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PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION: IDENTIFICATION AND HORIZONS OF INTEREST

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ABSTRACT

The philosophy of religion is much more than the connection of two established disciplines; it is the appropriation of diverse concepts, postulates, theories, and systems that constitute an epistemological model categorized as a science of religion. In the philosophy of religion, we find an alternative path to determining reflection, where philosophy is proposed as the method and religion as the object. Regarding its historical development, it can be affirmed that this science of religion does not require a specific origin; for its construction, it has imported philosophical, religious, and theological content and reflections on the fact of transcendence; and it allows us to recognize clear horizons for its research.

KEYWORDS: Philosophy of Religion, Religious Criticism, Religious Sciences, Religious Studies.

INTRODUCTION

The sciences of religion are disciplines with a certain theoretical development that attempt to understand the fact or behavior of religion. Psychology, anthropology, and sociology are interested in religious behavior; while in the process of the religious fact, the history of religions, phenomenology, and philosophy participate.

The philosophy of religion relates two opposing tendencies for the scrutiny of reality. Philosophy, with its dynamics of critical understanding, is very alien to religion, which almost absolutely affirms its conclusions. However, this participation of interests with opposite meaning and direction allows the phenomenon to be addressed in a more comprehensive way.

Some considerations on the philosophy of religion suggest that "it is difficult to think of a greater link between the two magnitudes (philosophy-religion). But, unfortunately, we almost only have that: the formula, the new denomination. The contents and the method have yet to be established" (Fraijó, 1994, p. 15). Nowadays there is an important development in studies on religion from this disciplinary possibility, however, there are no experiences in its contents that determine it epistemologically. "Writing a treatise on the Philosophy of Religion does not seem to be an easy task, among other reasons because of the difficulty involved in reflecting on a discipline that is challenging to find its own identity" (Ferrer, 2002, p. 945).

Richard Schaffler concludes: "Today, the philosophy of religion is far from being a unified field of subjects, methods, and results. What prevails is a disconcerting plurality of approaches, solutions and methods" (Schaffler, 1983, p. 14).

METHODOLOGY

The research was carried out from a qualitative approach, adopting a mainly theoretical and analytical methodology. The study links a hermeneutical model that establishes conceptions based on the interpretative dialectic of texts that attempt to describe the conditions of the object of interest.

What is philosophy of religion?

It is necessary to initially signify the related conditions (philosophy and religion) so that the resulting conceptions support the definition of philosophy of religion.

Philosophy is assumed by José Ortega y Gasset as "an enormous appetite for transparency and a

resolute will for noon. Its radical purpose is to bring to the surface, to declare, to discover what is hidden or veiled" (Ortega y Gasset, 1957, p. 80). According to Ortega y Gasset, philosophizing consists of the exploration of knowledge, an adventurous vocation of thought that drives the rational desire to reveal the mysteries of everything that exists.

Jan Hendrik Walgrave adds that "philosophy is a science that deals with the whole in its unity and connection" (Walgrave, 1965, p. 58). Walgrave adds, to Ortega's definition of philosophy, the idea of continuously inquiring about what surrounds us, what we perceive as our immediate reality, the search for the meaning of that reality.

We would then define philosophy as the search for knowledge, the discovery of new epistemological horizons and the reinterpretation of everything that surrounds us. This would make the philosopher an adventurer of knowledge, one who explores reality, both physical and metaphysical, by means of thought and reason.

Religion is described by Raimon Panikkar as a concept of simple meaning, being "a particular virtue by means of which we resolve our duty to God, paying him due tribute" (Panikkar, 2015, p. 73). These acts of tribute and their practices, which Panikkar refers to as "external acts", converge in what he calls "the end of religion", in other words, the purpose of it; and this end is normally achieved by means of "religious worship, whether this is a purely internal or also external act" (Ibid.).

We see then how Panikkar focuses religion towards a practical, liturgical and relational experience with God. This position is refuted by Michel Meslin in his book *Pour une science des religions*, which focuses religion on an interpretative experience of revelation. In Meslin's own words: "In fact, it is quite evident that we can only grasp the experience that man knows of the sacred through what he tells us about it by means of theoretical, conceptual, ritual or symbolic systems of expression, languages all of which, by nature, are human" (Meslin, 1978, p. 13). Meslin's concept of religion, then, focuses on the theoretical underpinnings of liturgical practices, rather than on the relationship between the human and divine realms.

Adriano Alessi defines religion as the "relationship between two different interlocutors. This relationship is revealed as something congenital both at the structural level or at the level of pure potentiality (religious attitude) and at the interior (religious experience), as well as at the operational level (religious behavior)" (Alessi, 1998, p. 401). We can observe how Alessi focuses the religious fact on

a relational experience on the different planes where it can be manifested, and adds to simplify, saying: "Religion is defined as the correlation of man with the divine" (Ibid.).

Taking into account the above concepts, we could define religion as those practices, rituals or liturgies carried out in order to relate the human being with the divine and all the theoretical bases that support these practices. This would turn the religious into a fervent practitioner of the respective norms and principles of his divinity and who seeks in them "salvation", "illumination", "sanctification" or simply an encounter with the kingdom of the sacred.

From the connotations of philosophy and religion, an understanding for philosophy of religion can be seen. José Morales, speaking about the phenomenological manifestation of the philosophical-religious fact, points out that "the philosophical analysis of religion" is in a certain way "the intellectual attempt to think about religion". "It is a philosophical investigation, and therefore rational, whose object is religion and the world of phenomena in which it manifests itself" (Morales, 2007, p. 15). For Morales, the philosophy of religion has religion as the conceptual center of the philosophical-religious fact, and its method of study is philosophical analysis. Here we can see an apparent subordination of philosophy to religion, where philosophy is reduced to a mere apparatus of study.

Michael Murray and Michael Rea place philosophy as a system for understanding religion, turning the philosophy of religion into a subdiscipline of philosophy. They mention that "in the philosophical discipline there are numerous subdisciplines, some of which try to use the tools and methods of philosophical inquiry to raise questions about other disciplines" (Murray & Rea, 2008, p. 4). This justifies the existence of subdisciplines such as "philosophy of law" or "philosophy of art", and in this case, the existence of the philosophy of religion (Ibid.). We see then how these authors present the same object-method relationship, so that, in the philosophy of religion, religion would be the object of study, while philosophy would be the instrumental system for study. According to Murray and Rea, philosophy is the center where religious studies converge and what is to be highlighted in the philosophy of religion, giving greater emphasis to the philosophical aspect.

If we approach the postulates of Kant's philosophy, we will also find multiple philosophical-religious concepts. One of these Kantian concepts is presented as follows: "Human reason needs an idea

of the highest perfection that serves as a measure to be able to establish determinations according to it" (Kant, 1963, p. 61). Although Kant is not explicitly talking about the philosophy of religion, the words "reason" and "ideas" bring us closer to philosophical thought. In addition, we can attribute to the statement an implicit mention of the religious fact, because the "supreme perfection" refers to the Divinity (God) and those "determinations" are the behavioral aspects with which we approach it (religious practices). Under this Kantian concept, we would define the philosophy of religion as the rational understanding of the divine and the behavioral procedures that grant an approach to that realm.

In a more binding understanding of the philosophy of religion, the philosophy of religion is identified as a single structure, as a new area of knowledge that has its own epistemological task and its own metaphysical ordering. Whether or not there is a subordination, whether or not the new formula shares characteristics with its different sections (philosophy and religion), the delimitations of its exponents and treatises, the systematization of its contents and its very conceptual definition, will depend on who approaches the epistemological environment that the philosophy of religion entails.

Background studies in philosophy of religion

Heinrich Fries, introducing the philosophy of religion into the systems of metaphysical understanding, stated that as an autonomous discipline, it can only appear when the unity between philosophy and revealed faith disintegrates (Fries, 1949, p. 15). According to Manuel Fraijó, the philosophy of religion first manifests itself as natural theology, emancipating itself from revealed theology (Fraijó, 1994, p. 19).

Sören Holm points out that before Kant there was no philosophy of religion as an autonomous subject (Holm, 1960, p. 11). This same position is commonly reaffirmed by other exponents of the German philosophical schools, such as Johannes Hessen, who gives the title of "founders of the philosophy of religion" to Kant and Schleiermacher (Hessen, 1955, p. 12). Kant himself, in assessing the apparent dichotomy that existed between philosophy and religion, and trying to harmonize them, suggests that they be approached as a new conceptual set and proposes his own book as a starting point (Kant, 1995, p. 23).

For Hubertus Hubbeling, the points of view of characters such as St. Anselm, Spinoza, Barth, St. Thomas Aquinas, Hegel, Kierkegaard, Brunner, and

Wittgenstein are useful in philosophical-religious discussions or dialogues (Hubbeling, 1987, p. 48). This relationship between exponents of different disciplines adjacent to the religious fact and the philosophy of religion complicates the almost non-existent distinction between philosophers of religion, scholars in philosophy or religion, and religious critics. Figures such as Plato, who lived long before philosophy emancipated itself from religion, are cited today in philosophical-religious or philosophical-theological treatises (Hubbeling, 1987, pp. 78-84). Others, historically closer, but conceptually more distant due to their critical positions regarding religion, as is the case of Marx, Nietzsche and Freud, do not escape appearing in philosophical-religious documents, and even wrote their own treatises.

Religious critics wrote philosophical treatises or other subjects, the postulates of which add conceptual content to the philosophy of religion. As an example, we could mention Karl Marx, who proposed an inflection thesis around the interdependent activities of politics and religion (Marx, 2010, p. 131).

Sigmund Freud, within the framework of psychoanalysis, proposed his thesis on religious behavior, categorizing religion as a kind of "obsessive neurosis" and giving religious practice the character of "neurotic ceremonial" (Freud, 1982, p. 1337).

Finally, we mention Nietzsche, who makes clear his point of view on the philosophy of religion with the following statement: "The price paid whenever religions are not in the hands of a philosopher is expensive and terrible" (Nietzsche, 1983, p. 88).

In contrast to religious critics, different authors have supported unity and recognized the synergies between philosophy and religion. Miguel de Unamuno, a Spanish philosopher and writer, for example, stated the following: "Philosophy and religion are enemies of each other and, because they are enemies, they need each other. There is no religion without some philosophical basis or philosophy without religious roots; each one lives on its opposite" (Unamuno, 1964, p. 91). Note how, although he begins by affirming an apparent enmity, he uses this same concept to attribute to the relationship between philosophy and religion a certain degree of mutual dependence.

Wilhelm Weischedel writes a historical narrative of the power struggle between philosophy and religion according to Western thought and on several occasions mentions the idea that when philosophy ceases to be interested in religion, the latter enters into crisis (Weischedel, 1998, p. 35).

Horizons for the philosophy of religion

Philosophy today is presented by many authors as a finished construction, which has taken place, and therefore abandoned. Much has been written about it in the past, but it is true that at present it lacks that experience that recognizes and generates knowledge, at least comparing it with the passion of Greek philosophy or with the effervescence of German idealism. In the words of Laureano Robles, "the philosophy that is made today, with honourable exceptions, is nothing more than a continuous and tangential historical reference. Rather than doing philosophy, what is being done is to live from history, in most cases without having a minimum historical preparation" (Robles, 1983, p. 8). Although somewhat strict, we see in his position a strong criticism of modern philosophy, a criticism that makes us wonder: Are we really contributing new knowledge to the philosophical disciplines? Bruno Latour agrees with Robles when he says that "postmodernists have come to the conclusion that after them there is nothing. It is as if philosophy had entered a final and dead-end alley" (Latour, 1993, p. 97).

In the face of such accusations (Roperio, 1997, p. 38) What is the philosophy of religion doing? Could it be that he is also in an intellectual stagnation? Is there no longer research that we can contribute? The truth is that, by its very nature and identity, the philosophy of religion is still quite distant from that "dead end". It is needless to mention the abysmal work ahead of the philosophers, theologians, sociologists, anthropologists, professors and students who research this discipline and try with their best efforts to shape it and delimit the horizons of the philosophy of religion.

However, two thematic or problematic axes in the field of philosophy of religion are relevant to the present. These themes can constitute dialectical routes for the philosophy of religion.

Theodicy as a phenomenon of the philosophy of religion.

"The search for God is related to the mystery that man perceives when facing reality. Without the incomprehensibility of reality, that openness and that longing that transcends the borders of death itself would not be possible" (Estrada, 2001, p. 133).

Of all the religious philosophical problems, one of the most prominent is the dilemma of the existence of evil. This is usually used to reject the possibility of the existence of a God (monotheism), mainly a personal, rational and interested one in creation (similar to the Judeo-Christian God). Thinking

rationality about religion ended up generating this problem, which, to a certain extent, constitutes an antithesis to religion (Tamayo, 2005, p. 857). Faced with this problem, theodicy rises as a powerful apologetic argument about the rational existence of a God. Estrada states that "the various strategies of theodicy seek to overcome the problem of evil in order to avoid these conclusions of an inaccessible, indifferent, idle, irrational, or simply non-existent God" (Estrada, 2001, p. 113).

Although it is true that in our environment the focus of theodicy normally tends more towards the origin of evil, divine ethics and the character of God (Leibniz, 2007, p. 227), for the purposes of this paper we will address theodicy according to its classic definition as "proofs of the existence of God" (Tamayo, 2005, p. 857). It is true that we cannot fully relate any treatise on theodicy, however, we will very briefly highlight two of the best known in our milieu: The Five Ways of St. Thomas Aquinas and The Argument of Moral Theism by Immanuel Kant.

The five ways of Tomàs de Aquino.

St. Thomas Aquinas was a distinguished Catholic theologian and philosopher, and one of the most important figures for religion inside and outside of Catholicism. He stood out from his peers for his way of employing scholasticism in the presentation of Christian theology. He used to take inspiration from Greek philosophers such as Aristotle and generate new religious positions from his philosophy.

Definitely, he could be considered a philosopher of religion, because "Thomas Aquinas showed that between Christian faith and reason there subsists a natural harmony" (Benedict XVI, 2011, p. 206). He was not afraid to combine faith and reason, philosophy with religion, because he was sure that both knowledge came from the same place, both came from the divine Logos (Benedict XVI, 2011, p. 212).

It is through this rational approach to divine knowledge that Aquinas develops, in the *Quaestio secunda* of his magnum opus *Summa Theologiae*, his renowned *Quinque Viae*; which are five philosophical arguments that justify the rational existence of God (Aquinatis, 1920, pp. 30-31). These are:

- Prima via: Via ex motu:

Everything that moves is, in a way, moved by something else. It is impossible for something to move on its own, therefore, the presence of motion in the universe can only be understood with the existence of a first mover that moves all things and

that nothing can move it. St. Thomas gives this first mover the identity of God.

- Secunda via: Via ex ratione causae efficientis:

Something cannot be the cause of itself, but must be the effect of a previous cause, and likewise that cause was the effect of a previous cause, and so on. One cannot proceed indefinitely in the order of causes, because if there were no first cause, its effects, that is, subsequent causes, would not exist either. Aquinas relates this first efficient cause to the identity of God.

- Tertia via: Via ex possibili et necessario:

Things can exist, or not, and it is impossible for that which has the possibility of not existing to exist forever, since it is understood that at one time it did not exist. If all things have the possibility of not existing, then at one time nothing existed, but then nothing could exist, because things do not come into existence except by something already existing. A pre-existing being is needed to call all things into existence. St. Thomas grants this necessarily pre-existent being the identity of God.

- Quarta via: Via ex gradus perfectionis:

Each gender has positive and negative degrees. The existence of degrees indicates the existence of extremes, for if something exists, there will also be a maximum expression of that something. Since fire, says Aquinas, is the greatest heat, it is also the cause of all heat. Then there is a being who is the ultimate expression of all perfection, goodness and truth. Aquinas links this highest being with the identity of God.

- Quinta via: Via ex gubernatione rerum:

The systematic and organized action of the different natural phenomena deduces that they do not act randomly, but under an intention. Therefore, all things obey an order, an intention, or a desire; and this desire comes from a being with knowledge and intelligence. Then there would be an intelligent being who directs all existing things to operate in order. St. Thomas bestows on this intelligent designer the identity of God.

Antonin Sertillanges concludes that: "We have arrived, then, at God" (Sertillanges, 1999, p. 77). According to him, by means of the *Quinque Viae* we can approach a knowledge of God based on a natural theology and rational arguments.

Immanuel Kant's argument from moral theism.

Immanuel Kant was a distinguished philosopher

and scientist of Prussian origin, and one of the precursors of German idealism. To this day he remains a very influential thinker and many of his postulates and works remain as a heritage of universal philosophy. He was the author of many treatises and important works related to the philosophy of religion, and many of them address the subject of the existence of God. Kant possessed a strong rational belief in divinity. For example, in *Monadologia physica*, he asserts that finite substances and their relations are maintained by the divine intellect (Kant, 1900, p. 415). This thought of Kant, according to Lucien Goldmann, concludes that for the universe to come into existence, the latter must be founded on a divinity with understanding (Goldmann, 1945, p. 58).

In his magnum opus *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Kant classifies the arguments demonstrating the existence of God into three groups: Ontological, Cosmological and Physical-Theological; whom he strongly criticizes because, according to him, they did not sufficiently demonstrate the existence of God (Kant, 2011, pp. 250-273). Later, in his book *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, he develops a new argument for the existence of God, but this time, a moral argument. José Gómez Caffarena refers to this argument as "moral theism" (Gómez Caffarena, 1983, p. 99), because, for Kant, "it is morally necessary to assume the existence of God" (Kant, 2011, p. 242).

Kant refers to God as a "supreme original good" who is the cause of all existing things, both physical and metaphysical. This being is an author who acts with intelligence and will (Kant, 2011, pp. 241-242). According to Martin Gottfried, these three concepts (understanding, will, and authorship) make up the fundamental determinations of God's being according to Kant (Gottfried, 1961, p. 165). Now, according to Kantian thought, the universe is governed by a "moral law" and its foundations are completely independent of nature and the beings that compose it (Kant, 2011, p. 240). According to Lewis White Beck, such beings abide by the moral law, not out of obligation, but in a free and self-imposed way (White Beck, 1960, p. 221), and that respect for the law and respect for our personality are not distinct feelings (Ibid). Therefore, it is a law that all created beings carry engraved in the very essence of being (Goodreau, 1998, pp. 64-71). A universal law of such magnitude can only come from a being who is sufficiently integral (morality) in his immortal nature, and who, in turn, also takes pleasure (happiness) with his creation when his will is fulfilled, since the created acts in the finality of the author's will. According to Kant, only in God can we

find a perfect harmony between morality and happiness; the primordial characteristics necessary for the formulation and execution of a universal moral law presuppose the existence of God (Kant, 2011, pp. 240-241).

It is really complex to fully understand a priori the Kantian postulates, mainly because they deal with transcendental concepts. However, we must remember that for Kant the absolute conviction of the existence of God is more important than that we demonstrate it rationally (Kant, 1963, p. 386). It is interesting to note how, according to Kant's theodicy, the most important thing was not the rational demonstration of the existence of God, but the rational/moral conviction about that existence. In other words, we will not come to the knowledge of God with definitive philosophical proof of His existence. According to Kant, we will find God in the practical execution of religion by observing the "Supreme Good" who has a will that is "morally perfect (holy and kind) while omnipotent" (Kant, 2011, p. 247).

Criticism of religion.

"Certainly philosophy comes after religion, but, on the other hand, religion subjected to critical reflection is subsequent to philosophy" (Welte, 1982, p. 34). According to Bernhard Welte's thought, for a long time religion operated autonomously without the need for any kind of explicit philosophy, especially during its origins, "but when religion no longer has its initial original force and thought has undergone a strong and autonomous development as a reflection, then the philosophy of religion is convenient and also necessary at least in relation to this state of historical consciousness" (Welte, 1982, pp. 26-27).

Welte affirms that an evolution of human thought causes a different perception of the religious phenomenon and that this perception leads us to think philosophically about religion. Welte mentions that after this evolution of thought "man has to attempt a critical exploration of what religion is" (Welte, 1982, p. 27).

This religious criticism suggested by Welte is nothing more than the reasonable analysis of religion, which must generate in the thinker different judgments or opinions about it, whether positive or negative. We see then that religious criticism is a fundamental part of the philosophy of religion, converting, in a certain way, the exponents of the criticism of religion, in a brief and delimited conceptual framework, into philosophers of religion. It sounds interesting to approach characters, such as

Sigmund Freud with his psychoanalysis of religion, or Karl Marx and his materialist theory of value, as philosophers of religion.

Freud's psychoanalytic position.

Sigmund Freud, Austrian physician, neurologist, professor and intellectual, known today as the father of psychoanalysis and one of the greatest intellectual figures of the twentieth century. He is the author of an impressive collection of books, essays and written clinical cases. Several of his works compose, in a certain way, an outstanding section on religious criticism, therefore, they also indirectly support the philosophy of religion.

For Freud there was an observable relationship between religious practices and obsessive acts, which he called "neurotic ceremonials" (Freud, 1982, p. 1337). He believed that religious action represented a powerful consciousness of guilt related, according to psychoanalysis, to the first experiences of religious man, so that the neurotic ceremonial would be unaware of the existence of this consciousness of guilt, for this reason he refers to it as "Unbewusstens Schuldbewusstsein" or "unconscious consciousness of guilt" (Freud, 1982, p. 1340); which constantly torments the religious and leads him to an obsessive neurotic action, where an anguished expectation represses him under the concept of punishment when he feels tempted in his most primitive desires (Freud, 1982, p. 1340).

According to Freud, there is no genuine religious action. From his psychoanalytic position, all religious behavior represented the neurosis of its practitioner, who diligently seeks to hide his deep sense of guilt caused by the psychic traumas that occurred in his childhood (Freud, 2005, p. 1766). The more the religious man's repressed libido advances, the more his prohibitions and ceremonial demands advance, but this defense mechanism is not really efficient. Freud states that "it is the law of neurosis that such obsessive acts enter more and more into the service of desire and thus gradually approach the primitive forbidden act" (Freud, 1982, p. 1766). Later, Freud comes to the conclusion that religion in general points to a neurosis. He mentions that "we could risk considering obsessional neurosis as the pathological partner of religiosity; neurosis, as an individual religiosity, and religion, as a universal obsessive neurosis" (Freud, 1982, p. 1342).

Freud has several writings related to the critique of religion. In his work *Totem and Taboo*, he tries to explain Christian religious action with the primordial "trauma" of the murder of the father, which would lead to its subsequent divinization (Freud, 1982, p.

1846). He believed that all moral action is related to primitive parricide, since "The taboo conscience is probably the oldest form of moral conscience" (Freud, 1982, p. 93). Sadly, these ideas did not receive the expected approval, since, at present, *Totem and Taboo* is considered a myth that tells us about the assimilation of the meaning of the father (Gómez Pin, 1981, p. 95).

Marx's socio-political position.

Karl Marx, a German politician, philosopher, economist and sociologist also contributed valuable content to the sciences of religion. His philosophical-religious stance was manifested by himself, explicitly, in most of his writings. Marx had a passionate inclination towards religious criticism. He thought that "the foundation of religious criticism is: man makes religion, and no longer, religion makes man" (Marx, 1970, p. 45). We immediately see how Marx approaches the religious issue from a purely social point of view and with a worldview typical of atheistic materialism. For Marx, what was remarkable and important about religion was the social and the political, while it demerited the theological and the spiritual.

Marx says that "religion is the sob of the oppressed creature, it is the real meaning of the heartless world, just as it is the spirit of a spiritless age. It is the opium of the people" (Marx, 1962, p. 46). He compares religion to an analgesic or anesthetic used by the oppressed classes to cope with their material problems in the face of a dominant group or class, an illusion to evade reality (Marx, 1970, pp. 71-72). For this reason, he adds: "the overcoming of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is the requirement of their true happiness" (Marx, 1970, p. 46). The Marxist critique of religion is also a critique of society that uses religion as a mechanism of political, social and economic suppression. Marx wanted the people to stop using religious figures and practices in purely social or political procedures or actions; He wanted to take the thinking of the lower social classes to a new intellectual milestone, and this he would achieve through religious criticism. "The critique of heaven is thus changed into the critique of the earth, the critique of religion into the critique of law, the critique of theology into the critique of politics" (Marx, 1970, p. 72), and with this, Marx thought, the working classes would achieve an intellectual and political emancipation.

Ramón García de Haro affirms that Marx's materialist postulates cannot be presented without first having an atheistic worldview. He mentions that "Capital does not expound an economic theory of value:

but what value should be, assuming that, since there is no God, the only reality is matter" (García de Haro, 1977, p. 59). For Marx, from his atheistic point of view, only that which is material, that which is palpable and quantifiable, has value, only that which can be understood from reason. For this reason, Marx does not use his discourse to sustain the non-existence of God, but takes it for granted from beginning to end; Their materialism is completely linked to atheism because, without the latter, the former would have no reason to exist. García de Haro notes this strange relationship of subordination in Marx's religious and political philosophy, therefore, he mentions:

"Capital manifests the conviction of a materialism peacefully possessed: not discussed. A materialism, therefore, that has a previous foundation: the denial of God. Only an atheistic a priori allows us to think peacefully of the world as an autonomous matter, the origin of itself, and to reduce the soul and its relations with God to an alienated manifestation of the evolution of matter, of the process of production, which are the bases of the theory of value" (García de Haro, 1977, p. 60).

For Marx, the metaphysical, divine or spiritual component is not necessary for the study of any discipline, since, for the specific context of Marx, who studied economics and society, everything that does not fall within the framework of the economic or the quantifiable simply has no value whatsoever and, having no value whatsoever, its non-existence is simply presupposed.

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CONCLUSIONS

Hegel thought that Christianity stood out from other denominations because of the rationality of its identity, because it did not break the balance between the theoretical/philosophical and the spiritual/religious. He affirms that "the formal greatness of Christianity consists precisely in the fact that it does not renounce reason; otherwise it would be something irrational, empty or envious, not something that is communicated in the spirit and in the highest form, within the spirit itself" (Hegel, 1981, p. 78).

So religion is not subordinated to capricious human desire, but is based on reason, possessing internal logic both in its postulates and in its practices; This would be the highest form of religion. We understand then that religion is not a topic that should be studied exclusively from the point of view of theology and spirituality, but that it is necessary to study it from reason, from the theoretical, from the philosophical.

It is in this union where the religious fact shines more than ever, where it stands out most as a discipline, when the philosophy of religion, free of subjectivity, is the method we use to approach the religious phenomenon. Therefore, the philosophy of religion, as an autonomous discipline, must be studied and developed, since it still has so much to offer to human knowledge that we cannot quantify the scope it will have in the future.

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