

A FREE MAN'S WORSHIP: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Bertrand Russell (1872–1970) was born in England. He was a mathematician by his study but using the mathematics for the purpose of logic he turned to be a most distinguished modern analytic philosopher. He has written most of his works on social issues. He came to be a lecturer in mathematics. However, he lost it because of his pacifist views in the World War 1. He lectured in England. He did work in the USA too but it was his imputed sexual immorality that a court in the USA denied his lectureship at the City College of New York. In one of his works, he wrote a proposal that temporary marriage should be allowed for undergraduates. Nevertheless, he stayed in America lecturing in different universities, and finally, in 1994, he regained his post at Cambridge University. He lived a pacifist throughout his life and later advocated for nuclear disarmament, too. In 1950, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. He is still known as a most controversial writer of the twentieth century. He is widely known as a philosopher and social critic. His works touch all aspects of human life.

*Russell's works vary in theme. Yet it is known fact that his philosophy is very controversial, too. No work has absolute truth. Most works are likely to go against convention. His first major work was *The Principles of Mathematics* (1900). Having collaborated with Alfred North Whitehead he wrote *Principia Mathematica*. It is the most important work in mathematics in three volumes. He has attempted to show that mathematics comes from logic. Therefore, the principles of pure logic are needed to understand mathematics.*

*Throughout his life he carried on his pacifist views and for his views, he suffered imprisonment, libelous attack and he also lost his lectureship in philosophy at Cambridge in 1916. There are many other works that he wrote besides mathematics – *Our Knowledge of the External World* (1920), *Analysis of Matter* (1927), *Marriage and Morals* (1929), *Education and the Social Order* (1932), *History of Western Philosophy* (1945) and *Why I am Not a Christian* (1957).*

KEYWORDS: *Creation, Power, Indignation, Worship, Temple of Ideals, Tragedy*

INTRODUCTION: A FREE MAN'S WORSHIP

A Free Man's Worship is from *Mysticism and Logic*. (Russell, 1918) His philosophy is here anti-religious but very humanistic. A human being is important and it is the human spirit that can't be subdued. We must have regard for the most human aspects of our being. Good human aspects are only worthy to be worshipped.

We accept the meaninglessness, the senselessness, the blindness of creation, and carry on our life under these acceptances. Russell emphasizes on "good" and urges us to respect what humans alone understand "goodness".

Human beings have been worshipping Power for many generations. This power is meaningless, senseless and without any weight. He says that power is everywhere: in nature as storm and change, in time, as fate, in death as finality. But this power is senseless, and it is by nature bad. The power of fate or power of time, or power of nature, or even the power of death while one is alive, is not worthy of worship. It is a power of "Good" that should be worshipped by us. In this sense, we see Russell equal to many philosophers like Plato and Aristotle, whose concern for the soul is uppermost.

Critical Analysis

History of the Creation

The idea of how the world and its creatures were created has been much similar in saying of the devil Mephistopheles and of sociologists and scientists. Mephistopheles explains the history of the creation to Dr. Faustus. By Dr. Faustus, Russell is referring to *Doctor Faustus* (Marlowe, 1994) a play by Christopher Marlowe (1564–1593), in which Dr. Faustus sells his soul to the Devil for knowledge of the world. Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe (1749–1832) also wrote the similar theme. Here Russell gives an "outline" a summary of Mephistopheles' appeal.

The endless praises of the choirs of angels had begun to grow wearisome for god. He thought that it would be more amusing to obtain undeserved praise, to be worshipped by beings whom he would torture. He smiled inwardly and resolved that the great drama should be performed. Mephistopheles reveals the secret cruelty of god that he was going to play in the great drama. Drama is a play, an acted outperformance, which was intended by God.

As Mephistopheles says, for many thousand years the hot nebula whirled aimlessly through space. At length, it began to take shape. The central mass threw off planets. The planets cooled, boiling seas and burning mountains heaved and tossed. From black masses of cloud hot sheets of rain flooded over the barely solid crust. Then the first germ of life grew in the depths of the oceans and developed rapidly in the productive warmth into vast forest trees, huge ferns springing from the damp mold sea monsters breeding, fighting, swallowing and passing away. And from the monster's knowledge of good and evil and the cruel thirst for worship. Social science and physicists also explain that the earth was born from the hot nebula. It cooled. Boiling seas and burning mountains left out black masses of clouds that fell heavily in the form of rain over the earth's surface. The first germ of life grew in the depths of the ocean. In the growth and progress of the living things, a man was also born. It is quite wonderful to find similarity in both kinds of descriptions. Usually, in religious books, it is said that blood created man. Science denies this fact. In a way, Mephistopheles also does not claim direct involvement of God in the creation of man. A man was born along with the development of other creatures. Yet he refers to the play being played by God making us alert by the remark "as the play unfolded itself."

Man's Position in the Creation

Mephistopheles says that man was born with the power of thoughts, the knowledge of good and evil, and cruel thrust for worship. It is true that only man possesses all these things. Man is the most powerful creature. The last phrase is somehow ambiguous. Has he the cruel thirst for the worship of himself or power of time or fate of death? In fact, man wants himself to be worshipped by others. He wants to keep everything under his command.

Though he himself worships the power of time fate and death, he also demands himself to be worshipped. The cruel thirst for worship refers to the latter one. Man is behind everything just to grasp and possess before a strong inevitable order of death. Before his death, he wishes to have pleasures of all kinds.

The man took the cruel game of God differently. He didn't understand the secret play. He thought that there was a hidden purpose behind the creation and the purpose was good. As there was nothing in this visible world worthy of reverence, he started to love God, something from the invisible world. The man worked to keep harmony in the world thinking that God intended so. Ancestral instincts of beasts of prey that man had were called sins and asked forgiving from god. Man developed a way of worshipping God to calm down his anger. This system of worshipping worsened his position and his power that was supposed to be worshipable was weakened. Possible joys that were expected in human life were killed by the man himself. Here is a beautiful remark from the devil –

And seeing the present was bad, he [man] made it yet worse that thereby the future might be better.
(Russell, 1988)

Instead of an improvement in the present, man made it worse. It was worse because he fell to worship invisible power. He expected the future to be better which was never possible. God smiled seeing that his plan was successful. He would give torture to man, and yet a man would live under his mercy. He smiled because he saw that man stood aside from the struggle and he abandoned every means of pleasure which was possible by his own effort and struggle. He smiled because he saw that man had become perfect in renunciation and worship. Then, God sent another sun through the sky, which crashed into the man's sun, and all that was left during creation returned to the nebula. This latest remark is not found mentioned in social science or physics. Dr. Faustus found that it was a good play. He wished that he would have it again performed.

Purposeless & Meaningless Outline

Mephistopheles has presented a purposeless and meaningless outline of the origin of the world. This is the meaningless world in which we are caught and entangled. There is nothing to qualify any action as good or bad, nothing to energize the spirit, nothing to make us aware of the value of living. The Similar world is presented by science in our belief. The atheist scientist also might portray the same world for us. In the fifth paragraph that-clause as noun clause has been extended at a great length. There are several parallel clauses within a sentence having semi-colons as conjunctions. In the meaningless world, our ideas must find a place because whatever is done by man for selfish desire is finally buried in the grave with his death. Russell writes-

“That man is the product of causes which had no end: that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and beliefs, are the only result of atoms, that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling can preserve an individual life beyond the grave that all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, that the whole temple of man's achievement must certainly be buried beneath broken pieces of a universe in runs.” (Russell, 1988)

Death is certain. It is an absolute truth. Though death cannot be ignored, one must not be unnecessarily in despair at approaching death. Only in that case human ideals and the human soul can find a home safely built in this universe.

Man and Nature

Nature is a mystery. She is omnipotent, but blind. She gave birth to a child. The man, child of nature, is still subject to her power, but yet he is gifted with sight, with knowledge of good and evil, with the capacity of judging all the works of his unthinking Mother (nature). Comparatively, man is seen more powerful than nature. Nature can't see, think or judge good and evil, but a man can. Death is only the means of control by nature, but yet until the death approaches and takes him in powerful grasp, he is free to examine, to criticize, to know, and to create in imagination. His outward life may be in control of nature, but inside he is free. The world is his. However, man is savage to feel oppressed by the powers of nature. Invisible power, blind and unthinking nature is supposed to be superior. He falls to worship the power. He bows before his gods, without inquiring whether they are worthy of his worship. He tolerates all cruelty and torture and still worships the jealous gods to calm them. All kinds of sacrifices are given to appease the supposed anger. The religion of Moloch is the example. Moloch is a pagan deity to which the sons of Judah sacrificed their children through a ritual of fire. Man does not know his possession of independence of ideas. That's why, in spite of unnecessary pain and suffering, he keeps on worshipping the power.

Russell mentions three kinds of people with a different attitude:

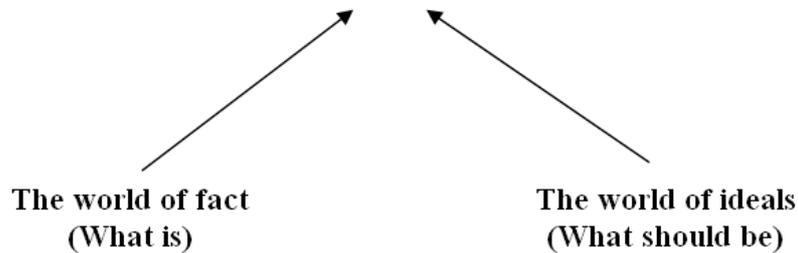
- Those who urge that naked power is worthy of worship. This attitude is reflected in God's answer to Job. In the book of Job in the Bible, Satan asserts that he can tempt any of God's creatures to turn their backs on God. God insists that Job cannot be swayed. Satan tests Job, inflicting him with illness and destruction, but Job remains faithful. God explains to Job that he had suffered and come through the test. But Russell implies a criticism of the book of Job, in which suffering rather than love and power rather than compassion are stressed;
- Those people who have an attitude to base their morality upon the struggle for survival, maintaining that the survivors are necessarily the fittest; and
- Those who maintain the belief that the world of fact is really harmonious with the world of ideal.

Russell favors the last one saying that the claim of the ideal world is being felt now. Worship, if it is not to cease, must be given to gods of another kind than those created by the savage. Therefore, feeling his demand, man creates God, all-powerful and all-good, the mystic unity of what is and what should be.

The World of Fact & the World of Ideals

The world of fact is familiar, ordinary, and daily truth. It is economic, sociological and psychological. Its essential element is the perception. Quite differently the world of ideals is fantastic. It is philosophical. An ideal is the essential element. The former stands for "what is" and the latter one refers to "what should be". Man creates God, all-powerful and all-good, the mystic unity of what is and what should be.

God



The world of fact, after all, is not good. We judge the world of fact from a religious point of view developed by our ancestors. Our thoughts are slaves to the savage attitude. Our thoughts must be purified from old savage thoughts. The dignity of man should be preserved and developed. He must be free from the tyranny of non-human power. As we have realized that power is largely bad, and man, with his knowledge of good and evil, is only a helpless atom in a physical world, he shall worship Goodness. *God should be recognized as the creation of our own conscience.*

Carlyle and Nietzsche and the creed of Militarism have accustomed us the worship of force which has been result of failure to maintain our own ideals against a hostile universe. Carlyle lost his faith in Christianity, which has been discussed in his work– *Sartor Resartus*. Nietzsche was much impressed with his work. Both of them wrote, emphasizing the importance of "free will" which inspired the Fascists in Europe. It led to evil anyway. Facts are also false, and they also torment man in different ways. Those who fail to recognize that facts are often bad suffer. Their worship of the facts is also like the sacrifice to Moloch. We can call for an analogy- the world of facts with the world of science. Worship to the facts of science is the major cause that has led to the devastating two world wars. We are still suffering regularly. Therefore, it has been necessary to respect the truth, beauty and the ideal of perfection. In the following words Russell favors "good" that stands for God and ideals of love.

"If power is bad, as it seems to be, let us reject it from our hearts. In this lies Man's true freedom: in determination to worship only the God created by our own love of the good to respect only the heaven which inspires the insight of our best moments. In action, in desire, we must submit perpetually to the tyranny of outside forces; but in thought, in aspiration, we are free from our fellow men, free from the petty planet on which our bodies impotently crawl, free even while we live from the tyranny of death. Let us learn, then, that energy of faith which enables us to live constantly in the vision of the good." (Russell, 1988)

Desires and Thoughts

When first the opposition of fact and ideal grows fully visible, a spirit of fiery revolt, of fierce hatred of the gods, seems necessary to the assertion of freedom. A man must not bow before the inevitable– power of death. He must disobey the hostile universe with Promethean constancy. This Promethean constancy refers to the Greek mythology. Prometheus was a Titan of Greek mythology who gave fire to humankind by stealing from Gold's place. For this Zeus punished him by having him chained to a rock and having a giant bird constantly eat at his liver. Constancy is thus endurance, the will to prevail. Russell believes that a man should endure all kinds of torments and works for the humankind. He must keep evil of the hostile universe in view and hate it all the time. He should accept the threat that the

power can invent for him.

A man may have indignation. At the time of the indignation our thoughts do not work. Indignation means surrender of thoughts. Those who can't reason or think burst with anger. Similarly, those who have desires struggle with rebellion for self assertion. It is wise for a man to overcome the rebellion. There is wisdom, the stoic freedom, in the submission of our desires. By the stoic freedom he refers to the stoic philosophy of acceptance of things as they come. It is also for public service and good deeds. From the submission of our desires springs the virtue of resignation. From the freedom of our thoughts springs the whole world of art and philosophy and vision of beauty by which it is easier to conquer the world Russell believes that the vision of beauty is possible only when a man is free without fear and horror of anything for thinking. Freedom comes only to those whose minds are not subdued by desire of personal goods.

Renunciation of desire can be good and bad in the result. Bad in the sense that some real goods of desire of public benefit may be lost, and good in the sense that without personal desire a man is free for thinking and making a vision of beauty. There are two kinds of desires- one impossible, but yet real goods, and another possible and we strongly long for that but yet false. The creed of religion, though it is attempting to prove to be never false, is still a means of purifying our hopes. There is much possibility of the discovery of harsh truths. In paragraph 13 Russell's views can be seen pessimistic, but yet he has proved it wisdom for a man. If something is unattainable though that is good for him, a man must not desire it passionately. Everything that is good and beautiful is finally buried in the grave because as Russell says, "to every man comes, sooner or later, the great renunciation." (Russell, 1988) He has referred here to death. He suggests that one must turn away his thoughts from vain regrets. He must not sit and weep at the min of his hopes. This degree of submission to power is not only just and right: it is the very gate of wisdom.

A Temple of Ideals

Russell, furthermore, argues that passive renunciation is not the whole of wisdom. To have a suicide thinking that the life is miserable and anyway the death is inevitable is never wisdom. If the death has been received for public service and good deeds, it is something active renunciation. Being free from fear of sorrow, change, failures, disenchantments of the world of fact, we can build a temple for the worship of our own ideals. The beautiful image of the temple of our ideals appears in the realms of imagination, in music, in architecture, in reason, in lyrics, etc. In the contemplation of these things, the vision of heaven will shape itself in our hearts. The temple is pure and sacred. The question arises – who can enter the temple? Those who are born without sin can enter, but such people are rare in the world. Hardly has he found them, and if there are, they have untimely death. Those people, who have confidence, no despair, get through the cavern of darkness into the temple by suffering for the good of mankind can also enter. To enter the temple of ideals one must be wise, free from any fear of torments. He must not be selfish and greedy. Loving mankind a man can feel radiance of a new insight, a new joy, a new tenderness.

When we have learnt both to resign ourselves to the outward rule of fate and to recognize that the nonhuman world is unworthy of our worship, it becomes possible to refashion the unconscious universe. A new image of shining gold replaces the old idol of clay. A Newvision will be experienced in life and even in the very power of death. The insight of creative idealism can find the reflection of beauty which its own thoughts first made. The mind has mastery over the thoughtless forces of nature. It is love by which a man can have a place in other's hearts, even in enemies' hearts.

Russell admires tragedy of all the arts implying that great heroic deeds and love at the face of death have great effect and occupy a room even in the enemies' hearts-

"Of all the arts, Tragedy is the most proud, the most triumphant; for it builds its shining citadel in the very center of the enemy's country, on the very summit of his highest mountain." (Russell, 1988)

Honor is given to those great and tragic warriors who through countless ages of warfare have preserved for us the priceless heritage of liberty. They have left their honorable images in our mind.

Beauty of Tragedy in Life

Russell, like Nietzsche, writes about pleasure and sorrow of individuals in the world. He says that the beauty of tragedy shows a quality which is present, less or more always and everywhere in life. In the spectacle of death, in the endurance of intolerable pain, and in the irrevocableness of a vanished past, there is a sacredness, an overpowering awe, a feeling of the vastness, the depth inexhaustible mystery of existence, in which as by some strange marriage of pain, the sufferer is bound to the world by bonds of sorrow. Every individual, when he abandons temporary desire and struggling for the purpose, and doesn't care hopes and fears of suffering and dark side of life, is victorious in the struggle with the powers of darkness. Every person is alone in the struggle with the powers of darkness. Every person is alone in the struggle in the whole world. Nevertheless, he is victorious. He has a glorious victory. As he has courage, he conquers pain, awe and even Death.

The past is never recoverable. It doesn't change or starve. Once it has terrible movement and finally it ends forever. This has been compared with autumn leaves. In the terrible wind they fall, but still they keep glory. They have still honor and love from people. It is also like Duncan, the king in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* whom Macbeth kills. He moves with terrible pain for some time and then ends forever. In human life, too, all minor and temporary desires and works wither soon. Only the things that were beautiful and eternal remain here forever, shining like stars in the night, Russell gives a beautiful remark here-

"Its beauty [beauty of the past], to a soul not worthy of it, is unendurable; but to a soul which has conquered Fate it is the key of religion." (Russell, 1988)

The life of man, viewed outwardly, is only a small thing in comparison with the forces of Nature. Man has considered his position very poor near the forces of nature. He has been doomed to worship power of Time, Fate and Death. As long as he has a passion for beauty, his thought makes him a free man. He no longer bows before the inevitable [death] in Oriental subjection. Oriental subjection implies to the loss of self called for in many Eastern religions. It may be referring to the Eastern ritual or religious practices in which one bows before so-called God in temples being he subject to inferiority and suffering. He writes essence of this text in the following lines-

"To abandon the struggle for private happiness, to expel all eagerness of temporary desire, to burn with passion for eternal things- this is emancipation, and this is the free man's worship." (Russell, 1988)

A free man is the person who is free from all kinds of selfish and temporary desires. A free man worships the humankind and that is the reason behind the passion for eternal things. Fate is itself subdued by the mind. There is determination and that causes a man dismiss the fear of death as well.

The World as Tragedy

A man is bound to other fellow men because of the tie of a common doom, and he brightens the relation with the light of love. Russell shows the miserable life of man in this tragic world in a beautiful imagery-

"The life of Man is a long march through the night surrounded by invisible foes, tortured by weariness and pain towards a goal that few can hope to reach and where none may tarry long. One by one, as they march, our comrades vanish from our sight, seized by the silent orders of omnipotent Death. Very brief is the time in which we can help them, in which their happiness or misery is decided. Be it ours to shed sunshine on their path, to lighten their sorrows by the balm of sympathy, to give them the pure joy of a never tiring affection, to strengthen failing courage, to instill faith in hours of despair. Let us not weigh in grudging scales their merits and demerits, but let us think only of their need- of the sorrows, the difficulties, perhaps the blindnesses, that make the misery of their lives; let us remember that they are fellow-sufferers in the same darkness, actors in the same tragedy with ourselves." (Russell, 1988)

If we feel the world, we will find it a tragedy. All the people, our fellow-men, are actors with same sorrows, the difficulties, blindnesses, misery and the common, inevitable doom bring all of us at the same center where there is darkness. All people wish to help. A man wishes to come out of the night darkness. He wants to be free from all sorrows, difficulties, weariness and pain. It is only possible if one throws light on their path, if one lightens their sorrows by massaging with ointment of sympathy, if one gives them love, encourages and brings them out of despair. One must not see his own needs; he must not weigh their merits and demerits in poor prejudicious scales, rather he should see their needs and their sufferings whatever good has been done, that will make him immortal. Eternity is achieved. Russell has said that if a man is condemned today to lose his dearest to lose his personal interests, tomorrow he will himself pass through the gate of darkness into the temple of ideal.

Rhetorics

Bertrand Russell was a mathematician and a philosopher, and he brought logics into literature saying that logics come from mathematics. Besides, his literary works have been enriched with his individual and effective style. Usually, in an essay, persuasion is supposed to be major element and a writer presents a persuasive argument in the traditional order of beginning, mid and ending. Russell is different from such writers. There is not well- designed structure of this persuasive argument. There is not any right division- beginning, mid and ending. His writing style comprises two devices: analysis and summary. There is a casual flow of thoughts. Russell presents beautiful images. Creation of the world has been beautifully described-

"For countless ages the hot nebula whirled aimlessly through space. At length it began to take shape, the central mass threw off plants, the plants cooled, boiling seas and burning mountains heaved and tossed from black masses of cloud hot sheets of rain deluged the barely solid crust." (Russell, 1988)

Metaphor has been extended for allegory to show how the human body can be realized to be similar with an enemy's country. Tragedy "builds its shining citadel in the very center of the enemy's country, on the very summit of his highest mountain, from its impregnable watchtowers, his camps and arsenals, his columns and forts are all revealed." Life of man has been compared with a long march in a metaphor- "The life of Man is a long march through the night,

surrounded by invisible foes, tortured by weariness and pain,. ". Again, he believes that all fellow-sufferers are actors in the same tragedy -. ". They are fellow-sufferers in the same darkness, actors in the same tragedy with ourselves." He builds a temple of ideal by a metaphor and says that "there is a cavern of darkness to be traversed before that time can be entered."

Russell starts the essay with the allusion- Mephistopheles's speech in *Dr. Faustus* and continues the analysis of images of God and the temple of the savage, our ancestors, and of God and temples of our own ideal. There are some allusions to Greek heroes and mythology. Promethean philosophy of rebellion is from Greek mythology. The religion of Moloch, the book of Job, reference to Carlyle and Nietzsche concerning with the worship of force, the Oriental subjection and the king Duncan in *Macbeth* are some important allusions to support his argument. There are some pithy maxims, too. "A soul which has conquered Fate is the key to religion." "Indignation is a submission of our thoughts." "From the submission of our desires springs the virtue of resignation." Throughout the argument, Russell has been serious and intellectual rather than emotional. Naturally, we also feel less emotional.

CONCLUSIONS

Russell is a humanist. From the sense of humanity, his analysis of power, the creation of God and mankind, the world, worship, tragedy, love and the ideal world is plausible and sensible. God is a creation of our conscience. Nature is blind and unthinking. The Power of time, fate and death is nothing more than our thought and imagination. We can live with fate, with nature, with the thought of death, but we must worship goodness. We must have emancipation from the worship of any kind of power. We should worship humankind because the worship of humankind is something different. It is a passion of eternal things that is really the free man's worship.

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