therefore we must abandon the attempts of a theoretical proof of the existence of God and the immortality of the soul since no theoretical knowledge of them is possible. At the same time, Kant offers a way of reconciling these phenomena, explaining that the task of religion is not to supplement scientific explanations, but to clarify and support the moral life that it relates to higher reality. So, one of the primary tasks of the ethical community is maintaining reconciliation between faith and knowledge that is reason.¹²⁸ Yet, Kant adds that:

Confronted with the moral dangers of the ethical state of nature, we are all obliged to join an ethical community that promotes the good principle and reduces the likelihood of our exciting the evil principle in each other. This commonwealth is not political, it is not a government, it claims no sovereignty. The ethical commonwealth is, at most, a "people of God" living under ethical laws within an organized church.

In order to determine what an *ethical community* or *true church* is we need to refer once again to the notion of *statutory faith*¹²⁹ and look at the churches which are based on it. The church, organized on the faith of the *Revelation*, i.e. *historical faith* founded on particular written, Holy Scriptures dogmas and teachings left by prophets, is deprived of the most important feature that is truth - it cannot claim universality as such. Kant claims that due to the natural needs of people to always seek for the higher concepts and foundations of the reason for something tangible or sustainable or any other confirmation from experience, it is necessary to appeal to any *historical faith*. But such a faith should be supplemented with foundations of *moral faith*, and this in turn, requires an interpretation of the *Revelation*, an explanation of it in the sense that it coincides with the universal practical rules of the *religion of pure reason*. If the *true*

¹²⁶ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 25.

¹²⁷ Ibid., pp. 25-33.

¹²⁸ Lilla, "Kant's Theological-Political Revolution," pp. 422-434.

¹²⁹ Kant, *Religion*, p. 164.

church is inherent in universality and necessity, then the *historical faith*, which is based on *Revelation*, has only a particular significance and contains the consciousness of its own randomness that is not limited in its manifestations. So, it has become clear that the features of the *true church* are universality and necessity. Possible functioning of a universal church can be justified by *religion of pure reason*, however due to the weakness of human nature such a belief is difficult to achieve in the sense that breaking down of the randomness in human's ambiguous nature of the moral maxim obtained earlier is not such a simple task. Nevertheless, *moral faith* as the ground of the unification of people into one ethical community on the basis of the *religion of pure reason* also requires public obligations, in a well-known ecclesiastical form, which requires the statutory legislation given in *Revelation* (either it is historical or ecclesiastical faith.) The form itself is accidental, diverse and without divine statutory laws cannot be recognized as a duty. The definition of this form cannot be directly considered as a matter of the divine legislator; we ourselves implement the idea of the reason in accordance with the divine will. The way a church is organized is a divine institution, if it is in full conformity with the moral religion.

Actually, Kant discusses the church issues only when it comes to the moral education of man, his self-transformation and the formation of sort of a *new man* and a *good heart*. Here, according to Kant, moral faith, the idea of God and the *true church* can help a man in his perseverance in confronting evil inclinations and in his confidence in the fidelity of the path of moral self-improvement. In this matter Stroud concludes that:

...the ethical community, or the visible church as it progresses closer to the ideal of the invisible church, is both the goal of moral cultivation and the place where such cultivation takes places.¹³⁰

It is based on this position of the purpose of religion that Kant defines both the characteristics of the church as well, its essence and role in the life of man and society. Apparently, in society, a person is attacked by such temptations as envy, acquisitiveness and love of power. Therefore, the victory of a good principle over the evil one is achievable only by creating and spreading a society which is organized according to the laws of virtue and that is, the involvement of people in its sphere will by the motivation of reason, make it a task and a duty for the whole human species. It

¹³⁰ Stroud, "Rhetoric and Moral Progress in Kant's Ethical Community," p. 334.

is also discussed by Stephen Palmquist in his philosophical essay “The Kingdom of God Is at Hand” where he emphasizes that:

Kant's theory of religion points us directly to a vision of the true goal of human history: the establishment of a world-community (a realm or kingdom) in which all people, humbly acknowledging their inability to live a morally good life, receive from God the power needed to obey the moral law, whatever their historical situation and whatever particular statutes and rituals they use to express this fundamental, rational faith. That the coming of the kingdom of God is possible is the unique message of Jesus' radical life and teaching; to make it a reality is the responsibility of each human person, aided by the grace of God. This is the heart of Kant's interpretation of the Gospel.¹³¹

But in what form can this ethical community be represented? Kant does not doubt that only the church can act as the unification of people guided by divine commandments. What kind of church is it, capable of embodying the idea of *the people of God* or *Kingdom of God*? Since there is no such church and it can only be present as an idea, therefore Kant prefers to call it an *invisible* or *true church*. Among the main features of such a church, Kant singles out: universality, purity, that is, unification exclusively on the basis of morality, relations both within the church and outside it is built on the principle of freedom and the immutability of its basic principles. It should be mentioned that Kant does not recognize as a model for the organization of such a *true church* any options for political government, be it monarchical, aristocratic or democratic. Closest, in his opinion, from the modern communities, the family is suitable for building a true church as a home community.

As follows from the ideal of faith, the *church* is a universal and necessary moral union of all the resurgent people. It is, according to Kant, *the Kingdom of God on Earth*. “People must form a social alliance uniquely designed to combat mutual corruptibility. This can be done only through theological constructivism.”¹³² I agree with the author for it is quite a logically built conception of theological constructivism Adina Davidovich who drew out a parallel between the Christian conceptions of *the Kingdom of God on Earth* and so called theological constructivism that nothing but the ethical society. If we are about to create such a kingdom on earth, it means that no power beyond of our reason would run it. Davidovich in the article “Kant's Theological Constructivism” also was citing plenty of times on Kant’s assertion that

¹³¹ Palmquist, “The Kingdom of God Is at Hand!” (Did Kant Really Say That?), p. 427.

¹³² Davidovich, “Kant's Theological Constructivism,” pp. 343-344.

humans' nature is corrupted by evil incentives and the only way to overcome them as Kant saw is by establishing an ethical community which led one to the Kingdom of God on Earth as well. It means that Kant was proposing a practical solution in order to get rid of those evil incentives. However, it is also not given by Kant himself, how this fight against mutual corruptibility would have been accomplished. Davidovich concludes,

The whole point of the ethical commonwealth is the promotion of virtue that depends on personal assent to a self-imposed moral law. Kant concluded that only one kind of legislator can be considered the supreme lawgiver of the ethical commonwealth. It is a divine governor of nature and morality who can penetrate the depths of the human heart and assure the realizability of morally deserving pursuits. Kant concluded his argument by suggesting that the sovereignty of good over the evil requires the union of individuals under the divine command, which is, at the same time, the law of duty.¹³³

From the point of view of human's religious development in history, the domination of the moral order in the earthly and sensual life is the highest good. This is the highest good for the human species, and the concept of this good includes the same thing as the concept of the highest good for the individual, namely: the identity of virtue and well-being, the ideal of reconciling the opposites of both kingdoms, freedom and necessity, morality and nature. But this is an ideal, where its implementation should be believed, but which is not realized in experience. In experience, the ideal of the church turns into empirically explained forms that have arisen in history. Their relationship with each other and value are determined depending on their approach to the ideal of the *invisible church*.

The history of religions is a process of moral enlightenment, a process in which mankind, with ever greater perfection and greater purity, is aware of that of *a priori faith*, the foundation of which is rooted in the organization of the reason itself. Up to this highest point, this development is achieved in *Christianity*, in the basic ideas of which practical faith in a symbolic form has reached its full self-knowledge. But this is not the end of the history of religions. It does not yet have an *invisible church*. There are some conditions that are being adhered by churches which instead of values propagate hypocrisy. The first is when the *visible churches* want to take the significance in society; second is, where they consider themselves more than the historically conditioned educational institutions of the *invisible church*; thirdly, where

¹³³ Ibid., p. 344.

the *statutory conditions* without which they are impossible in their empirical organization, seeks to suppress the true moral meaning.

Thus, Kant gives a critique of positive religions by virtue of *pure religion*. But the latter is for him not a system of natural truths, but a moral faith connected necessarily and universally with *a priori* human need for redemption. Whether this *pure religion* exists in experience or not, it is just as indifferent to its meaning as the empirical reality of moral behavior is indifferent to the meaning of the moral law. Both (the moral law and *religion of reason*) are absolute ideals that determine the development of humans' empirical life and determine its value. But they themselves are never fully achieved in this life. From *a priori* moral law the metaphysics of faith follows, and from its application to the need for redemption, the philosophy of religion is obtained. But from this there must also be *metaphysics of a priori experimental knowledge*, the *metaphysics of morals*, which will contain, although not universal and necessary knowledge of what really happens, like the *metaphysics of nature*, but the universal and necessary laws of the moral world.

Its principle should be summarizing the empirical relations of human life under the moral law and the resulting private imperatives. The moral law prescribes actions that must follow from a certain definite intention. And from the moral point of view, one should not separate actions and intentions from each other, at least in so far as from a just intention with a natural necessity follows a just act. Thus, the concept of the *universal, true Church* gives an attitude to virtuous life as the only true way of serving God, and positioning his own good will can overcome the barriers of mutual prejudice in the relationship of alternative religious systems or types of worldview in self-determination. Of course, such an association does not need to exist legally in form, but most importantly that mankind could make up its content in the communication and value terms. In order to make this idea possible, Kant calls upon the humanity to abandon the *illusion of religion*.

Practically, the conducted analysis provides grounds for assertion that the concept of the *universal church* of Kant is very relevant and has the potential for tolerance of religious relations. After all, as the basis of life activity, it puts forward an idea that can and should unite all people who agree on their life with the practical

value of following the ideals of God's will. It is an idea, a moral way of life for serving God and respecting others becomes facilitated by such a serving.

3.2 Kant's Revolution in Religion

I would like to highlight certain outcomes while examining the relationship between morality and religion in Kant's critical philosophy. One of the points being, while discussing the questions on religion in many of Kant's work however invariable priority was given to morality and he also tried to prove the moral necessity of God's existence.

The first argument which I want to emphasize upon here is that in *Religion*¹³⁴, on the one hand, Kant proves the independence of moral dogmas from religion, on the other, affirms the obligation of recognizing the existence of God from the point of view of practical reason. God was required not to dominate upon nature, but to serve as a kind of guarantee of moral demands in human's behavior such as *a complete change of heart*.¹³⁵ We have acquired that the content of religious consciousness is a concept of God as moral legislator and religion consists in the recognition by man of all his moral obligations as God's divine commandments. This opinion is justified by Kant considering that, if a person comes to believe in the idea of God only through the concept of the highest good, and this concept is created by man only according to the requirements of a moral feeling. Practically, a man desires that virtuous life should be rewarded, and vice punished. But since, such desires of man are not actually realized, he also composes himself the idea of such a being that would fulfill his desire and, at least in the future, provide him with the necessary harmony between the moral ideal and reality. In fact, we can assume that the egoistic need is so strong in us that recognizing God's being for the satisfaction of this need is a moral necessity for one. But since, the mere acknowledgment of God's existence by man, in fact, provides only one simple opportunity like getting a reward for virtue, and then of course a man would not have such grounds of reward if he did not think to some extent that God was obligated to fulfill a mercenary desire of the humans' heart. Therefore, we dare to say that a person is so blind in his absurd desire for happiness that if he really places this duty on God, representing the fulfillment of his moral

¹³⁴ Kant, *Religion*, p. 182.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

obligations, as if he fulfills God's commandments in them. Such was Kant's reflections, at first sight it could be considered for the decisive denial of all religion.

Kant regards comprehension of man's moral duties as God's divine commandments, as normal and necessary product of pure practical reason, therefore, the existence of religion under such a form and the content of such idea is regarded as necessary expression of human life as the life of free and intelligent personality. A man at the same time must also visualize his moral obligations as God's divine commandments, and keep in his mind such an idea that God, perhaps, still does not exist, so that as a matter of fact, man's religious consciousness should be kept strictly towards not recognizing his moral obligations for the real God's commandments, namely only to the representation of them as if they were valid God's commandments.¹³⁶

The next point is not less significant as the intercourse of morality and religion becomes a fact, such that the notion of *faith*¹³⁷ in Kant's critical philosophy for the first time receives the status of moral and authentic knowledge. Kant's intention was to find the conditions for universality and necessity in the sphere of experience and metaphysics as well. In the theoretical aspect, this is only a belief, and from the objective point of view insufficient knowledge. In order to clarify not the accidental, but especially necessary character of *moral faith*, Kant has compared it with other kinds of faith. We shall reiterate here what moral faith is so that we would not be getting confused while discussing Kant's conceptions of faith. So, moral faith: it is not knowledge like experience and is not a speculation, that is, it does not try to justify ontologically anything, nor does it synthesize the object of experience. Behind it there are no subjective factors, but only a pure moral consciousness, proceeding from considerations of freedom and duty. Therefore, we can comprehend moral faith as free. It appeals to man, as to a free being capable of using his freedom in his interests as a free being. In the aspect of moral faith, a person falls out of the natural space and is transferred to the sphere of obligation that is freedom. The moral maxim demands from him the restriction of freedom in order to again and again assert itself as a free intelligent being; it does not require external compulsion, but self-coercion.

¹³⁶ Bruxvoort Lipscomb and Krueger, *Kant's Moral Metaphysics: God, Freedom, and Immortality*, pp. 253-290.

¹³⁷ Clewis, *Reading Kant's Lectures*, p. 365.

Moral faith unconditionally assumes those absolute things that must exist, since there is a moral consciousness such as freedom, soul and God as an absolutely good holy being, as an unattainable limit of man's moral searches. Clewis, meanwhile, as Kant, has indicated and justified in favor of the moral religion:

Kant assures his readers that the “yoke” of universal, moral religion is far lighter than that of “statutory law” imposed by the clergy in a typical church: whereas the former *frees* people to obey the moral law, the effect of the latter is “that conscience is burdened.”¹³⁸

In general, as we have already said, religion for Kant has no significance outside the moral field of life and human activity. All that which a person thinks of executing more to be pleasing to God except of good behavior in life, since it is mere simple religious deception and distorted service to God. True morality, according to Kant's theory, is an autonomous, independent and unconditional morality by claiming that morality in its content does not need another ground since it is self-sufficient. However, if this is so, then it is asked: how does Kant find a point of support that would allow coexistence of religion and morality simultaneously? How does Kant define religion as the recognition of all our duties? Does Kant contradict himself in this case, while supplying morality in dependence on religion, then declaring its independent and not needing any religion? To answer this question, one should not forget that Kant does not speak about what was and what is the moral among people at the present time, but about what kind of morality should be among people. Kant does not at all reject that morality, as far as the human species knows his history, has always been dependent on religion; in contrary, he asserts only that such morals conditioned by religion, as it were, true morality.

So, with a view to look into the matter of Kant's doctrine of autonomous morality we need to once again have a look at it. Kant argued that the moral actions should not be estimated from the perspective of a single person's mind; it has to be done with the help of universal one.¹³⁹ What is this common for all minds? It means that Kant's thoughts on universal wisdom are nothing more than an abstract concept, conceivable only for the philosophical discourse. Nevertheless, we presume that Kant

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 377.

¹³⁹ Silber, *Kant's Ethics: The Good, Freedom, and the Will*, p. 64.

was talking about the universal law which is presented in *Groundwork*¹⁴⁰, namely the very formula of the categorical imperative which is common for all mankind.

When Kant points to the *universal mind* as the judge of the moral actions of each person, it means that we must consider only those actions that are recognized by all humanity. But we cannot know the judgments of the whole of mankind. If we even admitted that anyone has learned about judgments made by all people that have lived up to now and are living now, it is certainly impossible to admit that he could know how people of future generations that are yet to come will judge the same actions. And if this autonomous reason is neither the mind of the person, nor the mind of the all, then what is it? This question could lead to the outcome that the human's reason would have been withdrawn from the higher principle, from the divine initial cause, and thus the autonomy of a man would have been united with that of theory of *theonomy*¹⁴¹. That is, the principle of autonomy implies that a person acts independently, without any external influence whereas the principle of heteronomy means that a person acts according to external forces and influence. In religion, under such external influence, God is often understood. However, God is not an external force or an external factor, so the most adequate will be the principle of *theonomy* that declares that God's influence on us and our freedom are not opposite. In other words, they are occurring in different dimensions.

However, the judgment of most people is not yet an unmistakable, correct and obligatory judgment; they can also be selfish and immoral and can also easily err and mistake, like any single person. If, according to Kant, every individual can be so suppressed by sensuality that he becomes deaf to the requirements of the moral law, then how most of such people should be free from this oppression of sensuality and how it will become responsive to the voice of conscience and moral requirements? Here again, we have to defend humans for the simple reason that we belong to the two worlds (world of appearances and things-in-themselves) simultaneously and this advantage allows us to act in accordance with both the morality and intuition. If radical evil, as Kant insists, is inherent in human's nature, without exception, how

¹⁴⁰ Kant, *Groundwork*, p. 37.

¹⁴¹ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Paul-Tillich#toc595850main>, Accessed on: 29/06/2017, 22.30 pm. Theonomy is (divine rule) envisions a situation in which norms and values express the convictions and commitments of free individuals in a free society.

does all humanity or just a simple majority of people become free from its disastrous influence on the purity of moral behavior and on judgments about moral actions? In this matter, history repeatedly shows us how often humanity has been mistaken and how it has sometimes been unfair for plenty of people to treat individuals. Especially it should be said about phenomena in the moral field.

Since Kant denied the necessity of religious justification of morality, his ethics turned out to be one of the stages in the development of free thinking of the eighteenth century. The principle of Kant's autonomy of ethics is a continuation of the enlightenment criticism of religion initiated by Hume who came forward with the assertion that ethics do not need religious sanction.¹⁴² However, proclaiming morality as autonomous in relation to religion, Kant could not hold this view consistently. In his views, on the relation between morality and religion, two tendencies are revealed: firstly, he emphasizes the complete autonomy of morality, the independence of its justification from faith and creeds; secondly, on the contrary, he promotes the need for faith in God - however, not solely to justify morality itself, its laws and decrees, only to establish and justify a belief in the existence of a moral order in the world.

So, Kant had not fulfilled his plan of the theory of autonomous ethics to the end. He only limited the authority of religion, but did not at all renounce the religious faith. Kant's God is no longer the legislator of morality, not the source of the moral law and it does not proclaim this law directly.¹⁴³ Only he considers the cause of the moral order in the world. Without this order, the moral pattern of action and bliss would remain uncoordinated. Even the postulate of immortality, taken for granted, does not fully guarantee, according to Kant, the reality of the moral order of the world. Immortality opens only the possibility of harmony between moral dignity and the corresponding good, but not the necessity of this harmony.

It is theoretically possible to imagine a world in which the souls of people are immortal, but nevertheless, even in the afterlife there is no correspondence between the inclination and the moral law and between the highly ethical mode of action and bliss. The real complete guarantee of the reality of the moral order in the world can

¹⁴² Winegar, "Kant's criticisms of Hume's Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion," p. 888.

¹⁴³ Bruxvoort Lipscomb and Krueger, *Kant's Moral Metaphysics: God, Freedom, and Immortality*, pp. 23-47.

be, according to Kant, only a God who arranged the world in such a way that in the long run its act will be in harmony with the moral law and it will be necessary to receive retribution in the afterlife. At any rate, the existence of God which is not proved by any arguments of theoretical reason however is a necessary postulate of practical reason.

By presenting proofs which are in favor of the autonomy of morality, reinterpreting philosophical terms and concepts used by Kant can be confusing since he highlights that the notion of autonomy is spontaneity itself.¹⁴⁴ So here we have tried to reconsider the grounds submitted by Kant, yet logically and sequentially we try to reveal them, then, it turns out that they are more in favor of theonomy than human's autonomy since the requirements of the moral law, must be executed for the sake of and out of respect for the law itself, which is conceivable only if this law is not alien to the will. Thus, Kant rejects the doctrine of the dependence of morality on religion on the grounds that a moral law must not be alien to the human will. In order to keep apart God's existence as the legislator of moral laws, Kant has recognized the general legislative will as being identical with practical reason. Only an intelligent being has the ability to act in accordance with the concept of the law, that is, according to principles or will and if fulfilling actions by laws requires reason, then this will is nothing more than practical reason. Kant has indicated, an apparent self-contradiction in the relationship between religion and morality since the connection between them must be recognized only at the beginning of the moral development of human consciousness, and that is why the religion itself is defined only as the recognition of all our duties as the divine commandments. This self-contradiction has appeared in the fact that Kant negatively treated morality, derived from religion that is theological morality. The moral law is laid in reason of a man, and it is he who testifies the being of God. Morality consists in following a duty and suppressing in itself the inclinations contradicting this duty. If I act in accordance with the moral law, but do not overcome myself at the same time, i.e. if I act according to my inclination and inner impulse, my actions are only legal, but do not have moral dignity. With such a statement of the question, for instance, the canon "love your neighbor as yourself" ceases to be the driving force of morality. Meanwhile, in the gospels the commandment of "love your neighbor as yourself" is one of the most important

¹⁴⁴ Silber, *Kant's Ethics: The Good, Freedom, and the Will*, p. 75.

thesis. Duty and love do not reconcile with each other: we cannot love for debt. However, this contradiction cannot be considered as solely due to the religious form of morality. This contradiction is caused by life itself; religion gave only its interpretation of the historically arisen discrepancy between duty, inclination for virtue and happiness, immutability of morality of demands, personal interest and free choice of solutions.

Only with the further development of the moral self-consciousness of man, religion must lose its significance; a person must be morally good in respect to the moral law, therefore, should become autonomous and independent of religion or any other motives than the requirements of the moral law inherent in the very spiritual human's nature.

So, from all that has been said above, we dare to say that it is clear that autonomous morality is impossible and that in reality morality is always in close internal connection with religion, so that on the one hand true religiosity must necessarily be moral, that is, it must be accompanied by the fulfillment of all the requirements of the moral law, on the other hand, the true, not egoistic, morality must necessarily be religious, that is, it must be based on the principles of religion, subject to the highest religious authority as the cause of the existence and the moral law in the spiritual man's nature. And this close inner connection, in which there is a relationship between religion and morality, does not give us any right to segregate these two different areas in the spiritual life of human species, and I think that Kant was a bit wrong, defining religion only as the recognition of our moral obligations.

Religion and morality are, in fact, so different among themselves that it is unjustifiable to confuse or determine them for one who has not been blinded by any preconceived and one-sided false philosophical worldview. They are different between themselves 1) in their objects, 2) in the spiritual abilities of humans', which are especially manifested in them, and 3) in their general nature.¹⁴⁵ The main object of our all moral aspirations of man is to recognize the good, the fulfillment of which corresponds to the basic requirements of our moral law; in the field of moral activity, the will of one is manifested primarily as an ability that encourages us to choose between good and evil principles and to actually execute one or another of our

¹⁴⁵ Adler, "A Critique of Kant's Ethics," pp. 162-195.

intentions, as an ability to initiate in our activities. Religion is not limited to one's will, but it embraces everything like our spiritual strengths and abilities as reason, good will and heart. Finally, religious feelings have the same special and independent character as all our other feelings such as aesthetic, moral and intellectual.

But if the connection between religion and morality is so clear to everyone that there is no serious reason for specifying them, whence, it is asked, could have arisen the very thought ascribing morality an autonomous meaning? The only true answer to this question, I claim can be the lasting philosophical continuity that the thinkers who have assimilated to themselves such false and tendentious philosophical deliberations that the faith in the existence of a personal God or, at least, in the divine understanding about the world and human species are still there.

In reality, the Kantian revolution in the understanding of religion begins in his *First Critique*¹⁴⁶, namely, in the *Dialectic of Pure Reason*, where he at first sight does not recognize God, the immortality of the soul and free will as objects of theoretical knowledge or objects of possible experience, but views them as *ideas* of the reason itself, i.e. as concepts that are problematic for speculative reason. Their problematic nature is due to the lack of appropriate sensory contemplations, without which it is not possible to theoretically verify the reality of objects. Since, these ideas are excluded from the sphere of theoretical knowledge, they can be consistently thought of as objects of practical application of reason. The ideas of reason acquire practical reality through humans' freedom and lead us into the realm of intelligible being. In the *Second Critique*¹⁴⁷, these ideas are given the status of postulates of pure practical reason leading to a moral interpretation of religion. So, what is the revolutionary change in the understanding of religion? It can be expressed in the form of the following questions. Does morality need religion? What is the purpose of religion itself? Kant has answered that in his treatise *Religion* where *every* question on all previous European moral philosophy have been turned around, while trying to seek a basis for morality in religion. Here, we shall reiterate Kant's statement,

¹⁴⁶ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 378.

¹⁴⁷ Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 163.

Hence on its own behalf morality in no way needs religion (whether objectively, as regard willing, or subjectively, as regards capability) but is rather self-sufficient by virtue of practical reason.¹⁴⁸

From the point of view of pure practical reason, laws oblige our will through only one *form of universal legitimacy* of maxims, and therefore it does not need absolutely no material for determining grounds. The moral law, open in the humans' reason, serves as a reliable basis for choosing the maxims of behavior. However, herewith the question arises: is a person able to independently follow these chosen maxims; is he strong enough to be a moral being? Ultimately, can a person be free without God's help? We have to draw attention to the fact that the reason requires us to be free and moral beings; wherein these requirements have the form of imperatives such as *you ought to*. Are these requirements of the reason groundless? Recognizing their groundlessness, it means doubting on man's very ability to be a reasonable creature as well. Consequently, these requirements can either be softened referring to the *weakness of the human heart* and the *fragility of humans' nature* according to the principle *you ought to do* only what you can do or hope for divine assistance that will make up for the lack of will power available to man. Moreover, all nature as a material unity is in continuous formation and constant creation, and hereupon, the nature of man is also created by the efforts of man himself, his reason and will. Now we can see why Kant insisted on the autonomy of the will which means a person's ability to spontaneously design his nature according to the laws of freedom in order to improve it. What principle should a free will obey: its own moral law or divine will? For that matter, we shall say that in relation to religion, Kant applies a general practical requirement: it should not deceive us, that is, its statements must not contradict our reason. It is in religion, which is related to the supersensible being of man, that there are most temptations and risky attempts to give out the probable for the real, impossible for the possible, unknowable for the secret knowledge, since for a long time the religious faith has tried to oppose reason and even tried to raise above it. If we want to recognize religion as necessary for the ultimate, mortal rational being, we must exclude from it any deception and delusion that our reason cannot agree with.

¹⁴⁸ Kant, *Religion*, p. 33.

So where do we know what the will of God is? Does our action correspond to its higher will or not? For what purpose does man fulfill the divine command? A number of these questions lead us to the Kantian line of thought, which is aimed at finding the source of all human obligations, and thereby, of freedom. Primitively speaking, if God's law is only an objective principle of the application of freedom, that God wants it, and if a person should obey God only because God wants this obedience, then such obedience should be deprived of any possible moral and legal basis; then, the basis of this freedom would be God's irresistible will. Who wants to obey the God's will only because of its omnipotence, one can do good not because God wants good, it means, not disinterestedly, but with a view to either hope of personal bliss given from above, or fear of possible punishment, i.e. a certain corollary of consequence. In this case we are dealing with the conditional imperative of human behavior, which has its object of hope for bliss or fear of punishment. Such an imperative will always depend on the external condition, namely, on the omnipotence and omniscience of God, without which one will not be sure of his own strength and his own rightness.

Is God's omnipotence and omniscience a credible position for our reason? In a material world, all phenomena are subject to the laws of nature, and in an intelligible world we know only the moral law. Therefore, we are not only unable to experience the omnipotence and omniscience of God, but we must also abandon it in the intelligible sphere, since this concept contradicts human freedom, and therefore moral law. We are of the opinion that Kant, being a man of his time, could not openly acknowledge the contradictoriness of divine omnipotence, but his limitation of God's will by means of a moral law directly points to this. From this it follows that morality as an action that desires good for the sake of good is completely independent of the possible existence and possible will of God, and also of all religion. Such a conclusion does not mean that religion is not needed at all. With this, we felt that Kant would have never agreed. But the necessity and usefulness of religion arises from the very morality; from that ultimate goal that pure practical reason has. The function of religion¹⁴⁹ in Kant's moral philosophy depends on the function that the highest good has. If the highest good has the necessary function for motivating towards moral actions, then religion is central to morality. The highest good is an element that

¹⁴⁹ Collins, "Functions of Kant's philosophy of religion," pp. 157-180.

establishes the relationship between morality and religion. Indeed, the theory of the highest good, which is considered by Kant in the *Groundwork*¹⁵⁰ and in the *Second Critique*,¹⁵¹ leads us to the recognition of the existence of God or religion itself.

Kant gives a moral proof of the existence of God, which in our view, is not *a demonstration of the existence of God, but only a demonstration of the need to accept this being*. This proof is nothing more than a confirmation of the foundation of faith, and therefore has only moral certainty. It all adds up to that faith in God does not contain the assertion of its existence, and can regard its being only as a postulate of pure practical reason. The postulate of the existence of God as the moral creator of the world allows us to reconcile the kingdom of nature with the kingdom of freedom in order to think about the possibility of the common good. We can think of the idea of God and the idea of a highest good beyond the limits of a possible experience, notwithstanding that they do not have theoretical certainty.

There is another sort of a moral revolution in religion which Kant outlined in his *Religion*.¹⁵² He expresses a profound idea on the possibility of a radical transformation or change in the way people think, who decided to become morally good. Such a person, according to Kant, no longer needs any other motives than the idea of duty, and this decision:

That so long as the foundation of the maxims of the human being remains impure, cannot be affected through gradual *reform* but must rather be effected through a revolution in the disposition of the human being (a transition to the maxim of holiness of disposition). And so “a new man” can come about only through a kind of rebirth, as it were a new creation (John, 3:5, compare with Genesis 1:2) and a change of a heart.¹⁵³

So, from this passage a question arises as to how should a person act if he wants to be part of morality? The answer is clear that one acts morally when a person elevates his law of deeds before duty to man and mankind. Morality must be universal and universally valid that is, it has to have the form of a law. I must always act only in such a way that my desire for transforming my personal principle (my maxim) convert into a universal law. We can therefore understand Kant’s justification of the

¹⁵⁰ Kant, *Groundwork*, p. 25.

¹⁵¹ Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 141.

¹⁵² Kant, *Religion*, p. 68.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

concept of good will (it is autonomous, does not depend on either faith in God or fear of punishment) as a postulate of practical reason.

However, the ultimate goal of practical reason is not the preservation and development of the conflict between theoretical and practical objects, but bringing its sides into harmony in no way without compromises of freedom, which is possible, if only we are admitting the highest good that removes all the contradictions of earthly reality. In turn, the fulfillment of duty necessarily requires acknowledgment of the existence of the cause of the highest good. So we come to a rational concept of the existence of God. That God exists for our reasoning with moral necessities, although theoretically speaking; it is a hypothesis or an arbitrary assumption of his existence. The notion of the supreme good and God as the source of the highest good refers to the field of hope as a necessary moral concept of pure reason as well. Practically, hope here is not an accidental psychological state and not a timid assumption, but a specific concept, the reality of reason, determined by our moral duty. In any case, the highest good is attainable only in an intelligible world with the assumption of the immortality of the soul and God's being; therefore, the moral law through the concept of the highest good inevitably leads to religion.

CONCLUSION

The relation between moral and religious principles of human self-consciousness entails a key heuristic paradigm of western philosophy. The initial, scrutiny of problems associated with the above relation for the first time was propounded by Socrates. He insisted that the knowledge of virtue is acquired by reason itself; Socrates has left a thought that his behavior is guided by the indications of another, non-rational essence, which warns him against performing certain actions. It was *Daimonion*. The *Daimonion* of Socrates¹⁵⁴ that is the God or Divine Entity which inspired him all his life. At first glance, the ingenuous sincerity of Socrates's revelation casts a defiant challenge to all subsequent philosophical traditions, provoking it to some kind of revenge in the matter of rational criticism of any ideological and philosophical constructions. Hereby, the most demonstrative example of the realization of such revenge is a consistent reflection of the fundamental foundations of human culture, is the concept of a *true religion* as a *universal religion* within the boundaries of bare reason. The intention to discover the foundations of a *true religion* serving as a natural religion that is categorically opposed to the faith-centeredness in many historical religions becomes one of the main ways of developing the entire European philosophy. Here, it would seem that the eternal conflict of reason and faith from the field of epistemology organically passes into the space of moral reflection. In other words, the initial theistic statement of the religious foundations of human life turns into a rational search for the universal foundations of religion itself, which can furthermore give it a status of what it historically claims.

Without not supporting any side of the dispute between morality and religion, the philosophy itself, does not miss the opportunity to try the mantle of arbitrator in order to render it independent and objective verdict on behalf of the reason. Broadly speaking, the apple of discord here is morality itself, or rather the possibility of recognizing its independence from religion. It has been mentioned that Kant has claimed autonomy of morality. He has underlined that statement in *Religion within the Boundaries of Bare Reason*:

¹⁵⁴ Kenny, "Socratic Knowledge and the Daimonion," p. 30.

Hence on its own behalf morality in no way needs religion (whether objectively, as regard willing, or subjectively, as regards capability) but is rather self-sufficient by virtue of practical reason.¹⁵⁵

So, in this dissertation, the intention has been to investigate Kant's moral philosophy and his perspectives on religion. It was also important to explore the treatment of relations between religion and ethics in Kant's critical philosophy. Above all things, we can say that Kant's moral philosophy has been at the center of eighteenth century's philosophical discourses. By reflecting on profound issues of reason, morality and religion, Kant has left a legacy that has not been exhausted completely till date. He has identified, if not fully explained, a number of specific traits found in morality. Many-sided approach into the matters of reason, morality and religion has allowed us to establish a comprehensive picture of the antinomy between moral issues and religious affairs. We have appealed to Kant's major philosophical works in order to get coherence and follow up the continuity of his philosophical ideas. Thus, it has been revealed, that the fundamental ideas on freedom, good and evil principles in humans' nature, the radical evil, the existence of God, immortality of the soul, which initially were found in Kant's major work, in *Critique of Pure Reason*, were also developed in his later works that elaborated above questions. So, through re-examination of the concatenation between morality and religion, we have come to the conclusion that religion within the boundaries of bare reason is nothing else but morality. We have seen that morality has not been reduced to any elementary aspirations, feelings and inclinations, nor to any experiences, that are different from all other mental measures of a person.

It has been explicated that morality does not boil down to some inner mechanisms of mental impulses and human experiences; Kant's morality has a normative character indeed. He had determined an objective and inherent nature of moral demands in relation to individual consciousness. By expanding on the logic of morality, Kant succeeded in discovering the essence of moral conflict in the field of individual consciousness, namely between duty and inclination, human desires and aspirations.

It is one of Kant's achievements in the history of philosophy, particularly in the evolution of moral philosophy that points towards fundamental universality of

¹⁵⁵ Kant, *Religion*, p. 33.

moral demands and distinguishes morality from many other social norms (customs, traditions) that are similar to it. Revealing the “purity” of morality has become Kant’s focal intention. He has been seeking to free morality from all juxtapositions that contaminated its unique nature. In the implementation of this task, he focused on the concepts of pure reason.

Along with the questions of the relation between morality and religion, we have been inquiring Kant’s general differentiation of reciprocal correlation between theoretical and practical reason. Most significantly, in Kant's practical philosophy, the reason deals with the determining base of the “will”, and the “will”, in turn, is the ability or the creation of objects corresponding to ideas. In the narrow sense, Kant's practical reason is nothing more than a legislator, which means that it sets up principles and rules of moral/individual behavior in accordance with rules and norms of legal, political and religious behavior that one must coordinate with. In such a way, Kant's second question, “What ought I to do?”¹⁵⁶ is a practical one; it concerns a person's conscious choice of his own line of conduct. It has been asserted that the entire pre-Kantian philosophy alluded on the primacy of theoretical reason over the practical one. It goes to show that Kant’s emphasis has been shifted to the study of practical reason that in its system has the primacy over the theoretical reason.

Apart from the other postulates of practical reason, the notion of the “highest good” mostly used in Kant's philosophy of religion has been associated with the postulates of humans’ immortality and the existence of God. Here, Kant was included in the range of religious concepts, however, it has to be noted that those conceptions in his philosophy have a clearly expressed philosophical meaning in addition to their own religious attributes.

The “highest good” residing extremely within the boundaries of practical reason has been associated primarily with the postulate of the existence of God. The latter, as Kant pointed out, has solely been connected with the division of reason into practical and theoretical. Kant disclosed that theoretical reason treats a person peculiarly as a sensuous being, without affecting his “will”, that is, as a natural being. However, our theoretical reason does not take into account that our “will” comes into play being guided by the empirical motives and we are totally embraced by the idea of

¹⁵⁶ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 635.

pursuing happiness. This gap, however, have explicitly been marked by Kant. He noted that in such a state, a person is not able to acquire his freedom and as a result he begins living either according to the laws of natural causation or according to the laws of nature. Personal happiness as the sole goal of life, thereby, enslaves the “will” and deprives the person of personal status. Accordingly, a person becomes a puppet of a desire to experience pleasure and he is not able to back down. There is only way that is abandoning natural spontaneity and obeying the laws of freedom. Only such a choice will be personally justified. However, either nature itself or freedom, although it is inevitable in our world, still makes us regret about the impossibility of combining happiness (nature) and virtue (freedom) in it. The strong desire for happiness, Kant said, is not accidental for us, it is natural indeed. Kant emphasized that we should not declare the natural being of man as a complete mistake, at the same time one also should not accept it as the determining material content of the “will”. So, it turns out that freedom is solely tied with happiness and if there are moral conflicts that are inevitable in our lives since our world has been arranged like that, then the price of happiness is being redeemed by freedom. That is, here we see that Kant gives a special position to a man and anthropology in general. It is in freedom that Kant sees the source of the renewal of a man and society. The man is active; he is the creator of his own moral world. For Kant, every human person is a shrine, a man is always the highest goal, and he must not be a means. He indicated that it is important that a person aspires to become a person who is free and realize his self-consciousness in behavior, guided by duty. Kant has respect for the individual, for his human dignity, and not just for the person, but for the moral person, who aspires to fulfill the common duty, and not just to achieve personal, so to speak empirical happiness. A man, by comprehending himself as a phenomenon of the sensible and intelligible world, according to Kant reveals the depth of his inner and divine inclinations that evoke in him the “holy trepidation”, thus deducing the principle of obligation.

Notwithstanding, the ultimate goal of practical reason is not the preservation and development of the conflict, but bringing its sides into the harmony in no way at the expense of freedom, which is possible, if only we are to admit the “highest good” that removes all the contradictions of earthly reality. In turn, the fulfillment of duty necessarily requires acknowledgment of the existence of the cause of the “highest good”, which can only be transcendental indeed. So, we come to a rational concept of

the existence of God. God exists for our reason with moral necessity, although theoretically we are to speak here only of a hypothesis or an arbitrary assumption of his existence.

From Kant's standpoint, man's nature is permeated with that of tensions and conflicts. He has constantly been resounding that a man is a member of both a mechanically determined phenomenal world and the noumenal world of freedom. A man is being torn between a propensity for evil and a predisposition to good, to personal interest and duty, a natural inclination to happiness and a desire for virtue. Kant's reasoning was that happiness is so vague and an ambiguous notion, therefore on such shaky foundation, a rationally based moral system cannot be built. The determining reason for our moral judgment and behavior must be the pursuit of virtue, which is being understood as acting in accordance with a duty, proceeding from the notion of a moral law. When our desire for happiness is adequately subordinated to the demands of duty, happiness can be seen as an acceptable goal. Our deepest natural inclinations lead us to the hope that this goal will somehow come true. Kant fully realized that if the "highest good" is not attainable, then the whole system of morality, whose highest goal is good, becomes a grand illusion. So, we can conclude that merely to prevent the collapse of this moral system, Kant considered it necessary to postulate the existence of God and the immortality of the soul. A person belonging to the intelligible world strives for happiness and satisfaction of his natural needs, but as a noumenal, man strives to fulfill his duty. Consequently, Kant proposed to look for the basis of morality not in the nature of man, but in the *a priori* concepts of pure reason. The true purpose of pure practical reason is the "good will" that is in conformity with the moral law. The reason generates rules that are subordinate to the practical principles or grounds. Kant indicated that the practical principles are subjective; a man as a sensible being in his activity is being guided by the maxims leading to his own happiness, but as a being of the intelligible world, a person is being subordinated to moral laws and strives to achieve for common good.

Kant believed that the moral life of people is regulated by categorical imperative that is an unconditional moral prescription in human soul, the fulfillment of which is absolutely necessary, regardless of whether the person derives benefit (pleasure) from it or not. Kant has not denied the possibility of achieving personal

happiness all by oneself, but only if it is morally conditioned. Thus, Kant referred to it as mere incentive for the implementation of the moral law through duty, even if the incentive is fear or hope of reward, the moral value of actions is being destroyed. Hence it follows that morality, for Kant, was a necessary condition for the attainment of happiness and its inalienable element. The true happiness is in the fullness and harmony of life. Thus, happiness can possibly be achieved by means of reason and rationally understood morality; since the ultimate goal of morality, that serves as a means of fulfilling the requirements of the general human's nature, above all a reliable and lasting sociality, is human happiness, or referring to Kant, the "highest good". This is how Kant's philosophical deliberations on the postulates of practical reason are arranged. As a point of fact, Kant's considerations on the freedom itself are respectively huge. The freedom, in Kant, referred to the noumenal world and is independent of natural causality, although it finds, like natural phenomena, its confirmation in experience. The existence of freedom sets up the possibility of justifying a moral law. Formulated in the form of a categorical imperative, it relies on the realization of a universal ideal. Therefore, manifested dualism of freedom and the higher cause bring forth the necessity of postulating the existence of God, and the immortality of the soul which has been examined in detail in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* and *Critique of Practical Reason*.

Gradually, after introducing the concept of the "highest good" as a result of moral development and as a consequence of moral perfection of man, we have thus come to his next theory of "moral religion". Kant's conception of "moral religion" leads to the thesis that it is a traditional concept of a single, omnipotent, omnipresent, eternal, and primordial essence. Due to this it is possible to coordinate the system of nature (sensible world) and the notion of freedom (intelligible) that is both theoretical and practical reason. But on the other hand, Kant highlighted that the reconciliation between natural and free causality is due to the "religion of pure reason". The reason should not be imagined after this, that it can be inferred from the moral concepts; from the concept of some "highest good". The conducts are mandatory not because they are God's commandments, only because we are internally obliged to commit to them. In this case Kant said:

we shall study freedom in view of the purposive unity in accordance with the principles of reason, and we shall believe ourselves to be acting in

accordance with the divine will only insofar as we hold sacred the moral law which reason teaches us from the nature of actions themselves.¹⁵⁷

Philosophy being autonomous from religion wants to be good without the “highest cause”, but then it closes itself within the limits of subjectivity. The laws of nature are objective only by name, since their universality, according to Kant, is also subjective (*a priori*). Therefore, between the laws of nature and freedom there is (and cannot be) a contradiction, because they have the same status of subjectivity. The difference between them still exists, because nature cannot be the cause of itself. The cause for the natural pattern, Kant recognized, was the Supreme Being. And morality, because it is based on the reason, is self-sufficient and objective. Thus, nature is governed by God, and man is his own master. He is free to establish to himself an idol, a moral god and worship him. The query, whether Kant could reconcile the *a priori* synthetic position that “there is God”, with that of the concept of freedom or not still remains open. In fact due to Kant an idealistic humanism a concept of “God man” commences, that is the erection of a human reason for the role of legislator of the world. Kant analyzed God not from the stand point of existence, but he saw it as an entity (thing-in-itself). He has, likewise, presumed that the cause of “the fall of man” is freedom. Freedom, like reason, is the substance of the human spirit. Kant limits human cognition to limits of experience, so that freedom and reason do not depend on empirical conditions. At the same time, demarcation of faith and knowledge is happening. The faith, for Kant, has been reduced to morality, which is conceivable but not knowable. The moral way of thinking is possible only due to noumenal causality or freedom. The freedom is deduced from the moral way of thinking, since without freedom, morality is impossible. Since this is just a way of thinking, but not behavior, the attitude towards the moral law has been defined as a duty and an obligation. Human nature does not allow the practical realization of moral and Christian commandments. We cannot force ourselves to love our neighbor, but we can fulfill our duty to him. Thus, the moral development of mankind that has been raised by Kant in *Religion*, its hope for a better future, is based on the Christian commandment. It is precisely because the real conditions, based on natural causality, do not contribute to the achievement of universal happiness, the desire for it is possible only through freedom.

¹⁵⁷ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 644.

A man lives in a world of phenomena and obeys to necessity. He finds his human dignity when he realizes morality. It is only through the fulfillment of duty that he feels himself in every truth as a man. Freedom is asserted in spite of necessity, imposed by life circumstances. The genuine human nature therefore, consists of belonging to the noumenal world. Therefore, good and evil principles are not derived from natural causation but from freedom. By evaluating Kantian philosophy, we can see a gradual at the same time perplexed movement from the morality to God. In order to preserve the freedom of the individual, the moral law limits divine causation, but cannot deny its absoluteness. The ontology of faith, outlined by Kant in *Religion* completes the construction of a “moral religion”, the glimpses of which has been started in Kant’s previous works. The main idea of a critical revolution in its original and initial version can be reduced to the following proposition: “If you do not take care that you first make people at least moderately good, you will never make them honest believers.”¹⁵⁸

Kant proceeds from the thesis that religion follows from morality. The practical interest of reason, in his opinion, consists in the justification of religious feeling, and metaphysics boils down to three key questions: the existence of God, the immortality of the soul and free will. Consequently, the transcendental philosophy in its practical application grows out into the ontology of the faith of pure reason. Unlike traditional theology, “moral religion” gives a holistic view of faith, because it relies on the *a priori* judgment as “there is God”. The “religion of pure reason” is the philosophical part of the religion of Revelation. The philosophical theology preserves the autonomy of biblical theology and the religion opposed to reason is reduced to a cult (ritual).

In *Religion*, overcoming the antinomy between morality and religion has been completed. It is justified by Kant where the statement says: “morality in no way needs religion (whether objectively, as regard willing, or subjectively, as regards capability) but is rather self-sufficient by virtue of practical reason.”¹⁵⁹ Moreover, it is the basis on which the religion is being built. The concept of God is only a systemic moment of all critical philosophy, but not its ontological foundation. The next statement says:

¹⁵⁸ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 650.

¹⁵⁹ Kant, *Religion*, p. 33.

However, even if one were to assume statutory divine laws (which can be cognized as obligatory not on their own but only as revealed divine will), still the pure *moral* legislation whereby the will of God is originally inscribed in our hearts is not only the inescapable condition of all true religion as such, but it is also that which properly constitutes religion itself, and for which statutory religion can contain only the means to its furtherance and expansion.¹⁶⁰

So, the resolution of the antinomy between morality and religion lies in the “pure religious faith” that is seen in this next statement:

precisely without again and again offending greatly against the literal meaning of the popular faith is due to [the fact] that, long before this faith, the predisposition to moral religion lay hidden in human reason;¹⁶¹

In order to remove contradictions between “divine will” and human freedom, Kant distances the concept of religion from faith over each other. The antinomy is being overcome only in faith, for which the cognitive limits of theoretical reason were abridged. We can say that morality and religion have the same source; they are based on the *a priori* concept of mind.

In fact, the philosophical understanding of religion within the limits of reason alone has not been intended to overturn religion, but to extricate rational content from religious beliefs and myths and, supplying a person with a “moral religion”. In conjunction with an ethical community which came up with the promotion of moral perfection and Kingdom of God on Earth in Kant’s major work *Religion within the Boundaries of Bare Reason*, “moral religion” is aimed at helping a person to become tolerant and overcoming dogmatism and fanaticism, to have done with intolerance and confessional dictatorship in the matters of faith.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 114.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p. 123.

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