

## Soren Kierkegaard's Leap of Faith: political implications

Hossein Rouhani 

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Faculty of Administrative Sciences Economics, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran. E-mail: [h.roohani@ase.ui.ac.ir](mailto:h.roohani@ase.ui.ac.ir)

---

### Article Info

### ABSTRACT

**Article type:**

Research Article

**Article history:**

Received 27 august 2022

Received in revised 17 October  
2022

Accepted 25 October 2022

Published online 1 January  
2023

Soren Kierkegaard, as one of the leading anti-philosophers of the school of existentialism, employs an ironic and groundbreaking approach to find fault with rationalism, abstract thinking, heteronomy, ethics and pluralism developed from the ideas of thinkers such as Kant and Hegel. Instead of valuing society, government, and conventional ethical and moral norms, he supports de-familiarization, creativity, autonomy, activity, individuality, and singularity. Kierkegaard argues that there are three stages on life's way or three spheres of existence on the path to self-realization. He believes that the highest realm of human life is the religious sphere in which Abraham, as a believer in the realm of faith, decides to sacrifice his son Isaac to God with the aim of saving his agency, individuality and singularity from the clutches of moral, governmental and public systems. Kierkegaard argues that the leap of faith is making a decision in the very moment of madness, and considers it as a kind of gambling and risk-taking. He believes that faith is a belief in the impossibility, irrationality and paradoxicality. In this sense of faith, on the one hand, Abraham is willing to obey God's command regarding the sacrifice of Isaac, and on the other hand, he believes in his heart that Isaac will be returned to him in this material world by God's command. The present paper, accordingly, examines the following hypothesis: Although Kierkegaard is against the official government policy based on sovereignty and pluralism, his leap of faith, which implies standing on the boundaries and suspending the moral and the general, can lead to the emergence of a political event and, consequently, the birth of an active and autonomous subject.

**Keywords:**

Kierkegaard, leap of faith,  
political event, paradoxical  
faith.

---

**Cite this article:** Rouhani, H. (2023). Soren Kierkegaard's Leap of Faith: political implications. *Journal of Philosophical Investigations*, 16(41), 373-385. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.22034/jpiut.2022.53176.3353>



© The Author(s).

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.22034/jpiut.2022.53176.3353>

Publisher: University of Tabriz.

## **Introduction**

Soren Kierkegaard is an ironic thinker who is skeptical about everything imitating Socrates' famous phrase, "I do not know", and that is why he is not content with modern governmentalism and socialism. Society, to him is the world of masks, and being involved in social affairs makes a person unaware of his being, singularity, and unrepeatable and unique existence. According to Kierkegaard, Christianity means becoming an individual, and this individuality and singularity can only be achieved by neglecting the aesthetics and ethical realms. Kierkegaard divides human life into three stages: aesthetic, ethical and religious. In the aesthetic stage, a person is trapped in the moment, and such a person eventually suffers from despair and boredom due to living in the mortal world with no understanding of eternity. In the second stage, which is the ethical stage, man adheres to ethical and social laws, which leads to the loss of human singularity and individuality. However, in the stage of the leap of faith, Abraham enters the realm of faith. The main principle in the realm of faith is belief in the impossible and the irrational, which is a kind of gambling and risk-taking. In the realm of faith, Abraham experiences eternity through his personal decision. The implication of this statement is that living in eternity requires Abraham's activism and determination which can never be achieved through theoretical discussion and reasoning. Abraham's faith is paradoxical; on the one hand, he obeys the will of God who wants to sacrifice Isaac, and on the other hand, he believes in his heart that Isaac will be returned to him by God in this world. Abraham believes in what is unreasonable, and he makes a passionate decision about himself and his destiny by abandoning the level of reason and the leap of faith. Abraham acquires his individuality—imbued with a courageous choice and decision—through the leap of faith. By accepting God's will to sacrifice Isaac and creating a state of emergency on the boundary of reason, he suspends all the moral and social foundations of human societies, thereby creating a new kind of humanity that guarantees human action and freedom and liberation from the clutches of the government, society and formal moral systems. Kierkegaard believes that Abraham is a clear symbol of sacrifice, and we can never achieve our individuality without sacrificing. Apparently, Kierkegaard's desired subject is a concrete subject and an actor of the world who implicitly introduces a new kind of subjectivity and politics against government sovereignty and state-oriented politics by suspending morality and through entering the realm of faith. Abraham's entry into the realm of faith requires a leap of faith and, consequently, the realization of a political event the basis of which is gambling and risk-taking, giving birth to a single, autonomous, active and resistant subject. Utilizing a descriptive-analytical method, this paper analyzes different areas of human life from Kierkegaard's point of view, and then it analyzes the relationship between the leap of faith and political event by describing and expanding 'the leap of faith.'

## **Apoliticism: The Basis of the Aesthetic Sphere**

Kierkegaard is one of the leading existentialist thinkers, who examines the stages of "self-realization" in terms of the three spheres of existence, i.e., the stages of self-awareness.

Kierkegaard discusses these three stages in his books “Either/or” and “Stages on Life’s Way” under the titles of aesthetic sphere, ethical sphere and religious sphere. What should be noted here is that the aesthetic stage looks at itself, the ethical stage looks at the other and the religious stage looks at God (Zeinaly, 1400: 67). Kierkegaard writes:

No one shall be forgotten who was great in this world. But each hero was great in his own way, and each one was eminent in proportion to the great things he loved. For he who loved himself became great through himself, and he who loved others became great through his devotion, but he who loved God became greater than all of these (Kierkegaard, 1941: 7).

However, Kierkegaard believes that these three stages are not consecutive and do not have to follow each other necessarily.

One may not enter these three stages at all. Entering these stages requires having individual’s goal with a specific focus. Concomitant with this entering is a kind of awareness. However, most people cannot achieve such an awareness since they do not have an understanding of their lives, and while involved in their daily lives, they have no control over themselves and their lives. The people mostly lack culture, and are like a drunk peasant who falls behind a carriage and fell asleep, leaving the horses alone (Kierkegaard, 1992: 262). In the aesthetic stage, Kierkegaard argues, one begins to set a goal for oneself, i.e., he tries to take control of his life. His first priority is pleasure; therefore, he is not bound by any social customs or moral rules, and he devotes himself solely to his personal standards. The aesthete may be merely pursuing fleeting pleasures or engaged in abstract philosophical reflections.

The aesthete lives in the world as a non-committed hedonist because he basically does not live in the real world and does not get involved in it. In contrast, he is only involved in abstractions and generalities that are devoid of concrete life. The aesthete seeks immediate pleasures and is defeated by the senses (Kierkegaard, 1971: 182). The aesthete pursues immediate short pleasures without thinking about their consequences. He lives only in the moment, does not pursue any purpose, and avoids any responsibility or obligation. His life lacks coherence and continuity and his judgment is based on whether things are interesting rather than being good or bad. Therefore, he ignores all the ethical rules and finally, falls into the trap of vulgarity and obscenity (Zeinaly, 1400: 69).

A person who is in the aesthetic stage does not reflect on his own behavior and has no reconsideration of his actions since it requires selection and decision. However, the main characteristic of a person seeking aesthetics is indecision or negation of decision and selection (Taylor, 1975, 118). An aesthete is immoral and does not want to acknowledge the existence of any value or purpose in his life. He is preoccupied with innumerable possibilities while being incapable of choosing any of them. He can only stay indifferent. The aesthete expresses his indifferent approach as follows:

---

Marry, and you will regret it; don't marry, you will also regret it; ...Laugh at the world's foolishness, you will regret it; weep over it, you will regret that too; ...Believe a woman, you will regret it; believe her not, you will also regret it; whether you hang yourself or do not hang yourself, you will regret both. This, gentlemen, is the essence of all philosophy (Kierkegaard, 1971: 39).

An aesthete compares himself with a chessman that cannot be moved. He is depressed and spiritually barren and incapable of expanding and realizing his human potentials. In describing his mood, which is a description of the aesthetic sphere, he says: "Time passes, life is a stream, etc., so people say. This is not what I find: time stands still, and so do I" (Kierkegaard, 1971: 26).

The aesthetic person has a rich imaginative life and seeks novelty to stimulate his imagination; he avoids commitment and rejects social norms as he thinks they impose restrictions upon his life. Like a novelist, actor or artist, the aesthete attempts different possibilities when constantly changing the purpose of his emotions to maintain their novelty as a hedonist (Carlisle, 2019: 104). Another important trait of the aesthetic form of life is the inability of the aesthetic person to properly face the life realities. The aesthete remains in the sphere of ideas and possibilities incapable of turning ideas into real and concrete things (Mustaan, 2009: 83).

The aesthetic stage is basically a way of life in which man lives for a physical or spiritual pleasure, usually described as a kind of selfishness toward others. Even those who are involved in abstract philosophical reflections or academics who are constantly struggling to learn new things to be motivated to live and move are aesthetes since they live in the world as non-committed hedonists merely involved in abstractions and generalities that are devoid of the passion of concrete life (Zeinaly, 2021: 68).

The aesthetes suffer from guilt, depression, and absurdism, and their life is filled with repetitive experiences reducing its attractions (Carlisle, 2019: 104). According to Kierkegaard, every pleasure has a definite boundary. For this reason, boundless pleasure leads to boredom since after a while, the person no longer enjoys it. The hedonist gradually finds repetition, monotony and ugliness behind the beauties and pleasures and is no longer able to enjoy. The experience of boredom lies at the heart of the interactions of a pleasurable life. In the aesthetic stage, because the person is enclosed in his "self" and the "ego", the presence of "the other" is very faint and the pleasure that the person acquires is transient and boring (Vafaie, 2019: 3). The hedonist is then engaged in a vicious circle of boredom and innovation. His mind is constantly searching for diverse pleasures, and he knows that every pleasure he chooses leads to the loss of another one, i.e., after perceiving a pleasure, the person returns to the center and again finds another pleasure and moves towards the circumference of the circle. Kierkegaard calls it a circular movement. In simpler terms, the aesthetic man strives like Sisyphus for unlimited pleasure. However, his attempt to gain infinite

pleasure is futile since basically, human is finite and limited (Evans, 2008: 40). Kierkegaard writes of the unsuccessful attempt of the aesthete to attain infinite pleasure in life:

“Wretched fate! In vain do you prink up your wrinkled face like an old prostitute, in vain do you jingle your fool’s bells. You bore me; it is still the same, an *idem per idem* [the same by the same]. No variations, always a rehash. Come, sleep and death; you promise nothing, you hold everything” (Kierkegaard, 1971: 25).

The aesthete’s experience of boredom leads to his despair. Kierkegaard writes: “The aesthete is in despair throughout his life, because he does not believe in himself anymore; he is hopeless about his whole human nature, because he doesn’t believe in the existence of another kind of “ego” for himself. He is desperate throughout his life because his future won’t be different from his today” (Kierkegaard, 1971: 192).

The aesthete is incapable of choosing the boundaries and making commitments to make his life more meaningful and he does not want to choose anything and be capitulated by it (Carlisle, 2019: 73). A person in the realm of aesthetics in the imaginary sense is a person. A person who constantly postpones his individuality and delays the moment of decision making can never become a person or a subject (Najafi, 2016: 4). If we consider Aristotle’s definition of man as a political and social animal, it must be pointed out that in the sphere of aesthetics, the individual has nothing to do with politics due to his passivity, lack of responsibility, lack of commitment, experience of boredom, sense of anti-idealism, indecision and lack of decision-making and selectivity. The individual has nothing to do with politics since the necessary condition for the formation of politics is the subjectivity of man and his ability to make decisions and choose. The aesthete is a self-centered, apoliticized, anti-pluralist and anti-ethical human being who has not yet reached the stage of subjectivity and political activity (Mustaan, 2010: 80). The aesthete does not agree to the definition of politics as an activity within governmental, ethical, and legal frameworks, or as a political event that seeks to shape politics without the presence of the parties and the interventions of the government.

The aesthete has basically no clear understanding of politics and only lives in the context of fleeting and mortal pleasures. All the actions of the aesthete are formed under the influence of abrupt and momentary wishes and desires, none of which can give a stable and coherent identity to the person. Thus, the aesthete is apolitical because of lacking a strong, decisive, responsible and selective ethics. The whole prevailing thought in aesthetics is summed up in the fact that you are determined to be in the realm of indecision and live free from selection. Hence, the aesthete does not defend anything or anyone so as not to have to take a stand against anything or anyone else. The aesthete believes that if you commit yourself to a goal, you will regret it and if you do not commit yourself, your social status and dignity will be tarnished, which is, in turn, a source of regret. In any case, you will regret either way; the solution is, therefore, not to get involved in either of them at all (Caputo, 2020: 43). The aesthete prefers an eternity that never engages selection.

---

Kierkegaard writes about the aesthete's spirit, which includes apoliticism, anti-idealism and carelessness:

I have only one maxim, and even that is not a point of departure for me... My maxim is not a point of departure for me, because if I made it a point of departure, I would regret it (Kierkegaard, 1971: 37).

The fact is that the aesthete is abiding in self-centeredness, lack of subjectivity and decision-making power and selectivity. As a consequence, he is apolitical, inconstant and anti-idealist and is not compatible with any kind of political, ethical and social commitment. Therefore, indifference and incontinence are the main and basic features of esthetical stage. It is clear that the first step in the formation of politics is the emergence of a conscious and autonomous subject as the wheel itself, and this is while the person who is in the realm of esthetical has not yet reached the stage of subjectivity and human agency. It is obvious that the aesthete is a fanatic person and such a human being can never play the role of a political, active and selective subject. Therefore, without changing from self-orientation to subject-orientation, activity and selectivity, the emergence of any type of politics and political affairs is impossible for the aesthetic person (Parandush, 2018: 176).

### **Depoliticization: A Characteristic of the Ethical Sphere**

One of the important points in understanding Kierkegaard's intellectual system is to consider the passage from the aesthetic sphere to the ethical sphere and from the ethical sphere to the religious sphere not based on Hegelian dialectics but based on inflammation, apprehension, risk-taking and gambling. An aesthete who suffers from boredom, absurdism, meaninglessness, and despair caused by the aesthetic life, suddenly turns this despair into a springboard to a higher stage of life, and he becomes anxious about something, realizing that he is a finite being with a limited time. Therefore, he understands that he has a very limited opportunity and must make choices, and move from the mortal world to the eternal one and enter the ethical stage (Taylor, 1975: 185). The aesthete who escaped from the real conflict with time and lived in the moment, now tries to control the time instead of killing it with entering the ethical stage. In the ethical sphere, eternity means commitment and enduring permanence through the moments that pass, something that must be fought and won in the endless struggle with time. Unlike the aesthete who wastes and spends time, the ethical person takes control of the reins of time and does not waste it (Caputo, 2020: 54). Kierkegaard considers marital love as a clear example of the ethical sphere and writes about it:

Like a true victor, the married man has not killed time but has rescued and preserved it in eternity. Marital love has its enemy in time ... It is faithful, constant, humble, patient, long-suffering, tolerant, honest, content with little, alert, persevering, willing, happy (Kierkegaard, 1971: 140).

A married man who is in the ethical sphere is obligated and responsible, has authority and freedom, and controls time in the light of this spirit and power of decision-making, activism and

selectivity. With his decision and action on marrying, he is disconnected from the aesthetic life which is based on non-selectivity, non-commitment, indecision, and lack of self-control, self-orientation and inconstancy (Sameh, 2017: 3).

Kierkegaard writes about the main difference between the esthetical sphere and the ethical sphere:

What does it mean to live aesthetically, and what does it mean to live ethically? What is the esthetic in person and what is ethical? To that I would respond: the esthetic in a person is that by which he spontaneously and immediately is what he is, the ethical is that by which he becomes what he becomes (Kierkegaard, 1971: 192).

The aesthete does not want to choose or submit to anything and has no political subjectivity, while making a choice is the most basic aspect of ethical life. Making a meaningful choice is possible only when there is a real and irreconcilable difference between the alternative possibilities. At a particular moment, a person is either silent or talking, either at home or outside, either married or single, i.e., it is not possible to be both at the same time (Carlisle, 2019: 74). Kierkegaard writes:

What prevails in my either/or is ethical ... the issue is the reality of the act of selection (Kierkegaard, 1971: 17).

For Kierkegaard, ethics means striving to act in a morally correct way, which may be understood in terms of following the law, whether as something inherently good or bad, or as ethical precepts of a religious tradition or the executive laws of the government or merely the customs and contracts followed by a particular group. Ethical actions are often based on the terms 'right and duty' (Carlisle, 2019: 105). The goal of the ethical realm is to elevate man from the level of sensitivity which lacks authority and selection to the ethical level where rationality, stability, purposefulness and selectivity are possible so that a person can achieve some kind of enjoyment and consent by perfecting himself. At this stage, the individual comes out of the state of individuality and isolation and devotes himself to society, government and others. The story of lack of commitment, which is neglected in the aesthetic realm, is highlighted in the ethical realm, and the ethical person realizes the importance of duty and responsibility and believes that it is necessary to take responsibilities to discover oneself. Thus, the ethical person tries to get used to everyday life and enjoy it (Zeinaly, 2021: 110). In the ethical sphere, one is required to act as a whole for the sake of the community. The life of an ethical person focuses on the other and the general laws of society, which is why Kierkegaard believes that a person who dedicates himself to an ethical life wastes his time and misses the opportunity to experience individuality. The most important danger in the ethical stage is to remain in society and to lose oneself like a person being dragged from side to side. At this stage, man learns to turn his back on his singularity and autonomy, become a passive and heteronomous subject, and live behind the masks made according to others' thoughts or identities (Zeinaly, 2021: 111). The ethical person strives for his ethical perfection, which is unattainable,

---

and he is always threatened by forces beyond his control. The world that gives meaning to one's existence in the ethical sphere can be subverted suddenly. The stability and security of the ethical sphere is in fact an illusion because moral judgments are always subject to human error and no conclusive certainty can be found in the ethical sphere. This can lead to a deep self-doubt or a false sense of self-esteem, both of which are spiritually crippling (Carlisle, 2019: 106). If in the aesthetic sphere, the aesthete has no subjectivity and lacks any kind of commitment, choice or idealism, in the ethical sphere, the individual enters society and harmonizes himself with the rules and norms approved by the society, ethics and the government. It is true that in the ethical sphere, the moral person achieves subjectivity by choosing a moral life. However, as a matter of fact the subject of the ethical man is not a singular, autonomous, resistant, active, or eventual subject. Rather, the subject of the ethical sphere is a heteronomous subject who does not experience true self-awareness and self-actualization. Such a passive, barren and objectified subject can never speak against the beliefs of the majority and be critical of the government and the daily life of the people. The subject of the ethical sphere is a reactive, tame and barren subject that acts only selectively within the framework and scope defined and limited by the government, society, and ethics. The passive subject of the ethical sphere has to formulate his activism and subjectivity in accordance with the government orders and prohibitions, as well as the principles, rules and norms accepted by the society, ethics and government (Parandush, 2018: 25). The subject of the ethical sphere deprives politics of the birth and development of an ironic, autonomous, active, and groundbreaking subject, and reduces it to the level of elections and seizure of power between parties and political institutions. The state in the ethical sphere is practically and realistically focused on the seizure of governmental power, and it is obvious that the subject of the ethical sphere can never be the creator of an active, autonomous and critical subject (Tajik, 2021: 107). In politics extracted from the ethical sphere, there is a kind of attachment to political power and seizure of political power, and in this type of politics, man sacrifices his individuality and singularity to satisfy the government, society and others. A person in the ethical sphere has to adjust his political subjectivity in relation to the rules dictated by the society and government. The subject of the ethical sphere reduces politics to macro-politics, and can never become the political subject of religion, creativity and criticism. Politics resulting from the ethical sphere is the work of government that creates a hierarchy between the positions and duties as an established order in human communities (Tajik, 2021: 225). Thus, politics derived from the ethical sphere is a kind of macro-politics that does not include any kind of eventuality or singularity. This macro-politics which is focused on the state and government, is not the place of crystallization of human freedom and liberation from the clutches of state and government systems, and has basically nothing to do with human piety and salvation. In the ethical sphere, man is not a real actor and has no talent for creativity, and transgression from rigid political, social and ethical structures, and politics becomes merely a kind

of Puppet Theater with the role-playing and acting of the state actors (Tajik, 2021: 228). In politics derived from the ethical sphere, plurality, singularity and human individuality are completely ignored, and heteronomy takes the place of human autonomy and independence. The subject of the ethical sphere cannot decide himself, rather it is the ruler, society and government that decides for him. Apparently, the logical and immediate result of living in the ethical sphere is the formation of macro-politics, as well as the emergence of a passive subject and an ethical heteronomy who is never capable of disobeying governmental, social, and moral laws and norms. In the ethical sphere, we are not facing politics as an event and a surprising and groundbreaking phenomenon, and human becomes a manageable spectator and passive subject taking no risk instead of being an active subject in the world (Sadeghi, 2018: 98).

### **Political Event as a Leap of Faith**

While the ethical sphere is focused on finite and worldly concerns and accepts the correlated limitations of these matters, man in the religious sphere is not self-sufficient and needs the grace of God. An ethical person is strong, decisive and responsible towards himself and maintains his originality through constant action of the will while the religious person must give up this willfulness and accept something beyond himself (Carlisle, 2019: 211). An ethical person tries continuously to realize a public issue while a religious person goes beyond it. Therefore, although in the religious sphere, man fulfills his will by adhering to morals, rules and social norms to a great extent, in the end, he loses his singularity and individuality and gets caught in a kind of stillness and peace of comfort, leading him to search for another world, called the religious sphere (Mosta'an, 2010: 97). Kierkegaard believes that faith is a kind of change of temperament and change in the individual to place his life in a new path. Faith is not a teaching or a doctrine and has nothing to do with theoretical discussions and examinations, i.e., believing in God is developed not by reason but by dizziness, inflammation and anxiety (Abazari, 2017: 5). To Kierkegaard, a rational understanding of faith resembles a young woman who wants to understand why her husband has chosen her with love, and as soon as this thought comes to mind, she is no longer in love (Kierkegaard, 1992: 189). Kierkegaard's leap of faith is not feasible without risk-taking and gambling, passion and introspection, as well as selectivity and activism. The leap of faith is not of knowledge, but of action, and is far from logical and rational truths. Faith is determination, not inference. Faith is not a form of knowledge, but a choice that manifests the will (Coch, 1925: 75). Faith relying on rational reasoning is a cautious belief that keeps one from making deep leaps and taking risks and gambling. Describing faith as an irrational decision, fraught with apprehension, choice, and danger, Kierkegaard writes:

Not putting your hand on fire is one matter and taking risk in the realm of God to put all your life on fire in another matter. Belief is to endanger one's whole being (Kierkegaard, 1971: 155).

---

For Kierkegaard, risk-taking is considered very important for faith, and it is impossible to have faith taking no risk. In fact, in the definition of faith as endangering and mutating full of anxiety and inflammation, the beliefs of religion do not belong to rational evaluations and measurements. It is through the worship of God that his existence is proven, not by the presentation of evidence to prove him. “There is a huge difference between knowing what Christianity is and understanding what it means to be a Christian,” Kierkegaard writes. Christianity is related to existence and the existing issue, while choice and the existing issue are opposed to reflection and thought” (Kierkegaard, 1992: 319). Faith is not an organized and pre-planned program, but somewhat like a romantic relationship between two people wherein risk and uncertainty are inevitable. It is quite difficult to gain faith since it is a truth that cannot be passed but rather one must live with it. Kierkegaard writes, “If I can find God along the horizon, I have no more faith. However, since I am not able to do this, I have to believe. Faith is a leap that God has bestowed on man” (Kierkegaard, 1992: 183). We can conclude that adventure, risk-taking, passion and distress are the basic components of faith (Nakisa, 2013: 9). According to Kierkegaard, the real knight of the religious sphere is Abraham because when God commands Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac, he rides on his donkey without any hesitation whatsoever in this command and divine request, and walks slowly to reach the alter to sacrifice Isaac. In the meantime, while surrendering to the command of God to sacrifice his son, he simultaneously and constantly believes in his heart that Isaac will live and be returned to him in this mortal world as nothing is impossible for God (Carlisle, 2019: 178). Abraham is an example of a person who is called the knight of faith since he is not tempted to listen to the call of Kantian morality, which implies his disobedience to God’s command on the sacrifice of his son Isaac. Kant, a moral thinker, says that Abraham was obliged to doubt the voice that commanded him to act blatantly immoral although the fact is that the path of faith requires the suspension and restraint of a moral act, and condemns the believer to absolute silence and solitude. His fear of consciousness is a result of this; who can assure him that he has not made a mistake? Faith is not seeking forgiveness but is accompanied by fear, shivering, inflammation and anxiety (Mustaan, 2010: 99). Contrary to Kant’s moral view, the knight of faith makes a leap of faith and steps in the privacy of a one-on-one relationship with God, where the authority of general laws is suspended (Caputer, 2020: 70).

Abraham was aware of the paradoxical nature of faith. He did not doubt the divine promise as a consequence. Certainty forms the basis of Abraham’s faith. Abraham was certain that God would not divest him of Isaac. He believed in the impossible and knew that anything was possible for God (Derefus, 2008: 17). On this, Kierkegaard writes: “The paradox of faith is so great that it can turn a crime into a sacred and godly act” (Kierkegaard, 1985: 81). According to Kierkegaard, faith is a dangerous act and behavior, which the Greeks also called divine madness. Kierkegaard is by no means concerned with calling insanity the conflict between reason and faith. He never seeks to

hide madness behind rational arguments. As Kierkegaard believes: “By faith, Abraham did not forsake Isaac. On the contrary, he reached him” (Kierkegaard, 1985: 75). Therefore, faith is not giving in the sadness and contentment, but the joy and happiness that comes with the help of the impossible. Abraham had set out to sacrifice his son, and at the same time he knew that his son would survive. God wanted and did not want Isaac to be sacrificed. In the face of this conflict, human understanding was heading in a vicious way from the impossible by leaving the realm of reason and logic and entering the realm of the impossible. The impossible is not meaningless; on the contrary, it is the only thing that expresses the true meaning to us, contrary to reason and logic (Mustaan, 2010: 96). Kierkegaard seeks to unveil the sphere of faith associated with subjectivity, autonomy, and singularity by rejecting the aesthetics and ethical realms. In Kierkegaard’s leap of faith, man, as the actor in the universe, creates himself through his decisions and choices. The subject emphasized by Kierkegaard is the self-emphasizing and autonomous subject. This subject is the same creative subject which is always evolving as a restless institution that creates and causes a fundamental and groundbreaking change. This subject always criticizes his immaturity and takes a step towards change (Tajik, 2020: 271). Kierkegaard’s subject is a surprisingly moving subject that, by leaping into faith, gambling, and creating an emergency and event-like state, suspends the general, moral, and universal, and brings man to an autonomous dynamic life, not a passive and transformational one. Kierkegaard’s singular and active subject, born in the religious sphere, is a subject of resistance and a constant critic of power, a subject who can speak against the government and the beliefs of the majority and criticize it (Parandush, 2018: 23). In Kierkegaard’s leap of faith, which involves paradoxical faith and belief in the impossible, Abraham, as the knight of the religious sphere, breaks the universal and moral foundations by breaking the habit and tearing the symbolic veil, thereby supplying originality, autonomy, singularity and individuality. The fact is that in the religious sphere, man acts as a critical and creative subject contrary to the moral, universal, and unifying matter, as the knight of the religious sphere believes that every human being is a special, unique, and singular being who can free himself from the clutches of the general, moral and universal only through a leap of faith that involves a courageous and daring selection. Kierkegaard’s faith is a kind of leap, transcendence, force and unprecedented, event-like, and ironic power that elevates human subjectivity and agency. In fact, it is by entering the realm of faith that a person can passionately rule over his own destiny through his actions and choices, and face his real singular self (Zeinaly, 2021: 27). Kierkegaard seems to be in contradiction with politics as the seizure of government power, and politics as activism in the public sphere and civil society. However, he emphasizes subjectivity, singularity, individuality, activity, and human agency, and defines faith as an impossible and paradoxical issue. Thus, the traces and aspects of politics as a leap can be identified in Kierkegaard’s religious sphere of thought. If we define and formulate true politics as an autonomous and independent idea that aims to find new areas for the realization of the human will, it is undoubtedly Kierkegaard’s leap of faith which involves human risk-taking,

subjectivity and agency, as well as decision-making, selectivity and belief in the impossible that can be the basis and provider of a political event through which people can act as singular, critical, creative and self-sufficient subjects to free themselves from the domination of the public life and universal issues (Mashayekhi, 2019: 105). One of the main and fundamental implications of Kierkegaard's leap of faith is the birth and development of politics as a political event, in which taking risk, acting against the rule, and apprehension and anxiety about the components and necessities of such politics are necessary. Even though Kierkegaard opposes politics in the sense of a plural action, his emphasis on defining faith as impossible and dangerous, as well as his full-fledged defense of one's singularity, activity, subjectivity, and autonomy inevitably places him among the ironic and critical thinkers who provide the necessary intellectual materials to draw a kinetic and groundbreaking subject and also define politics as an event (Najafi, 2016: 4).

### Conclusion

Kierkegaard is a thinker who considers the modern age to be an age devoid of vigor and enthusiasm, and speaks of vigorous reason as opposed to Kant and Hegel's rigid, dogmatic, and calculating rationality. He also believes that in the modern world, and especially in Hegel's system of thought, individuality, singularity, and human activity are mostly overlooked, and that man is incapable of stepping on the path of true activism and selectivity. By dividing the spheres of human life into three aesthetic, ethical, and religious spheres, Kierkegaard notes that the religious sphere is superior to the two other ones because it is here that man becomes a single actor and an autonomous subject with a leap of faith. This paper explored the claim that Abraham's leap of faith in the religious sphere led to the birth of an active, creative and ironic subject. In other words, believing in the realm of faith requires taking risks and taking a path in an unknown world full of inflammation and anxiety. In the religious sphere, a person with a leap of faith, which is accompanied by fear of consciousness and insane decision, becomes an active and selective subject. The logical and immediate result of the emergence of such a subject is the coming of politics as a political event. In defining politics as a singular, surprising, and unfamiliar thing, politics is no longer degraded into partisan games trying to seize the government power. Thus, in the religious sphere, which is an arena for human liberation from the clutches of rigid and formal ethical and social systems, human agency rises and man becomes an intervening actor in the world instead of being a spectator.

### References

- Abazari, Joseph. (2021). Foreword by Yousef Abazari about Kierkegaard, *Farhang-e Emrooz*, p. 5, [www.farhangemrooz.com](http://www.farhangemrooz.com). (in Persian)
- Caputo, John. David. (2020). *How to read Kierkegaard*, translated by Saleh Najafi. Tehran: Ney Publications. (in Persian)
- Carlisle, Clare. (2019). *Kierkegaard*, translated by Mohammad Hadi Hajibeyglou. Tehran: Elmi va Farhangi Publications. (in Persian)
- Coch, Card. (1925). *Soren Kierkegaard*. Copenhagen: Copenhagen University Press.

- Drefus, Herbert. (2008). *Kierkegaard on the Self and Philosophical Engagement*, edited by Edvard F. Evans.
- Evans, C. Stephen. (2006). *Kierkegaard on faith and the self: Collected essays*. Taylor University Press.
- Kierkegaard, Soren. (1971). *Either / or*, translated by David F. Swenson. Princeton University Press.
- Kierkegaard, Soren. (1985). *Fear and Trembling*, translated by Alistair Hannay. London: Penguin Books.
- Kierkegaard, Soren. (1992). *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, translated by Howard V. Hong, Edna H. Hong. Princeton University press.
- Kierkegaard, Soren. (1941). *Fear and Trembling*, translated by Walter Lowrie. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Mashayekhi, Adel. (2019). *Leibniz and political science*. Tehran: Nei Publications. (in Persian)
- Mosta'an, Mahtab. (2010). *Kierkegaard: a metaphysical thinker*. Isfahan: Porsesh Publications. (in Persian)
- Najafi, Saleh. (2021). Promoting Hegel with Hegel in a conversation with Saleh Najafi, *The Center of the Great Islamic Encyclopedia*, p. 4, [www.cgie.org:ir/fa/news/15330](http://www.cgie.org:ir/fa/news/15330). (in Persian)
- Nakisa, Pouria. (2013). The world beyond the wall, *Shargh Newspaper*, September 18, 2013, No. 1835, p. 9. (in Persian)
- Parandosh, Pouria. (2018). *Event, subject and Truth in Alain Badiou's Political Thought*. Tehran: Tisa Publications. (in Persian)
- Sadeghi, Fatemeh. (2018). *Founder's Power, Sovereignty or Politics*. Tehran: Negahe Moaser Publications. (in Persian)
- Same, Seyyed Jamal. (2021). A Reflection on the philosophies of existence and phenomenology, *Sedanat*, p. 3, [www.3danot.ir](http://www.3danot.ir). (in Persian)
- Tajik, Mohammad. Reza. (2020). *A current is on the Way*. Tehran: Tisa Publications. (in Persian)
- Taylor, Mark. (1975). *Kierkegaard's Pseudonymous Authorship: a study of time self*. Princeton University Press.
- Vafaie, Sadegh. (2021). An exploration in Kierkegaard's philosophy, similarities and differences between Ibrahim and Agamemnon, *Mehr News Agency*, p. 3, [www.mehrnews.com/news/4569](http://www.mehrnews.com/news/4569). (in Persian)
- Zeinaly, Razieh. (2021). *The Self, the Other and God in Kierkegaard's Thought*. Tehran: Ansu Publications. (in Persian)