Epistemological and Religious Meaning of Belief- An Analysis on David Hume.

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Abstract

Belief is a common technical term in many subjects viz; religion, science, philosophy, epistemology, psychology and the like. Even the meaning of the term is "wishful thinking", the usage of the term is different in their context. It has so many ramifications that one hardly knows where to begin the discussion and where to conclude it. Why we are to choose belief is the question. When we are unable to satisfy ourselves with mere knowledge or science, we intend to seek another option to know or understand the subject. Belief gives us the knowledge. When a belief is justified true, it becomes knowledge, if not it remains as mere belief. There is a traditional boundary in belief between two subjects, one is epistemology and other one is morality. The research problem here is whether Hume uses the term belief in different meaning. Hence, this research proposed to have objective to study Hume's usage of belief in the epistemological and moral or religious sense in explaining his other philosophical subjects. In the epistemological context, Hume argues that we can have no rational knowledge of matters of fact, reason in its strict or a priori sense yielding intuitive or demonstrative knowledge only of relations among ideas. Rather, our knowledge of matters of fact involves our applying a psychologically constituted relation of causal necessity to empirical elements. In moral context, his explanation is on other way. In order to elaborate his interpretation, qualitative research design was used since it is a descriptive study on a concept. From secondary sources, the data were collected. David Hume's works have been used as original sources and other writings of other Humeans were also used to get more understanding of the subject. The data were analyzed qualitatively and findings were proved based on textual evidences. Accordingly, David Hume unsystematically proposed his philosophy and for his easiness, he has used terms to explain his thought. When he found that there is no way to explain a concept scientifically, he intended to go for practical sense of usage. Accordingly, he had used the term belief in two different ways of meaning to explain his epistemological and religious or moral meaning.

Keywords: belief, epistemology, morality, meaning, David Hume