REFLOSOPHY

"Where Reflection Meets Philosophy"

E-MAGAZINE VOLUME- I

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

ARYA VIDYAPEETH COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)

GUWAHATI- 16

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Message from the Principal's Desk

অভিনন্দন বার্তা

আর্য্য বিদ্যাপীঠ মহাবিদ্যালয়ৰ দর্শন বিভাগে পোন প্রথম বাৰৰ বাবে ই- আলোচনী 'Reflosophy Where Reflection Meets Philosophy'খন প্রস্তুত কৰি উলিওৱাত মই অত্যন্ত আনন্দ অনুভৱ কৰিছোঁ। আলোচনী এখনে ছাত্র- ছাত্রীৰ সৃজনীমূলক প্রতিভাৰ বিকাশ ঘটায়। গৱেষণামূলক চিন্তাৰ উন্মেষ কৰে। সমূহীয়াভাবে কাম কৰিবলৈ শিকায়। বর্তমানৰ বৈদ্যুতিন যুগত ই - আলোচনীৰ গুৰুত্ব অপৰিসীম। এনেধৰণৰ কামে আধুনিক প্রযুক্তিৰ লগতো ছাত্র- ছাত্রীক পৰিচয় কৰাব। আলোচনীখনৰ সৈতে জড়িত সকলোকে মই আন্তৰিক অভিনন্দন জ্ঞাপন কৰিলোঁ। আলোচনীখনৰ এই যাত্রা অব্যাহত থাকক।

শুভেচ্ছাৰে—

ডঃ প্রদীপ কুমাৰ ভট্টাচার্য্য

অধ্যক্ষ, আর্য্য বিদ্যাপীঠ মহাবিদ্যালয়

গুৱাহাটী, অসম।

Message from the Head of the Department

It gives me great joy to share a few words for the first edition of our Departmental e-Magazine. As Head of the Department, I feel proud that this magazine has become a platform where our students and teachers can express their ideas, creativity, and reflections beyond the classroom. This e-magazine is not merely a compilation of writings, but a reflection of the vibrant academic culture that our department seeks to nurture.

The contributions of our students and faculty showcase the depth of inquiry, imagination, and dedication that are at the core of philosophical engagement. Such efforts remind us that philosophy continues to inspire reflection on the timeless questions of truth, knowledge, and morality, while also staying attentive to the challenges and complexities of the modern world.

I extend my sincere congratulations to the editorial team for their dedication and hard work in bringing this issue to fruition. Their commitment has transformed an idea into a meaningful platform for expression and dialogue.

May this e-magazine continue to inspire inquiry, creativity, and dialogue, while fostering a stronger academic culture within our department.

With best wishes,

Dr. Charu Das (HoD)
Associate Professor
Department of Philosophy
Arya Vidyapeeth College (A)

Faculty Support

Ms. Bijuli Rajiyung
Assistant Professor
Teacher-in-charge
(E-magazine Page Designs)

Dr. Sunu Kalita
Assistant Professor
Teacher-in-charge
(E-magazine Contents and Articles)

Editorial Boards

ADRITA DAS
5TH SEM

SOHUM DEB
5TH SEM

PARASH DAS
5TH SEM

JOYJALI PHONGLO
5TH SEM

RAJ LAKSHMI SARKAR
3RD SEM

SUSHMITA CHAKRABORTY
3RD SEM

E-Magazine Page Design Team

MONU BORA
3RD SEM

ARUNABH JYOTI TAMULI
3RD SEM

BIPUL CHOUDHURY
3RD SEM

NISHIRAJ KASHYAP
3RD SEM

BIKAN BISWAS
3RD SEM

The Class Representatives

Alongside the Editorial Boards

Epistles from the Editors

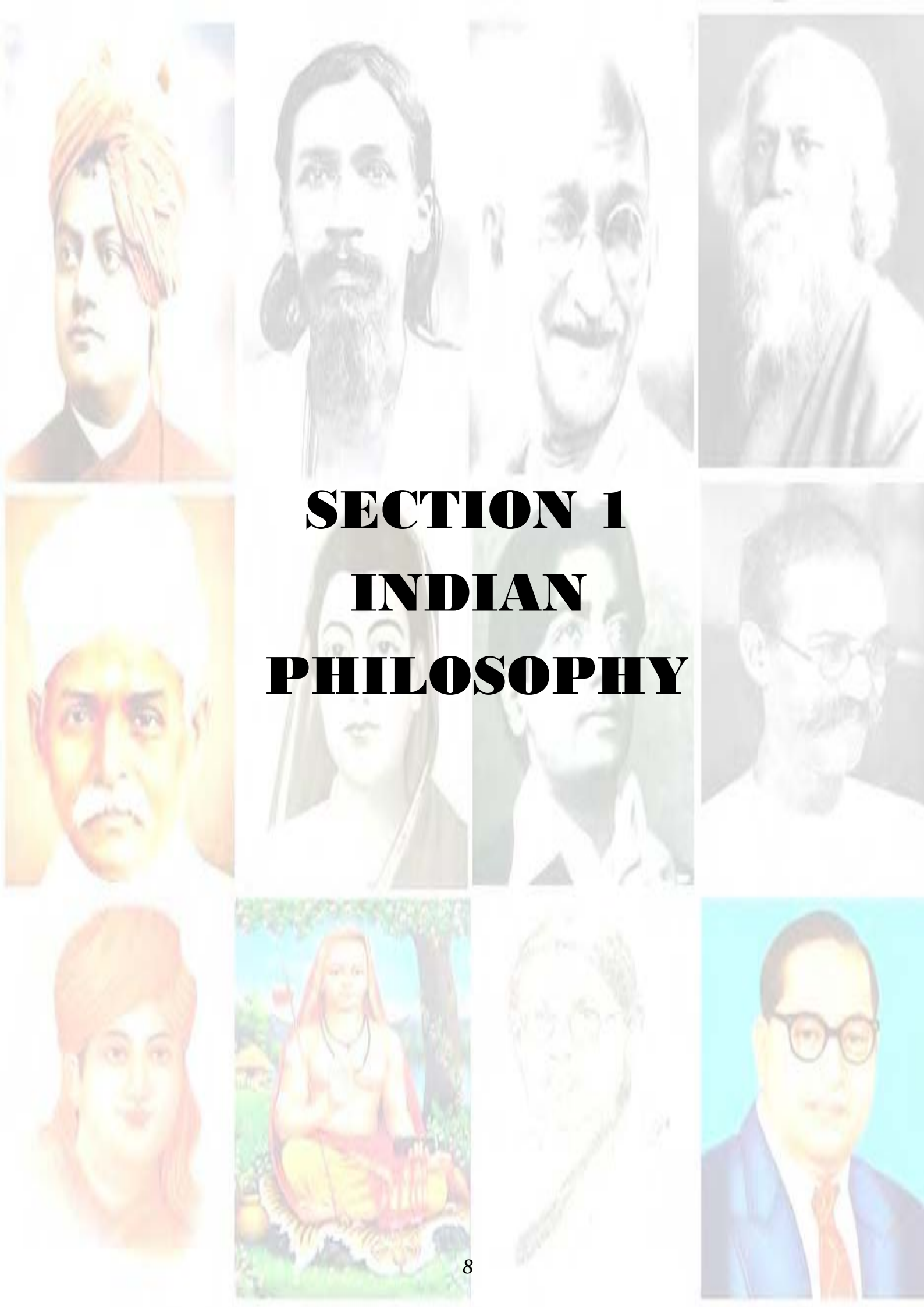
It gives us great pleasure to present the first issue of our Departmental e-magazine. Philosophy, often described as the "love of wisdom," is not just an academic discipline but also a way of life that encourages us to question, reflect, and seek meaning beyond the ordinary. In today's rapidly changing world, where certainty often gives way to ambiguity, the philosophical spirit reminds us to pause, think critically, and embrace diverse perspectives.

This magazine is a thoughtful initiative to provide a platform where students, teachers, and contributors can share their ideas, reflections, and creative insights on philosophical themes. Ranging from classical explorations of truth, knowledge, and morality to contemporary reflections on philosophy and human existence, the writings gathered here highlight the department's vibrant spirit of intellectual curiosity and engagement.

We are grateful to everyone who contributed with their articles and their reflective thoughts, making this issue a collective effort of thought and creativity. We also extend our heartfelt thanks to our teachers for their guidance and to our peers for their enthusiasm in making this endeavour possible.

We hope this magazine not only informs but also inspires readers to think deeply, engage in dialogue, and continue the timeless journey of philosophical exploration.

- The Editorial Team



SECTION 1
INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY OF SWAMI VIVEKANAND AND GANDHI

SUSHMITA CHAKRABORTY

3rd Semester

Swami Vivekanand (1863-1902) used the analogy of Hindu caste system to indicate the way to human progress. At the outset, it may be pointed out that Vivekanand was not a votary of caste system. He asserted that the caste system was opposed to the essence of Hindu religion. Caste represented a social custom, and all our great preachers had tried to break it down. From Buddhism downwards, every new sect "had preached against caste. However, as a form of social stratification and division of labour caste system represented a universal phenomenon. In a nutshell, caste system implied the division of society into four classes. Brahmin or the priests, Kshatriya or the soldiers, Vaishya or the traders, and Shudra or the labourers, de the working class. Since this social division is universal, history shows that the period of ascendancy of each caste is marked by different levels of moral progress. As Vivekanand observed among the Chinese, the Sumerians, the Babylonians, the Egyptians, the Chaldeans, the Aryas, the Iranians, the Jews, the Arabs among all these ancient nations, the supreme power of guiding society is, in the first period of their history, in the hands of the Brahmin or the priest. In the second period, the ruling power is the Kshatriya, that is either absolute monarchy or oligarchical government by a chosen body of men. This process goes on. As Vivekanand further observed in the context of his contemporary world: Among the modern Western nations, with England at their head, this power of controlling society has been for the first time, in the hands of the Vaishya or 24 Social and Political Philosophy mercantile communities, made rich through the carrying on of commerce (7), Complete Works of Swami Vivekanand, Vol. 4). Vivekanand predicted that his times would be followed by a new era marke by Shudra rule, that is the ascendancy of the labourers or the working class would take place first in Russia, and then in China. By this he did not mean the Shudras or the lowest class would become powerful by assuring military economic power. Rather, he held that the labour power itself would become the key to supreme power in society.

Vivekanand vividly described the salient features of the rule of each canter which may be shown by the following chart Vivekananda vision of human progress postulates a state in which the knowledge of the priest period, the culture of the military, the distributive spirit of the commercial, and the ideal equality of the last can be kept intact, minus their evils (The Complete Works, Vol. 6). However, Vivekanand was fully convinced that the pursuit of moral progress was of no avail in the face of abject poverty and starvation. Though a severe critic of socialism, he was prepared to accept it for fighting the prevailing poverty. As he stated: I am a socialist not because I think it is a perfect system, but half a loaf is better

than no bread (The Complete Works, Vol. 6).

Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) was particularly outspoken in his preference for moral progress over material progress. In Hind Swaraj (1908), Gandhi predicted the eventual downfall of Western civilization unless it changed its course and purpose. He argued that the industrial system was disrupting the natural order, elevating the status of the machine while diminishing the value of human beings. A new god had been created in the form of mass production, leading to unprecedented material abundance. The common man, formerly a producer of wealth, both material and artistic, was now a servant of the power machine—a degraded being. Comparing modern civilization with traditional Indian civilization, Gandhi observed that modern civilization is predominantly materialistic, while ours is mainly spiritual. Modern civilization focuses on investigating the laws of matter and employs human ingenuity to invent or discover means of production and weapons of destruction. Our civilization, on the other hand, mainly explores spiritual laws (Living Thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi, ed. by Mulk Raj Anand).

Gandhi emphasized the need to minimize material needs to achieve moral or spiritual progress. As he pointed out: "A man is not necessarily happy because he is rich, or unhappy because he is poor." The rich are often seen to be unhappy, while the poor are often perceived as happy. Millions will always remain poor. Observing this, our ancestors discouraged us from luxuries and pleasures. Gandhi admitted that moral progress was impossible under conditions of extreme poverty. Ensuring the minimum needs of everyone is essential to preserve their dignity. Gandhi maintained: "No one has ever suggested that grinding pauperism can lead to anything else than moral degradation." Every human being has the right to live and to find the means to feed themselves. For this simple act, no assistance from economists or their laws is required (Selections from Gandhi Social and Political Philosophy by Nirmal Kumar Bose, 1948). In Gandhi's view, eradicating poverty was essential to overcoming moral degradation. Thus, he wrote in Young India (1927), "For the poor, the economic is the spiritual. You cannot make any other appeal to those starving millions. It will fall flat on them. But you take food to them, and they will regard you as their God." They are incapable of any other thought. Material production was therefore necessary to meet the minimum needs of human beings. It was vital to keep them alive. Beyond this, material progress was not necessary. Gandhi advocated for the minimization of wants, which would ensure moral progress. As he asserted, "Civilization in the real sense of the term consists not in the multiplication but in the deliberate and voluntary reduction of wants, which promotes real happiness and contentment and increases the service capacity." One can reduce wants through perseverance, and reducing wants leads to happiness, a healthy body, and a peaceful mind (From Yeravada Mandir, 1945).

Gandhi deprecated the craze for machinery, which not only led to the multiplication of wants but also deprived a large number of people of their right to work. The craze for labour-saving machines left thousands of people without work and threw them on the open streets to die of starvation. Gandhi would welcome only such machines that contributed to everybody's welfare, and not the ones that created glaring social inequalities. According to Gandhi, moral upgradation of human beings consisted in the performance of duty. He identified the moral progress of mankind as true civilization. So, he wrote in

Hind Swaraj (1908). Civilization is a way of conduct that guides individuals on their duty. Performing duty and following morality are interchangeable concepts. To uphold morality is to gain mastery over one's mind and passions. Through this, we come to understand ourselves. The Gujarati equivalent of civilization is good conduct. In summary, Gandhi aimed to limit material progress to fulfilling basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter. Beyond this necessity, all social effort should focus on moral growth, which involves reducing desires, practicing self-control, and performing duty. Only moral progress can lead to true happiness for all human beings.

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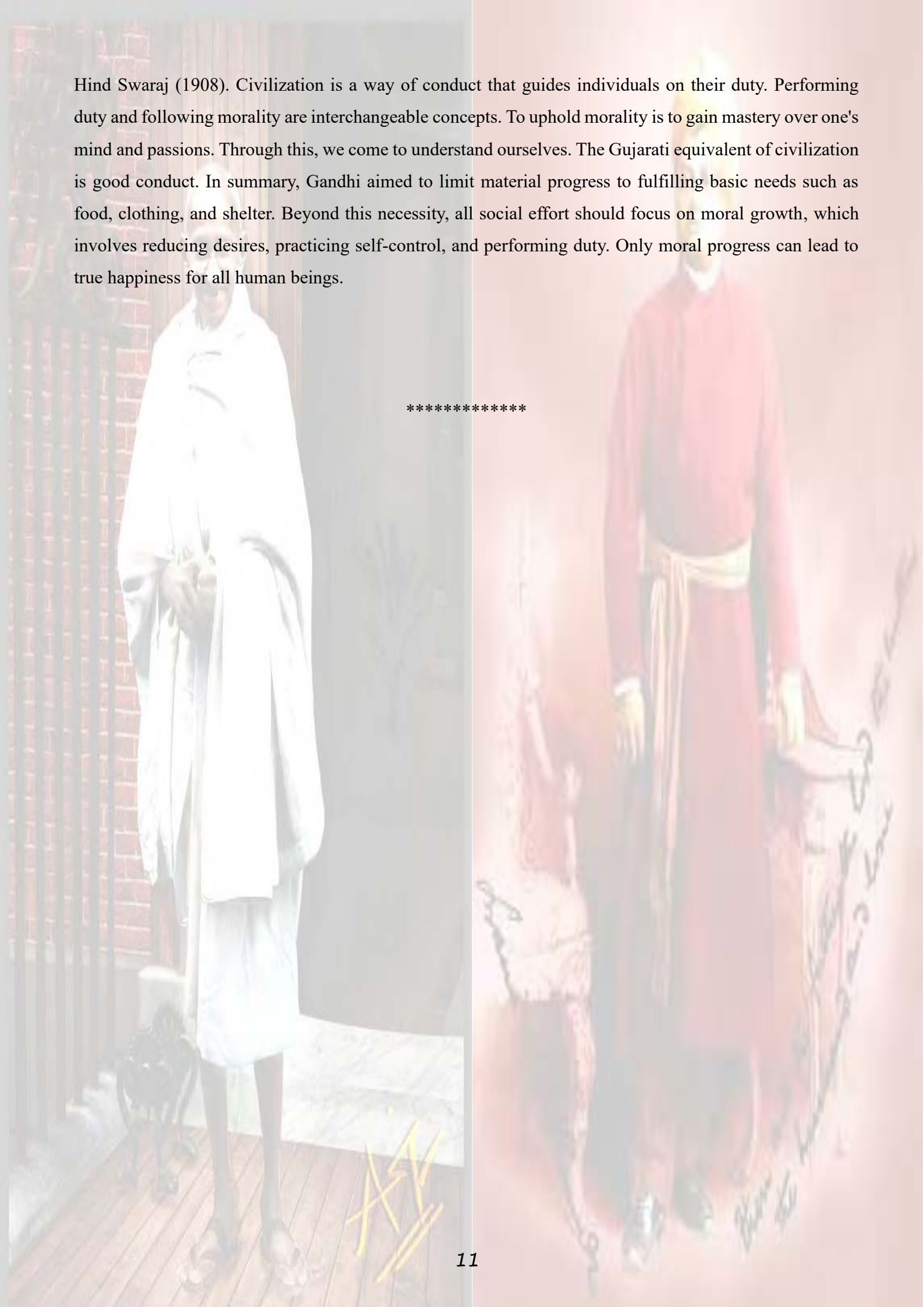

SANKARA'S ADVAITA VEDANTA

MONU BORA

3rd Semester

Advaita Vedanta is a three-thousand-year-old Hindu philosophy and spiritual tradition. The word Advaita originally emerged as the Sanskrit term "Advaita Vedanta," meaning not two. Advaita teaches that moksha or liberation (also translated as freedom, enlightenment, spiritual awakening, or self-realization) is possible in your lifetime. Its greatest exponent was Adi Shankara, who lived around 880. What is freedom in Advaita?

In our experience, Advaita freedom is the absence of thoughts. we all have two lives. We have the life in our thoughts and we have the life we live in the present moment. They are the duality of Advaita and absence of dead duality- the not two of Advaita is when there are no thoughts in our experience of the present moment is all that exists, which is the oneness of Advaita.

ETHICS OF THE ADVAITA VEDANTA (SANKARA)

The principal and of all voluntary actions in the attainment of happiness which includes the complete negation of pain. The other ends were voluntary actions facts about donate to it. They are means to the attainment of happiness. Happiness is of two kinds:

Supreme or infinite happiness or bliss.

Finite or empirical happiness.

Empirical happiness, springs from the sensible objects of enjoyment, which is an imperfect reflection of infinite bliss. Supreme happiness or bliss is Brahman or the Absolute. The attainment of Brahman, Which is in the nature of infinite bliss, is the highest good, the state of liberation, which exterminates all pain and misery. Thus the realization. Brahman in the nature of infinite and eternal bliss is the highest good. The finite self is ontologically identical with Brahman. So self realization is the Summum Bonum of life. The empirical self is the Atman or Brahman Limited by the mind body complex which is a modification of ignorance (avidya). Brahman is Atman, transcendental self unlimited by nescience (maya). Listening to the Vedic text conveying identity of the individual self with their absolute and comprehension of their meaning, Reflection on them and reasonings in conformity with them and concentration of the mind on the Atman or Brahman and its withdrawal from external objects of enjoyment are necessary for the realization of Brahman, Atman, or infinite and eternal bliss. The concentration of the mind on Brahman directly leads to the intuition of Brahman. Intuition is the immediate knowledge which transcends intellectual knowledge. Sense control, mind control, absence of mental agitation endurance of heat and cold, hunger and thirst, etc., concentration of the mind on Brahman faith in the instructions of the preceptor, discrimination between the eternal and the non mind which is conductive to the intuitive realization of Brahman. Prudential duties or duties aiming at the

eternal, and this passion for enjoyments in this world and in heaven are the prerequisites of the desire for the realization of Brahman or Atman. Absence of mental agitation in the presence of the object of enjoyment means renunciation. Hearing the texts, reflection upon them, and concentration of the mind on the Atman or Brahman are the common duties of persons in all the stages of life. The worship of a personal God is a cause of immediate intuition or impersonal Brahman. It leads to the concentration of fulfillment of desires, which should not be performed. Forbidden or unrighteous acts should not be performed. Obligatory daily duties ought to be performed without any attachment. Daily ablution, prayer, etc., are obligatory duties which purify the mind. Duties should be dedicated to God because they lead to true knowledge, insight, or intuition, which is the Means to the realization of Brahman; the Atman is Brahman. The mind purified by sense control, mind control, and the like is the organ of the intuition of the Atman. Shankara regards the eradication of the three primal desires:

• Desire for wife and sons

• Desire for wealth

• Desire for happiness

Here and hereafter, the eradication of all desires for external objects of enjoyment is the indispensable prerequisite of the realization of the Atman of Brahman. All actions are driven by desires that stem from ignorance. Ignorance is the wrong identification of the Atman with the not-self. It can be destroyed by true knowledge after the self, which is not the body, vital force, the sense organs, mind, intellect, and egoism, but the universal, infinite, and external spirit. True knowledge or intuition dawns on the mind when it is purified by sense restraint, mind control, and the like. The performance of unconditional duties and their dedication to God, the extirpation of all desires for enjoyments here and hereafter, and the renunciation of the world. Thus, the ethics of Shankara is a blend of asceticism and Transcendental Eudemonism. He regards the complete extirpation of all natural desires as the indispensable precondition of the realization of Brahman. Intuition of identity of pure Consciousness and Bliss Brahman or Atman is self-realization. It transcends discursive, intellectual, or rational knowledge of the plurality of finite objects and empirical selves. This doctrine may be referred to as Transcendental Eudemonism. it may also be called Transcendental Purism, because the realization of the transcendental purity of the atman can be attained by transcending the empirical world of moral distinction of virtue and vice. Virtue is acquired by performing the enjoined duties. Vice is acquired by committing the forbidden acts. Transcendental purity of the Atman is attained by intuition of it and renunciation of all actions and destruction of virtue and vice. Virtue leads to empirical happiness. Vice leads in empirical misery. Both springs from actions are due to desire and ignorance. When ignorance is extirpated by true knowledge or intuitive realization of the one Atman or Brahman, transcendental purity of the atman or its absoluteness is realized. Therefore, Shankara's ethics may be called Transcendental Eudemonism or Transcendental Purism. Atman is the universal self and not the individual self. The highest good is the realization of

Brahman, Atman, or Transcendental Self, which is our existence consciousness and bliss. This is quite reasonable apart from metaphysical objections to it. that means to it is open to objection. Shankara makes too much of knowledge and disparages works. He exaggerates the importance of renunciation of the world for the attainment of the Highest Good. He wrongly advocates the ethics of asceticism or eradication of the primal desire. They should be sublimated rather than eradicated. Actions are, Shankara maintains, due to desires, which spring from ignorance. Ignorance is false identification of the self with the not self or mind body complex. Desires do not directly spring from ignorance, but from emotions which are produced by ignorance. So Shankara enjoins the eradication of all emotions and desires. But love, friendship affection, Generosity patriotism, humanitarianism desire for perfection, and good of the family, community nation and humanity should be cultivated. Actions for one's physical intellectual, moral and spiritual improvement, earning one's livelihood honestly, and good of one's family community and nations would be performed. Asceticism is an inadequate moral idea.

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF KRISHNACHANDRA BHATTACHARYA

NIHA SARKAR

5th Semester

K. C. Bhattacharya was born at Serampur on the 12th of May 1875. He was born in a Brahmin family of Sanskrit scholars; naturally, in his childhood itself, he was initiated into an appreciation of ancient Indian wisdom. Krishnachandra had his initial school education at the local school. However, after passing his matriculation examination in 1891, he was sent to the Presidency College. He was a brilliant student throughout and so succeeded in getting the P.R.S. award of the Calcutta University in 1901. He joined the Bengal educational service and served as a Lecturer in Philosophy in various colleges of Bengal. He retired from the educational service in 1930, when he was officiating as the Principal of Hooghly College. After retirement, he was invited to work as the Director of the Indian Institute of Philosophy at Amalner. He worked there till 1935, when he was offered the post of the George V Professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy of Calcutta University, in which capacity he worked till 1937. He had a very keen philosophical insight, and consequently, he was a very cautious writer. His writings were brief, precise, and full of meaning. Particularly towards the end of his life, he was in the habit of writing short notes — scribbles — which he used to throw about in his room in the night only to be gathered and safely preserved by his wife in the morning. These scribbles, at times, contained profound philosophical ideas. Some of them are yet to be arranged, classified, and published. K. C. Bhattacharya died on the 11th of December 1949.

THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

Krishnachandra describes knowledge thus, “It is introspection into knowledge ... that we realise that we believed before we knew — and that there was then no awareness of the distinction of the object believed from the belief. Knowledge as distinct from mere belief involves the awareness of distinction.” It is apparent that knowledge, here, has been described in terms of belief. It is true that nothing can be known unless it is believed, and also that there is a difference between “belief” and the object believed.

The awareness of this distinction is also an essential aspect of knowledge. That shows that fundamentally, knowledge is always a kind of awareness. Awareness can be of two types: awareness in the objective attitude and awareness in the subjective attitude. In the former, a distinction is made between the object of awareness and the subject of awareness; in the latter, it is difficult to make such a distinction. Gopinath Bhattacharya says, “Of the two types of awareness, it is one in the objective

attitude that the author (K. C. Bhattacharya) primarily takes into account as signified by the term knowledge." But he himself admits that even "one's awareness of himself — an awareness in the subjective attitude — has also been called knowledge at times." Again, while discussing the mutual implication of knowledge and truth. Krishnachandra says, "Knowledge of an object alone is true and there is no truth without the awareness, for Truth has to be defined in terms of what alone is known." Again, he says, "Knowing is known only as an awareness, an awareness of truth and that truth and knowing have a content related to each other, and Truth is conceived not as becoming in the objective attitude.". These descriptions of 'knowledge' create a great difficulty for a scholar who is trying to apprehend K. C. Bhattacharya's account of the nature of knowledge. It is now clearly evident that the term 'knowledge' has not been used by him clearly in one precise sense. There appears to be some ambiguity about it. But a little reflection will show that this ambiguity is there because the term 'knowledge' itself is ambiguous. Both in ordinary discourse and in academic discussions, this term is used in various and different senses. But if we take note of Krishnachandra's treatment of the concept of philosophy and view his concept of knowledge in that light, we shall be able to determine and outline a theory of knowledge that would be free from the ambiguities mentioned above.

K. C. Bhattacharya does not conceive knowledge as a passive state of the subject. It is a sort of activity — an activity of a free reference of the subject to the object. If this is so, sciences cannot claim to know, because they, in a sense, cut away this reference to the subjective and lay emphasis and stress only on the objectivity of the object. The empirical aspect of the theoretical consciousness, therefore, is not knowledge. The awareness of the object as fact is only a non-cognitive awareness. With respect to the object as fact, "we should say that it is known simply as evident and that it is not known as related to knowing." Now, a free reference of the subject to the object might mean a free reference of the subject to the object in the objective attitude or a free reference of the subject to the subject as object, that is, a free reference of the subject to the object in the subjective attitude.

In the former, the subject relates itself to the object freely, that is, without itself getting related to it. Gopinath Bhattacharya makes this point clear by saying that, "it is rather the case that the subject has an immediate feeling of relating itself to the object without having a feeling of getting related to the object." This awareness is knowledge in the realm of the philosophy of the object. In this the subject is aware of the experiences and thoughts of the object without in any way identifying himself with them. This may be called knowledge in the objective attitude. The object of this knowledge may be either a physical fact or a psychic fact — a psychic fact because a psychic fact is not purely a mental event, it is always an aspect of the object. The object has certain modes of relatedness to the subject, e.g., knowingness, feltness, etc. This relatedness, viewed as a character of the object, is a 'Psychic fact'. This knowledge, therefore, may be called "awareness through psychological introspection" in the objective attitude. This takes us to consider Introspection proper, the spiritual Introspection, which

is awareness in the subjective attitude, or, in other words, which is a free reference of the subject to the subject in an enjoying consciousness. In the former case, there was an awareness of the relatedness of the object to the subject. This is negated in this new awareness, in spiritual Introspection. "Introspection proper is a form of the theoretic consciousness that implies an abjuration of the objective attitude." This is knowledge in an enjoying awareness — the enjoying understanding of the subject 'I'. This, then, is knowledge in the realm of the philosophy of the spirit. That is why this knowledge is described as the free reference of the subject to the subject itself in an enjoying consciousness. But, if we analyses this enjoying consciousness still further, we find that in the act of enjoying itself, something over and above the self is also enjoyed. We have seen that, according to K. C. Bhattacharya, something else may be either a body, physical or mental, or other selves with whom the self stands in some relationship, or an over-personal self, a reference to which is made in religious consciousness. Of these three, the first two cannot be described as cases of pure subjectivity. In the enjoying consciousness of 'I', in which body is also enjoyed, there is, in a sense, an enjoyment of individuality. Such a consciousness is expressed in our saying, 'I am such and such'. The consciousness of individuality somehow gives the self an objectivity. That means that this subjectivity is somehow infected with objectivity, and as such, does not remain pure subjectivity. Likewise, when I am conscious of other selves in my enjoying consciousness of 'I', I am aware of myself in relation to others. This again is not pure subjectivity. These two then cannot be proper or pure examples of purely subjective sense (as a free reference of the subject to itself in an enjoying awareness). A higher form of subjectivity, as we have seen, is the consciousness of an over-personal reality. The reason is obvious. In the first two cases, subjectivity is always disturbed either by the awareness of objects or by the awareness of other selves. It is true that in both these cases, 'the body' or 'the other self,' is a shadow of 'I' because it is realised in the 'I-consciousness,' but it is also true that the shadow does also have its effects on the I-consciousness. But, in the enjoying consciousness where the subject as 'I' has an awareness of an over-personal reality, the 'I' itself becomes a shadow. The awareness of 'I', in a sense, transcends its introspective boundaries and has a consciousness of self-fulfillment in the awareness of the super-personal reality. This awareness can be called knowledge in the realm of the Philosophy of the spirit, and this can be the highest form of knowledge available to us. Clarifying this point, Malkani describes this knowledge as knowledge by self-abnegation, rather than self-denial. This knowledge is possible by renouncing the self and not by denying it.

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ANNIE BESANT'S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT

SRIJANA CHETRI

3rd Semester

Theosophical Society was established by Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott. Annie Besant became the President of this society in 1907. Under her presidency, the Theosophical Society became a real force not only in the field of philosophy and religion but also in the fields of social and political reforms in India. Annie Besant was so much influenced by Hinduism that she believed that she was a Hindu in a past life. She came to India in 1893 at the age of forty-six and devoted herself to social, religious, educational, and sometimes to political activities. Her political views were not very mature, but she did make a mark in the field of religion and social thought. Her philosophical views were almost the same as those found in Hinduism. She considered Advaita Vedanta as the intellectual bridge between Hinduism and Islam. Her views in the field of religion were similar to those of Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, and Dayananda. She believed in all the dictums of Hinduism. She was very much impressed by the Bhagavad Gita and wrote a famous commentary on it. Annie Besant believed that so far, five main races and their subdivisions have evolved in the world. She thought that in the future, two more root races would evolve, thus bringing the total to seven. She considered the Aryan race as the best and thought Central Asia as its place of origin. The important socio-political ideas of Annie Besant are:

1. Liberty: Like Ram Mohan Roy and Keshab Chandra Sen, Annie Besant demanded home rule for India. She wrote, "I demand for every man, whatever be his opinions, that he shall be able to speak out with honest frankness the result of honest thought, without forfeiting his rights as a citizen, without destroying his social position, and without troubling his domestic Peace. Liberty is immortal and eternal, and her triumph is sure, however it may be delayed...and hers is also the triumph of tomorrow if only we who adore her, if only we can be true to ourselves and each other. But they who love her must work for her, as well as worship her, for labour is the only prayer to Liberty, and devotion the only praises. Explaining her idea of liberty and the free men and women in a free nation when you have free nation she said, "You can only have a free nation when you have a free men to build it out of free men and women both, but no man is free and no woman is free who is under the dominance of appetite, or vice, or drunkenness, or any form of evil which he is unable to control. Self-control is the foundation on which alone freedom can be built. Without that, you have anarchy, not freedom, and every increase of the present anarchy is paid for by the price of happiness, which is given in exchange".

2. Aristocratic Socialism: Annie Besant was against representative democracy. Like Plato, she wanted to entrust the function of Government to a selected class of people. Criticizing representative democracy as Majoritarianism, she said, "Our ideal of Brotherhood applied to Government claims power for the wise and not for the ignorant; places law-making in the hands of those who only know the needs of the household, or perhaps the needs of the town. The people have a right to happiness, but they can never get it for themselves by physical force, by legal violence, and by competition; they must be guided to it by knowledge, by those who understand." She wanted a socialism based on common agreement leading to the realization of mutually beneficial and enjoyable adjustment of capacities and functions. Condemning mass socialism, she said, "A democratic socialism, controlled by votes, guided by numbers, can never succeed; a truly aristocratic socialism, controlled by duty, guided by wisdom, is the next step upwards in civilisation."

3. Spiritual Nationalism: Annie Besant started the Gospel of spiritual nationalism, which was later on expressed in the writings of Sri Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore, and M.K. Gandhi. In her presidential speech at the Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress, she said, "For what is a Nation? It is a spark of the Divine Fire, a fragment of the Divine Life, out-breathed into the world, and gathering round itself a mass of individuals, men, women, and children, whom it binds together into one. Its qualities, its powers, in a word, its type, depend on the fragment of the Divine Life embodied in it. The foreigners laid waste to her cities and deposed her kings. They came to conquer, but they remain to be absorbed. At last, out of those mingled peoples, the Divin Artificer has welded a Nation, compact not only of her own virtue but also of those her foes had brought to her, and gradually eliminating the vices which they had also brought." The essence of spiritual nationalism, according to Annie Besant, is religion. Religion is a revivifying force. It teaches solidarity, pleading for the religious basis of spiritual nationalism. Annie Besant said, "I feel strongly...that only based on religion can true Nationality be built up. Religion itself which gives the sense of human dignity joined to the sense of human duty, and the self-respect of India could never have arisen as it has arisen today, had not the philosophies and the religions of past re-won their empire over the Indian heart; and the virtues that the great religions typify, all of which we find in this sacred land, are virtues that we need for the building of our Nation."

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AGNOSTICISM LOGICALLY LEADS TO SKEPTICISM

RAHUL CHAKRABORTY

5th Semester

In Kant as well as Hume, the destiny of philosophy seems to be predicted, but remains unfulfilled. If there is an evolution in material nature and if it is an evolution of being with consciousness and life as its two key terms and powers, this fullness of being, fullness of consciousness, fullness of life must be the goal of development towards which we are tending and which will manifest at an early or later stage of our destiny. Presenting the same argument in different words, Vivekananda pointed out, "It has gone beyond all law, beyond all limitation, beyond all nature. Nature has come under the tutelage of man. Man has gained nature, as it thinks it is now. That is the original that the soul has to succeed the succeeding steps through which it is manifesting, all the successive experiences through which it is passing to attain that goal." Vivekananda was born. The soul is, as it were, taking a body and trying to express itself through that. It finds that to be insufficient, throws it aside, and a higher one is taken up. Through that, it struggles to express itself. That also is found to be insufficient, is rejected, and a higher one comes, so on and on until a body is found through which the soul manifests its highest aspirations. Then the soul becomes free. The most prevalent view in Indian thinking is that this may be achieved while living. Nyaya Vaishashika and Samkhya moksha may consider moksha as possible only after death. This view, however, has not been accepted by the majority of Indian thinkers. Besides the distinction between liberation while living and liberation after death, there has been a distinction between individual and collective liberation. While the traditional Indian philosophy normally believes in individual liberation, the Neo-Vedanta philosophers, including Vivekananda, R.N. Tagore, and Sri Aurobindo, insist upon the necessity and possibility of collective liberation. The Concept of liberation is identity with God, the infinite. In the words of Vivekananda, "Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divine within by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy, by one or more, or all of these, and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms, are but secondary details." Immortality, Hear ye Devas who live in higher spheres, I have found out a ray beyond all darkness, beyond all doubt. I have found the Ancient One. The way to this is contained in the Upanishads. On earth, we die. In heaven, we die. In the highest heaven we die. It is only when we reach God that we attain life and become immortal. This God, according to the Upanishads, is not extraterrestrial. He interpenetrates the universe. He is human and in everything. Thus, in Contemporary Indian Philosophy is clear that Moksha cannot be called an individualistic or extraterrestrial goal. Sri Aurobindo, particularly, has interpreted it in the light of the consciousness of the modern man. Even the most recent exponents of Indian Yoga such as Rajneesh, Mahesh and others have given an interpretation of Moksha which is acceptable even to the Western men and women. The popularity which Yoga is receiving these days in the West shows that it is Indian culture which has offered

idea that is valuable to all times and to all nations. In the end, liberation can be best defined as the true of salvation of Vivekananda. “The idea of freedom is the only pleasure or pain, from freedom from everything, the sense, whether of pleasure or pain, from good as well as evil. Liberation, according to Vivekananda, can be achieved by all three traditional paths of Jnana Yoga, Karma Yoga, and Bhakti Yoga. In his own circumstances, however, Karma Yoga, he said, “But the liberation. Explaining liberation through the moment, if the power of God is infinite. Who can live a life ever active in Providence? All-powerful One does not will it. Through His command, the sun glows, the sun shines, the earth is in. We can only worship Him on earth. He is the all in all. He is all and in all. The bonds of earth are indeed the goal of Karma Yoga. Thus who think that Indian philosophy does not find a suitable place for ethics forget that Indian philosophy does not stop only at the rational part of the spiritual goal.

Ethics in India did not see spiritual freedom as a limit; it transcended to the supra-rational. Vivekananda rightly pointed out, “The greatest goodness is the highest freedom. Freedom is best expressed in the freedom of essential freedom. Clarifying the concept of freedom of will, Vivekananda said, “Freedom of the will-it is as you feel you are here to act. But this freedom is the thought necessity. There is one infinite link before, after, and between the thought necessity.” SOCIAL and Social Institutions Society, according to Vivekananda, is not a human creation but created by God himself. He said, “Love, Renunciation, Unselfishness-three great manifestations of spirituality from these alone can raise any society, and stand. Neither physical prowess, nor economic superiority, nor practical dexterity can form such a basis. Thus, against the Western idea of society advanced by Hobbes and others, Vivekananda believed love and sacrifice to be the basis of society. This emphasis is characteristic of Indian culture. In the tradition of Indian philosophy, Vivekananda believed that there is an organic relationship between the individual and society, and therefore, the good of either depends upon the other. Explaining this intimate relationship, Vivekananda said, “The aggregate of many individuals is called Samshti (the whole), and each individual, you, I, an animal, a bird, a worm, an insect, a tree, a creeper, the earth, a planet, a star, each is Vyasti, while this Universe is Samshti. Thus, society is the same as the Absolute. It is a divine creation. It is an aggregate of numerous individuals whose self-sacrifice is required for its welfare. The individual starting from individuality should gradually transcend to the stage of identity with society, where collective happiness becomes his own happiness. Religion is the backbone of this structure. It is Dharma as maintained by the ancient Indian thinkers. In the tradition of the ancient Indian concept of Purushartha, Vivekananda maintained that religion or religion is the keynote of social solidarity. Explaining this idea, he said, “The sole, the whole force, the whole sanction, the whole cementing power behind society is one and only one, viz: Religion, Spiritualism, Other-worldliness. Society must, of course, provide for economic well-being and physical comforts. But the final aim, as everywhere else, is the being and physical comforts. But the final aim, as everywhere else, is the. Thus, the social thought of Vivekananda can be termed as socialist words, “Thus Western man is born individualistic; the Hindu is socialistic, entirely socialistic.” This is Neo-Vedanta socialism, which we shall explain in sequence. Criticism of

Caste-system in spite of his immense praise for the Varna system, Vivekananda was well aware of the fact that the present degeneration of that ancient idea into a rigid caste system is the cause of the degeneration of the nation. He condemned the present caste-system in very clear words. He said, “Despite all the ravings of the priests, caste is simply a crystallized social institution which, after doing its service, is now filling the atmosphere of India with its stench, and it can only be removed by giving back to the people their lost social individuality. He rebuked those who considered following the religion and caste system. He said, “In religion, there is no caste between the highest caste and a man from the lowest may become a monk in India, and the two castes become equal. The caste system is opposed to the religion of Vedanta. Thus, Vivekananda, in tradition with the abolition of inequalities based upon the caste system. He wrote, “Caste is a social custom and all our great preachers have tried to break it down. Buddhism downwards, every sect has preached against caste, and every time it has only riveted the chains. Beginning from Buddha down to Rammohun Roy, everyone made the mistake of holding caste to be a religious institution and tried to pull down religion and caste all altogether, and failed. In spite of the above-mentioned severe criticism of the caste system, Vivekananda realized that this stratification cannot be uprooted unless a better substitute is available. Comparing even the present caste system with the Western class system of social stratification, Vivekananda found it better. Since no society can exist without some sort of social stratification, Vivekananda advised that the present caste system may be maintained only if we could eliminate casteism. He said, “What caste really is, not one in a million understands. There is no country in the world without caste. In India, from the Contemporary Indian Philosophy 4 caste we reach the point where there are two castes. Caste is based on that principle. The plan in India is to make everybody Brahmin, the Brahmin being the ideal of humanity. If you read the history of India, you will find that attempts have been made to raise the lower classes. Many are the classes that have been raised.

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LIFE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

ANISH DAS

5th Semester

On 12th January 1863 a child was born in the house of Vishvanath Datt, resident of Gormohan Mukherjee Street in North Calcutta in Bengal, who was known to the world as Vivekananda. The child is named Narendra Nath. Ramakrishna, the teacher of Vivekananda, called him by this name. Bhuvaneshwari Devi, the mother of Narendra Nath, was a very intelligent and religious lady. She used to recite the Ramayana and Mahabharata and perform her household chorus with a calm mind. Thus, like M.K. Gandhi, Vivekananda owed some of his mother. The early education of Narendra Nath was given through Bengali and English. His mother used to tell him the stories of Ramayana and Mahabharata. The child showed special interest in Ramayana and particularly in the character of Rama. Wherever the story of Rama was recited, the child Narendra Nath used to hear it with rapt attention, forgetting all childhood plays. Once, he meditated in a room of his house with so much rapt attention that the room had to be broken to awaken him. Thus, Yogic consciousness was evident in Vivekananda from the very beginning. He used to have peculiar experiences while sleeping. In these experiences, he used to feel light between the eyebrows, which gradually spread throughout his body. This experience proved the spiritual power of Narendra Nath. On the other hand, the child used to commit so many childhood pranks that his mother used to say that she had asked for a son to Shiva, but he sent a demon to him. Narendra Nath was particularly intimate with the domestic servants. At the age of 6, Narendra Nath started going to school. Within a year, he memorized Muktibodha. He also memorized most of the portions of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. After a year, he was admitted to the educational institution of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar. His teachers here were very much impressed by his intelligence and genius and used to praise him very much. Narendra Nath was not only a good student but also a good player. He possessed sound health. In the Entrance class, Narendra Nath had sufficient knowledge of English, Bangla literature, and Indian history. His understanding was deep and his memory sharp. He could follow a writer by only reading some of the lines written by him. He could understand the subject of a book by merely reading some portions of it. He passed the Entrance examination in the first division. After it, he entered Presidency College. Here, he very much impressed his teachers. His principal, W.W. Hasti, used to say that he never saw a genius. At the college stage, he had achieved an intimate knowledge of English literature, European history, philosophy, science, art, music, and medicine. During this period, Brahmo Samaj was very popular in Bengal. The leaders of Brahmo Samaj had a wide influence over the Bengali youth. Narendra Nath was also influenced by Brahmo Samaj and became a member of it. This influence was particularly due to his intellectual outlook. He never agreed to admit a thing without understanding it. He was vehemently against superstitions. He was a staunch

supporter of social reform. He had a keen desire to participate in the progress of his country. All these tendencies led him to the Brahmo Samaj. However, gradually, he became dissatisfied. Once, he asked Devendranath Thakur, the greatest leader of Brahmo Samaj, "Sir, have you seen God?" He did not receive any satisfactory answer. During this time, Ramakrishna, the priest of the Kali temple of Dakshineshwar, had a name in Calcutta. He was a devotee of a higher, and it is said that he realized Kali directly. He used to believe in the divine of all the religions. He preached that all religions are essentially the same. The principal of the college of Narendra Nath told Ramakrishna about Narendra Nath. Narendra Nath went to Ramakrishna and was very much impressed by him. He had a strong impression that he accepted Ramakrishna as his guru. Narendra Nath passed away due to a heart attack.

On 7th August 1895, Swami Vivekananda left the USA for England. The British newspapers compared him to Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Keshabchandra Sen, and even Gautama the Buddha. He was welcomed by heads of various churches, and he delivered several lectures in England. There, Miss Margaret E. Nobel, later Sister Nivedita, met his teacher, Vivekananda, for the first time. His lectures on Jnanyoga in London particularly became famous. On 6th December 1895, Swami Vivekananda reached New York from England. Here, he delivered lectures on Karma-yoga and Bhakti yoga at the residence of Miss S.E. Waldo, who later on became his disciple known as Hari Dasi. Vivekananda delivered lectures in a very informal style. Gradually, the number of his American disciples increased. In February 1896, he laid the foundation of the famous Disciples Society of New York. He also delivered lectures on Vedanta philosophy on 25th March 1896, which was so impressive that he was offered the chair of Eastern philosophy. Swami Vivekananda had no financial difficulty as he was receiving overwhelming cooperation from all sides. In April 1896, Swami Vivekananda left Calcutta alone. He went to Varanasi, Ayodhya, Lucknow, Agra, Vrindavan, and Hathras. At Hathras, he was accompanied by his disciple Sadanand. Both of them now toured India. After a year, Vivekananda had a vision of the soul of the country, including Gazipur and Varanasi. In February 1891, he went to Kanyakumari. There he sat on a rock in the sea and had his realization of the great unity of India. At present, there is on this rock the world-famous Vivekananda Memorial.

In 1893, Vivekananda heard that a Parliament of Religions was being organised in Chicago, USA. He decided to participate in this parliament in order to give his message to the world. He was very much pained by the poverty of India and wanted to work for the welfare of the people of India. This was one of the important purposes of his visit to the USA. Before going to the USA, he went to Khetri, where the king of this state was his disciple. It was this princely disciple who suggested the name of Swami Vivekananda, which was adopted by Narendra Nath. On May 31, 1893, Swami Vivekananda left Bombay for the USA. In the way he went to Ceylon, Penong, Singapore, Hong Kong, Kentan, and all these places, he realised the spiritual unity of Asia. He reached Chicago on 11th July 1893. Seeing the spectacular progress of knowledge and science in the USA, he was highly impressed. After twelve days, he reached

the information office of the proposed Parliament of Religions. He was told that the parliament will be recommended by someone in the USA or elsewhere. Vivekananda sent a telegram to his friends. Vivekananda hardly needed any introduction. However, the genius-like certificate. While travelling in the train in Boston, Swami Vivekananda met a rich lady of Massachusetts. She called him at her residence and introduced him to Professor J.H. Wright of the department of Greek studies at Harvard University. Wright was very much impressed by Vivekananda and introduced him to Dr. Bros, the chairman of the selection committee of the delegates, by writing, & " Here is a person who is a greater scholar than all our scholar professors added together. He insisted that Vivekananda should be admitted as the representative of Hinduism at the Parliament of Religions. He also gave Vivekananda a rail ticket to Chicago and a letter of recommendation for lodging and boarding. Unfortunately, Vivekananda lost these papers during the journey. However, these were received by a lady, G.W. Hale, who contacted Vivekananda and took him to the Parliament, where he was respectfully admitted as a delegate, and arrangements for his stay were made along with other representatives from the East. The Parliament of Religions was inaugurated on 11th September 1893 at Columbia Hall. Religious leaders of the world had gathered there to hear Swami Vivekananda in the evening of the first day. They welcomed the prolonged clapping of the first words of Vivekananda. Leaving all formalities of the Parliament, Swami Vivekananda presented his ideas in such a direct and clear language that the Parliament was very much impressed. After it, he delivered a dozen lectures in the USA, which made him famous in the West. The New York Herald proclaimed him as the greatest person at the Parliament of Religions and wrote that after hearing him, we feel how foolish it is to send religious missionaries to a nation of such a great scholar. During his lectures, Swami Vivekananda repeatedly drew the attention of the West to the problems of India. On the invitation of the Bureau, he visited several places in the USA and delivered lectures on the headship of the department of American intelligentsia. He was offered the headship of Eastern philosophy at Harvard University and the Sanskrit language at Columbia University, which he declined, saying that he was a Sanyasin.

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BHAGAVAD GITA

CHANDRAMA DAS

3rd Semester

Bhagavad Gita literally means 'The lord's Song ', i.e., the philosophical discourse of Lord Krishna to persuade the reluctant Arjuna to fight. It is the most popular and sacred book of the Hindus and is contained in the Bhisma-parva of the Mahabharata, the greatest Sanskrit epic. Various are the praises showered on this work, both by Indian and European scholars. Lokmanya Tilak calls it 'a most luminous and priceless gem which gives peace to affected souls and makes us masters of spiritual wisdom'. Mahatma Gandhi calls it the 'universal mother whose door is wide open to anyone who knocks,' and the future says that 'a true votary of the Gita does not know what disappointment is. He ever dwells in perennial joy and peace, and that passes understanding. The Gita deals with metaphysics, religion, and ethics, and has been rightly called the 'gospel of humanity'. The central teaching of the Gita can be beautifully summarized in this semester of Annie Besant: It is meant to life the aspirants from the lower level of renunciation, where objects are renounced, to the loftier heights where desired are dead, and where the yogi dwells in clam and ceaseless contemplation, while his body and mind are actively employed in discharging the duties that fall to his lot in life.' The Gita tries to build up a philosophy of karma based on jnana and supported by bhakti in a beautiful manner. In the beginning, we find Arjuna horrified at the thought that he has to fight with his relatives and friends, and he says to Krsna that he can foresee no advantage in killing relatives and he flatly refuses to fight-'I would not like to kill these, even though I may be killed by them.'I krna then, proceeds to instruct him that it is his duty as a prince, as a warrior, as a righteous man to fight against evil and restore peace and order. Some people have tried to read in the Gita a 'cult of murder '. But this simple shows to what extent a noble work can be misinterpreted. To fight against evil is the duty of man. To make the situation poignant, relative and beloved friends and revered elders stand on both sides, and Arjuna has to vindicate his claim, he has to follow his svabhava and svadharma. It is a significant fact that though Lord Krsna in the beginning repeatedly asks Arjuna to fight, in the end, when the teaching has been imparted to him, the lord simply says - 'Do as you please.'

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BEING

THE fundamental metaphysical teaching of the Gita is that 'of the unreal there is no being and of the real there is no non-being'. The soul is indestructible (avinashi), eternal (nitya), unborn (aja), undiminishing (avyaya), all-pervasive (sarva-gata), immovable (achala), ancient (sanatana), and

death, it cannot perish along with the body. Just as a person casts off worn-out garments and unmanifest (avyakta), unthinkable (achintya), and immutable (avikarya). Only bodies are destroyed, not the soul. It is neither born nor does it die. It is immortal and everlasting. Not being subject to birth puts on the new ones, so does the soul cast off worn-out bodies and enter into others that are new. The infinite underlies and animates all finite existence, and the soul, being essentially one with it, is not affected by birth and death, by "dust returning unto dust".' He who sees the ultimate Reality seated equally in all beings and unperishing within the persisting, sees truly.

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YOGA

The Gita represents a unique synthesis of Action, Devotion, and Knowledge; the will to the philosophy of action; and emotion to the physical aspect of knowledge; the will to the philosophy of Action; and emotions to the philosophy of Devotion. Modern psychology teaches us that these three aspects of the mind are distinguished only in thought and not divisible in reality. There is no watertight division separating one from the rest. The teaching of the Gita is in keeping with this view. To quote Dr. S. Radhakrishnan: 'The Absolute reveals itself to those seeking knowledge as the Eternal Light, clear and radiant as the sun at noon-day; II, I6. Nasato vidyate bhavo nabhavo vidyate satah; II, 22; VI, 29. to those struggling for virtue as the Eternal Righteousness, steadfast and impartial; and those emotionally inclined as Eternal Love and the Beauty of Holiness.' Different people attain the same goal of salvation through these three different paths of knowledge, action, and devotion. All three are ultimately synthesized. This synthesis is called 'Yoga'. The literal meaning of the word is union, i.e., of the individual with the Absolute. It also signifies equanimity or balance of mind (samatva). It means the higher perspective of action, which comes through detachment (karmasu kaushalam). The yogi is the ideal ascetic who curbs his passions and maintains calmness in heat and cold, in joy and sorrow, in honor and dishonor. 'As a lamp flickers not in a windless place,' that is the simile for the yogi who curbs his thoughts and yields himself entirely to absorption. We find the following beautiful description of yoga: where no other gain is considered greater, and where one is not moved by the greatest pain—that state, free from misery, is yoga. A yogi is a Sthita-prajna—one firmly rooted in higher reason and unmoved by the pairs of opposites. He attains the highest state of brahman (brahmī-sthiti), where he is never bewildered (nainam prapya vimuhyati) and from which he never falls (yad gatva na nivartante).

IV

JNANA

This yoga is essential and mainly focuses on the path of knowledge. The Yogi's ideal is self-realization, which cannot be achieved without knowledge. Even devotees are granted knowledge by the Lord, rendering all actions insignificant. The culmination of action is in knowledge. Having obtained

knowledge, one soon realizes that one may realize the goal. 4 yoga, bereft of knowledge, is an impossibility. We may weaken the power of the senses by fasting and abstaining from necessities, but unless we rise above the relish and the desire, the psychological attachment to the sense-object, we are not true yogis. And this relish can go away only with the rise of true knowledge. 5 How high the Gita places knowledge can be seen from the following:' Even the most sinful man can cross over the ocean of Samsara by means of the boat of knowledge alone. As a fire well-kindled reduces fuel to ashes, so the fire of knowledge reduces embraces peace. There is nothing purer than knowledge. 6 The knower is identified by the Lord with His own self. 7 1 VI, 7, 8; XIV, 24, 25. 2 VI, I9. 3 VI, 20, 23. 4 dadami buddhiyogam tam yena mamupayanti te, X, Io. 5 II, 59. 6 nahi jnanena sadrsham pavitramiha vidyate, IV,38. 7 jnanitvatmaiva me matam, VII, I8.

V

KARMA

Karmayoga is not opposed to Jnanayoga. In fact, the former is possible only when the latter is attained. No embodied being can completely renounce action.1 The constituent Gunas of prakrti, sattva, Rajas, and Tamas, necessarily give rise to action. As Wordsworth says: 'The eye cannot choose but see. We cannot bid the ear be still, Our bodies feel where they be Against or with our will. The universe itself depends on actions. 2 Inertia is not liberty, but death. Work keeps up the cycle of the universe, and it is the duty of every individual to help it. He who does not do so and finds pleasure in the sense is sinful and lives in vain. 3 The ideal of the Gita is not negativism, asceticism, or escapism. It is not a negation of action, but performance of action in a detached spirit. It is not Naiskarmya, but Niskama karma. The giving up is not of action itself, but of interest, desire, fruit, attachment regarding action does not bind. The Gita synthesizes both Pravrtti and Nivttri. As Prof. M. Hiriyanna says: 'The Gita-teaching stands not for renunciation of action, but for renunciation in action.' It is emphatically stated that Samnyasa does not mean the renunciation of action, but of interest, desire, and attachment; it means the giving up of the fruit of all work. 4 Actions are our sphere; fruit of action and attachment at the same time, we should never be inactive. 5 And without knowledge, renunciation of desire and attachment is not possible. So only a true jnani can perform niskama karma. Therefore, the Gita says: Only fools and not wise people speak of jnana and karma as different and opposed; really, they are one. 6 Here arises an apparent contradiction in the Gita where it is also remarked that for him who has realized the self, who is enjoying the bliss of the self, and who remains ever satisfied in the supreme peace of the self and, who remains ever satisfies in the supreme peace of the self, for him there remains nothing to be done. 7 This verse emphasizes the word 'tasya' ('for him '). The perfect man has no axe of his own to grind. He simply acts for the good of the people. The perfect man also has to work for the benefit of humanity (loka-sangraha) in the spirit of perfect detachment, disinterest, selflessness, with no desire to reap the fruit. He alone is capable of doing so. The liberated 'cave-dweller' in Plato goes again into the cave to free others. He who performs actions

in a detached manner, thinking himself to be a mere instrument of God, is not contaminated by it. 1 But the Gita definitely recognized a supra-social state for the liberation sage. He cannot be forced to work. He may not be living in society, yet his very presence in the world confers benefits upon humanity, like the presence of the sun. An object is raised here that absolutely disinterested action is a psychological impossibility. But it is not valid. Firstly, the liberated sage had risen much above the psychological plan. He is not the transcendent mystic plan, and empirical injunctions and prohibitions, ordinary rules of practice, and psychological rules do not apply to him. Intellect cannot grasp this state; it can only point towards it. Secondly, for the aspirant, we may say that the Gita recommends, not the annihilation of all desires, but the merging of all desires in one supreme desire for the development of spiritual life. All actions, therefore, should be inspired by this supreme desire. The betterment of our spiritual life is the single motive and the only end prescribed for all our actions.

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AUROBINDO GHOSH

SAMPRITI MEDHI

5th Semester

Aurobindo Ghosh was born on the fifteenth of August 1872 at Konnagar, West Bengal. He got his early education in the Loretto Convent School of Darjeeling and was taken to England at the early age of eight. In the early part of his stay in England, he was put under the care of an able teacher named Drewett. In 1885, he was sent to St. Paul's School in London. In school, he developed a special fascination for some classical languages like Greek and Latin, and also for some European languages. He learnt them all, and even tried to compose verses in Latin and Greek. He founded an Ashram at Pondicherry with the sole aim of putting into practice some of the spiritual and yogic ideas that he had come to think about. Only after a few years, one of his eminent disciples, Mira Richard, took upon herself the task of managing the Ashram, and in the course of time became almost the symbol of the Ashram; she has been both literally and figuratively as 'the mother' of the Ashram. The Philosophical Background: Sri Aurobindo's philosophy carries on it the stamp of a number of influences. He had studied Western philosophy and literature at an early age and was well acquainted with the comprehensive system of some of the Greek philosophers, like Plato and Aristotle. He was also well-acquainted with some of the idealistic philosophies of recent times. Sri Aurobindo's philosophy can be called idealistic. It's conceiving reality as spiritual. The philosophy of Sri Aurobindo may aptly be described as integral non-dualism (Pũrṇa - Advani's), or integral idealism (Pũrṇa- vijñana), or just integralism (Pũrṇavãda). To be able to appreciate Sri Aurobindo's metaphysical position in a better way, it would be worthwhile to have a look at the four theories of Existence that he himself enumerates and examines. The four theories of Existence, according to Aurobindo, were:

1. The Super-Cosmic theory — According to this theory, the Absolute alone is real. Its monistic character is so emphatic that in such a theory the reality of everything else, even of man, tends to suffer. In the extreme forms of such a theory, even human existence does not have any real meaning; it is conceived as a mistake of the soul or a delirium of the will to live or as an error or ignorance which somehow overcasts the Absolute Reality. Sri Aurobindo places Advaita Vedanta under this category. We can also include the metaphysical theories of Bradley or even of Spinoza as falling under this group, because according to them, the Super-cosmic Absolute or the substance is the only reality. Sri Aurobindo criticized this theory because it reduces to the status of an illusion, a dream, or an image. It also takes away from man his reality. Moreover, it reduces the universe to a static block-universe and leaves no room for 'becoming' of any kind. It thus is not consistent with the experience whose explanation it seeks to provide. Sri Aurobindo criticizes the theory because it is extremely one-sided and partial.

2. The Cosmic or the Terrestrial theory — This theory is the exact opposite of the Supracosmic. It considers cosmic existence as real. It goes further and accepts the cosmic reality as the only reality. Ordinarily, keeps itself confined to the material universe. God, if at all it exists, is also a changing phenomenon, and if God is not conceived as existent, then Nature is taken to be an eternal process of change and becoming, and this life as the only field of action. Man is conceived to be the highest possible form of evolution and change. Nothing is conceived to be permanent except becoming or continuous change. Such a view is found most commonly in the Western tradition. All forms of naturalistic philosophers, Materialism and Positivism can be said to have advanced cosmic-terrestrial views. Sri Aurobindo criticizes this view again on the ground that it is one-sided. If the Supra-cosmic theory is on one extreme, this theory is on the other extreme. Its defect lies in the fact that it fails to notice the possibility of the beyond. It completely overlooks the fact that our material existence is extremely poor and inadequate. Such a theory, in the long run, is neither intellectually nor emotionally satisfying. It overlooks the fact that every individual is capable of certain nobility of being, of going beyond the terrestrial.

3. The Supraterrestrial theory— It believes both in the reality of the world as well as in the reality of something higher. That is to say, in a rough way, it tries to reconcile the Supracosmic and the cosmic-terrestrial views because it admits the reality of both the material cosmos and 'the transcendent world'. It believes that the earth is a place for a temporary sojourn of the soul, but it also believes that behind the morality of the bodily life of man, there is the soul's immorality. In a sense, theistic philosophies and religion would fall under this category because they all, while recognizing the reality of this world, believe in the possibility of a higher world in which the soul, in its immortality, can enter. It is a fact that this theory seeks to reconcile the first two theories because it makes room for the reality of all three aspects of the metaphysical realm: the cosmos, the individual beings, and the transcendent world. But Sri Aurobindo feels that even this theory suffers from the same kind of error from which the Supracosmic theory suffers. It believes that there is a higher realm of being —heaven or paradise or something of that sort in which man can enter and find his salvation. But the present state of man in the world is conceived as a fallen state, as a state of bondage which has to be transcended. Therefore, in a sense, this theory also preaches acosmism and reduces man almost to the status of an unreality.

4. The defect of the three theories mentioned above leads Sri Aurobindo to develop his own metaphysical theory, which, in his opinion, is truly synthetic or integral. He believes that for a really synthetic theory, the reality of both the cosmos and the higher realm has to be maintained. Even the material has to be conceived as an aspect of the Divine, and it must be realized that the attainment of the higher realm would mean a transformation of everything, including the material, the vital, and the mental. Sri Aurobindo tries to evolve such a theory which maintains the ultimacy of the spiritual or the higher realm and yet makes even the earth-life an aspect of the Divine plan. He says, "Earth life's not a lapse into the more of something in divine, vain and miserable, offered by some power to itself as a

spectacle or to the embodied soul as a thing to be suffered and then cast away from it: it is the scene of the evolutionary unfolding of the being which moves towards the revelation of a supreme spiritual light and power and joy and oneness, but it includes in it also the manifold diversity of the self-achieving spirit." Such a theory is really synthetic and integral because it synthesizes both the Supracosmic and cosmic-terrestrial in an obviously more harmonious manner than the Supraterrestrial theory.

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GANDHI'S ETHICS OF AHIMSA

RINGSRINGDI KEMPRAI

3rd Semester

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi revives Buddha's ethics of ahimsa and applies it to social, economic, and political problems. He evolves a new outlook on life based on the doctrine of ahimsa and seeks to solve all social, political, and economic problems in the light of this principle. He gives a new orientation to the problems that face humanity today and offers a new solution. Buddhism and Jainism preached ahimsa in India long ago. Hinduism also inculcated ahimsa for the attainment of liberation. But they did not apply it to the social, economic, and political problems. Gandhi says, "My contribution to the great problem lies in my presenting for acceptance Truth and ahimsa in every walk of life, whether for individuals or nations. Gandhi was influenced by Tolstoy, who believed in absolute altruism. Tolstoy maintained that the true self could be realized in acts of self-sacrifice alone and that moral goodness was identical with altruism. He showed that egoism in the form of gratification of sensibility was self-defeating. Gandhi borrowed the idea of civil disobedience from Henry Davie Thoreau (1817-1862) of the U.S.A. He says, I accept the motto-'That government is best which governs least," I believe- "That government is best which governs not at all' (Civil Disobedience).1 Truth and Social Service-Mahatma Gandhi is an apostle of ahimsa. The basic principle of life is based on Truth. Gandhi gives a succinct account of his philosophy. He says, "I often describe my religion as the religion of truth. Of late, instead of saying God is Truth, I have been saying Truth is God, in order more fully to define my religion. We are sparks of Truth. The total of sparks is indescribable as-yet-unknown Truth, which is God. "The bearing of this religion on social life is or has to be seen in one's daily social contact. To be true to such a religion, one has to lose oneself in continuous and continuing service of our life. Realization of Truth is impossible without a complete merging of oneself in an identification with this limitless ocean of life. Hence, for me, there is no escape from social service; there is no happiness on earth beyond or apart from it. Social services must be taken to include every department of life. In this scheme, there is nothing low, nothing high. For 'all is one, though we seem to be many."? God—He says, "God is life. He is love. Truth and Harmlessness constitute the essence of God. "God is that indefinable something which we all feel but which we do not know." "There is an indefinable mysterious power that pervades everything. I feel it, though I do not see it. It is this unseen power that makes itself felt and yet defies proof, because it is so unlike all that I perceive through my senses. It transcends reason. But it is possible to reason out the existence of God to a limited extent." "I do not regard God as a person. Truth for me is God and God's Law, and God is not different things. God is Law Himself. Therefore, it is impossible to conceive God as breaking the Law. He and His Law abide everywhere and govern everything. "I do perceive that, is

whilst everything around me is ever-changing and ever-dying, there is underlying all that change, a living power that is changeless, that holds all together, that creates, dissolves and re-creates. That informing Power or Spirit is God." God is Truth-Knowledge-Bliss (sat-chit-ananda). "The word 'Satya' (Truth) is derived from 'Sat', which means being. And nothing is or exists in reality except Truth. And where there is Truth, there also is knowledge, pure knowledge. And where there is true knowledge, there is always bliss." Gandhi looks upon God as an impersonal, omnipresent power or Spirit that pervades the universe, and that is immanent in the human soul. He is Truth, Love, and Bliss. He can neither be perceived nor grasped by the intellect, but He can be felt. He can be imperfectly grasped by the intuition, which is direct realization. God is Truth and Love. He can be known only through love or non-violence. Means and ends are inseparable. They are convertible terms. God is the end. Therefore, He can be known through truth and love or non-violence. "Truth is God. When you want to find Truth, us God the only inevitable means of Love. is.., 0л, violence, and ultimately means and ends are convertible terms." Sometimes Gandhi speaks of God as the only reality. says, "We are not. He alone is." "I have intense longing to lose myself in the eternal and become merely a lump of clay in the Potter's divine hands." Man is the instrument in the hands of God. "Man is the maker of his own destiny in the sense that he has freedom of choice as to the manner in which he uses that freedom. But he is not the controller of the results." Human freedom is limited by the divine will. Results of human actions depend upon the will of God. Gandhi's idea of human freedom is borrowed from the Divine Will. Results depend upon the Bhagavad Gita.

Unity of life- He says, "I believe in as many ones as Cod and therefore of humanity. Though we have many bodies, we have but one soul. The rays of the sun are many through refraction. But they have the same source." "I believe in Advaita. I believe in the essential unity of a man, and for that matter, of all lives." There is unity of life in all lives. There is unity of Spirit in all mankind. God-realization is the Supreme End-Man's ultimate aim is the realization of God, and all his activities, social, political, and religious, have to be guided by the ultimate aim of the vision of God. Gandhi says, "The immediate service of all human beings becomes a necessary part of the endeavour, simply because the only way to find God is to see Him in His creation and be one with it. This can be done by the service of all. I am a part and parcel of the whole, and I cannot find Him apart from humanity." My creed is service of God and therefore of humanity." Service of man-God-realization is the Highest Good. It can be attained through the realization of the oneness of life or the Spirit of all mankind and sentient creation. God can be realized through the service of all mankind. Love and ahimsa are the only means of God-realization. Purity is essential for the realization of God. Gandhi says, "To see the universal and all-pervading Spirit of Truth face to face, one must be able to love the meanest of creation as oneself. Identification with everything that lives is impossible without purification. God can never be realized by one who is not pure in heart." Perfect self-control depends upon God's grace. Absolute self-surrender to God is necessary for complete self-control, including sex-restraint. Jesus Christ says,

"Whosoever will have his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Ahimsa- Ahimsa is not merely a negative virtue of non-stealing and non-injury, but a positive virtue of doing good to here. Ahimsa is supreme kindness and supreme self-sacrifice. li no violence in thought, word, and deed. It is not only abstinence from killing and doing no harm, but also abstinence from causing pain through word or thought and resentment. It is non. violence in every form-in thought, word, and deed. But violence or non-injury in thought, word, and deed constitutes the negative aspect of himsa. It has a positive aspect, which is more important than the negative aspect. It is not only a complete absence of ill-will toward mankind and sentient creation, but also involves overflowing love and affection for them. Ahimsa met non-injury and love. God is Truth and Love. And we realize Trans no longer loves the whole animal world, including mankind. "Ahimsa is the basis of the search for Truth. The search is in vain unless it is founded on ahimsa as the basis. The only means for the realization of Truth is ahimsa. A perfect vision of Truth can only. follow a realization of ahimsa." Ahimsa requires truthfulness and fearlessness. Gandhi says, "There is only one whom we have to fear, that is God. When we fear God, we shall fear no man; and if you want to follow the vow of Truth, then fearlessness is necessary." Gandhi says, "Ahimsa is the means; Truth is the end. Ahimsa is our supreme duty." "Ahimsa and Truth are so intertwined that it is practically impossible to disentangle and separate them." "Non-violence and Truth are inseparable and presuppose each other." He says, "Non-violence implies as complete self-purification as is humanly possible." It implies "a living faith in the existence of the soul as apart from the body." Non-violence is soul force. The power of Atman. It is the power of Love. "It is uttermost selflessness. Selflessness means complete freedom from a regard for one's body." "Ahimsa does not simply mean non-killing." "Anger is the enemy of Ahimsa, and pride is a monster that swallows it up." Ahimsa implies the conquest of anger and pride. "A Satyagrahi will always try to overcome evil by good, anger by love, untruth by truth, himsa by ahimsa." Ahimsa implies the absence of hatred. Hate ought to be conquered by love. "Hate is the subtlest form of violence. We can win over the opponent only by love, never by hate?" In its positive form, ahimsa means the largest love, the greatest charity. I am a follower of ahimsa. I must love my enemy. Active ahimsa. necessarily includes truth and fearlessness. The practice of ahimsa calls forth the greatest courage. Non-violence is the weapon of the strongest and bravest." It is the opposite of cowardice. It is not a fight against the attack of the evil doer. It is better to be violent than to be a coward. “My creed of non-violence is an extremely active force. It has no room for cowardice or even weakness”. A violent man can become non-violent. But a coward can never become non-violent. He says, ‘Non-violence and cowardice go ill together. Through nonviolence is an impossibility without the possession of unadulterated fearlessness.’ ‘Ahimsa requires through humility for it is reliance not on self, but on God alone.’ Non-violence implies restraint upon one's desire for vengeance. Vengeance is weakness. It springs from fear of her. Vengeance is better than Heles' submission. But forgiveness is higher than vengeance. He says, "Ahimsa is the extreme limit of

forgiveness. But forgiveness is a virtue of the brave. Ahimsa is impossible without fearlessness. "Soul force requires the control of all bodily and self-regarding desires. Thus non-violence implies truthfulness, selflessness, harmlessness, freedom from anger, pride, and hatred, love for all men and creatures, fearlessness, and courage, humility, forgiveness, and absolute self-surrender to God." "One who believes in non-violence believes in a living God." Gandhi was influenced by Christ, who said. "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you. Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. And unto him that smitten thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy Cloke forbid not to take thy coat also. Love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again. Condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven. Non-violent, Non-co-operation with Evil-Gandhi says, "Hate the sin and not the sinner." "For we are all tarred with the same brush, and are children of the same Creator, and as such, the divine powers within us are infinite. To slight a single human being is to slight those divine powers, and thus to harm not only that being but with him the whole world." So, we should not try to crush the wrongdoer but try to resist evil by dissociating ourselves from it in all possible ways. Evil cannot stand by itself. Non-cooperate with evil, and it will die of inanition. "It is quite proper to resist and attack a system, but to resist and attack its author is tantamount to resisting and attacking oneself." And we can actively attack an evil system by non-cooperation with it in a Non-violent manner. His moral weapon of non-violent non-cooperation is a most potent weapon to fight an evil system with. I took the forms of passive resistance and civil disobedience in the face of politics to fight the evil of foreign domination. He says, “An out and out civil registrar simply ignores the authority of the state. He becomes an outlaw, claiming to disregard every immoral State law. “Civil disobedience, no payment of taxes, etc., are potent means of fighting foreign domination. He says,” all men recognized the right of revolution; that is, the right to allegiance to, and to resist, the government, when its tyranny is unendurable. “Nonviolence is not a fight from wickedness. It is not passive submission to the will of the evil-doer. It is "mental and moral opposition to immoralities." It is a deliberate restraint upon the desire of vengeance. Retaliation increases wickedness. Non-violence is an active moral fight against wickedness. It is not physical resistance to evil. It is moral resistance to it. Gandhi says, "Non-violence in its dynamic condition means conscious suffering. It does not mean meek submission to the evil of the evil-doer, but it means the putting of one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant." "The satyagrahi seeks to convert his opponent by sheer force of character and suffering. The purer he is and the more he suffers, the quicker the progress." "It is not non-violence if we merely love those who love us. It is non-violent only when we love those who hate us." "Ahimsa is not merely a negative state of harm-lessness, but it is a positive state of love, of doing good even to the evil-doer." "Having flung aside the sword, there is nothing except the cup of love which I can offer to those who oppose me." Gandhi says, "Non-violence is the law of the human race, and is infinitely greater than and superior to brute force." Violence breeds violence. It springs from anger and ill will. It destroys itself. Non-violence springs

from love. Love kills violence. It ultimately disarms opposition. It wins him by conversion. It transforms him by superior moral strength. Gandhi says, "Non-violence is a method of coercion; it is one of conversion." "The satyagrahi's object is to convert, not to coerce, the wrong-doer." "They must not be violent in thought, word, and deed towards the enemy." "Satyagraha postulates the conquest of the adversary by suffering in one's own person." All social, economic, political, and religious evils are based on violence. They can be ended by non-violence. Non-violence is not only a moral weapon of an individual. It is a moral weapon of the masses; organized and well-disciplined mass non-violence is an infallible moral weapon against all kinds of evil, social, economic, religious, national, or international. Non-violent non-cooperation is a revolution. Gandhi says, " It is not an armed revolt. It is an evolutionary evolution; it is a bloodless revolution. The moment is a revolution of thought, of spirit. Non-cooperation is a process of purification and, as such, it constitutes a revolution in one's ideas."

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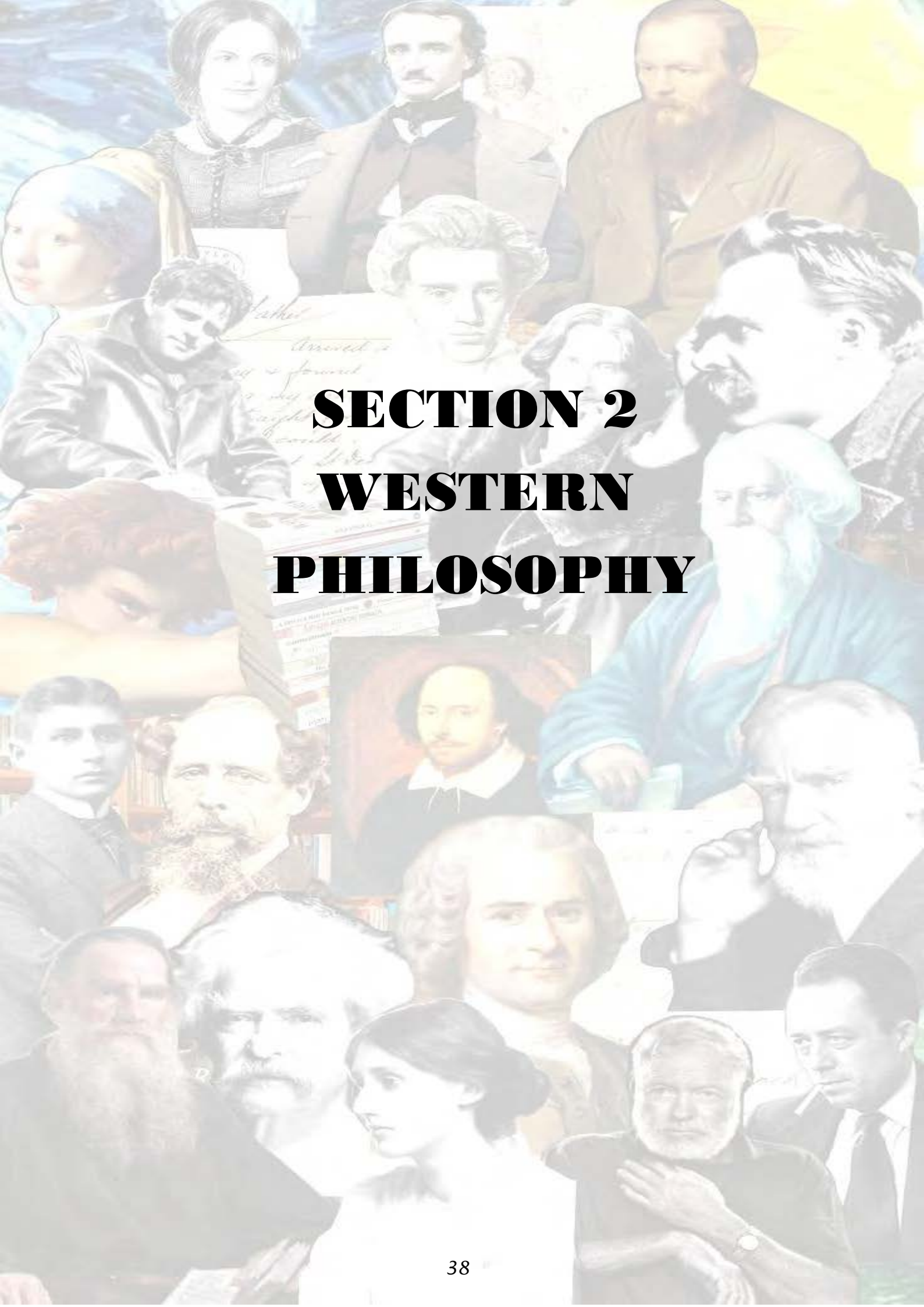

SECTION 2
WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF AN EARLY GREEK THOUGHT

BARSHREE HAFLONGBAR

3rd Semester

Few of the ancient peoples advanced far beyond the mythological stage, and perhaps none of them can be said to have developed a genuine philosophy except the Greeks. It is for this reason that we begin our account with them. They not only laid the foundations upon which all subsequent systems of Western thought have been reared, but formulated nearly all the problems and suggested nearly all the answers with which European civilisation occupied itself for two thousand years. Their philosophy is one of the best examples of the evolution of human thinking from simple mythological beginnings to complex and comprehensive systems that any people have furnished. The spirit of independence and the love of truth which animate their thinkers have never been surpassed and rarely equalled. For these reasons, the study of Greek philosophy ought to be an attractive and valuable discipline to the student interested in higher speculative thought. By the history of Greek philosophy, we mean the intellectual movement that originated and developed in the Hellenic world. We shall include in it, however, not only the systems of the Greeks themselves, but also those which exhibit the essential features of Greek thinking and which are manifestly the products of Hellenic civilisation, whether they flourish at Athens, Rome, Alexandria, or in Asia Minor.

LITERATURE

We may view these conditions as the result of the awakening of the Greek consciousness. The new movement is both a symptom and a cause of enlightenment: it is the outward sign of growing reflection and criticism of the traditional; it issues in a protest against the old institutions and in a demand for reform. The history of Greek literature before the sixth century B.C. reveals the development of a spirit of reflection and criticism similar to that expressing itself in political life. The Homeric cheerfulness and objectivity, characteristic of the naivete of childhood, gradually disappear; the poets become less optimistic, more critical, and subjective. Already in Homer we find occasional moral reflections on the behaviour of men, the foolishness of mortals, the misery and transitoriness of life, and the wickedness of injustice. In Hesiod, the note of criticism and pessimism grows louder; his Works and Days is a moral handbook that attacks the foibles of the age and offers moral maxims and practical rules of life, praising the home-spun virtues and lamenting the decline of the good old days. In mournful and satiric strain, poets of the seventh century (Alcacus, Simonides, Archilochus) decry the rise of the tyrannis and deplore the weakness of men, urging them, however, to bear their lot bravely and to leave the outcome to the gods. The didactic and pessimistic spirit is still more marked in the poetry of the sixth century; the political fortunes of the people are made the subject of discussion, and the new order of things is condemned, often with great bitterness. To this period belong the fable-writer Essop and the so-called gnomic poets (Solon, Phocylides, Theognis), whose wise maxims embodying ethical reflections may be

characterized as an embryonic moral philosophy. The truth is, the individual is beginning to analyse and criticise life, not merely living it, but pondering on it; he is no longer content to give voice to the customary conceptions and ideals of his race, but is prompted to set forth his own personal ethical, political, and religious thoughts and yearnings. Eventually, this spirit of inquiry and discontent, which results from larger and more complex experiences, leads to a philosophical study of human conduct in the form of theories of ethics and politics.

RELIGION

The religious development follows similar patterns. Originally a form of nature worship, Greek religion evolved into polytheism, creating a society of gods imagined by poets as a host of superior beings leading a historical life. Here, too, the spirit of reflection and criticism plays its role, helping to make religion ethical and rational. Reflection on the character and conduct of the gods, as depicted by Homer, and the moral refinement of consciousness lead to a purer concept of Olympus: as civilization advances, the gods themselves become moral, with Zeus conceived as the ethical head of the divine social order, protector of righteousness on earth and in heaven. The metaphysical impulse, meanwhile, finds expression in theories about the gods, their origins, and their relationships to each other and the world. People begin to question traditional mythology, wondering how such gods came into being; they attempt, in a crude way, to explain phenomena, using mythology as the basis of their speculation. The earliest example of a primitive genealogy of the gods, or theogony, is Hesiod's Theogony. Other works in this genre include the theogony of Pherecydes of Syros (540 B.C.) and the Orphic cosmogonies, which may derive from an older theogony, possibly from the sixth century B.C., but in their current form do not date back earlier than the first century B.C. According to Hesiod's Theogony, Chaos was the first to emerge, followed by Gaia (Earth), and then Eros (Love). From Chaos came Erebos (Darkness) and Nux (Night), and from their union, Ether (Light) and Hemera (Day). The earth produces the sea and, in union with Uranus (Heaven), the rivers. From Uranus's seed, Aphrodite (Love) is born; that is, the rains from heaven stimulate life's germination in nature. This attempt to explain origins relies not on scientific or logical methods as we understand them today, but on poetic imagination and popular mythology. The poet ponders how the surrounding phenomena and events originated and interprets them through simple, everyday experiences, attributing their causes to generation or human volition: Darkness and Night together produce Day; the Earth, fertilized by Heaven, gives birth to rivers.

PHILOSOPHY

Theogonies, though not philosophy, are a preparation for philosophy. Already in the mythological notions, there is present a germ of philosophical thought, a desire for some kind of explanation, even though the demand is rooted in the will and easily satisfied by pictures of the imagination. Theogonies and cosmogonies represent an advance over the mythologies; they are an attempt to rationalise the mythical world and to explain the origin of the beings supposed to govern occurrences in nature and events in the life of man.

These theories, however, are still, in a large measure, such as satisfy the poetical imagination rather than the logical intellect, and they appeal to supernatural forces and agencies rather than to natural causes. Philosophy arises when fancy is superseded by reason, imagination by intellect; when the supernatural agencies are abandoned, as principles of explanation, and facts of experience made the basis of investigation and explanation. It is an effort to account for things and occurrences in a more or less impartial and unprejudiced way, independently of the popular mythology, and unhampered by immediate practical needs. Appearing in Greece during the sixth century B.C., in an age of enlightenment, it is the natural outcome of the spirit of inquiry which we have described and which expressed itself in all the forms of Greek mental life. Greek philosophy begins with an inquiry into the essence of the objective world. It is, at first, largely interested in external nature (philosophy of nature), and only gradually turns its eye inward, on man himself, or becomes humanistic. The first great problem is: What is nature and, therefore, man? the second: What is man and, therefore, nature? The shifting of the interest from nature to man leads to the study of human mental problems: the study of the human mind and human conduct, the study of logic, ethics, psychology, politics, and poetics. The attention is next centered, more particularly, upon the ethical problem: What is the highest good, what is the end and aim of life? Ethics is made the main issue; logic and metaphysics are studied as aids to the solution of the moral question. Finally, the problem of God and man's relation to him, the theological problem, is pushed into the foreground, and Greek philosophy ends, as it began, in religion.

(1) The first great problem was taken up in what we may call the Pre-Sophistic period, which extends, let us say, from about 585 to the middle of the fifth century B.C. The earliest Greek philosophy is naturalistic: its attention is directed to. nature; it is mostly syllogistic: it conceives nature as animated or alive; it is ontological: it inquires into the essence of things; it is mainly monistic: it seeks to explain its phenomena by means of a single principle; it is dogmatic: it naïvely presupposes the competency of the human mind to solve the world-problem. The scene of the philosophy of this period is the colonial world; it flourishes in Jonia, Southern Italy, and Sicily.

(2) The period of the Sophists, who belong to the fifth century, is a period of transition. It shows a growing distrust of the power of the human mind to solve the world-problem and a corresponding lack of faith in traditional conceptions and institutions. This movement is sceptical, radical, revolutionary, indifferent, or antagonistic to metaphysical speculation; in calling attention to the problem of man, however, it makes necessary a more thorough examination of the problem of knowledge and the problem of conduct, and ushers in the Socratic period. Athens is the home of this new enlightenment and of the great schools of philosophy growing out of it.

(3) The Socratic period, which extends from 430 to 320 B.C., is a period of reconstruction. Socrates defends knowledge against the assaults of scepticism and shows how truth may be reached by the employment of a logical method. He also paves the way for a science of ethics by his efforts to define the meaning of the good.

Plato and Aristotle build upon the foundations laid by the master and construct rational theories of knowledge (logic), conduct (ethics), and the State (politics). They likewise work out comprehensive systems of thought (metaphysics), and interpret the universe in terms of mind, or reason, or spirit. We may, therefore, characterise this philosophy as critical: it investigates the principles of knowledge; as rationalistic: it accepts the competence of reason in the search after truth; as humanistic: it studies man; as spiritualistic or idealistic: it makes mind the chief factor in the explanation of reality. It is dualistic in the sense that it recognises matter as a secondary factor.

(4) The last period, which extends from 320 B.C. to 529 A.D., when the Emperor Justinian closed the schools of the philosophers, is called the Post-Aristotelian. The scene is laid in Athens, Alexandria, and Rome. Two phases may be noted, an ethical and a theological one. (a) The paramount question with Zeno, the Stoic, and Epicurus, the hedonist, is the problem of conduct: What is the aim of rational human endeavour, the highest good? The Epicureans find the answer in happiness; the Stoics in a virtuous, life. Both schools are interested in logic and metaphysics : the former, because such knowledge will destroy superstition and ignorance and contribute to happiness; the latter, because it will teach man his duty as a part of a rational universe. The Epicureans are mechanists; according to the Stoics, the universe is the expression of divine reason. (b) The theological movement, which took its rise in Alexandria, resulted from the contact of Greek philosophy with Oriental religions. In Neoplatonism, its most developed form, it seeks to explain the world as an emanation from a transcendent God who is both the source and the goal of all being.

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HISTORY OF LOGIC

BIPUL CHOUDHURY

3rd Semester

The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle is generally credited as the father of logic. Chrysippus (280-206 B.C.), a Greek philosopher who was one of the founders of Stoic logic, developed a system in which the fundamental elements were whole propositions. Galen (A.D. 19-ca. 199), the physician, developed the theory of the compound categorical syllogism, but most philosophers used to write commentaries on the works of Aristotle and Chrysippus. Boethius (ca. 480-545) is another logician whose name deserves special mention here. Peter Abelard (1079-1142) was the first major logician of the Middle Ages. Abelard distinguished arguments that are valid because of their form from those valid because of their content. He held that only formal validity is conclusive. William of Ockham (ca. 1285-1347), a medieval logician, made original contributions to logic. Ockham extended the theory of modal logic, conducted an exhaustive study of the forms of valid and invalid syllogisms, and further developed the idea of a metalanguage, a higher-level language used to discuss linguistic entities such as words, terms, and propositions. Toward the middle of the fifteenth century, a reaction arose against the logic of the Middle Ages. Rhetoric largely displaced logic as the primary focus of attention; the logic of Chrysippus, which had already begun to lose its unique identity in the Middle Ages, was ignored altogether. The logic of Aristotle was studied only in highly simplified presentations. A reawakening did not occur until two hundred years later, through the work of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716).

DEVELOPMENT OF SYMBOLIC LOGIC

In order to give a proper account of the development of symbolic logic we have to see a few very important points.

➤ Much before Gottfried Willhelm Leibniz, who is regarded to be the pioneering figure in the development of symbolic logic, many scholars contributed to the development of logic and mathematics.

➤ Epicurean Philodemus (first century B. C.), the author of the treatise Syntax of Philosophy, wrote about the identification between logic and computing. He called logic the art of computing. A similar tone to Philodemus is found in the Neoplatonic philosopher Proclus (411-485 A. D.), who also thought of logic as computing.

➤ The first one who tried to achieve a logical calculus was the medieval scholar Raymundus Lullus,

whose treatise Ars Magna was appreciated much later by Leibniz.

Leibniz can be considered to be the forerunner of mathematical logic. Even in his younger days he had the precise major contribution to technology by providing the conceptual foundation for the electronic circuitry idea of a computing logic, as well as the conception of subjecting logic entities to calculations similar to algebra, which he called the Polar Star of Reasoning, but unfortunately, he could not finalize his project. Leibniz is known as the co-inventor with Newton of the differential calculus. Before he was twenty years old, he published a book entitled Dissertatio de Arte Combinatoria. In this Leibniz put forward two-fold plan for the reform of logic. The first plan was to establish a universal scientific language (Characteristica universalis) in which all scientific concepts could be represented by a combination of basic ideograms. Leibniz thought that logic had a tremendous potential for a scientifically designed universal language which would be mathematical in character. The second plan was to establish a universal calculus of reasoning (calculus ratiocinator). According to him, this calculus of reasoning would provide an automatic method of solution for all problems which could be expressed in the universal language. Leibniz did not carry forward his two-fold plan and hence he cannot be regarded as the founding father of symbolic logic. Had he done it, he would have been known as the father of symbolic logic. The next important name in the development of symbolic logic is that of George Boole (1815-64). Boole attempted to give a mathematical interpretation of logical reasoning. Boole was the first to have a precise idea of a symbolic logical calculus in his works: The Mathematical Analysis of Logic (1847) and An Investigation of the Laws of Thought (1854). Boole proposed a calculus for syllogism. It involved translating each syllogism into arithmetical notation. These ideas led directly to the invention of propositional calculus and Boolean algebra. Boolean algebra is a simple and elegant type of algebraic structure. In 1847, Boole gave the structure its first unrefined description as part of his development of the algebra of logic. The Oxford Companion to Philosophy says. He aimed to translate sentences expressing logical relations into algebraic equations, which were then to be manipulated according to algebraic laws to determine what can be deduced from the original sentences. The algebraic laws can be thought of as axioms governing the operations they mention. Boole saw that the axioms do not have a unique subject matter, but rather characterize a type of structure. This generalizing move enabled the Boolean structure to be discerned in a wide variety of domains; for example, there are Boolean algebras of propositions, sets, and switching circuits. In other words, Boole showed that algebraic formulae could be used to express logical relations with the connectives, such as conjunction, negation, disjunction, and conditionals. Modern logic received the theory of truth functions, the disjunctive normal forms, and the conjunctive normal forms out of Boolean algebra. Another pioneering logician of symbolic logic is Augustus de Morgan (1806-71), an English mathematician who worked on the logic of relations his work Formal Logic. The traditional

treatment of the theory of relations, Morgan considered to be inadequate. Morgan felt that, through valid reasoning, William Stanley Jevons (1835-82) simplified and developed Boole's algebra of classes. John Venn (1834-1923) continued Boole and Jevons's work. In 1881, Venn used diagrams of overlapping regions and some topological models to illustrate the relations between classes and to visually present the truth conditions of propositions. He also used the word 'symbolic logic' for the first time. Gottlob Frege (1848-1925), a German philosopher, mathematician, logician, and professor at the University of Jena, initially focused on mathematics, especially geometry, but soon shifted to logic. His Begriffsschrift (meaning 'concept script') broke new ground by rigorously treating ideas of functions and variables. Frege aimed to show that mathematics is based on logic, and in doing so, devised techniques that went far beyond the Aristotelian syllogistic and Stoic propositional logic traditions. His fundamental idea was that mathematics is a branch of logic, and he needed precise logical tools to prove it. He gave us the propositional calculus with complete axioms, the logic of predicates, and the crucial concept of the logical function in predicate logic. His invention of 'qualification logic' was the greatest development in that field since Aristotle and has completely replaced Aristotelian syllogistic logic in university courses. This revolutionized the perception of logic. Frege is considered one of the Fathers of Modern Symbolic Logic. Other logicians contributed to this field as well. Peano (1858-1932), an Italian mathematician, extended logic into a formal system, working on the foundations of mathematics. Bertrand Russell (1872-1970), a British philosopher, mathematician, and social commentator, was influenced by both Peano and Frege. Russell's well-known contribution is the Russell paradox (1901). Along with A.N. Whitehead (1861-1947), he authored the monumental book 'Principia Mathematica,' published in three volumes from 1910 to 1913. They demonstrated that pure mathematics can be reduced to logic, establishing it as the foundation of mathematics. Today, symbolic logic mainly derives from Frege and Russell, along with many other logicians and mathematicians. In the twentieth century, much work focused on formalizing logical systems and exploring their consistency and completeness. The Czech mathematician and logician Kurt Gödel (1906-1978) made significant contributions, especially with his incompleteness theorems published in the 1930s. Symbolic logic also encompasses developments like multivalued logics and the formalization of modal logic. Recently, logic has continued to evolve as a vital field. in Georg Ferdinand Cantor (Germany, 1845-1918), Rudolf Carnap (Germany, 1891-1970), Richard Jeffrey (USA, 1926-2002), David Kaplan (USA, born 1933), Saul Kripke (USA, born 1940), Willard Van Orman Quine (USA, 1908-2000), Alfred Tarski (Poland, 1902-1983), Georg Henrik von Wright (Finland, UK, 1916- 2003), Ernst Zermelo(Germany, 1871- 1953) etc are to mention a few logicians, mathematicians and philosophers who have contributed their best effort for the growth of the subject.

RENE DESCARTES

SAMILI TERONPI

3rd semester

Descartes, a Frenchman, was born in Touraine in 1596. He came from a wealthy family. Throughout his life, he remained a bachelor, and his inheritance enabled him to dedicate himself to philosophical meditation. Apart from being an epoch-making philosopher, Descartes was a creative mathematician. His great fame induced Queen Christiana of Sweden. At her invitation, he went to Stockholm on October 1649, but the following year in February. 1650, he died of pneumonia. 1. The method of Descartes. Descartes was very much worried by the uncertain philosophy of his times. He saw that philosophy was the cultivation for many centuries of the best minds that had ever lived, and there was yet not a single proposition in it which was not under dispute. [1]However, Descartes did not despair of knowledge and knowledge for him. Must attain a certitude equal to that of the demonstration of arithmetic and geometry. [2]this knowledge, he thought, could be attained if we use an appreciator method of enquiry. Seeing that knowledge proper had already been attained in arithmetic and geometry, he was surprised to find that philosophers had not reared a lofty edifice on such a firm and solid foundation. However, it was the method and not the subject matter so much which had enabled mathematics to attain certitude, so Descartes attempted to understand the method of mathematics which could be utilised for advancing knowledge in any subject. He called his own enquiry 'universal mathematics' in Rule IV of his regulae. This will be called 'meta-mathematics ' today, "such a science", according to Descartes, " should contain the primary rudiments of human reason, and its province ought to extend to the eliciting of true results in every subject" Descartes has noted that deduction alone could yield certain results, and experimental inference could not yield error-less results.4, but he did not see that these methods dealt with two different kinds of propositions. Furthermore, we are only now beginning to realise that philosophy does not deal with cognitive but with non-cognitive propositions concerning self–realisation. Such distinctions would show that the criterion of mathematics cannot be applied to the understanding of philosophical problems.

Descartes, therefore, was very much concerned with the enquiry into the method of philosophising. He had proposed to lay down thirty-six rules, of which he mentioned thirty-one in the Regular. The object of Cartesian methodology was to apply the mathematical method of philosophy with a view to obtaining certitude in knowledge. As a result of his enquiry, he laid down four broad rules for his self-guidance.

1. Never to accept anything as true unless I clearly know it as such. Descartes believes that errors arise from poorly comprehended experiences or from hasty, groundless, and preconceived notions. The only remedy, therefore, he thinks, lies in resolute refusal to believe in what is not clearly and distinctly

perceived.

2. Divide up each of the difficulties under examination into as many parts as possible. We begin with something vague and indefinite, and later on, step by step, attain clearness and Distinctness.

3. Commence with the simplest objects and ascend, step by step, to the more complex. The explanation must be ordered and systematic. Descartes is in favour of deductive use in Philosophical thinking, as he implies that later steps. It should be clearly deducible from earlier ones.

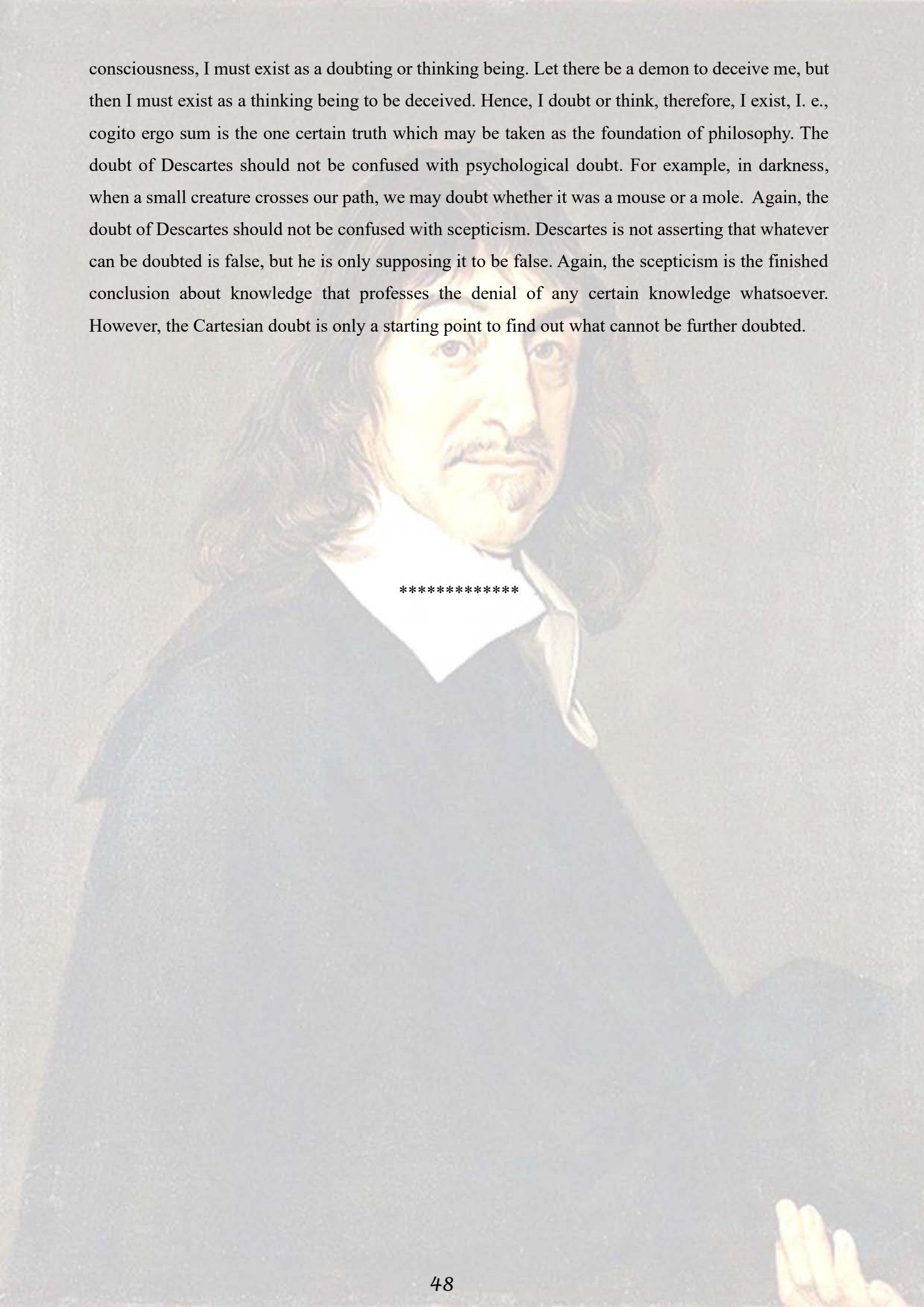
4. In every case, make the enumeration so complete that I might be assured that nothing was omitted. The complex thing can be understood when we know it's (I) several constituent factors separately, clearly and distinctly, and when we (ii) know the order or system in which they are found. Descartes, being himself a great mathematician, was struck by the excellence of mathematics. Therefore, to make philosophy truly scientific, he hoped to make its method patterned on mathematics. Now in Geometry, we first of all start with a few evident axioms and then reach the whole body of its conclusions by means of simple elaborative deduction. Now, in the same way in philosophy too, he tells us, to find out "by an inductive enumeration and a critical sifting of all ideas. . .. a single certain point to deduce all further truths. The first task of philosophy is analytic, the second synthetic." (Windelband, ibid., p. 390).

Now, how can we find something that is sure? Descartes believes that the single, certain truth can be systematically sought by deliberate doubt. When doubt is pushed to its farthest limit, then it will reveal something which is indubitable, which is clearly perceived. Now, to discover the indubitable intuition, let us doubt all that can be doubted.

(i) Sense -testimony can be doubted. Things of our daily life, like tables, chairs, etc. We know through the senses. But the senses deceive us, as is clear from illusions, hallucinations, etc. Now prudence demands that we should not rely on things which deceive us even once. We are deceived not only by distant and minute objects but also by other things. However, some may think that it is impossible to doubt that we are seated here, in a certain place at a certain time. But similar certainty is also found in our dreams, who knows that we may be dreaming, and the things of the present sense–experience may be deceiving us? Thus, some sense beliefs are more probable than others. All of them, again, appear convincing, as long as they last. But, then, whether even one of them is certain, past doubt, we have no grounds of believing; on the contrary, we have ample grounds for doubting.

(ii) Even the truths of science can be doubted. At this stage, it might be objects that the truths of sciences like 2+2=4 cannot be doubted, even in dreams. However, the case does not seem to be quite clear. We cannot know whether any truth or knowledge is at all intended for us, finite beings; whether God has not created us rather for mere opinion and error. Besides, who knows, there might be no God at all. There might be a demon, at once potent and malignant, who tricks us into believing in falsehood. That I doubt cannot be doubted. When the doubt has done its worst, it finds a fact of completely Unassailable

consciousness, I must exist as a doubting or thinking being. Let there be a demon to deceive me, but then I must exist as a thinking being to be deceived. Hence, I doubt or think, therefore, I exist, I. e., cogito ergo sum is the one certain truth which may be taken as the foundation of philosophy. The doubt of Descartes should not be confused with psychological doubt. For example, in darkness, when a small creature crosses our path, we may doubt whether it was a mouse or a mole. Again, the doubt of Descartes should not be confused with scepticism. Descartes is not asserting that whatever can be doubted is false, but he is only supposing it to be false. Again, the scepticism is the finished conclusion about knowledge that professes the denial of any certain knowledge whatsoever. However, the Cartesian doubt is only a starting point to find out what cannot be further doubted.



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PHILOSOPHY IN RELATION TO COMMON SENSE

TUNUSRI SENGYUNG

5th semester

Everyone, however uneducated he may be, has some sort of worldview. He has his views on the nature, value, and destiny of life, body and mind, nature and God. He has his view if truth and error, right and wrong, beauty and ugliness, future life, and the like. He has his view of the relation of the human individual to the world, society and God. His views are generally imbued by the social environment. They are mostly derived from authority and tradition. Some of them are based on scientific evidence and rational reflection. This is a sort if philosophy which may be called the philosophy of common sense. The philosophy of common sense is not based on critical reflection. It is derived from authority and tradition or imbibed from the social environment. It is dogmatic and uncritical. The Human reason cannot be satisfied with this kind of unsystematic and unreflective philosophy. So it passes from the philosophy of common sense to that of science. It builds the superstructure of philosophy on the solid foundation of the results of scientific enquiry. Science rationalizes common sense. Philosophy rationalizes science. Science and common sense. The facts of our common experience are disjointed and isolated from one another. They are independent of one another. They are bewilderingly diverse. The common sense of the world is unreflective and unsystematic. Science seeks to connect the seemingly independent and unreflective facts of experience and explain them by discovering their causes and laws. It reduces the seemingly unrelated plurality of facts of experience to a unified system. The scientific view of the world is systematic. Science is an organized common experience.

The characteristics of science are

1. Generality.

2. Certainty.

3. Accuracy.

First, common experience is concerned with particular facts, but science is concerned with the general features and relations of facts. Science seeks to discover laws and nature, and apply them to particular cases. Generalization is the goal of science. Secondly, common knowledge is uncertain because it is based on mere opinion and not proved by scientific methods. Scientific knowledge is certain because it is based on rational grounds. Thirdly, common knowledge is inaccurate and inexact, but it is verified by scientific methods. Scientific knowledge is exact and accurate. Common knowledge is often based on mere conjecture. But scientific knowledge is based on accurate observation and experiment, and quantitative measurement. Fourthly, scientific knowledge is systematic and methodical. While common knowledge is unsystematic and immethodical. The former is based on scientific methods

while the latter is based on random and casual perception, vague conjecture, and unreliable authority or tradition. Science organizes the isolated facts of common experience and reduces them to a system. It systematizes the particular facts of common experience. It connects them by uncovering their causes and laws. Science is organized common sense. It is a systematized common experience.

PHILOSOPHY AND SCIENCE

Science is an organized common experience, whereas philosophy is organized scientific knowledge. Both science and philosophy deal with the world of our experience, and are based on the facts of our common experience. Both seek to explain them by discovering their connections, their unity, and harmony. The sciences deal with sections of the world, while philosophy deals with the whole world. The sciences seek to harmonize the facts of our common experience. Both seek to explain them by discovering their connections, their unity, and harmony. The sciences deal with sections of the world, while philosophy deals with the whole world. The sciences seek to harmonize the facts of our experience in particular departments, whereas philosophy seeks to harmonize all facts of experience in different departments of the world. Philosophy does not deal with any transcendental world, but with the world which we perceive, and in which we live. Just as in passing from common sense to science, we do not enter upon a new territory, so in passing from the sciences to philosophy, we do not step beyond the world of our experience. Philosophy deals with the same world and seeks to comprehend its meaning. If science is a step beyond common experience, philosophy is a step beyond science. Science organizes the particular truths of our common experience, while philosophy organizes the general truths of science. Each science deals with a particular department of the world, and its verdict is supreme within its own sphere. The results of one science may be in conflict with those of another science. For example, physical sciences teach determinism, All events are strictly determined by their causes. Psychology teaches that volition's and actions are determined by their causes. But Ethics teaches that volition's are free and determined by the self. Philosophy only can reconcile the conflict between them by giving a conception of the reality which does not undermine the freedom and creativity of the self. Philosophy harmonizes the highest truths of the sciences and reduces them to a system. The sciences supply. The data to philosophy, which harmonizes and organizes them. Philosophy without foundation in science is dogmatic. Science is an interpretation of common experience. Philosophy is an interpretation of sciences. Particular sciences deal with particular departments of the world. Philosophy deals with the whole universe. Sciences give particular views of it. Philosophy gives a synoptic view of it. “It is not the ascertainment of particular facts that it is concerned with, but with that gaining of a true insight into the general structure of the universe and man’s relations to it.’ Scientists observe and experiment upon facts, and define and describe them, analyse and classify them, and explain them by ascertaining their causes and laws of their operation. They collect facts by observation and experiment, determine the conditions under which they occur, verification by observation and experiment. So, the method of philosophy, though rational and

reflective, differs from that of science, and formulates their modes of behaviour. They do not seek any ultimate explanation of the whole universe. Philosophy, like the sciences, seeks certain, exact, and organized knowledge. But it seeks comprehensive knowledge. It seeks to know the first cause, the efficient cause, the material cause, the final cause, the meaning, value, and purpose of the entire universe, and man's relation to it. It reflects upon the world as a whole, and the moral, aesthetic, and religious experiences of mankind, and seeks to arrive at a rational conception of reality as a whole. Science does not deal with the first cause and the final cause of the universe. It does not deal with the Creator of the universe and its purpose, and the Holy and the goal. Nor does it enquire into the nature of truth, good, or beauty. Philosophy is speculative and critical. It is the conscious reflection upon the world as a whole, practicality as to its meaning, purpose, and value. Thus, it is speculative. It is the critical examination of the popular and scientific concepts. Thus, it is critical. Sciences assume the reality of matter, energy, time, space, causality, law, ordered series, mind, good and evil, truth and error, beauty and ugliness, and the like, and explain particular facts in the light of these fundamental assumptions. But philosophy takes nothing for granted. It enquires into the validity of these assumptions. It criticizes the concepts of the sciences. It examines the popular and scientific concepts, and systematizes and organizes them.. It aims at a world-view. It is the integration of scientific knowledge. But it is not a mere synthesis of the sciences. It is the synthesis and my critical interpretation of them. Science takes a quantitative view of the world. It is quantitative rather than qualitative. 'It seeks to reduce the qualities of things to quantitative formulae and mathematical equations. It measures, weighs, computes, and describes results in symbols. But philosophy takes a qualitative view of the world. It is. not satisfied with quantitative formulae, which are mere logical abstractions. It considers the qualities and unique features of individual things and events, and explains their meaning and value. Science considers facts. Philosophy evaluates them by considering their meaning and value. Philosophy investigates the ultimate nature of the supreme ends or values, viz., Truth, Good, Beauty, and the Holy, and their relation to Reality. Philosophy, as the science of values, is called Axiology. It enquires into the nature of the supreme values and their relation to Reality. This distinguishes philosophy from science. Science is not concerned with values, but deals with facts only. Philosophy deals with the meaning, purpose, and value of facts. It also deals with the supreme values, which satisfy the deepest human aspirations. Thus, it is not simply the synthesis of the sciences. It integrates the results of all the sciences, satisfies our scientific interests, moral, aesthetic, and religious aspirations, and gives a rational conception of reality as a whole. It satisfies not only our intellectual demand for harmony and unity, but also our moral aspiration for the Good, aesthetic aspirations for Beauty, and religious aspiration for communion with God, the Holy. It aims at a rational conception of Reality, which is a completely coherent structure fulfilling the conditions of Truth, Good, Beauty, and the Holy. Observation, experiment, classification, explanation, analysis, synthesis, deduction, and induction are the methods of science. It explains particular facts by ascertaining their causes and formulating laws or uniformities of behaviour, or by framing hypotheses. The method of Philosophy

is, as we have already seen, rational reflection on the framing of hypotheses. But it is not quantitative and numerical like the scientific method. Philosophy starts with the conclusions of the various sciences, adds to them the results of the ethical, aesthetic, and religious experiences of mankind, and then reflects upon the whole in order to arrive at a rational conception of reality and of our position in it. Philosophy is the conscious reflection upon the world as a whole, particularly as to its meaning, purpose, and value. It is the critical examination of the concepts of common sense and science. It is thus speculative and critical. It aims at a rational world-view by a critical examination of common concepts and concepts of science. Though philosophy is opposed to science in some respects, they are interdependent on each other in certain other respects. We cannot spin out the web of philosophy by sheer speculation; it must be built upon sciences which supply the data of philosophy. Hence, philosophy without science is inadequate. Sciences, too, are incomplete without philosophy. The sciences are isolated from one another, unless they are coordinated and unified by philosophy. Philosophy, therefore, is empty without science, and science is blind without philosophy. They are complementary to, and interdependent upon, each other. The sciences without philosophy are an aggregate without unity, a body without a soul: philosophy without the sciences is a soul without a body, different in nothing from poetry and its dreams.'

Methods of science and philosophy

Science observes, experiments, measures, analyses, classifies, and explains particular facts by ascertaining their causes and formulating their laws or uniformities of behaviour or by framing hypotheses. Observation and experiment, classification and explanation, analysis and_ synthesis, induction and deduction are the methods of science. The method of philosophy is rational reflection, like that of science. The method of science is accurate observation, experiment, and rational explanation. It accurately observes and experiments with rational hypotheses. The method of philosophy is rational reflection, like that of science. The method of science is accurate observation, experiment, and rational explanation. It accurately observes and experiments on particular facts and explains them by general laws of nature or by rational hypotheses. The method of philosophy is rational reflection on the results of the sciences, and moral, aesthetic, and religious experiences, and the explanation of them by a rational conception of reality. The methods of both science and philosophy are rational. But philosophy is comprehensive. It seeks to harmonize the facts of experience and the highest conclusions of sciences with one another, and arrive at a rational conception of reality as a whole. It does not observe and experiment, classify and explain facts by the laws of nature and hypotheses. It does not use mathematical formulae and quantitative methods. It does not resort to induction and deduction. But reflects upon the facts of experience and scientific concepts, logical, ethical, aesthetic, and religious values, and interprets them by a rational hypothesis, which can harmonise them with one another. Its method is empirical and speculative or transcendental. It is rational reflection, coordination, and interpretation by a rational hypothesis, which is incapable of verification by observation and experiment. So, the method of philosophy, though rational and reflective, differs from that of science.

PROOFS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

VICTOR RAJ KOWAR

3rd semester

Philosophers and theologians have long sought rational demonstrations for the existence of God, giving rise to several classical proofs. The **ontological argument**, advanced by Anselm, reasons from the concept of a perfect being to God's necessary existence. The **cosmological argument**, rooted in thinkers like Aquinas, traces the cause of the universe to a first mover or necessary being. The **teleological argument** appeals to order and design in nature as evidence of divine purpose. Meanwhile, the **moral argument** sees the foundation of morality in God's existence. Collectively, these proofs represent humanity's enduring quest to reconcile faith with reason.

i. The Cosmological Argument- The world is contingent and dependent. Therefore, it must depend upon a necessary and independent being. The world is relative. Therefore, it must depend upon the Absolute. All things and beings in the world depend upon other things and beings. They are non-self-existent. They depend for their existence upon their cause. They are not independent entities. They are related to other things in the spatio-temporal order. They are relative and limited by space and time. They are finite and limited. The whole world is contingent, dependent, relative, and finite, or limited in time and space. Therefore, it must depend upon a necessary, independent, absolute, and infinite being or God for its existence. He is not contingent and dependent on any other being. He is not related to any other being external to him. He is not limited in time and space. He is absolute and infinite and the ground of the world. The cosmological argument is stated in a popular form; thus, the world is a system of effects. The effects have their causes. These causes, again, are effects of their causes, and so on, but we cannot go on indefinitely, backward from effects to causes. There can be no infinite regress, so we must stop at a point and suppose the existence of an absolute. First cause is Causa Sui, which is self-existence and self-cause, and independence of any other cause. God and the first cause are beyond the spatial, temporal world, independent, infinite, unnecessary, and unconditioned. Martineau stated the cosmological argument in the form of a causal argument. According to him, a causal argument consists of the argument of the existence of God from the very nature and idea of causality. A cause is a power, force, or energy that produces an effect; it produces a particular effect to the exclusion of others by exercising its causal energy. The causal energy is directed to produce a particular effect. But only a mind can direct energy. We are directly aware of energy only in our volition in the form of will. The causality immediately known to us is will causality. We extend this idea of causality to Nature by analogy. So the energy in Nature must not be unconscious physical energy, but mental energy of God or Infinite Mind; the causality in Nature is will-causality of God. The cosmic energy is the divine energy immanent in the world. Thus, God is the cause of the world. He is the material cause and the efficient cause.

ii. The Teleological Argument-The teleological argument consists in inferring the existence of God from the marks of design in the world. As its intelligent designer, it takes a popular form, just as a house, whose divine architect is full of harmony, order, and unity, is designed by an intelligent architect. So the world, which is full of unity, order, and harmony, must be designed by an infinite intelligent designer or God is the intelligent designer of the world. Martineau argues that selection, combination, and graduation are the marks of intelligent design. An intelligent designer selects his materials, combines them, and places them in an order of graduation. An architect selects proper materials for a building, combines them with one another in a particular order, and adapts them to one another. He first lays the foundation, then builds the walls, and at last the roof. There is a graduation in the different parts of the building. Similarly, Martineau argues that there are abundant marks of selection, combination, and graduation in nature. The earth, mountains, oceans, plants, animal bodies, and human organisms are composed of selected materials, which are adapted to one another with a definite order. The mind depends upon life and the nervous system. Life depends upon matter. Plants depend upon material things for their articles of food. There is a hierarchy of different grades of beings. Selection, combination, graduation. The evidence found in the world proves that it is the work of intelligent designers. They cannot be the work of designers and those with finite intelligence. So, they are the work of God, who has infinite knowledge. The different organs in an organism are coordinated with one another to serve particular ends. Animal instincts are expressed in complex, well-coordinated movements to serve the biological ends of self-preservation and race preservation. They unerringly realize their ends without consciousness of them. These are unmistakable signs of design. The wonderful adaptations in nature are expressions of intelligent design. They prove the existence of God as an intelligent designer of the world. This is the teleological argument for the existence of God. This is Martineau's teleological argument. God is conceived either as transcendent or immanent. He imposes his plan upon pre-existing matter from without and transmutes it into the universe. This is called transcendent or external teleology. Our God is the indwelling spirit of the world, evolving its material form within his nature and realizing his purpose through it. This is called internal teleology or immanent finality.

iii. The ontological argument- The ontological argument consists in inferring the existence of God from the idea of God, and Anselm deduced the existence of God from the idea of a perfect being. A perfect being must exist before perfection involves existence. An existent perfect being is more perfect than a non-existent perfect being. Descartes repeated Anselm's ontological argument. The existence of God follows from the idea of a perfect being, as perfection implies existence. God without perfection would be an imperfect being. But Descartes advanced another argument allied to the ontological argument. I have an idea of an infinite being in my mind. What is its cause? No finite object can produce it. An effect cannot be more than its cause, but a cause can be more than its effect. All finite objects together cannot produce the idea of an infinite being. Because the sum of finite beings is finite, I cannot be the cause of

the idea of the infinite, because I am actually finite, though I am potentially infinite. The idea of God is o the infinite by negating the finite, since it expresses infinite beings. Therefore, God or the indefinite infinit is not sub-finite or indefinite, but a positive being. The indefinite is the ground of the finite being, which i the cause of the ideas of the indefinite. Descartes says, "I should not have the idea of an infinite substance seeing I am a finite being, unless it were given to me by some substance, in reality indefinite." Thus, Descarte inferred the existence of God as the cause of the idea of the finite being. Hegel stated the ontological argumen in the form, "Thought and reality are identical. Reality cannot exist for itself. It exists as an object of a external consciousness of God. Reality is an object of divine thought, which is expressed in it. The univers is intangible to a finite mind because it is an externalization of the infinite mind. Self and non-self ar correlative to each other. They are movements of absolute self-consciousness, which relate them to each othe in their all-embracing unity. So, thought and reality are identical. What is real is rational. What is rational i real. The world presupposes the existence of God as its knower. Hegel did not infer the existence of Go from the idea of God. Now, did he infer the existence of God as the cause of the idea of God? Pringle Pattiso stated the ontological argument in another form. In finite life, the idea transcends the actual and is neve completely realized. But there cannot be an unbridgeable gap between the idea and the actual. They ar ultimately identical. The ideal is actual in God.

iv. The Moral Argument- The popular form of the moral argument is simple. The virtuous are not properly rewarded, and the vicious are not adequately punished in this world. So God will give them their merited rewards and punishment in the future life. He is the moral governor. Otherwise, there will not be moral justice. Kant regarded the existence of God as a postulate of morality. The highest good is virtue. The complete good is virtue in harmony with happiness. Our moral consciousness demands that virtue ought to be rewarded with happiness. But the virtues are seldom found to be happy in the world. So, Kent argued there must be a supreme being or God who will reward the virtuous with happiness in the next World. Virtue is goodwill or rational will, both of feelings and desires a person can make himself virtuous. But he cannot make himself happy, because happiness depends upon outward favourable circumstances which are beyond his control, but God can make the virtuous happy in future life because he is the controller of the realm of spirits and the realm of nature. The existence of God is a postulate of morality. Martineau gave other moral arguments. First, the moral law is obligatory on us. It is not an impersonal law. It is a command of God, communicated to us through causal signs, which is the voice of God in us. Rashdal also gave this argument. The moral law does not exist in the material world. It is not created by us. It is not imposed by society or the state on us. So it is a law of God. Secondly, Martineau inferred the existence of God from moral obligation as its source. It is a relation between a finite person and an infinite person or God. If I had been the source of my moral obligation, I could have annulled it at my will, but I can never annul a moral obligation. The society or the state is not its source because it can produce physical compulsion, but not moral obligation, so God is the source of moral obligation. Our moral obligation is completely due to him.

Thirdly, Marty inferred the existence of God as the most perfect and holy person in a hierarchy of morals. We find in the world that some people are more perfect than others. The former are examples to the latter. We are always inspired and ennobled by the example of holy persons. Hence, we are led to believe that there is the most holy and perfect person or God, who is the culmination of all perfection. James Seth inferred the existence of God from the moral ideal. The moral ideal is infinite and cannot be completely realized by us. But what is ideal in us is actual in God. The moral perfection of God is imperfectly revealed to us as the moral ideal, which inspires us to realize it gradually. Seth says, “The ideal is not simply the unreal. But the expression and exponent of the real what's on our side is the ideal. It is on its further side, the real. Behind the ‘ought’ lies the ‘is’. Behind our existence ‘ought to be’ the external ‘I am’ of the divine righteousness.”

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RELATION BETWEEN ETHICS AND OTHER SUBJECTS

BIVASH SARKAR

3rd semester

ETHICS AND PHYSICAL SCIENCE

Physical science deals with morality. But moral life is lived in the midst of nature of the laws of nature make us fearless. The ocean, the sky, and the land cannot be divorced from each other. Knowledge of the secrets of nature indirectly influences our wee lives. Physical sciences help us understand the nature of the environment within which moral life is lived. Thus, Ethics is directly related to the physical sciences.

ETHICS AND BIOLOGY

Ethics deals with the morality of human conduct. Human life is not only mental life, but also bodily life. The mind is intimately connected with the body. Many duties exp: temperance rests on psychological consideration and are unintelligible and inexplicable without any direct reference to psychological details; thus, moral life is intimately connected with bodily life, and ethics is indirectly related to biology. It is indirectly related to biology. But Herbert Spencer wrongly holds that the criterion of good or bad conduct is to be found in the tendency to promote or hinder the development of life. The key to morality cannot be found in the life of the organism. Moral conduct has no meaning without reference to a being who has a rational will. The development of organic life is but a subordinate part of the end of life. Thus, biology has no direct bearing upon ethics.

ETHICS AND PSYCHOLOGY

Ethics is the normative science of human conduct. It seeks to determine the nature of the Highest Good of human life. It lays down the standard of the Supreme Good which ought to determine our volitions and actions. It teaches us how we ought to will. But before we can determine how we ought to will, we must know how we do will. And psychology tells us how we actually will. Thus, Ethics is based upon Psychology. It is based upon the psychology of will. Psychology is the foundation of ethics. So, Ethics studies the psychological basis of morality. However, there are important differences between Psychology and the scope of psychology is process. Of all processes, willing or volition alone. It does not study knowing and feeling. Or, it studies them with reference to their bearing on volition and action. Ethics considers human experience as an activity in the pursuit of an end or ideal. But though Psychology and Ethics both deal with volition, Ethics cannot be identified with the psychology of will. (2) Psychology is a positive science, while Ethics is a normative science. Ethics enquires how we ought to will, but Psychology enquires how we actually do will. It deals with the process of volition as it actually happens in the mind. But it does not enquire into its rightness or wrongness, or the nature of the highest good which determines it. In other words, Psychology is a science of the actual, while Ethics is a science of the ideal.

Psychology, as a scientific discipline, studies all mental processes in pursuit of theoretical knowledge. But Ethics, as a normative science, seeks to explain the facts of moral life by reference to an ideal according to which we ought to live. Moral facts are mental facts, and so they come within the province of Psychology. However, psychology studies them simply as mental phenomena and moral facts. It studies them without any reference to their moral significance. But Ethics is pre-eminently the science of the Ought.

ETHICS AND SOCIOLOGY

Ethics is a normative science of the conduct of men. But man is a social being. He cannot live apart from society. He owes the major portion of his mental and moral equipment to society. An individual imbibes his notions of right and wrong, good and evil, from the customs and manners prevailing in a society. A human being, apart from a society, is an abstraction. Again, social progress depends upon the moral individuals. The vision of the moral reformers determines the moral progress of society. Thus, the individual and the society influence each other. Ethics is the science of the morality of the individual. Sociology is the science of the structure, origin, and development of human society. It is the natural history of social groups. It studies the origin, growth, and development of social groups through the modification of customs and institutions. Thus, Ethics is closely connected with Sociology. Ethics is closely related to Sociology. It seeks to determine the nature of the Supreme Good of the individual. But the individual is a part and parcel of society. He cannot be conceived apart from society. Individuals are interdependent members of the social organism. Thus, the Supreme Good of the individual depends upon that of the society. The personal good must be in harmony with the common good or the social good. Ethics is mainly concerned with the conduct of the individual. Sociology is concerned with the conduct of society, i.e., its habits, manners, customs, and institutions, which influence the conduct of the individual. Hence, Ethics must depend upon Sociology in determining the nature of the Supreme Good of the individual in his relation to society. Sociology is a positive science. It simply investigates the nature, origin, and development of habits, customs, manners, and institutions of social groups without reference to any moral standard. It does not consider their moral worth. Sociology depends upon ethics to consider its moral worth. Sociology depends upon ethics for the moral estimation of these customs and manners. Sociology. Considers them as natural facts. Ethics considers their moral value and regards them as good or bad. The intimate relation of Ethics and Sociology has led some ethical thinkers (e.g., Evolutionary Hedonists) to regard Ethics as a branch of Sociology. They hold that morality is a product of the evolution of society. They trace the conception of normal good ultimately to the conduct of animals. They try to evolve the ideal from the actual. Though Ethics is closely connected with Sociology, it is not a part of it. There are important differences between them. Ethics differs from Sociology in the following points:

(1) Sociology is a positive science, while Ethics is a normative science. Sociology gives us data or facts from the moral point of view and judges them to be moral or immoral. them to be moral or immoral. about

social groups. Ethics pronounces judgment of value upon them and interprets them with reference to the moral ideal. It evaluates customs, manners, and institutions

2) Sociology is a purely theoretical enquiry, while Ethics, as a normative science, has a practical bearing upon our lives. It deduces duties and rights from the Highest Good, seeks to determine our virtues, indicates the ethical functions of the State, and determines the moral worth of social customs and manners, and political laws, constitutions, and institutions.

(3) Sociology is a purely theoretical science, while Ethics, as a normative science, is closely connected with Metaphysics. Ethics is the science of the Moral Ideal. Metaphysics investigates the validity of the Moral Ideal, or its relation to Reality. Thus, Ethics is closely connected with Metaphysics. But Sociology is a purely theoretical science.

ETHICS AND POLITICS

Politics is the science of government; it describes the structure and functions of government. It is a normative science. It seeks to prescribe laws and organize institutions and regulate the conduct of individuals with a view to realizing public good or utility. Government is an institution devised by men for their welfare. enacts laws for the attainment of public good, and enforces them on people with threats of punishment. Politics aiming at public good is intimately connected with Ethics, which determines the Supreme Good of the individual. In a narrow sense, Politics aims at the enactment of such laws as will ensure the protection of the person and the property of individuals in a State. The government should enact laws and set up and maintain institutions in accordance with moral principles. States should be guided by the rules of morality in their multiform relations and activities. They should not ignore ethical considerations. The moral basis of a State is the general will of the people. Its strength and safety depend upon it, not on arbitrary rule. Its deal is the establishment of an ideal welfare state which best promotes the self-development and moral perfection of its citizens. Man is a social animal. He is also a political animal, Aristotle says. Man is always a member of some kind of community or political organization. Moral life is not lived apart from the State. It has always lived in some sort of political organization. Moral life, though not identical with political life, is a part of it. Moral conduct is intimately connected with political life. Rights and duties are maintained by the State. Virtues are relative to the State. So, Ethics is related to Politics. Both Ethics and Politics deal with human conduct. They both treat human acts as related to the end of human good. They both consider human actions as determined by social relations, and as determining them. But Ethics is not a branch of Politics; nor is Politics a branch of Ethics.

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TEACHER'S CORNER

LESSONS IN RESILIENCE: A PHILOSOPHICAL CHRONICLE OF MY TRANSFORMATIVE ENCOUNTERS

Ms. Bijuli Rajiyung
Assistant Professor
Department of Philosophy
Arya Vidyapeeth College(A)

The philosophical examination of personal experiences with arduous personalities and the transformative journey towards becoming a better human being presents a compelling narrative that intertwines the complexity of human interactions with the pursuit of personal growth and moral development. Throughout my life's encounters with such personalities, I have come to appreciate how these experiences have significantly shaped my character, reinforcing virtues such as patience, resilience, and empathy. At the core of these transformative experiences lies the need to navigate relationships fraught with conflict, misunderstanding, and the occasional sting of ingratitude. The philosophical underpinnings of virtue ethics, particularly as articulated by Aristotle, have been instrumental in understanding this journey. According to Aristotle, virtues are cultivated through habitual practice, and it is often through adversity that these virtues are most rigorously honed. Arduous individuals, with their challenging behaviours, have served as unwitting mentors in this process, offering real-world scenarios that necessitate the practice of patience and forgiveness. The Stoic philosophers further illuminate this journey by emphasizing the importance of internal reactions over external events. The Stoics teach us to focus on controlling our responses and maintaining emotional equanimity, regardless of others' actions or attitudes. This Stoic mindset has aided me in remaining composed in the face of adversity, cultivating an inner resilience that is essential for personal growth. The existential insights of Jean-Paul Sartre also resonate within these interactions, particularly his notion of "bad faith," which describes individuals who are not true to their authentic selves. Arduous personalities often embody this existential inauthenticity, failing to take responsibility for their actions or acknowledge the perspectives of others. Yet, through these encounters, I have been compelled to confront my own authenticity, striving to transcend their negativity by acting with integrity and sincerity, thereby affirming my personal values and commitments. However, within this intricate dance of human interactions lies the disheartening reality of ungratefulness, a common trait among some arduous individuals, which challenges the limits of altruism and kindness. The philosophical considerations of utilitarianism come into play here, highlighting the tension between acting for the greater good and the emotional toll of unreciprocated kindness. Utilitarian philosophy suggests that actions should be guided by the pursuit of collective happiness, yet the experience of ingratitude tests this ideal, prompting reflections on the balance between selfless giving and self-preservation. These interactions have further deepened my understanding of the Buddhist concept of non-attachment, a principle that encourages

offering kindness without expectation of return. This perspective has fostered a sense of freedom in giving, allowing me to extend goodwill irrespective of the reaction received. It reinforces the notion that the act of kindness itself, rather than its acknowledgment, is where intrinsic value lies. Additionally, the philosophy of positive psychology underscores the importance of nurturing positive relationships and focusing on the strengths that such challenges reveal. This contemporary approach emphasizes the significance of reframing negative experiences as opportunities for growth and learning. By shifting perspective in this way, interactions with arduous personalities transform into catalysts for developing resilience and empathy, strengthening the virtues necessary for a well-rounded character. In synthesis, the philosophy of my life's experiences with these personalities and the insights gained from their ungratefulness have profoundly influenced my journey towards becoming a better human. These encounters, viewed through the lenses of virtue ethics, Stoicism, existentialism, and Buddhist non-attachment, reveal that growth often emerges from discomfort and challenge. By engaging philosophically with these experiences, I have discovered that the path to personal development is neither linear nor devoid of trials, but rather a dynamic interplay of cultivating resilience, embracing authenticity, and offering boundless kindness, ultimately leading to a more enriched and empathetic existence.

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WHY IS PHILOSOPHY ESSENTIAL IN THE ERA OF THE TECHNOLOGICAL WORLD?

Dr.Sunu Kalita
Assistant Professor
Department of Philosophy
Arya Vidyapeeth College (A)

In an era dominated by rapid technological advancements, information overload, and global challenges, one might wonder if philosophy—an ancient discipline rooted in questioning the fundamentals of existence—still holds relevance. Yet, far from being a relic of the past, philosophy remains a vital tool for navigating the complexities of contemporary life. It equips us with the skills to think critically, make ethical decisions, and find personal meaning amid chaos. Let us see why philosophy is not just useful but necessary in today's society, drawing on insights from various thinkers and studies. Philosophy trains the mind to dissect arguments, evaluate evidence, and construct logical responses—skills that are indispensable in a world flooded with misinformation and fake news. Studying philosophy hones critical reasoning, allowing individuals to give and receive criticism effectively, which is crucial for professional environments where collaboration and debate are key. For instance, it improves problem-solving by teaching how to analyse concepts, definitions, and values, while also enhancing communication through clear, well-structured arguments. Philosophy essentially involves thinking hard about life's big questions, including — what philosophy is, how it works, as well as its four core branches — why we are here, how we can know anything about the world, and what our lives are for. During *Philosophy Break* where we believe the practice of philosophy is the antidote to a world saturated by information, and the more that people engage with philosophy, the more fulfilling their lives will be. The addictive nature of the digital world, for instance, afflicts many of us. The relentless torrent of information saturates our attention spans. But life is finite, and the things we give attention to define our lives. It's crucial to break free from the turbulent current and come up for air.

In practical terms, these abilities translate to real-world benefits. Philosophy graduates often excel in standardized tests like the LSAT and GRE, preparing them for careers in law, medicine, and engineering, where analytical reasoning is paramount. Moreover, in an age of algorithmic decision-making and AI, philosophy encourages us to question assumptions and adapt to new information, fostering a dynamic intellect that thinks differently and solves unconventional problems.

Modern society grapples with ethical quandaries amplified by technology, from AI ethics to data privacy and climate responsibility. Philosophy provides frameworks for evaluating these issues, helping us assess the implications of innovations like artificial intelligence. It redefines technology not as an omnipotent force but as a tool to enhance human creativity, warning against blind trust that could lead to pathological dependencies. Furthermore, philosophy influences ethical choices and shapes societal beliefs, promoting

deep thinking about right and wrong. Courses in ethics and logic are especially valuable for fields like business and healthcare, where decisions impact lives. By encouraging us to question entrenched truths and recognize clichés, philosophy equips individuals to interpret phenomena critically, as seen in everyday analysis of media and culture. Beyond professional skills, philosophy enriches personal life by addressing life's big questions: Why are we here? What makes a good life? As Socrates famously declared, the unexamined life is not worth living, urging reflection over conformity. In a digitally distracted world, it counters information overload by promoting mindful use of time, as Seneca advised in his essay on the shortness of life. This reflective practice provides direction, enriches existence, and fosters a love of learning, helping individuals find purpose amid uncertainty. Engaging with philosophers like Nietzsche or Lucretius can transform worldviews, challenge everyday assumptions and easing existential anxieties. Philosophy cultivates empathy by developing the ability to see the world from others' perspectives, including different cultures and individuals. In the 21st century, it emphasizes inclusion by empowering diverse groups and encouraging dialogue across differences, moving beyond universal ideals to accept varied views while criticizing toxic ones. This is essential for building fair societies in an increasingly globalized world. Philosophy does not compete with science; it complements and enhances it by questioning assumptions and clarifying concepts. For example, it explores what neuroscience reveals about free will or what physics suggests about reality. This interdisciplinary role makes philosophy vital for fields like the sciences, arts, and social studies, improving methods of research and analysis. In summary, philosophy remains highly relevant; it is a fundamental element for thriving in modern society. It sharpens minds, guides ethics, enriches lives, promotes understanding, and bridges disciplines—all while encouraging a lifelong pursuit of wisdom. As Bertrand Russell noted, it enlarges our intellectual imagination and diminishes dogmatic assurance, making us better equipped to face the uncertainties of the future. In a time when quick answers often overshadow deep inquiry, embracing philosophy ensures we live not just efficiently, but meaningfully.

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MY LIFE AS A STUDENT AND A TEACHER

Krishna Deori
Guest Faculty
Department of Philosophy
Arya Vidyapeeth College(A)

Life tends to lead us places we don't confess to wanting to be. I assumed studying science in high school was a practical and sound-minded thing to accomplish. But underneath, I yearned for a realm of words, fantasy, and ideas. I wrote poetry and short fiction to attempt to find meaning beyond equations and numbers. This forbidden passion slowly began to lead me to philosophy as a natural consequence of the kind of questions I already found myself asking.

It was not straightforward learning philosophy for the first time. The topic was too theoretical, with complex vocabulary and arguments unrelated to everyday life. I struggled in the initial lessons, and I doubted if I made the correct decision to learn about this subject. However, upon listening to the biographies of philosophers, the entire outlook shifted. Socrates progressed from a name on a page to a man standing in the marketplace who was tall enough to ask questions and courageous enough to die for what he believed. His student, Plato, led me to a world of ideals and visions that made me challenge myself to look beyond the mundane. Descartes' process of doubt helped me to accept uncertainty. Although generally regarded as black, Nietzsche released the profound human battle against hopelessness and the quest for meaning. Their philosophies were human stories full of passion and dedication, and not mere theories. This realization did change my thought process in a different direction when it came to philosophy. Philosophy was realized to be more about being present in the moment and not about thoughts. Having overcome that barrier, I started working on the topic with greater interest.

My guides led me, and similarly, the philosophers lead the philosophers. Their words of encouragement and apt descriptions filled me with confidence in my ability, most importantly when I used to lack confidence. They helped me learn to love the subject, along with teaching the subject. Their encouragement was very valuable while studying for the competitive exams. As a result of their guidance and my efforts, I cleared the NET and SLET in the initial attempts. That accomplishment was not a singular one, an individual one. It permitted me to know that I could be a teacher for this subject. It ignited a new enthusiasm to teach philosophy and relate it to others, as had been done for me by my teachers. But enthusiasm for a subject by itself does not create a great teacher. I realized that I needed to improve my teaching and make it sharper; feel more at ease among the students, and introduce them to philosophy without diluting its content. This compelled me to do a B.Ed. degree, where I understood the importance of communication, compassion for teaching, and pedagogy. My training bridged the gap between learning and teaching. I understood that teaching was not just imparting facts but arousing curiosity, imparting values, and improving the thinking faculty of the students. Philosophy, above all

other subjects, needs this method because it deals with deep questions that are contentious and reflective.My experience of teaching at Arya Vidyapeeth College remains one of the most cherished memories of my life. It was a humbling but rewarding experience to be permitted to teach alongside the same teachers who taught me in turn and to stand in the same classrooms where I previously sat as a student. A full circle had been formed. Teaching philosophy for me here, is not merely a profession; it's an obligation. Daily life in the classroom reminds me of my own life, full of uncertainty, curiosity, and bewilderment. I wish not only to educate but to engage with my students, help them solve their struggles with ideas, question, and view philosophy as a living matter and not remote.

Reflecting back, my path involves more than a change in academia. It's a journey of self-improvement, transcending curiosity to commitment, self-doubt to assurance, and learner to educator. Philosophy is now a new approach to life for me. Through being a student, philosophy taught me how to ask questions without fear, to find answers to every doubt. It emboldened me to question, investigate, and entertain possibilities beyond what is immediately apparent. It is my responsibility as a teacher to lead other individuals on their way and make them understand that philosophy as a vibrant entity exists in life, and not only in books

Every time philosophy comes to my mind, I remember that teaching and learning are companions, the two sides of the same coin. I learn from the questions, problems, and new philosophy journey. What had been a passion for poetry, writings, and the books of the world has now become information about students as I teach philosophy. The classroom has turned into a place of conversation where both learners and teachers progress together. I keep on developing myself, which has now become an all-consuming dedication to ideas, to learning, and to sharing. Philosophy has given me my voice, my profession, and most importantly, a sense of meaningful existence.

As I go on, I firmly believe that philosophy is less a case of having the courage to ask questions and not necessarily try to get answers. I would like to inspire at least one student in each class not to view philosophy as a hard subject but as a guide in the quest for meaning and truth.

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ACTIVITIES

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Guwahati, Assam, India

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FAREWELL
Farewell

First Class Holders
(2024-2025)

ANAMIKA MARAK

ANASUYA DEKA

ANINDITA KALITA

ANKITA SARKAR

ANULEKHA THALEDDAR

BULBUL HUSSAIN

DIPIKA MEDHI

ELIZA BORO

MADHUSMITA MAJUMDAR

NEKIBUDDIN AHMED

PRIYA RAI

RISHITA KUMARI

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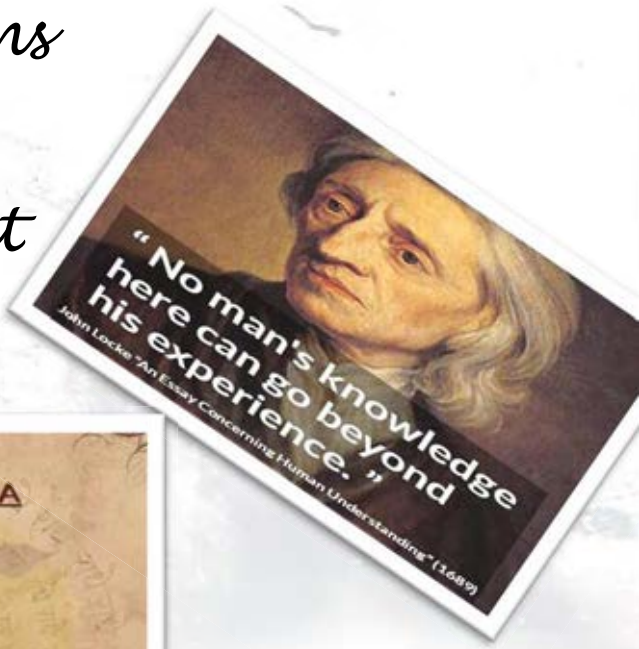
SABINA YASMIN

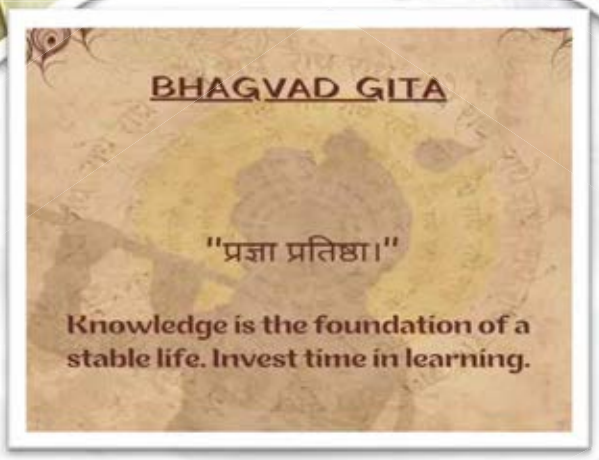
SMRIITI DAS

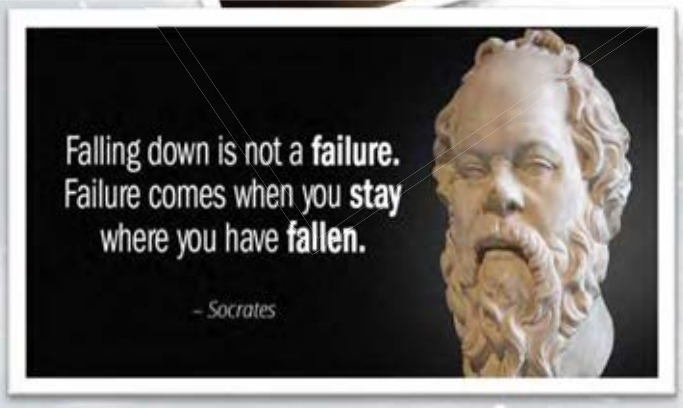
TANISHA DAS

TRINAYAN BARTHAKUR

Aphorisms of Thought







Great Philosophical and Ethical Movie Suggestions

You Don't Know Jack (2010) is a biopic on Dr. Jack Kevorkian, the controversial pathologist who championed physician-assisted suicide. It explores the ethical dilemmas of euthanasia, individual rights, and society's struggle with death and dignity. Through testimonies and debates, the film questions morality, compassion, and the limits of medical responsibility.

The Matrix **(1999)** follows Neo, a hacker who discovers that reality is a simulated world controlled by machines. Guided by Morpheus, he confronts questions of free will, truth, and identity. Blending thrilling action with deep philosophical ideas, the film explores perception, reality, and humanity's struggle for liberation.

Okja (2017) directed by Bong Joon-ho, follows a young girl, Mija, who raises a genetically modified "super pig" only to have it taken by a powerful corporation. The film blends adventure with moral questions about animal rights, corporate greed, environmental ethics, and the complex choices between compassion and exploitation.

Inception (2010) directed by Christopher Nolan, explores dreams within dreams through Dom Cobb, a thief skilled in extracting secrets from the subconscious. Tasked with planting an idea instead, he faces questions of reality, free will, and identity. The film masterfully blends action, psychology, and philosophy, leaving audiences questioning what is real.

Boyhood (2014) directed by Richard Linklater, uniquely follows Mason's life from age six to eighteen, filmed over twelve years with the same cast. The film captures ordinary moments of growing up, family struggles, and personal change, raising philosophical reflections on time, identity, memory, and the meaning found in everyday existence.

Thank you