ON A JUSTIFICATION OF LOGIC OF BELIEF IN RELATION TO RELIGIOUS ARGUMENTATION

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ABSTRACT

Logical analysis is a very important evaluation of any argumentation, but it is rather essential for religious argumentation. Logical analysis of beliefs and religious phenomena should not have different epistemic grounds. In this article, I will raise some points about the logic of belief in relation to religious argumentation. Propositions of any assertion are based on truth-conditional validity and consistency in order to achieve sound argumentation. Cognitive process works through personal choices along with traditionally accepted arguments of belief. On the one hand religious arguments assert certain epistemological assumptions, whereas, on the other hand, one tries to match one's own prejudices, ideas, opinions and so forth with religious ones. An assessment of religious arguments through logical analysis will be very helpful to understand preferences on belief systems.

Key Words: Philosophy of Logic, Logic of Belief, Justification, Proposition, Premise, Conclusion, Validity, Consistency, Religious Argument.

Thinking logically is not always an easy task to fulfil completely and satisfactorily, especially in such areas where objects of knowledge need to be identified. It might be more difficult in religious thought, which interfere in many subject-matters. Any rational thought opens a door to an analysis of logical and linguistic capabilities for the human mind. Arguably, unlike other propositions of arguments, religious propositions cannot escape from metaphysical connections. However, metaphysics plays a role in any religious argument and it becomes apparent that the epistemic ground of metaphysics is crucial for deciding both primary and final judgements. Logical analysis of beliefs and religious phenomena should not have different epistemic grounds apart from their metaphysical relations. Propositions of religious thought assert truth-conditional validity while their cognitive processes are on conscious preferences. Religious argumentation might have been based on certain axioms, assumptions or doxastic judgements like any other kind of argumentation.

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Judgements, prejudices, opinions and preferences of thought are part of an affirmation or a negation of a thought. Epistemological content of proposition, belief, representation and sense is preserved in the mind (Morton 1997, 1-22). Capability of a mind is ready to produce any logical stand from there. Logical formation could be followed through linguistic structures that normally accompany thought processes. Rationality of religious thought in religious argumentation is also correlated to linguistical capability of any religious language.

Religious argumentations are not dissimilar from any other argumentation in respect of the structure of formal or informal logic. Although there have been historical debates of whether religious argumentation are to be discussed on the basis of rationale or not, any religious argumentation is subject to epistemological examination regardless to their metaphysical connections. Metaphysical grounds of religious arguments also need to be discussed while their epistemic sources are analysed for premises and conclusions (Hintikka 2005). Propositions are set up on certain truth values and any logical analysis begins with the problem of the primary epistemic judgements for the propositions. Nonetheless as Hodges asserts, "in order to assess the rationality of an argument, we need to take into account all the known facts, and not just the stated premises. An argument is normally deployed against a background of known facts and agreed beliefs, and the rationality of the argument depends on what these facts and beliefs are" (Hodges 1985, 60). Changes in the epistemic grounds of the arguments alter premises and also any conclusion of arguments. Thus, when a connection between logic and belief is demonstrated, there is a certain need to establish how the juxtaposition of premises and the conclusion are integrated in the argument.

The history of theories of knowledge shows us that there are some rejections as regards the principles of the structure of logic; especially critiques of religion-based objections are directed to justifications of epistemologies for argumentations (Pojman 1999). One may criticise the principles of logic without completely denying rational argumentation. It might be more important to provide principled justifications for one's views and to be aware of their implications (Goldstein *et. al.* 2005, 59). Disputably, the nature of the religious arguments can be of the metaphysical, existential, epistemological, methodological kind in essence. Furthermore, ethical, social, and scientific propositions may also interact within religious argumentation. Independence of any kind of knowledge-based assertion from other spheres of thought may conclude a lack of proper judgements. 'Logical truth' in argumentation is used as opposed to 'contingent truth' which is empirical or factual truth. As Haight claims, "we do not need premises that are true in all possible worlds, unless our conclusion is *about* all possible worlds. All we need to know they are true in this one" (Haight 1999, 57).

An argument might be valid but its conclusion could still be false, then the argument is valid and sound. “Once we decide that an argument is deductively valid, we may direct attention to the question of its soundness” (Lepore 2000, 14). Laws of thought, the principle of identity, the principle of non-contradiction, the principle of excluded middle have been taken as necessary and sometimes sufficient conditions for validity of a thought (Nagel 1996, 181). Good argument should not only be valid but it should also have true premises to be called a sound argument. Axioms are helpful philosophical tools as a special kind of premise in a certain kind of rational system. “Axioms in such systems are initial claims that stand in need of no justification- at least from within the system” (Baggini and Fosl 2003, 26). In religious argumentations there are varieties of those kinds of axioms which are in dispute whether they are at the centre of epistemology of the creedal assertions or not. If a proposition is counted as the central core element of epistemology, it is believed to be true and becomes a faith and as such part of religious discourse.

An argument has to be established on solid grounds. “For logical purposes, an argument simply consists of a sentence or a small set of sentences which lead up to, and might or might not justify, some other sentence” (Thomassi 1999, 32). Furthermore, “one and the same sentence can be used to make a true statement in one situation and an untrue statement in another situation” (Hodges 1985, 27). Proposition is to make an assertion. Propositions are either true or false, one may not know which particular instance is true (Nuchelmans 1983). For Quine, proposition is nothing but a declarative sentence. Meaning and factuality of matter should match each other. “Meanings of sentences are exalted as abstract entities in their own right under the name of propositions. These, not the sentences themselves, are seen as the things that are true or false. These are the things also that are known or believed or disbelieved and are found obvious or surprising” (Quine 1986, 2). Information which is given in proposition may not always be clearly seen. Verification of the meaning identifies the epistemology of those propositions (Miller 1998, 279-302). Quine also rejects the linguistic theory of logical truth which refers to the fact that language makes logical truths. Although there is a close bond between logic and language, truth-claims have their own judgmental processes (Quine 1986, 95-102). In addition, religious language plays a great role in religious argumentations but propositions have their truth-values based on their certain/particular/specific epistemological grounds. Woozley argues that there are degrees of truth. “Only fully coherent system of propositions would be the complete knowledge of reality, any body of propositions or so-called knowledge that falls short of that will be only loosely coherent, and all propositions will be partly true and partly false, no proposition is wholly true and none is wholly false” (Woozley 1969, 155). If that is the case, there is a need for further care to identify truth and knowledge regarding logical coherency for argumentations. If one understands a ‘situation’ in the sense of religious paradigm, the problem that

arises is whether the result of the religious argumentation might lead to a dichotomy amongst the sphere of rationality. In order to avoid those kinds of paradoxical conflicts among religious argumentations, a clear definition of religious epistemology needs to be identified first and foremost. It becomes urgent, since religious arguments may produce multiple conclusions.

In classical two-valued Aristotelian argumentation, which depends on truth-values of premises and conclusions, it goes on to show that an examination of the premises and conclusions is to find a logical fallacy. Aristotle says that "when arguments reason to a false conclusion the right solution is to demolish the point on which the falsity depends: for the demolition of any random point is no solution, even if the point demolished is false. For the argument may contain many falsehoods, e.g. suppose someone assumes that he who sits, writes and that Socrates is sitting; for from these points it follows that Socrates is writing. Now we may demolish the proposition that Socrates is sitting, and still be no nearer to a solution of the argument. 'Yet the axiom is false'. But it is not on that that falsity of the argument depends; for supposing that any one should happen to be sitting and not writing, it would be impossible in such a case to apply the same solution" (Aristotle 1995, 271). Changes of the premises may result in changes of the conclusion too. He reminds us here, the importance of necessity of connection between premises and conclusion. He goes on to explain that "accordingly, it is not this that needs to be demolished, but rather that he who sits, writes: for not everyone who sits writes. He, then, who has demolished the point on which the falsity depends, has given the solution of the argument completely. Anyone who knows that it is on such and such a point that the argument depends, knows the solution of it, just as in the case of a figure falsely drawn. For it is not enough to object, even if the point demolished is a falsehood, but the reason of the falsity should also be demonstrated; for then it would be clear whether the man makes his objection with his eyes open or not" (*ibid*).

Aristotle perceives four possible ways of preventing man from bringing his argument to a conclusion. "It can be done either by demolishing the point on which the falsity that comes about depends, or by stating an objection directed against the questioner- for often when a solution has not as a matter of fact been brought, yet the questioner is rendered thereby unable to pursue the argument any farther" (*ibid*). These are demonstrations of the faults in the argumentation and that person who argues. The personal critique of the questioner is a form of *ad hominem*. "Thirdly, one may object to the questions asked; for it may happen that what the questioner wants does not follow from the questions he has asked because he has asked them badly, whereas if something additional is granted the conclusion comes about. If, then the questioner is unable to pursue his argument farther, the objection will be directed against the questioner; if he can do so, then it will be against his questions" (*ibid*). An objection to the conclusion which does not follow from the premises or proof is called a *non sequitur*. A

conclusion of the argument should be followed logically by what is in its premises**.** "The fourth and worst kind of objection is that which is directed to the time allowed for discussion: for some people bring objections of a kind which would take longer to answer than the length of the discussion in hand" (*ibid*). According to Aristotle, only dismissing the points upon which falsity relies is the real solution. All other objections are obstructions of thought. Surely, religious arguments also have elements of interpretation and perception of reality. But they are also subject to avoiding any logical fallacies such as *ad hominem, non sequitur* argumentations and so forth. What is warranted or justified belief in the argumentation requires maintenance of proper usage of terms and concepts. Then, the systematic ways of inferences have to utilise the logical analysis on certain epistemic grounds.

K. Popper, although not claiming to underestimate logical analysis and language analysis for evaluating argumentation, sees that these are only part of the process. He says that "I do not deny that something which may be called 'logical analysis' can play a role in this process of clarifying and scrutinizing our problems and our proposed solutions; and I do not assert that the methods of 'logical analysis' or 'language analysis' are necessarily useless. My thesis is, rather, that these methods are far from being the only ones which a philosopher can use with advantage, and that they are in no way characteristic of philosophy. They are no more characteristic of philosophy than of any other scientific or rational inquiry" (Popper 2002, 19). If the argument is seen as a firm construction, premises are like bricks and the conclusion is like a roof supported by these bricks; one should not suppose to be presented without the other. If the bricks are solid, the construction is supposed to be solid as well, because propositions are key elements of any argumentation. It is what is used to make a statement or assertion on the basis of certain epistemic preference. Proposition has a value of truth or falsity. It is either true or false in two-valued logic. Truth and knowledge should be consistent. It might be arguable as to what the case is; logical analysis is an enquiry to discover it. Capacity of a knower, the limitation of knowledge, and veracity of argumentation are also associated to a discovery of the coherence of truth-value through epistemology in the argumentation (Rescher 2005, 10).

Epistemic logic is the systematisation of the logic of knowledge. Knowing a particular conjunction is the beginning of knowing all the parts of that conjunct. Since an inquiry starts, "gradually a bridge has begun to be forged purely logical questions to such central epistemological questions as those concerning the objects of knowledge, different kinds (or even senses) of knowledge (and their interrelations), the intentional character of knowledge, *de dicto* versus *de re* distinction and so on" (Hintikka and Halonen 2001, 246). Epistemic objects can be meaningfully understood in the context of a structured argument. Therefore, the source of knowledge classifies universals and

particulars into proper categories, and categorisation of certain epistemological grounds requires producing a judgemental belief on senses and ideas.

Necessity and contingency of a proposition is defined by primary epistemic judgements. “Statements whose truth or falsity is not necessary express *contingent* truths (or untruths). These depend on the way of the world. (‘Contingent on’ means ‘dependent on.) The statements are also called *contingent statements* are also called contingent statements. In a different world they might be false” (Haight 1999, 53). The necessity of a proposition may or may not be found in a concluding statement. Judgemental processes are for premises and conclusions and then the overall juxtaposition of argumentation. Thus, validity of a premise does not necessarily bring about a necessary conclusion (Shapiro 2006). Any conclusion taken as a premise of another argumentation needs to be analysed again in its relation to the sphere of that argument. Otherwise, logical fallacies may occur to demolish the argumentation. To evaluate an argument, one must first display its logical form in order to demonstrate epistemic judgements and then must justify those logical forms by some appropriate means (Fisher 1988, 152).

Varieties of validation of any argumentation can be compiled by the following: (1) An argument is valid *if and only if* it is not invalid. (2) If an argument is valid, *then* any argument of its form is also valid. (3) An argument is valid *if and only if* there is no argument of its form that has true assumptions and a false conclusion. Then following forms are invalid argumentations: (1) an argument is invalid *if and only if* it is not valid. (2) An argument is invalid *if and only if* its conclusion does not follow on from its assumptions. (3) An argument is invalid *if and only if* the conclusion has nothing to do with the assumptions. (4) An argument is invalid *if and only if* it has true assumptions and a false conclusion. (5) If an argument has true assumptions *and* a false conclusion, it is invalid. (6) An argument is invalid *if* there is an argument of its form that is invalid. (7) An argument is invalid *if and only if* there is an argument of its form that is invalid. (8) An argument is invalid *if and only if* there is a counterexample to it (Packard and Faulconer 1980, 8-16).

Hodges defines logic as the study of the consistency of sets of belief. Those beliefs can be expressed by declarative sentences. “Just as beliefs, a set of declarative sentences is called *consistent* if there is some possible situation in which all the sentences are true” (Hodges 1985, 42). Logical coherence is amongst the premises, conclusion and overall judgements and an agreement amongst assertions. The theory of correspondence of truth is an epistemological assertion that a statement is true if it shows, proves or demonstrates what it is that it is. Factuality of an assertion can be analysed on the justification of truth. Correlation of truth to the argument is a relation between truth-value of the argument and its factuality in the world. A structure of the argument needs to be sustained conceivably in judgemental assertions. Judgements on the validity and soundness of argument are to make a decision on how this process works for

verification on the knowledge and object of argumentation. Intrinsic behaviour of epistemological root of the argument is embedded in logical structure of the argument (Meyer 2001, 183-200).

Being conscious and able to think about things raises fundamental questions. Questions such as, 'who am I?', 'where did I come from?', 'where will I go?', 'what is the meaning of life?' and so forth might be seen as metaphysical questions as well. And many related questions regarding the meaning of the nature of life lie in the decision-making processes of daily life. Religions have tried to answer similar questions throughout the history of mankind. Studying abstract concepts allow passing judgments on propositions to make or establish truths-claims whereas those judgements are a product of epistemological preferences (Audi 1998). The concept of 'theology' denotes a system of doxastic beliefs through religious arguments. Yet, religious arguments are not solely justifications of theological assertions. Logical analyses allocate questions to be responded through discovering judgemental processes. A rational justification or the explanations for the bases of religious beliefs is connected to not only epistemological grounds and structure of the argument but also belief *per se* (Schlesinger 2001). If someone argues that water boils at 100 Celsius, s/he can prove it in a laboratory. If someone does not accept this result, s/he has to prove why. On the other hand the problem proving the existence of an entity is not similar to the above example. Herein lies the problem: does religious knowledge differ from scientific knowledge which is based on experience or empirical data? Even if some people cannot agree with the standards of evaluating its truth, there is an agreement as to what constitutes evidence. To reach an evidence of religious conclusion, one may need more evaluation and justification. That is the reason why people may think that religious judgement is different than others.

Some believers may not consider providing any evidence to support their faiths; since they may think that faith alone justifies the foundation of their religious argument. Still, they think faith is the evidence for them. Thus, religious knowledge does not seem to employ the same type of evidence as empirical knowledge. Therefore, some philosophers assume that religious beliefs are not rationally acceptable, because of their concealed metaphysical connection in their epistemology (cf. Plantinga 1993). While most religions have a body of beliefs and doctrines, these can often form and produce very complicated religious arguments. Discussions on doxastic beliefs for establishing any faith do not necessitate ignoring their metaphysical explanations in favour of epistemological preferences (Hintikka 1998). Foundations of belief are not only based on rational processes of thought but also personal preferences and emphasises on the belief. Although perception of metaphysical realities might vary from one person to another, according to their own judgements, there are a certain number of religious frameworks for establishing a solid ground for

justification. Foundation of belief is not only valued by any rational process of thought, but also judged by its correspondence to truth.

A Conclusion

Any statement has a judgemental value on its epistemological ground. Therefore, any premise and conclusion is subject to a justification on its truth value. In this sense, propositions are derived from certain belief postulates, which the term of belief is used here in a general meaning. The concept of belief is also very essential for religious thought. There will always be an attempt to lay down the logical framework of religious arguments, in epistemological and methodological approaches. Existential and rational enquiry about religious phenomena leads to a religious conviction about the propositions of subject-matter whilst attempting justification of true belief. Concepts, propositions and inferences may also be drawn from existential questionings through metaphysical diversity in religious argumentations. Sometimes, logic of belief is attacked by misleading premises and invalid conclusions likewise as it may happen in any other argumentation. Consciousness of the logical consequence of any religious assertion relates to interpretation of the metaphysical judgements. In order to have any rational discussion about the statement of a belief, one needs to be clear about the foundation of beliefs and being consciously aware of the judgemental statements of epistemological preferences. But one should not also forget that religious logic needs a holistic approach too. At the same time, understandings, perceptions, experiences and their practical applications of those preferences can, or should, be observed and reflected in daily life. The application or demonstration of belief is directly related to one's personal responses to his or her evaluations of epistemological phases. Thus, the usage of logic is the same in argumentations but sometimes the picture may hide its stages.

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ÖZET

Dini Argümantasyonla İlişkisinde İnanç Mantığı Yargısı Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme

Mantıksal analiz her türlü argümantasyonda çok önemli bir değerlendirmedir, ama dini argümantasyon için daha da bir ehemmiyet kazanmaktadır. İnançların ve dini fenomenlerin mantıksal analizi farklı epistemik zeminlere sahip olmamalıdır. Bu makalede, dini argümantasyonla ilişkisinde inanç mantığında bazı noktaları ortaya koyacağız. Her türlü iddiayı ileri süren önermenin sağlam bir argümantasyon oluşturabilmesi için doğruluk koşuluna bağlı geçerlilik ve tutarlılık üzerine kurulmalıdır. Zihinsel süreçler inancın geleneksel kabul edilmiş argümanları ile birlikte kişisel tercihler ile birlikte çalışır. Bir yönden dini iddialar belirli epistemolojik varsayımları ileri sürerler, diğer yandan kişinin önyargıları, idealları, düşünceleri ile dini olanlarını birleştirirler. Dini argümanların mantıksal analiz yoluyla değerlendirilmesi inanç sistemleri üzerinde yapılan tercihleri anlamaya yardımcı olacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mantık felsefesi, İnanç Mantığı, Yargı, Önerme, Öncül, Sonuç, Geçerlilik, Tutarlılık, Dini Argument.