

Triadic freedom and subjugation by idols

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Can God....not be God, if He so wills it? If yes, then He would be doing away with His divine essence, which is what defines Him as eternal and unchanging... If no, then He is neither free, nor omnipotent!

And a few more questions that spring from the above quandary: Are the Christian "servants of God" in actual fact slaves? How free can a believer in a non-free God be? Are the ancient "gods" divine or demonic entities?

The intentional confusion that is being cultivated, with a specific purpose in mind and by specific circles, is becoming more and more widespread in the sphere of Greece's spiritual life. This confusion has selectively targeted the historical life of Hellenism; as a result, Greeks (especially the younger generation) are completely oblivious as to which trust they are called upon to inherit and pursuantly bequeath....

One of the symptoms of this confusion is the simplistic comparison between ancient idolatry and Orthodox Christianity that is being observed, and specifically, **with the intellectual criteria that the movement of the Enlightenment had imposed.**

In a symposium recently organized by T.M. magazine, attempts were made by academic voices, through their use of paradigms, to find faults in Christianity because it allegedly fostered in its faithful the conscience of "God's slave". Of course it would be entirely unnecessary to point out that **terminology such as this has often been borrowed from idolatrous ceremonial sources**, and can be found interspersed in innumerable texts of ancient writings. A characteristic example is the excerpt below, from "Oedipus Tyrant", in which the blind clairvoyant Teiresias addresses king Oedipus with the following words: «**ου γαρ τι σοι ζω δούλος, αλλά Λοξία**»... (...for I do not live as your

slave, but Loxias' ...).

Overlooking this type of simplification, and in order to clearly define the **morality** that a religion inspires in its followers, we need to first of all to investigate **the morality of the divinity** that each religion is based on. In other words, **the morality of the follower is inclined to reflect the morality of the “god” upon whom he has rested his conscience!!!**

So, in order to respond directly as to whether (and to what extent) idolatry or Christianity forge faithful that are slaves or free, we will have to previously examine whether their “God” (or “gods”, respectively) are themselves “slaves” or “free”.

Given that we are referring to Hellenic reality, the basis for such a comparison will be Orthodoxy (on the part of Christianity) and the Olympian religion.

What is freedom?

When exploring the religious concepts of the “Ancients” – and especially with regard to the issue of freedom – we will discover that we are touching on a topic that had already caused **very acute and incessant confrontations**, even as far back as the classical times. When studied painstakingly (as the Sophists had done), both Homer’s “theology” and Hesiod’s “Theogony” contain the following contradictions at a philosophical level: although the “gods” of Mount Olympus are portrayed as omnipotent, nevertheless, a number of verses from Homer presuppose the necessity for a pre-existing “cosmic order”, a “destiny” (**αἴσα**) that even “**almighty**” **Zeus can not transgress without punishment!**

In other words, the highest of all gods and people is subject to requisites that he is bound to comply with, so that he not be self-annulled...It is worth mentioning that Plato also acknowledged this all-powerful “Destiny” (**Μοῖρα**) as being **common to both gods and humans.**

An explanation such as: “this theological position resounds (in the gods) the Hellenic concept of ‘measure’ and it is an attempted ‘avoidance of hubris’” does not in the least alter the fact that, with their **concept of finite divinity**, they are essentially undermining it by themselves.

Is God free to not be God?

However, apart from this **externally-imposed requisite**, Zeus –and all the other gods of idolatry in general– are subjected to a far more essential and catalytic “**internal**” **requisite**: the absolute freedom of divinity hides within it the ultimate risk of **compulsory monism**, which, finally, proves to be

could not possibly have escaped the Christian philosophical and theological thought of the first centuries. The Fathers – chiefly the Cappadocians – with their profound knowledge of ancient Hellenic thought, had perceived the **deterministically subjugated character of such divinities**, and had strived to interpret the Holy Bible with their Hellenic philosophical ‘armory’, so that by verbally formulating the dogma of triadicity, they would be able to resolve the “drama” of divine essence and the tragedy of the human soul that was chained to it.

They discovered that in the Holy Bible – specifically in the New Testament – God had chosen to reveal certain of His elements that were unknown to the pre-Christian world. Specifically, in numerous passages there were scattered mentions of a plural divinity which, albeit essentially one, was **represented in three ways**, or, otherwise, was trisected at an existential level.

For the first time in the history of theology, Orthodox Patristic thought conceived divinity **not as ‘essence’, but as ‘hypostasis’**. Subsequently, for the first time in the history of philosophy, it perceived man **not as an individual, but as a persona**.

Idolatry’s divinities are not personae. They act, and they are portrayed, as Humans; and this is the reason we are given the fleeting impression that they have actually acquired a “personality” in the philosophical sense of the term (i.e., as personae with freedom, self-awareness, hetero-awareness). Antiquity’s Man is **not** a persona in the fullness of the term, because he is subject to the laws of deterioration as Aristotle had very correctly pointed out; **the Man of the Christian era however can be considered thus** (a person), **now that he is familiar with the method that is required for him to become a persona, should he so desire**.

Of course, the dogma of Triadicity constitutes the primary step towards a new relationship between God and Man, as well as Man and the World, as it **transfers** the critical ontological speculation regarding the **essence** of the primeval being (God), but also of the other beings, from “**what**” (**it is**) to “**how**” (**it is**); in other words, from the “essence” itself to “existence”.

Despite all the above, the fundamental antinomy that is hidden in God’s freedom is not lifted; “God can do everything that He wants, but does not want everything that He can do”. **Can He, however, not be God?** Isn’t the freedom of His existence (divine freedom) restricted, by the compulsory existence of His (also divine) essence?

Patristic thought proclaims that the essence of God per se is both unknown and potentially inconceivable by man. However, His existence - and more specifically, the three Hypostases of that essence (and to the extent that this was revealed to mankind) - are **not compelled to represent divinity; they desire it freely**. This free will is not the result of any convincing argumentations; it is the result of the Love that connects and binds God’s Hypostases.

This is how John's famous expression "God is Love..." acquired its essential meaning.

In other words, God **is** – or in other words God **exists** [through Love](#).

We can therefore understand why, in Patristic thought, **faith in another god (or many other gods) is worthless**; it is because all of them are merely "idols" (or "stooges") and not personae, and they are obeisant to external or internal influences!

This is the reason that **neither the God of Mohammedans, nor the God of the Jews is the Christian God**, despite the fact that Jews –especially– use the Old Testament! The Judean divinity is a divinity "confined within History", whereas the Christian God exists far beyond it!

In fact, the Orthodox view is that, should any attempted reconciliation with the divine contain the assertion that God is not a Persona, it will constitute a blasphemy and it will essentially be addressing demonic entities! (Hence the Orthodox conviction that Muslims are.....idolaters!) In other words, as far as their **essence** is concerned, angels and demons are the same thing. Where they differ completely is in **their Existence –in the manner of their existence– and that is the determining factor**. That same Essence is exceptionally difficult to approach noetically, which is why Orthodoxy avoids discussing the divine Essence.

Thus, by knowing that they are merely based on gnostic mutilations, all the "hot air" theories regarding "Judeo-Christianity" do not provoke exasperation, but instead they appear hilarious – especially when they are quoted officially.

It might perhaps be redundant to stress that only a complete distortion of the Christian spirit could possibly lead to the use of Christian theology or religion to create "slaves". It is not by chance, therefore, that something like this was attempted initially in the West and later introduced to our East, when recalcitrant Hellenic spirituality was at its lowest (during the Turkish occupation).

As an epilogue, it would also be worth mentioning the following: The ancient Hellenes – a religious and generally pious people – quite possibly because they had perceived the subjugative character of idolatrous morality, **had purposely not included any systematic theological instruction** in their various educational systems. They had confined religious education, within the boundaries of **social obligation**. Paganism, therefore, was never the bearer **or** the representative of Hellenic education! Let's not forget that!

Is Apollo truly "free"? The ancient Hellenic religion places its gods within the boundaries of the universe and thus renders them subject to its determinisms. On the other hand, Christianity places God beyond the world; in other words, He is **not subject to mundane restrictions. Christianity furthermore believes that to offer worship to such**

“non-free” entities will inevitably lead a person to non-freedom.

It is only natural, therefore, for the following question to be posed: Does worshipping an absolutely free being (God) make a person partake of absolute freedom? The Orthodox view is that through asceticism, one can attain “theosis”, in other words, become united to the divine. Union with the divine **essence, however, is out of the question; it remains forever distant, as a separate person.**

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