

JESUS CHRIST THE PHILOSOPHER: AN EXPOSÉ

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Abstract

Rarely do philosophers and scholars endeavour to examine Jesus Christ's teachings from the perspective of philosophy this is because it is presumed that Christ's teachings fall within the ambience of religion and theology. Philosophy as a discipline of study has been misunderstood and most times characterized by abstract considerations. This article titled: *Jesus Christ the Philosopher: An Expose* brings out the fact that some teachings of Jesus Christ are and ought to be understood as being philosophical. The article looks at Jesus as a historic person, exclusive of post-resurrection Jesus Christ which is fundamentally an issue of faith. The main objective of this work is to uncover, expose and write on the teachings of Jesus Christ which are philosophical. Certain areas of philosophy inherent in Christ teachings are in the areas of Social Philosophy viz: Leadership Philosophy, Philosophy of Peace and Conflict Resolution, Ethics and Virtue Ethics and Law. The conclusion of this article is that Jesus Christ's teachings are philosophical and thereby captures Jesus Christ as a philosopher.

Key words: Jesus Christ, Philosopher

Introduction

Humanity has been bristled by the mystique which the teachings of Jesus Christ have aroused in the minds of men, races, cultures and nations. These teachings had been exquisitely subsumed and understood within the ambience of religion and incisively advanced in this paradigm of thought. Ample evidence of Christendom fixed Christ mainly as a figure which could be studied and explicated within the sanctuary of holiness, divinity, faith and transcendence. However an extension of this study unveils that, apart from the religious and theological bents of the teachings of Jesus Christ, there are philosophical inklings which require prompt resonance and reanimation. Suffice to say here that the inspiration, a person derives from this philosophical protractile of the teachings of Jesus Christ educes profundity and novelty in philosophical study.

In another perspective, pre-eminence must be accorded to the two prongs of Jesus Christ's personage. The first in the person of Christ as a historic figure, a Jew who walked, taught and sermonized on the streets of Galilee, Palestine and Nazareth. The second aspect of Jesus Christ, which is referred to as post-resurrection Jesus Christ is a matter of faith, which is the basal of Christianity. For incisiveness, this paper is not concern with post resurrection Jesus Christ. Ostensibly, the person of historic Christ who appeared and stood trial before Pontius Pilate, the Emperor of Rome is our concern in this paper. Paul the Epistle writer, whose letter to the Colossians reads. "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit according to the traditions of men and according to the basic principles of the world..." (Colossian 2:8) becomes the spring board for this paper.

This portion of Paul's epistle could be misconstrued to imply that philosophy derails and is characterized by negatives and deception. This verse berates the positive imports and impacts which philosophical convictions and constructions have bestowed on humanity and society. As a corollary to this passage, the paper submits that Jesus Christ was a philosopher. His teaching were deeply thought-provoking and inclined towards good and moral life, notwithstanding Paul's assertion. Engaging and contentious questions are; was Jesus Christ a bona-fide philosopher? What kind of philosopher was he? How does his philosophy relate to issues raised by other philosophers? And does his philosophical teachings contribute to contemporary philosophical issues and contentions?

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Interestingly, one should note that these questions betray that philosophical inquisitions and explorations need not always include argumentation, criticality, system-building and professionalism. It does not need to exclude divine inspiration and religions, authority or theological exegesis. It should be tilted towards certain orientation to knowledge, dialogue logicity, and exhibition of wisdom and proficiency. Kreeft submit “Jesus was a philosopher. But his philosophy was more substantive than just mere argumentation” (42)

Discursive Paradigm Of “Jesus Christ The Philosopher”

Man’s minds would be puzzled that many convictions of this article impute Jesus Christ to be referred to as a philosopher, the reason for his position is educed within the ambience of intellectual heritage which unearths Jesus Christ’s philosophical teachings. It is pertinent to hold that some sets of thought ascribed to Christ are within the purview of philosophy, especially as scholars have severally and extensively accorded an omnibus status to philosophy which has made philosophy to share and be applied to various disciplines of study and thought. Preliminary views on Philosophy are instructive here; Mesembe, Edet in his *Outlines of Oriental Philosophy* opined that philosophers though few in number have a part (role) to play in contributing to an enlarged awareness of the mentality of other people(xii). Burt an eminent scholar further added;

“The goal of philosophy is the goal of human living itself and philosophy is employed as an instrument to facilitate human fulfilment” (203).

As a follow-up of Burt’s assertion, Alozie notes, “Philosophy is a cognitive, critical and reflective enterprise aimed at problem-solving”(1). Kwesi Wiredu reiterates that the function of philosophy everywhere is “to examine the intellectual modes of knowledge and reflection of human wellbeing “(2). Oladipo affirms that philosophy is an insight and commitment to human well-being. According to him, “a philosopher is expected to promote a better understanding of the human condition as a means of enhancing the human capacity to cope with the challenges of life “(14). Chukwu Okolo lends his voice to this extensive definitions of philosophy as reconstructing man’s experience, prods man to be fully human, to think out solutions to ‘man’s, most basic problems of existence as individuals and as social collectives’ (5).

Paul Tillich approach to philosophy reads “... it is the attempt to answer the most general questions about the nature of reality and human existence... questions which do not ask about the specific sphere of reality but about the nature of reality, which is effective in all realms” (90). This approach pursues answers to general questions, explores the rationale of various claims about reality.

These definitions of philosophy as proffered by various scholars’ and philosophers, ignite these questions, Is Jesus Christ, a philosopher? Can his teachings be adjudged to be philosophical? Responses to these questions would serve as the catch-phrase explanation towards the thrust of this topic “Jesus Christ the Philosopher” substantially in philosophical constructions, especially in moral philosophy, philosophers would agree that Jesus Christ was a philosopher. Dallas Willard’s opinion on Jesus Christ’s, teachings reads “... Jesus brilliance depicts a philosophical mind which requires not only certain intellectual skills but also certain character commitments regarding the importance of logic and the value of truth in one’s life” (607) Dallas added “Jesus aim...was to achieve understanding or insight in his hearers...He presents matters in such a way that those who wish to know can find their way to; can come to the appropriate conclusion they have discovered, whether or not it is something they care for (607).

In Jesus Christ’s itinerant sermonisation, which was a replicate of the “sophists”, exemplified that Jesus Christ did not countenance every view on issues brought before him by the Jews and the Pharisees, instead he engaged in extensive argumentation, which were highly controversial, which the Jewish intellectual leaders greatly frowned at his disposition. It is a recondite fact that outside Christ’s reference to scriptural portions and traditions which were religious, he often used reason in doing most of his responses which betrayed philosophical inputs that were implicit in his dialogues and discourses.

These were expressed in forms of parables and became the stimuli for deeper thought. Pertinently, let us look at Jesus Christ educational background, which could have been a platform of his acquisition of basic knowledge of the world, Galilean society, his environment and men who lived in Galilee. According to Vermes, Galilee did not possess a rabbinical school until the middle of the 1st century C.E. This explains partially its ostracism in religious circles in Jerusalem. (Vermes 1993) (Baldet, 53) and by implication, there were no teachers (Rabbis) in Galilee. If there were teachers as Vermes writes; can an inference be drawn to indicate that Jesus had formal education?

The New Testament writings virtually did not mention anything about Jesus education. But Luke had reported the childhood anecdotes of Jesus in the temple. Baldet writes "what we do know is that, Bible education in Hebrew during the first century was given orally to Jewish boys" (60-61).

In another portion, Baldet extensively painted a picture of Jesus Christ's education in the following passage: A few privileged boys, those who had special talents were admitted to a more advanced school—the "bet ha-midrash". There, they studied the deeper meaning of the Torah. Assuming that Jesus was the oldest son, so he may have been encouraged to follow a more advanced religious education, perhaps including learning to read Hebrew. Advocates of this thesis based their argument on gospel passages that evoke Jesus superior scriptural interpretation as demonstrated in his debates with devout Pharisees, professional scribes and temple authorities in Jerusalem (61).

This position is ostensibly supported by some verses in Luke's Gospel which reads:

After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among teachers, listening to them and asking them questions, and all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers" (Luke 2:46-47).

In contra position to the biblical verses of Luke as espoused above, other authors cited the portion of John's Gospel to betray that Jesus Christ was not educated. The passage of John's Gospel reads "Astonished, the Jews wondered "How could he read the letters without having studied" (John 7:15). From these passages about his education, it is persuasive to submit that, his philosophical spark has been elicited from these verses of Luke and John's gospels.

A. Ethymological Semantics Of Philosophy

It is seminal in philosophical thought and paradigm to submit that etymologically philosophy is derived from Greek words "philein tes sophia" and in Latin "philo and sophia" literally meaning "love of wisdom". By estimation and protraction, this phrase "love of wisdom" is inclusive of those who "use wisdom" exhibit wisdom" and value wisdom for the sake of knowledge about man, humanity, society and creation. From the above perspective, if Jesus Christ had exhibited and use wisdom as presented in the Gospel of Luke it logically follows that he was a philosopher as his teachings implicitly exude philosophy. The passages of Luke's Gospel 2:42-47 and 51-53 hitherto quoted attest to this fact.

B. Jesus Christ's Dialectics And Dialectical Methods

Dialectics and dialectical method were accorded preeminence by Hegel and Karl Marx. As a concept, dialectics is traced to the ancient Greeks especially Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. By etymology, 'dialectics' is a Greek word "dialokois" meaning dialogue or polemics. In simple comprehension, dialectics is interpreted as an art of getting at the truth by way of revealing contradictions in the argumentation of an opponent and by overcoming these contradictions by better reasoning (Buzuev and Gorodnov 66). Kneale and Kneale with incisive appropriateness note that dialectics is 'a method of argument involving refutation but leading eventually to positive results of high generality' (9). By inference, dialectics means dialogue in a contention to arrive at the truth. Philosophers of great repute displayed dialectics in their philosophical postulations. These are found in Plato's *Republic*, *Phaedo*, *Parmenides*, *Theaetetus* and also found in Aristotle's *Topics*. Contextually as if of the passages of Jesus Christ teachings were mainly dialectical which tacitly places Jesus Christ in the realm of Philosophy. A perusal of these instances are germane and instructive in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Most of the parables in these Gospels speak volumes on dialectical exhibition and usages by Jesus Christ.

Also the episodes on the arrest and trial of Christ's are dialectical—precisely Christ's arrest by the Sanhedrins who led him away to Caiaphas the High Priest (Matt 26:57), Jesus encounter with Pilate (Matthew 27:11), (Mark 14:53) Jesus faces the Sanhedrin, Jesus faces Pilate (Mark 15:1-5) Jesus faces the Sanhedrin (Matt. 22:66-71) Jesus faces Pontius Pilates (Luke 23:1-5), Jesus faces Herod 23:1-12; Jesus before the High Priest (John 18:12-14);

Jesus in Pilate's court (John 18:28-38), Pilate's Decision and handing over of Jesus to the Jews are philosophical pictures of Christ (John 19:1-6) usages of dialectical method and dialectics.

C. Jesus Christ's Virtue Ethics And Ethics

One of the major philosophical postulations of Jesus Christ is in the realm of Ethics and Virtue Ethics. In broad perspectives, "virtue ethics" certainly requires a provision of ethical justification of virtues and some accounts of their moral significance. On a narrow interpretation, virtue Ethics or (Ethics of Virtue) points to a justification of a particular kind, one which grounds moral life" (Frankena 54:1-17). According to Carr "Virtue Ethics construe virtues as traits of character in some sense constitutive of human flourishing (100-1).

Virtue Ethics is traced to the philosophies of Socrates, Plato Aristotle, Confucius who are recognized as great philosophers. John Rawls, Utilitarianism of Bentham and J. S. Mills, Altruism of Judeo-Christian practices, Philosophy of Care of Gilligan, Etzioni's communitarianism, Kant's deontology are considered within the paradigm of Virtue Ethics. Incisively, Virtue Ethics examines themes like generosity, compassion, kindness, justice peace, care, character-utilitarian which undeniable centre on extra-moral good of human life and happiness.

Jesus Christ On Compassion, Care, Generosity And Kindness, "Epitome Of Virtue Ethics"

Several parables of Christ as espoused in the Synoptic Gospels of Mark, Luke and Matthew articulate his Virtue Ethics of compassion, care, generosity and kindness. In Mark, the feeding of Four Thousand and Five Thousand followers of Christ are instructive. In Mark's words

The multitude being very great (in number) having nothing to eat; Jesus called his disciples and said. I have compassion on the multitude because they have continued with me, three days and have nothing to eat. If I send them away hungry to their house, they will faint on the way..." (Mark 8:6), So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground, and He took the seven loaves and give thanks... (Mark 8:8) So they ate and were filled. Also this scenario is reported (Mathew 15:32-39).

In another portion of the Gospels of Mark and Mathew, Jesus also fed Five Thousand followers- (Mark 6:30-39, Mathew 14:13-21). In Luke Gospel, the virtue ethics of generosity was clearly exemplified by the feeding of Five Thousand people in the city of Bethsaida. Accordingly, the Apostle, in clear ignorance of the virtue of generosity approached Jesus and notified him that it was getting dark and they have no more than Five loaves and two fish. The words of Jesus as represented in Luke reads "then He took the five loaves and two fish and looking up, He blessed and broke them and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude. So they all ate and were filled..." Luke (9-16-17)

Again Jesus said, "Give to everyone who asks of you. And from him, who takes away of your goods do not ask them back" (Luke 6:30). Jesus Christ's articulation on Virtue Ethics of care is show-cased in superb analogy in Luke's Gospel thus:

I say to you do not worry about your life, what you eat; nor about your body, what you will put on... consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither store house nor barn and God feeds them... Do not seek what you eat or what you should drink nor have on anxious mind. Your Father knows that you need these things "(Luke 12:22-31) (Mathew 6:26). The Lord's Prayer modelled by Christ's reads "Give us this day our daily bread "(Luke 11:3), epitomizes care for mankind.

Another synoptic passage of Jesus Christ's, virtue Ethics which encapsulates compassion and care is in the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-31) where the parable narratives of Jesus were memorable account of compassion of those who have decided to be recalcitrant.

D Jesus Christ's Theory On Ethics

The teachings of Jesus Christ reveal a precipitation of Altruism as an ethical construct, thus emanate from Christ emphasis on selflessness, and service to others.

Altruism as an ethical concept that articulates the love of neighbor over and above oneself, including those who are perceived as one's enemies. Paul's letter to the Galatians speaks clearly on this principle "The entire law is summed up in a single command; love your neighbor as yourself" (Galatian 5:14) Altruism was the foundation of Lao tzu philosophy of selflessness. A portion of *Tao Te'ching* reads, "Heaven and earth endure because they are not simply selfish but exist in belief of all creation ...one lasts longer by placing the wellbeing of all (others) above the wellbeing of self alone." (Wren, 69).

In a portion of Luke's Gospel, Jesus retorted "I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you...(Luke 6:27-28) But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you..."(Luke 6:30). A run through of the parables of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-36) and parable of prodigal son (Luke 15:11-13) are altruistic-inclined. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, the issue of "love" was in issue and the response, by Christ explains simply the need to show love and love of neighbor as oneself.

Christ's reply is instructive at this point "you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all you might, strength and with all your mind and your neighbor as yourself (Luke 10:25). Reasoning from these perspectives, reveals that altruism was at the centre of Christ's theory of Ethics.

E Jesus Christ's Social Philosophy

The beacon upon which Jesus Christ constructed his social philosophy was evident in the social structure of the Jewish society which Jesus Christ lived in and carried out his ministry. One of the problem that puzzled the elites of the Jewish society was the effrontery and the boldness of Christ in his ministrations especially in His place of birth which was Galilee, and other towns namely Palestine and Samaria. Clearly in the first century different currents of Greco-Roman thoughts had influenced the Mediterranean world-(Baldet, 43), betraying that the Roman system of administration over the Jewish society however influenced the social philosophy of Jesus Christ. This fact as shown in the key components of Christ social philosophy include; His thought on leadership (leadership philosophy), conflict, Conflict Resolution and Peace (philosophy of non-violence and violence and his legal principles.

I. Christ On Leadership Philosophy

Christ's leadership philosophy is exemplified and enshrined in the servant leadership which is epitomized in the Gospel of Mark. In the passage, Christ illustrated the traits, which a leader ought to possess, namely humility and service. The disciples while with Jesus requested from him, that they be granted opportunity to sit at the most prime positions, at the right hand and the left hand of him. But Jesus Christ being aware of the primordial desire of man, which could be common among his disciples responded in a subtle manner which the disciples could not comprehend. His reply reads;

You know that those who are considered rulers over the gentiles lord it over them and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you, but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant... (Mark 10:43-44; Mathew 20:26-27).

In another passage, the disciples contended among themselves; who should be the greatest?" Jesus called them and said to them "If anyone desires to be first he shall be the last and servant of all..." (Mark 9:35). To reaffirm his position on humility as the centre of His leadership philosophy, Jesus practically exemplified it by washing the feet of his apostles (John 13:1-14). Jesus Christ's leadership philosophy reminds us of crypt of virtue which is inherent in man (Eyo: 167).

II. JESUS CHRIST ON CONFLICT, CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PEACE

Enormous and numerous conflict situations were experienced and prevalent at the time of Jesus Christ's ministry, which characterized, the sociocultural particularities especially the oppression of the Jews by the Roman authorities.

Baron observed that "marked inequalities existed among social and occupational groups in the heart of Galilean society. In particular, the peasants were exploited by absentee landowners and oppressed by tax collectors (372-373). To further show the tensions and conflicts that occurred, Baron retorted:

Roman fiscal policy and the Jewish rules concerning agriculture... weighed heavier on peasants, who found themselves caught between Jewish religious obligations and the Roman civil obligations. But the ruthless methods of Roman enforcement left them with no choice. "This crushing financial burden which inevitably led to widespread impoverishment of the population was the source of extreme tensions that at times broke out in riots or open revolts(374). These excerpts of Baron characterized the conflicts and social tensions, which Jesus endeavored to scold, rebuke and condemn the Jewish elites and leaders who were then referred to as Pharisees, Sanhedrins, Scribes and tax collectors. Now the pertinent question is, how were the conflicts and social tensions to be resolved? A seeming inference on these tensions could be resolved by the diplomatic resoluteness of Jesus Christ as captured in Matthew gospel.

It reads "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that by the mouths of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church, but if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be like a heathen?... (Matthew 18:15-17). An extensive interpretation of this passage speaks of his standards and versions of conflict and how these conflicts could be resolved. The passage intuitively reveals the thrust of Jesus Christ's articulations of conflict resolution. Apparently, this passage also signalled that non-violence was inherently adopted and adaptive as a model of conflict resolution. These inferential indications, trigger non-violence as a pattern of conflict resolution which is worth scrutinizing in this article.

III Christ On Non-Violence In Philosophy Of Peace And Conflict Resolution

It has been mentioned hitherto, that Jesus of Christ advocated a non-violent pattern of conflict resolution which is obvious in many passages of the Judeo Christian Bible. The “Beatitudes or Christ’s” Sermon on the Mount are illustrative in this perspective.

According to the synoptic gospel of Matthew

Jesus seeing the multitudes, went up a mountain... His disciples came to him. Then he opened his mouth and taught them saying...Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God..., (Matthew 5:1-9). This passage of the “Sermon on the mount draws one’s inclination towards a later view of Jesus Christ in Matthew’s gospel; which reads” you have heard that it was said in the (law) “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth”. But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also, if anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two (Matthew 5: 38-41).

Following these passages, a line of reasoning and articulation were later inferred by many advocates, philosophers and scholars of non-violence and peace. Succinctly, Nojeim comments are instructive in this respect. For him, ‘Christ’s message in the new testament centres more on love, forgiveness and turning the other cheek than it does on punishment and vengeance. A convincing case can therefore be made that Christ’s teachings dovetail nicely with non-violence. Christ was an early practitioner of non-violence”(20-21) In support of the above assertion, other scholars consistently appreciated the advocacy of Jesus Christ as a nonviolence advocate, which was significant in Mahatma Ghandi’s philosophy of non-violence. Accordingly, these words harmonize this position “The New Testament spoke deeply to Ghandi, in particular Jesus Christ’s sermon on the mount set him afire. Ghandi was deeply moved by the message of forgiveness and redemptive love, which Christ urged his followers to obey in the Sermon on the Mount (Beatitudes)... (Brown : 26)

Leo Tolstoy’s recourse to Christ’s sermon on mount drew admiration to Tolstoy’s reliance on Christ as a practitioner of non-violence. In his book, *My Religion*, Tolstoy expressed this conviction clearly, My personal life is interwoven with the social, political life and the political life demands of me a non-Christian activity, which is directly opposed to Christ’s commandment. Universal military service.. Placed before all people... weapon of murder.. Every citizen must come to court and in the punishment that is everyman has to renounce Christ’s commandment of non-resistance to evil, not only in words, but in action as well” (22) Extolling this observation, Tolstoy retorts;

Christ says do not resist evil, the purpose of courts is to resist evil. Christ prescribes doing good in return for evil. The courts retaliate evil for evil. Christ says, make no distinction between good and bad. All courts do is to make this distinction. Christ says, forgive all men; Forgive not once, not seven times but without end; Love your enemies do good to those who hate you the courts do not forgive but punish; they do not do good but evil to those whom they out, according to the meaning that Christ- must have rejected the courts (*My Religion 25*)

As an avowed non-violent and non-resister practitioner, a scenario at the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus Christ was arrested is illustrative. In the synoptic Gospel of John one acknowledges this scene. “Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it and struck the high priest’s servant whose name was Malchus. So Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword into the sheath..”(John 18:10-11) The Gospel of Matthew, presents a different version thus;

“And suddenly, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. But Jesus said to Him” Put your sword in its place for all who take the sword will perish by the sword (Matthew 26:51-52)

Evidently, one submits that these articulations of Christ are at the centre of Jesus Christ’s social philosophy. However in extolling non-violence of Christ, Tolstoy asserts as captured by Eyo et al in *Introduction to Philosophy of Conflict Resolution and Peace* thus:

Christ says do not resist evil. The purpose of the Courts is to resist evil. The courts retaliate evil with evil. Christ says make no distinction between the good and the bad. Christ says, forgive all men, forgive not once, not seven times but without end....” (Eyo et al, 206).

Garnered from Tolstoy assertion, it is apparent that Christ's non violence injunction and the state (Courts and Military service) have incompatible relationship.

Jesus Christ Exhortations On The Law

Christ was not a Lawyer nor a Jurist but his legal thoughts arose from *Torah* which contained the laws of Moses which regulated all human actions. It covered what we now call Civil Law, Commercial Law and Criminal Law (Baldet, 76) most scholars on the Pharisee sect frowned at Christ's exhortations like you have heard what your ancestors said ... but truly I say to you "Does this not indicate a refutation?". To comprehend this question, reference is made to Gospel of Matthew where Jesus said "Do not believe that I have come to abolish the law... I come not to abolish but to fulfill it" (Matt. 5:17).

Following from this position of Matthew, there are other verses which reiterated Jesus Christ exhortations on the Mosaic Law. These portions are instructive "But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one speck of the law to fall away" (Luke 16:17). In another verse, Jesus said "For truly I say to you, fill heaven and earth pass away not an iota nor a mark over an iota will pass from the law until all is accomplished" (Matthew 5:18). These two verses show that Jesus was quite aware of *Torah*.

However, there are some certain aspects of Mosaic Law which Jesus Christ emphatically instructed some amendments. These could be as the result of pretentious and sycophantic manners of the Pharisees and the Scribes. These aspects include, laws on Sabbath, Divorce, Ritual and dietary purity.

On Sabbath, the Mosaic law states "keep the Sabbath holy" Jesus added a little amendment "The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath... the son of man is master even for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27-28). In other words the law was given to serve humanity not the reverse" (Baldet 82).

On Divorce, the Mosaic Law specifically allowed for it, but Jesus Christ objected to this law. A scenario of Jesus position is instructive here,

"And Pharisees came up... to test him and asked "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife? He (Jesus) answered them, "What did Moses Command you" They said, "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and he rid of her". But Jesus said to them, "For your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. But from the beginning of creation "God made them male and female" for this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and he joined his wife... and the two shall become one flesh... what God has united, let not man, separate" (Mark 10:2-9).

This verse imputes that Christ amendments of the law abhors divorce.

On the traditional rules (laws) of purity and Ritual rescription, where Moses had commanded and the Pharisees religiously practiced it to the later, Jesus instructed that observing these rules strictly had no value in itself. He accordingly sought an amendment to this rule (law) as captured by Mark;

"The Pharisees and Scribes who had come from Jerusalem... asked him "why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with hands defiled? And he said to them " well did Isaiah prophesy of you... for it is written "These people honor me with their lips but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me... you put away the commandments of God and hold fast to the teachings of men" (Mark 7:1-8).

Christ's legal thoughts and exhortations are surmised in these verses above elaborately and capture Christ's legal principles.

Conclusion

In this article, enormous efforts have been made to examine essentially how Jesus Christ could be conceived as a philosopher. By way of concluding, these key points affirm that Christ was a philosopher.

The etymological definition of philosopher articulated that philosopher are user and lovers of wisdom. On this paradigm, Jesus Christ could be adjudged to be a philosopher. The paper also chronicled the use of dialectics as shown in the trial of Jesus. Further, the social philosophy of Christ as captured in leadership thought and his version of conflict Resolution as epitomized in the "sermon on the mount".

Also, Altruism, generosity and compassion evince Christ's theory of Ethics and Virtue Ethics. Finally his legal (principles) philosophy enhanced Christ as advocate of amendment of the Mosaic Law. These readings as articulated in this article exposes Christ as a philosopher.

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