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GREEK AND MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY

SEMESTER - V

PHILOSOPHY

BLOCK 1

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COURSE INTRODUCTION:

This course introduces to you the subject of Greek and Medieval Philosophy. Greek Philosophy is playing an important role in western philosophy. Aristotle says that philosophy arises out of wonder. People were curious about everything. So knowledge was something, which was in the emerging stage in that period. So in this course some basic concepts of Greek and Medieval philosophy are going to deal with. Different concepts like concept of substance, change, being, atoms, knowledge, existence of God, religion are the issues which are going to be studied in this course. In this specified course these entire concepts will be studied in the light of some pre-Socratic, traditional Greek and Greek medieval philosophers.

BLOCK INTRODUCTION

This course consists of two blocks. The first block consists of eight units. First unit of this block is 'The Problem of Substance of Thales'. After reading this unit, you will be able to know that the philosophical term 'substance' corresponds to the Greek 'ousia', which means 'being', transmitted via the Latin 'substantia', which means 'something that stands under or grounds things'. According to the generic sense, therefore, the substances in a given philosophical system are those things which, according to that system, are the foundational or fundamental entities of reality

The name of the second unit of this block is **'The Problem of Change'**. This unity introduces to you the problem of change. Here you will find the problem as discussed both by the Eleatic thinkers, viz. Xenophanes, Parmenides and Zeno and also by Heraclitus. All the Eleatic thinkers were from Elea, a town in South Italy and Heraclitus was a citizen of Ephesus, in Asia Minor.

'The Problem of Being' is the third unit of this block. This unit introduces to you the concept of being as interpreted by the thinkers of the Ionic school. Ionia was situated at the coast of Asia Minor.

The fourth unit of course one is **'the Paradoxes of Zeno'**. This unit introduces to you Zeno's argument against motion and plurality. Zeno was a pre-Socratic Greek philosopher of Magna Graecia and a member of the Eleatic School founded by Parmenides. He was the third and last important thinker of the Eleatic school. He is best known for his paradoxes. The main sources of the nature of Zeno's arguments on motion are the writings of Aristotle and Simplicius of Cilicia.

The fifth unit of this course is **'Democritus: Atomism'.** After going through this unit, one will be able to about development of Atomism, Anaxogoras, Democritus' concept of atoms, the Atomism of Democritus and the Weight of the Atoms

The sixth unit of this block is **'Socrates: Virtue and Knowledge'**. This unit introduces you to Socrates' faith in knowledge, in clear and reasoned thinking, is strong-so strong that he sees in it the cure of all our ills. He applies his method to all human problems, particularly to the problems of morality, and seeks to find a rational basis for conduct. The radical thinkers, as we saw, looked upon the ethical ideas and practices of their times as mere conventions; after all, might makes right.

The seventh unit is **'Plato: Theory of Knowledge'.** After going through this unit you will know that the theory of knowledge consists of the philosophical study of the nature, origin and, scope, and the conditions of its validity and the limitation of knowledge. The fundamental issue that remains unsolved in epistemology is the definition of knowledge. Philosophers at different time have proposed different definition of knowledge. Plato opens the discussion of knowledge by telling first what knowledge is not. In defining knowledge his main object is to refute the false theories regarding knowledge.

The name of the eighth unit is **'Plato: Doctrine of Ideas'.** In this unit we are going to learn and discuss about the Plato's doctrine of ideas. This theory of Plato is occupying a very significant role in philosophy. Plato's theory of ideas or form can be regarded to be one of the most important contributions of Plato to philosophy. According to Plato ideas or forms are ultimate reality of this universe.

While going through this course you will come across some boxes which are put on the left side or right side of the text. These boxes will give us the meanings of some words and concepts within the text. Apart from this, there will be some broad and short questions included under Activity and Check Your Progress in every unit. Activities will increase our thinking capacity because questions put in Activity are not directly derived from the text. But answers to the short questions are put in the section Answers to Check Your Progress. Besides, there are some text-related questions which are put in Model Questions. These questions will help you in selecting and mastering probable topics for the examination so that you can prepare for the examination with confidence.

UNIT 1: THE PROBLEM OF SUBSTANCE OF THALES

UNIT STRUCTURE

1.1. Learning Objectives

1.2. Introduction

1.3. Thales Concept of Substance

1.4. Problem of Substance of Thales

1.5. Let us sum up

1.6. Further Reading

1.7. Answer to check your progress

1.8. Model Questions

1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able-

- to know about the concept of Substance in Greek philosophy
- to know what other Greek philosophers maintained about Substance
- to know what was the problem of Substance in the philosophy of Thales

1.2 INTRODUCTION

The philosophical term 'substance' corresponds to the Greek 'ousia', which means 'being', transmitted via the Latin term 'substantia', which means 'something that stands under or grounds things'. According to the generic sense, therefore, the substances in a given philosophical system are those things which, according to that system, are the foundational or fundamental entities of reality. So, substance (substantia - underlying, underlying - the Latin translation of the Greek) is that which exists independently, in itself, unlike accidents, or properties existing in another (namely, in substance) and through another. Substance - something stable and permanent, as opposed to the volatile and transient; essence (Greek), underlying the phenomenon; indivisible, one, comprehended by the mind, in contrast to the plurality of the sensually perceptible.

1.3 THALES' CONCEPT OF SUBSTANCE:

The problem of substance is the first problem to which the early Greek philosophers addressed themselves and the substance selected as basic by each of the Milesian philosophers was a concrete substance. They ask the question: What is the basic stuff of which the world is composed? And answer in terms of such concrete objects of sense perception as water, air or a hypothetical undifferentiated mass from which sense objects are derived. By means of a single principle (monism) they endeavor to account for the qualities of different bodies and their changes which are transformations of the primal stuff. Observations show that substances are changed into other substances (water, e.g., becomes steam or vapour) and, by a similar process, the original element must have been transmuted into the different substances found in our present world of experience.

The problem of change is not entirely ignored by the Milesian philosophers; but it has not yet emerged as distinct from the problem of substance. The individual philosophers although they are all hylozoists in supposing that the cause of change and motion animates the primitive substance and is not a separate principle, differ among themselves in their description of how things arise from the primordial stuff. Thus, Thales naively assumes that the first principle, water, simply becomes other things-that things are produced by the transformation of water.

The problem of substance is also the primary concern of the Pythagoreans, who advance an abstract number-theory: numbers are the primary causes of things. They fix their attention not so much upon a concrete, sense-perceived substance, as upon the relations existing between things, the order, uniformity, or harmony in the world. Since this may be expressed in numbers, they make entities of numbers.

The problem of substance remains same for Heraclitus and Eleatics. Heraclitus resembles the Ionians in assuming an animated substance (fire) as the principle, but consciously singles out the fact of change, or becoming,

as the significant thing: the world, according to him, is in constant change; everything is in a state of flux; there is no real permanence in things.

According to Empedocles and Anaxagoras the elementary substances of which all things are composed are qualitatively differentiated, the view which they share is, accordingly, designated qualitative atomism, to distinguish it from the quantitative atomism of Leucippus and Democritus. The quantitative atomists accept the new conception of unchanging elements and changing relations, but differ from Empedocles and Anaxagoras in other respects: whereas the latter assume elements and separate moving forces, Leucippus and Democritus presuppose numberless minute indivisible particles of matter, called atoms, and conceive motion as inherent in the atoms themselves.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Question 1: Fill up the blanks:

(a) The philosophical term 'substance' corresponds to the Greek 'ousia', which means……..

(b) Substance is that which exists……., in itself, unlike accidents, or properties existing in one and through another.

(c) The problem of substance is the first problem to which the early…….. philosophers addressed themselves and the substance selected as basic by each of the…….. philosophers was a concrete substance.

1.4 PROBLEM OF SUBSTANCE OF THALES:

Thales of Miletus (624 - c. 546 BC) was a pre-Socratic Greek philosopher, mathematician, and astronomer from Miletus in Asia Minor

(present-day Milet in Turkey). He was one of the Seven Sages of Greece. Many, most notably Aristotle, regarded him as the first philosopher in the Greek tradition, and he is otherwise historically recognized as the first individual in Western civilization known to have entertained and engaged in scientific philosophy.

Thales is recognized for breaking from the use of mythology to explain the world and the universe, and instead explaining natural objects and phenomena by theories and hypotheses, in a precursor to modern science. Almost all the other Pre-Socratic philosophers followed him in explaining nature as deriving from a unity of everything based on the existence of a single ultimate substance, instead of using mythological explanations. Aristotle reported Thales' hypothesis that the originating principle of nature and the nature of matter was a single material substance: water.

Thales' most famous philosophical position was his cosmological thesis, which comes down to us through a passage from Aristotle's Metaphysics. In this work Aristotle unequivocally reported Thales' hypothesis about the nature of all matter - that the originating principle of nature was a single material substance: water. Aristotle then proceeded to proffer a number of conjectures based on his own observations to lend some credence to why Thales may have advanced this idea (though Aristotle didn't hold it himself).

Aristotle laid out his own thinking about matter and form which may shed some light on the ideas of Thales, in Metaphysics (The passage contains words that were later adopted by science with quite different meanings.) That from which is everything that exists and from which it first becomes and into which it is rendered at last, its substance remaining under it, but transforming in qualities, that they say is the element and principle of things that are. …For it is necessary that there should be some nature, either one or more than one, from which become the other things of the object being saved... Thales the founder of this type of philosophy says that it is water. In this quote we see Aristotle's depiction of the problem of change and the definition of substance. He asked if an object changes, is it

the same or different? In either case how can there be a change from one to the other? The answer is that the substance "is saved", but acquires or loses different qualities (the things you "experience").

Aristotle conjectured that Thales reached his conclusion by contemplating that the "nourishment of all things is moist and that even the hot is created from the wet and lives by it." While Aristotle's conjecture on why Thales held water as the originating principle of matter is his own thinking, his statement that Thales held it as water is generally accepted as genuinely originating with Thales and he is seen as an incipient matter-and-formist.

Thales thought the Earth must be a flat disk which is floating in an expanse of water. Heraclitus Homericus states that Thales drew his conclusion from seeing moist substance turn into air, slime and earth. It seems likely that Thales viewed the Earth as solidifying from the water on which it floated and the oceans that surround it. Writing centuries later, Diogenes also states that Thales taught "Water constituted ('stood under') the principle of all things." Aristotle considered Thales' position to be roughly the equivalent to the later ideas of Anaximenes, who held that everything was composed of air.

The 1870 book Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology noted Thales dogma that water is the origin of things, that is, that it is that out of which everything arises, and into which everything resolves itself, Thales may have followed Orphic cosmogonies, while, unlike them, he sought to establish the truth of the assertion. Hence, Aristotle, immediately after he has called him the originator of philosophy brings forward the reasons which Thales was believed to have adduced in confirmation of that assertion; for that no written development of it, or indeed any book by Thales, was extant, is proved by the expressions which Aristotle uses when he brings forward the doctrines and proofs of the Milesian.

Therefore Thales' importance lies in his having put the philosophical question squarely and in having answered it without reference to mythical beings. He declared water to be the original stuff, basing his conclusion, perhaps, on the fact that nourishment, heat, seed, which are essential to life, contain moisture. In selecting water as his primary substance, Thales may have been influenced by the myth of Oceanos and Tethys. This suggestion has some plausibility in view of the emergence of Greek philosophy from Greek mythology and religion. Water has the capacity of assuming solid, liquid and vaporous forms and thus seems to be in process of transformation before one's eyes; water evaporates in the heat of the sun and this is readily interpreted in Thales' view as the transformation of water into fire; water comes down again in the form of rain and is absorbed into the ground-this could be regarded as the transformation of water into earth; and finally, water is necessary to life. John Burnet, in examining the reasons for Thales' selection of water, discounts the biological ones, suggesting that they are products of a later age. Out of water everything comes; he does not tell us how, most likely because the transformation of one substance into another was accepted by him as a fact of experience, and was not a problem for him at all. He evidently looked upon nature as alive, as moving, acting, changing, as did all the early Greek philosophers-so at least Aristotle tells us. If we may believe Hippolytus, all things, according to Thales, not only come from water, but return to water. Perhaps he conceived it as a kind of slime, which would explain most satisfactorily both solids and liquids and the origin of living beings. Our knowledge of Thales' philosophy is largely conjectural; the views attributed to him by Aristotle are reducible to three: (1) all things are full of gods; (2) the earth is a flat disc floating on water; and (3) water is the material cause of all things.



Activity: 1.1

Question 1: Write short notes on:

(a) Substance of Thales

(b) The concept of substance in Greek philosophy



CHEACK YOUR PROGRESS

Question 2: State whether true or false:

(a) Aristotle, regarded Miletus as the first philosopher in the Greek tradition, and the first individual in Western civilization known to have entertained and engaged in scientific philosophy.

(b) Thales' most famous philosophical position was his cosmological thesis, which comes down to us through a passage from Aristotle's Metaphysics.

(c) Thales declared water to be the original stuff, basing his conclusion, perhaps, on the fact that nourishment, heat, seed, which are essential to life, contain moisture.



1.5 LET US SUM UP

- The philosophical term 'substance' corresponds to the Greek ousia,which means 'being', transmitted via the Latin substantia, which means 'something that stands under or grounds things'.

- Substance (substantia - underlying, underlying - the Latin translation of the Greek) is that which exists independently, in itself, unlike accidents, or properties existing in another (namely, in substance) and through another.

- The problem of substance is the first problem to which the early Greek philosophers addressed themselves and the substance selected as basic by each of the Milesian philosophers was a concrete substance.
- Thales of Miletus (624 -546 BC)was a pre-Socratic Greek philosopher, mathematician, and astronomer from Miletus in Asia Minor (present-day Milet in Turkey).
- Aristotle reported Thales' hypothesis that the originating principle of nature and the nature of matter was a single material substance: water.
- Thales' most famous philosophical position was his cosmological thesis, which comes down to us through a passage from Aristotle's Metaphysics.
- Thales thought the Earth must be a flat disk which is floating in an expanse of water.
- In selecting water as his primary substance, Thales may have been influenced by the myth of Oceanos and Tethys.
- Our knowledge of Thales' philosophy is largely conjectural; the views attributed to him by Aristotle are reducible to three: (1) all things are full of gods; (2) the earth is a flat disc floating on water; and (3) water is the material cause of all things.



1.6 FURTHER READING

1. Thilly, Frank, A History of Philosophy, Central Publishing House, Allahabad.
2. Masih, Y., A Critical History of Western Philosophy (Greek, Medieval, Modern), Motilal Banarsidass Publishers private limited, Delhi.
3. Wright, M.R., Introducing Greek Philosophy, Routledge.
4. Allen, E. Reginald, Greek Philosophy Thales to Aristotle (Readings in the History of Philosophy), The Free Press, New York.

1.7 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. (a) ans. being

(b) ans. independently

(c) ans. Greek, Milesian

2.(a) Ans: True

(b) Ans: True

(c) Ans: True

1.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very short questions:-

1. What is the Greek term with which the word 'substance' corresponds with?
2. What is the meaning of the word 'substance' in Greek language?
3. What are the primary causes of things according to Pythagoreans?
4. What is the basic substance according to Thales?
5. From where did Thales' philosophical position come down?

B. Short questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

1. The concept of substance according to Milesian thinkers
2. Heraclitus' concept of basic stuff

C. Long questions: (Answer each question within 300-500 words)

1. Explain the concept of substance as found in the Greek philosophy from the period of Milesian philosophers.
2. What is ultimate substance according to Thales? Explain.

*** **** ***

UNIT 2: THE PROBLEM OF CHANGE

UNIT STRUCTURE

2.1 Learning Objectives

2.2 Introduction

2.3 Parmenides and Heraclitus

2.4 Parmenides on the problem of change

2.4.1 Comments on Parmenides

2.5 Heraclitus on the problem of change

2.5.1 Comments on Heraclitus

2.6 Let us sum up

2.7 Further reading

2.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

2.9 Model Questions

2.1 LEARNING OBJECRIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- know Parmenides' analysis of change
- describe Parmenides' ontology
- explain Heraclitus' analysis of change
- discuss Heraclitus' notion of universal flux
- distinguish between Parmenides and Heraclitus
- understand the difference between permanence and change in metaphysics

2.2 INTRODUCTION

This unity introduces you to the problem of change. Here you will find the problem as discussed both by the Eleatic thinkers, viz. Xenophanes, Parmenides and Zeno and also by Heraclitus. All the Eleatic thinkers were from Elea, a town in South Italy and Heraclitus was a citizen of Ephesus, in Asia Minor. You will be interested to know that the Eleatics gave us the first platform of philosophy in its true sense. The cardinal principle of the Eleatic school is 'All is one' on the other hand for Heraclitus reality is change.

These thinkers indulged themselves gradually in the problem of permanence and change. Xenophanes' contribution towards philosophy is less but more certain to the history of religion. Parmenides' contribution towards philosophy is characterized by the first principle of things and it is the 'change'. This doctrine of 'change' was ultimately developed into a system of ontology. Zeno, being a disciple of Parmenides supported the postulate that reality is one.



LET US KNOW

Xenophanes accepted the hylozoism of per-Socratic period and better known as a pantheist.

Parmenides, as a metaphysician is the father of the philosophy of permanence i.e. the philosophy of 'Being'

2.3 PARMENIDES AND HARACLITUS

The germ of the philosophical thinking of the 'Being' or permanence is deeply rooted in the Eleatic thinkers. On the other hand the germ of the philosophy of change is deeply rooted in Heraclitus. The Eleatics advocated the principle that 'things must be permanent, unmoved and therefore, can never be changing'. The thesis is thus 'only Being is, and Becoming not at all. All change, all Becoming is mere illusion'. Again Heraclitus advocated the principle of 'phenomenon of change and motion'. Thus for Heraclitus the thesis of change is 'Becoming is, and change, permanence, identity, these are nothing but illusion.' Though Heraclitus was contemporary of Parmenides yet their philosophies were opposed to each other. According to Parmenides 'reality is one, eternal, and unchangeable change. Again for Heraclitus, on the contrary 'reality is change, flux and becoming'. You will be able to find here that like Thales, who considered water as the only reality, for Pythagoreans, number as the only reality and for Parmenides, the only reality is Being, unmixed with not change. This first principle of things, is Being and it is excluded from all becoming. Thus in Parmenides'

philosophy there developed the antithesis between change and not-change. On the contrary of Eleaticism, Heraclitus developed a principle of Becoming is. change, permanence, identity, these are unreal. According to Heraclitus, unlike Parmenides, both changeand not-being are equally real. You will be able to conclude here that for Parmenides change is illusion on the other hand, for Heraclitus, change is illusion.



LET US KNOW

Heraclitus, a Greek philosopher of the late 6th century BCE, criticized all his predecessors as they have failed to see the unity in experience.

Heraclitus has claimed to announce the word 'logos'. Here 'logos' means that all things are one, in some sense. Opposites are necessary for life. But opposites are unified in a system of balance exchanges.

The Eleatics advocated that all is one and the ultimate principle of this universe i.e., the Being, is one and eternal.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Fill in the blanks

a) Heraclitus developed the philosophy of ……. and motion.

b) According to Parmenides reality is …….

c) For Heraclitus, both …….. and ……. are equally real.

Q 2: State whether the following statements are True or False

a) Eleaticism advocated that all change and all become is mere illusion.(True/False)

b) For Heraclitus Being is only real. (True/False)

c) According to Heraclitus Being and not being are equally real.(True/ False)

d) Heraclitus advocated the principle of 'Phenomenon, change and motion'. (True/False)

e) Parmenides says that 'Reality is one'.(True/False)

f) The first principle of things, is change and it is excluded from all becoming. (True/False)

Q 3: Who says this, 'The thesis of change is 'Becoming is, and Being, Permanence, identity, these are nothing but illusion.'

Q 4: Bring out a distinction between being and becoming.



ACTIVITY: 2.1

Explain the difference between Parmenides and Heraclitus regarding the problem of change

Ans: ……

……

……

What the Eleatic thinkers have advocated?

Ans: ……

……

……

2.4 THE ELEATICS ON THE PROBLEM OF CHANGE

Parmenides was the most influential Eleatic thinker. He was born on 514 BC. Parmenides was influenced by the problem of 'transitoriness and changeableness of things'. He proclaimed the theory that nothing in this world is permanent and therefore we see that all things come into existence and pass away at another moment. So the truth is that 'a thing is not, as that it is.' Amidst all change and mutation of things, Parmenides developed the antithesis between change and not-change. He concluded that 'The absolute real is the change. Not-change is the unreal'. Not-being has no existence at all. Therefore, it is unreal and always becoming. This not-

change is the word of becoming and changing moments given by our senses. The world of not-being, being unreal, is always illusory and mere appearance. According to Parmenides, only the changeexists. It is eternal, timelessly present, undivided and indivisible. Being is self-identical. It exists in the whole being of itself. It is simple. Its only quality is 'isness'.

Thus Parmenides propounds the philosophy of permanence in the midst of all changing moments of the world of senses. The Thesis follows here: 'Being alone is real and many-ness and changes are unreal'. You can therefore see here that Parmenides makes a distinction between the appearance and reality. The postulate of his philosophy is: 'It is a matter of intuition which can make such distinction possible'. Thus in Parmenides' philosophy thought is more important than the senses.

Many thinkers observe that Parmenides identified thought and existence i.e. the change. Hence we cannot think of non-change. We can think only of the Being.

Zeno was born on 489 BC and supported the postulate of Parmenides that 'Being is real'. His approach towards Eleatic speculation is somewhat negative but rational. For Zeno also the world of sense is illusory and has two fundamental characteristics viz. (a) multiplicity and (b) change. True Being is essentially one and has no plurality and change. To make the maxim 'Being is real' more philosophically sound, he supported the view of Parmenides that multiplicity and motion are impossible. Multiplicity and motion therefore cannot be real things. Thus the principle of distinction of Zeno lies in the postulate: 'that which is self-contradictory is not real'.

2.4.1 Comments on Eleaticism

You can find here that for Eleaticism 'Being is permanent, eternal and unchangeable. The many-ness and change are appearance and are necessarily illusory'. Many thinkers observe that the germ of materialism is present in the eleatic thinker, like Parmenides. Again others think that the

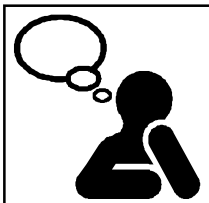
germ of idealism is present in Parmenides' philosophy of 'One is real'. Atomists like Leukippus, Democritus, the successors of the Eleatic school, have propounded that the atoms are eternal and unchangeable. Each atom is just the 'change' of Parmenides, multiplied into many.

But idealist like Plato observes that the ideas are eternal forms of our thought. Again Parmenides' distinction of reason and sense are also supported by Plato and many thinkers. Modern thinkers like Leibnitz and Kant have also tried to reconcile the distinction between reason and sense. Again many critics have observed that Zeno had failed to give proper explanation regarding the notion of motion or manyness. Whatever the critical observation may be the errors of Eleaticism have found to be significant in the history of Western philosophy.



LET US KNOW

- Parmenides is also known for the philosophical school he established in his city, the Eleatic school.
- Parmenides is one of the most significant of the pre-Socratic philosophers. His only work was titled, On Nature, is a poem, which only survived in fragmentary form.



ACTIVITY:2.2

Explain the philosophy of Eleaticism

Ans: ……

……

What are the two fundamental characteristics advocated by Zeno?

Ans: ……

……

Is the Being self-identified according to Parmenides?

Ans: ……

……



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 5: Who propounds the philosophy of permanence in the midst of all changing moments of the world of senses?

……

……

……

Q 6: Who developed the theory of Being? Write a brief note on this theory?

……

……

Q 7: State the two fundamental characteristics of the world of sense forwarded by Zeno.

……

……

Q 8: Where does the principle of distinction of Zeno lie?

……

……

Q 9: Who holds the view that atoms are eternal and unchangeable?

……

……

2.5 HERACLITUS ON THE PROBLEM OF CHANGE

Heraclitus was born about 535BC. The fundamental teaching of Heraclitus is the principle of constant change or flux. He taught that the world is in a state of continuous change. '"One cannot step twice into the same river", for other and yet other water are ever flowing on'. Heraclitus reached to the conclusion of 'constant flux', because he observed that in

this world of phenomena, 'every existent thing is a harmony of opposites'. The origin of all things in this universe is 'was or strife of the opposites'. "Nothing stands, nothing holds fast, nothing remains what it is." Becoming is the unity of opposites (for e.g. hot and cold) as the world is in every moment in the process of becoming.

This becoming is both is and again is not at the same time. Becoming is thus defined by Heraclitus as 'the at-onceness of "is" and "is not:" Unlike this viewpoint the Eleatic thinkers who have affirmed that Being is all reality and Not-being is all illusory, Heraclitus have affirmed that both change and not-change are equally real and therefore, true. 'Becoming is the identity of Being and not being'.

Therefore, the first principle which is in constant progress and which never comes in rest is the ever-living fire. He often called this fire as vapor or breath. Fire represents the essence of the soul. Fire also symbolizes the concrete physical activity of substance but not the substance itself. Fire is in constant transformation into all other things. "All things are exchanged for fire and fire for all things; as wares are exchanged for gold and gold for wares". The cosmic process is guided by law. In his philosophy of 'All is flux' he introduces the idea of necessity. This law of necessity is the reason in all things and thus the logos. "This alone is wise" advocated by Heraclitus, "to understand the intelligence by which all things are steered through all things". Man's soul is like the divine reasoning. Morality makes an individual to follow the path of rationality and enhances a self-disciplined life. Morality is the guardian of law as it makes an individual to respect law. To put in the words of Heraclitus: "Character is a man's guardian divinity". Man in his moral life must therefore, surrender himself to the universal reason. This universal law ultimately pervades all things.

2.5.1 Comments on Heraclitus

Heraclitus' contribution to modern western Philosophy is significant. His appeal to reason made a gate way to metaphysics in an implicit way.

You can justify this observation because Heraclitus had supported reason to understand the fundamental thesis that 'All is flux'. It is senses which gives wrong knowledge about which is permanent. This view of Heraclitus had of-course rejected the thinking of Parmenides. Moreover the distinction between sense and reason had an immense influence on Plato and other thinkers of the West. Even the Stoics were also influenced by Heraclitus' metaphysical and rational thinking. But Aristotle had criticized Heraclitus' doctrine that 'everything is and is not'. To explain this we can say that 'everything is and is not' means that 'p is true and not true' i.e. a judgment is true and not true'. This leads to contradiction in Heraclitus' speculative thinking.



LET US KNOW

- Heraclitus is known for his doctrine that things are constantly changing i.e. universal flux .There is unity in opposite and fire is the basic material of the world.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 10: State whether the following statements are true or false

a) Heraclitus concluded that fire is the essence of the soul. (True/False)

b) Change is not constant in this world, in the words of Heraclitus.(True/ False)

Q 11: Fill in the blanks

a) Stoics were …….. by Heraclitus.

b) Heraclitus was criticized by …….

Q 12: How does Heraclitus define the word 'becoming'?

……

Q 13: What is the viewpoint of Aristotle against the concept of change or becoming?

……

……

……

Q 14: What is the fundamental thesis of Heraclitus?

……

Q 15: "One cannot stop twice into the same river"- who says this.

……

……

……



ACTIVITY:1.3

What is the doctrine of Heraclitus regarding the problem of change?

Ans: ……

……

……

What is the first principle of Heraclitus regarding the problem of change?

Ans: ……

……

……



2.6 LET US SUM UP

- Parmenides stated that the sciences deceive us to know the truth of this world of objects.
- According to Parmenides only knowledge (logos) helps us to understand the truth of this world

- Parmenides taught that 'What exists must always exist'. Genesis and destruction is illusory. It is because the underlying material of which a thing is made will still exist after its destruction.

- Heraclitus is commented by his commentators as to be a material monist, a scientific cosmologist, a metaphysician, a religious thinker, a mystic, a revolutionary, an innovator of logic and the first genuine philosopher.

- Heraclitus is better known for stepping in a river and through this philosophical interpretation he proposed that all is change. 'No one can step twice into the same river, nor touch mortal substance twice in the same condition. By the speed of its change, it scatters and gathers again.' Therefore change is only constant in the world. Nothing can ever have the same identity because there is a constant change at work in reality. Similarly our own identities change: 'We step and do not into the same rivers, we are and are not'.

- According to many thinkers, the germ of materialism is present in the Eleatic thinker, like Parmenides. Again others think that the germ of idealism is present in Parmenides' philosophy of 'One is real'. Atomists like Leucippus, Democritus, the successors of the Eleatic school, have propounded that the atoms are eternal and unchangeable. Each atom is just the 'Being' of Parmenides, multiplied into many.



2.7 FURTHER READING

1) Masih, Y. A Critical History OF Western Philosophy, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Private Limited Delhi

2) Thilly, Franky. A History Of Philosophy, Central Book Depot, Allahabad

3) Stace, W. T. A Critical History Of Greek Philosophy, Macmillan And Company Limited Delhi

2.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: a) Change b) One

c) Both being and not-being

Ans to Q No 2: a)True b) False c) True d)True
e)True f) True

Ans to Q No 3: Heraclitus

Ans to Q No 4: The concept of being is found in the philosophy of Eleatic thinkers, on the other hand the concept of becoming or change is rooted in the philosophy of Heraclitus. According to Eleatics, things must be permanent, unmoved, and therefore, can never be changing. In contrast to the previous view, Heraclitus clearly points out that the thesis of change is Becoming, is and Being, Permanence, identity, these are nothing but illusion. And he confirms that "Reality is change, flux, and becoming." Contrary to this view, Parmenides stats that "Reality is change, flux, and becoming."

Ans to Q No 5: Parmenides

Ans to Q No 6: Parmenides

Ans to Q No 7: Parmenides. He holds the view that 'the absolute real is the Being, not being is the unreal.' Not-being has no existence at all. Therefore, it is unreal and always becoming. The world of non-change, change unreal, is always illusory and mere appearance. Parmenides' view is that only the 'Being exists'. It is eternal, timelessly present, undivided and indivisible.

Ans to Q No 8: The principle of distinction of Zeno lies in the postulate "That which is self-contradictory is not real."

Ans to Q No 9: Democritus

Ans to Q No 10: a)True b) False

Ans to Q No 11: a) Influenced b) Aristotle

Ans to Q No 12: "the at -onceness of "is" and "is" "not". Unlike this viewpoint, the Eleatic thinkers have affirmed that both Being and not change are equally real and therefore, true. Becoming is the identity of change and not change".

Ans to Q No 13: Aristotle criticized the Heraclitus doctrine that 'everything is and is not'. It can be explained that 'everything is and is not' means that 'P is true and not true', i, e., a judgment is true and not true'. This leads to contradiction in Heraclitus speculative thinking.

Ans to Q No 14: "All is flux".

Ans to Q No 15: Heraclitus

2.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very short questions

Q 1: What is the cardinal principle of the Eleatic school?

Q 2: Who advocates the theory of change?

Q 3: According to whom, "Reality is one, eternal, and unchangeable being."

Q 4: State the name of a thinker who belongs to Eleatic school.

Q 5: Who was the propounder of the philosophy of permanence?

Q 6: Zeno points out the two fundamental characteristics of sense, what are they?

Q 7: Name the two philosophers who tried to reconcile the distinction between reason and sense.

Q 8: 'Everything is and is not'-who used this viewpoint as a doctrine.

Q 9: Zeno believed that reality is one. Is it true?

B. Short questions (Answer each question in about 150-200 words)

Q 1: Explain briefly the distinction between being and becoming.

Q 2: Zeno points out the two fundamental characteristics of sense, what are they? Discuss briefly.

Q 3: Briefly comment on the Heraclitus viewpoint- 'Everything is and is not'

Q 4: Write short notes on the concept of Being

Q 5: Briefly discuss the concept of Becoming.

C) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: Explain critically the Parmenidean philosophy.

Q 2: Discuss the contributions of Heraclitus' to Western philosophy.

Q 3: Give a critical exposition of the metaphysics of Parmenides.

Q 4: Critically discuss the view of Heraclitus that reality is flux.

Q 5: Bring out the salient features of the Philosophy of Parmenides.

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UNIT 3: THE PROBLEM OF BEING

UNIT STRUCTURE

3.1 Learning objectives

3.2 Introduction

3.2 Important Ionic or the Hylozoist thinkers

3.3.1 Thales' concept of Being

3.3.2 Evaluative Comment on Thales

3.4 Anaximender's concept of Being

3.4.1 Evaluative Comment on Anaximender

3.5 Anaximenes' concept of Substance

3.5.1 Evaluative Comment on Anaximenes

3.6 Pythagorean concept of Being

3.6.1 Evaluative Comment on the Pythagoreans

3.7 Let Us Sum Up

3.8 Further Reading

3.9 Answers to check your progress

3.10 Model Questions

3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- know the basic features of Greek Philosophy
- explain the primitive stuff of the universe
- find that cause of change and motion gives rise to the Being
- compare Thales and Anaximender
- analyzes the difference between the Pythagoreans and their predecessors
- understand the naturalistic analysis of the world
- discuss the viewpoints of Ionian physicists

3.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit introduces to you the concept of being as interpreted by the thinkers of the Ionic school. Ionia was situated at the coast of Asia Minor.

The thinkers of the Ionic school were materialist. Philosophy begins with the Ionic thinkers in naturalistic materialism. This naturalistic materialism of the first period of Greek philosophy has three basic features. The features are:(1) Greek philosophy is concerned only with nature

(2) Greek philosophy is concerned only with the external world.

(3) Greek philosophy is concerned only with man as a part of nature.

So, Greek philosophy demands an explanation of nature. It is thus cosmological in nature also. As the Ionic philosophers were all materialists so they are often called as Hylozoists. The Greek word 'hule' which means matter represents the philosophy of materialism. Consequently deeper thinking regarding the problems of man, of life, of human destiny, of ethics did not find any well defined explanation. But the most striking feature of the early Greek philosophy indicates the logical expression of human mind. The principle of logical thinking made the thinkers to ask the question: 'What is the basic stuff of which the world is composed of?' Talking the help of one single principle, thinkers of the Greek philosophy tried to explain, 'that ultimate principle', which can sustain all changes and multiplicities. This fundamental deeper thinking which is better coined as speculative thinking in philosophy was first found its genuine expression in the Ionian physicists like Thales, Pythagoreans, Heraclitus, the Eleatics, Empedocles, the Atomists and Anaxagoras. These thinkers interestingly attempted to explain nature by natural causes and never by taking the help of any mythical beings. The problem of change made the Greek thinkers to accept two fundamental issues. They are: (i) that the reality is alive and

(ii) that the original substance has within itself the cause of change and motion. This is the theory of hylozoism.

3.2 IMPORTANT IONIC OR THE HYLOZOIST THINKERS

The most important hylozoist thinkers are Thales, Anaximander Anaximenes and Pythagoras. In spite of their subtle differences amongst

themselves, they all agree to the fact that the cause of change and motion give rise to a single primitive substance which is the primordial stuff. Thus Thales accepts Water as the first principle. Anaximander view that though things are separated from the Boundless yet originally existed in mixture or fusion. Anaximenes understands that Air is the first single primitive substance. For the Pythagoreans the Number is the world-stuff of all things.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Fill in the Blanks

a) The important Ionic thinkers are ……., ……. and …….

b) The Greek word 'hule' represents the philosophy of …….

c) Early Greek philosophy is …… in nature.

d) The problem of change made the Greek thinkers to accept reality as ……

Q 2: State whether the following statements are true or false

a) Early Greek thinkers explain nature as supernatural (True/False)

b) The problem of cause and motion never gave rise to the primordial stuff.(True/False)

c) According to Anaximenes, things existed in mixture. (True/False)

d) The Atomists are Ionian physicists. (True/False)

Q 3: What are the three basic features of naturalistic materialism?

.....

.....

Q 4: Name three Ionian physicists.

.....

.....



ACTIVITY:3.1

What are the two fundamental issues that the Greek thinkers have accepted regarding hylozoism?

Ans: ……

……

……

What was the most striking feature of the Greek thinking?

Ans: ……

……

……

3.3.1 Thale's Concept of Being

Thales was born in Miletus, in Asia Minor, a place in Greece about 624 BC to 550 BC. Thales was a statesman, mathematician, an engineer and even an astronomer. Most remarkably, Thales is considered as the father of Greek philosophy. Along with Thales, Solon and Croesus were mentioned worthy in pre-Socratic age.

Thales is said to be the father of philosophy only because of the reason that he attempted to explain the universe on naturalistic and scientific principle. The universe is explained without taking the help of myths and anthropomorphic gods. It is a fact that water philosophy has no value in itself but he propounded the problem in his own way. He is also credited to understand the direction and character of early Greek philosophy.

The most fundamental curiosity that made Thales to talk on water philosophy is perhaps to explore that 'what can be the single ultimate principle' in the midst of multiplicity of the universe. The first period of early Greek philosophy was remarkably cosmological in nature. Thales is supposed to be the pioneer of this cosmological feature in understanding this world of nature.

But Thales was not properly recorded. We find two most important propositions in his speculative thinking.

First: Water is the first single principle of all things.

Second: Everything comes from water and returns back to water.

While propagating water as the original stuff perhaps follows from the conclusion that nourishment, heat, seed, which are essential to life, all have moisture. Thales like other Greek thinkers, has understood nature as alive, acting and changing. He has never of-course explained why water is the only single primitive stuff. This is perhaps because of the reason that his experience supported transformation of one substance into another substance. Thales holds that water has the capacity of holding the state of solid, liquid and vaporous forms.

3.3.2 Evaluative Comment on Thales

John Burnet makes a critical estimate of Thales' water-philosophy. He comments that like all other early Greek philosophers, Thales too have naively accepted the process of transformation of nature and without any further enquiry concluded that it is water which is necessary to life. According to Aristotle also Thales has never asked himself the question that how the 'universe arose out of water and therefore gave no explanation. It is because Thales has derived his conclusion from observing the vibrant and productivity of nature and found that the 'nutriment of all things is moist and that even actual heat is generated there from and that animal life is sustained by water…'



LET US KNOW

- Thales is considered as the father of Greek philosophy. According to Aristotle, Thale's philosophy has three important features.

They are: 1. All natural things are of the nature of god.

2. The earth as a disc floats on water.

3. From water the world of nature has come into existence.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 5: Who is considered as the father of Greek philosophy?

.....

Q 6: What is the reason of considering 'water' as the main stuff?

.....

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ACTIVITY: 3.2

Is Thales considered as the pioneer of the cosmological explanation of this world? Why?

Ans: ……

……

……

Why Thales is acknowledged as the father of Greek philosophy?

Ans: ……

……

……

3.4.1 Anaximender's concept of substance

Anaximender was a disciple of Thales but about a generation younger. He also belonged to Miletus and said to have flourished about 611-547 BC. Unlike Thales, Anaximander wrote a philosophic treatise. This philosophic

treatise was the first Greek documentation but has been unfortunately lost. Moreover Anaximander, like Thales was a cosmologist. He is credited to have constructed the first map ever known. Like other early Greek thinkers Anaximander was a materialist.

Anaximender supposed that there is a single primary stuff to which everything has its origin and everything must return back to the primal mass. Anaximander explains the essence of things as: 'the Boundless or Infinite, conceived as an eternal, imperishable substance out of which all things are made and to which all things return'. The nature of substance was not definitely explained but it meant a boundless space-filling, animate mass. All qualities of nature are derived from this 'boundless, imperishable substance'. While propounding this 'boundless something' he laid down an important principle of one universal formless material stuff. This boundless mass is the primal stuff of this world of particulars. Interestingly enough Anaximander stated again on the other hand that the particulars cannot account for this formless general principle. This is thus the monistic theory of creation.

To make this explanation more clear, let us cite an explanation, the earth mass can be changed into particular things like pots, bricks, utensils etc. But the earthen pots cannot be directly shaped into pots and bricks or any other earthen objects. In order to give rise to the earthen bricks or pots, these things have to be reduced again to the formless mass of earth.

Moreover, Anaximender concluded that the world is controlled by the opposites like hot and cold, wet and dry. The world of particulars is possible because of the working capacity of the opposites.

Moreover, Anaximender advocated that the world has evolved in due course of time. It is from water everywhere the watery creatures were found into existence. Gradually water dried up and land appeared. Watery creatures then adopted themselves to the dry land and thus survived. Man, like every other animal featured as fish in the beginning. With such an

explanation we can see here the germ of the modern organic theory of evolution.

Anaximander's theory of the cylindrical earth which moves freely in space once again predetermined the theory of gravitation. His theory of materialism is represented as god. Again this theory of materialism justifies that god is infinite, boundless and material. As such god can never be mythological and anthropomorphic in nature. He also ignores the divine creation of the world.

3.4.2 Evaluative Comment on Anaximender

Critics are of the opinion that Anaximender's theory of formless matter and particulars have found its expression also in Aristotle's theory of matter and form. It is also observed that the boundless 'infinite, indeterminate and qualitatively undifferentiated matter' of Anaximender pre-focuses Aristotle's 'indeterminate potential matter'.

Many thinkers are of the opinion that Anaximender has developed an important theory regarding the origin and evolution of living beings. It is also considered that Anaximender though in his primitive style, yet developed the basic theory of 'adaptation of species to their environment'.



LET US KNOW

- The treatise On Nature was the first philosophical book written in Greece. It is the first prose in Greek language.
- Anaximender's theory of 'the boundless' plays an important role in the later development of astronomy.
- Professor Burnet opines that "the 'innumerable worlds' of Anaximender were not necessarily successive but simultaneously existing worlds".



ACTIVITY: 2.1

How Anaximender explains the essence of things?

Ans: ……

……

……

Explain Anaximender's monistic philosophy.

Ans: ……

……

……



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 7: How does Anaximander explain the essence of thing?

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Q 8: What is the monistic theory of creation?

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3.5.1 Anaximenes' concept of Being

Anaximenes belonged to Miletus. Like his predecessors, Anaximenes was a materialist. Anaximenes favors Thales for accepting, a determinate matter as first principle of this universe. We can find Anaximenes more logical and definite thinker than Anaximender while explaining the primary stuff of this universe. To such an explanation, Anaximenes considers air as the primordial stuff of this universe. There is a reason for accepting air as

the ultimate stuff of this universe. It is because Anaximenes, perhaps has given more importance to the living beings than the non-living things. Air allows any living-beings to breathe and is the most essential stuff for survival. Here lies the significance of air and the world of living creatures. Therefore, Anaximenes comes to the conclusion that air is the primordial stuff of this universe.

Anaximenes arrives to such a specific conclusion because air has certain characteristics. These characteristics are: (a) mobility, (b) changeability and (c) inner vitality. Air is the vitality of this universe which allows life. Hence this universe is a living organism. Anaximenes in this sense is a hylozoist.

Again air has two opposite principles. These opposite principles are:

(a)condensation and (b) rarefaction. Again air is regulated by these two principles. Anaximenes defines condensation as 'compression of the air in a narrow space'. Rarefaction is also defined as 'explanation of the air in the greater space'. Air takes the form of fire by rarefaction while by gradual and regular condensation, air gives rise to water, earth and stone.

Anaximenes justifies through this primary stuff, air, the nature of all material things and also all other important elements of this universe. We all know that scientific enquiry encourages the method of knowing-how. This method of knowing-how is very much prevalent in Anaximenes. This method of knowing-how makes him to explore the ultimate stuff of this universe. The two principles of condensation and rarefaction are the two most significant opposite principles of the method of knowing-how.

Anaximenes' method of explaining the world of quality, such as vaporous, liquid, solid, sound, colour, rough-smooth etc. involves the principle of quantitative differences. Modern science follows this method of explaining anything the formulae of quantity.

3.5.2 Evaluative Comment on Anaximenes

Anaximenes is credited to have pioneered the most important theory of 'reduction of qualitative difference to quantitative terms' in the development of scientific explanation. His doctrine of condensation and rarefaction explain the emergence of "elements" from the primary substance. Anaximenes has influenced Democritus, who ultimate concluded that 'the reduction of all change to motion. All changes are produced by motion, and motion is eternal.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 9: Fill in the blanks

a) Anaximenes is more ……. and ……..thinker.

b) The two opposites of air are …….. and …….

c) Anaximenes has influenced ……. the Greek thinker.

Q 10: State whether the following statements are True or False

a) Anaximenes stated that air is the primary stuff of this universe. (True/ False)

b) Air never allows any living organism to live. (True/ False)

c) The method of knowing-how is not present in Anaximenes theory of materialism. (True/False)

d) According to Anaximenes the world is a living organism. (True/False)

Q 11: What are the characteristics of Air Given by Anaximenes?

.....

.....

Q 12: State the mehod of the two opposite principles- Condensation and rarefaction formulated by Anaximenes.

.....

.....

3.6.1 Pythagorean concept of Being

Pythagoras started the school of philosophers, known as the Pythagoreans. The predecessors of the Pythagoreans were interested in putting the question: 'As what can be the primal stuff of this world?' In reply they considered it as a concrete substance and we have come to know what are these concrete substances are. But the Pythagoreans on the other hand devoted themselves to think about the problem of the uniformity of this world. These thinkers are all mathematicians and therefore concentrated on quantitative relations. Pythagoras, being a mathematician, tried to solve the problem of regularity in the world by the number theory. He thus propounded the theory that 'the number theory is the principle of all things of this world.' This number theory can only solve all problems of relations and uniformities, order and law. "Numbers must be the true realities, the ground of things, and everything else an expression of numbers." Numbers, for the Pythagoreans are the principles of things and are not the primal stuff of things. They behold the theory that things are the picture of numbers. Astronomy and ethics both have ground root in number theory or number-mysticism. Number theory of Pythagoras has a historical significance as it explains natural law mathematically.

Pythagoras believes in the immortality of the soul. Voice of Gautam Buddha is vividly seen in the Pythagorean number mysticism as it strongly supports that the 'whole wheel of rebirths is essentially painful and it is the duty of man that he should put an end to this wheel of rebirths.' They also agreed to the philosophy of transmigration of the soul. Purity of conduct is the key word for Pythagorean ethics. Moreover it is believed that disinterested scientific learning is the duty of man as it can help in the attainment of contemplation of the ultimate things of the universe.

3.6.2 Evaluative Comment on the Pythagoreans

Critics hold that with the gradual development of number-mysticism, the Pythagorean philosophy can be seen to develop without any discipline

principle. 'Identification of the different numbers with different things can only be left to the whim and fancy of the individual.' Therefore, critics opine that Pythagorean system is almost a crude understanding of this universe. The application of number-mysticism is fruitless and useless too.



LET US KNOW

- The Pythagoreans believe that the earth which is a planet revolves round the sun which is the central fire.
- Copernicus is also influenced with his heliocentric supposition from the Pythagoreans.
- Pythagoras advocates that 'Number is the world-ground, the stuff out of which the universe is made.



ACTIVITY: 3.4

Explain the number theory of Pythagoras

Ans: ……

……

……

What is the difference between Pythagoras and his predecessors?

Ans: ……

……

……



3.7 LET US SUM UP

- Early Greek thinkers are all cosmologists
- Early Greek philosophy developed around finding the primary stuff of this universe.

- Materialism is the key word for the development of the Ionic philosophy.
- Pythagorean methodology of number has influenced the modern rationalists thinkers like Descartes, Spinoza, Leibnitz, Kant, Russell.
- According to Russell the essence of Plato's philosophy is Pythagorean in nature.
- Pythagorean number-mysticism suggests the teleological proof for the existence of God.
- The number theory of Pythagoras can only solve all problems of relations and uniformities, order and law. "Numbers must be the true realities, the ground of things, and everything else an expression of numbers."
- Pythagoras propounded the theory that 'the number theory is the principle of all things of this world.' This number theory can only solve all problems of relations and uniformities, order and law. "Numbers must be the true realities, the ground of things, and everything else an expression of numbers." Astronomy and ethics both have ground root in number theory or number-mysticism.

3.8 FURTHER READING

1) Thilly, Frank. A History Of Philosophy .Central Book Depot, Allahabad

2) Stace, W. T. Stace: A Critical History Of Greek Philosophy. Macmillan and Company Ltd.

3) Masih. Y. A. Critical History Of Western Philosophy.Motilal Banarsidass Publishers. Delhi.

3.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR ROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: a) Tales, Anaximander and Anaximenes b) materialism

c) cosmological d) as alive

Ans to Q No 2: a) False b) False c) True d) True

Ans to Q No 3: The features are: (1) Greek philosophy is concerned only with nature (2) Greek philosophy is concerned only with the external world. (3) Greek philosophy is concerned only with man as a part of nature.

Ans to Q No 4: Thales, Pythagoras, Heraclitus

Ans to Q No 5: Thales

Ans to Q No 6: Thales holds that water has the capacity of holding the state of solid, liquid and vaporous forms. Thales has derived his conclusion from observing the vibrant and productivity of nature and found that the 'nutriment of all things is moist and that even actual heat is generated there from and that animal life is sustained by water…'

Ans to Q No 7: He explains it as "the boundless or infinite, conceived as an eternal, imperishable being out of which all things are made and to which all things are return.

Ans to Q No 8: Regarding the boundless, imperishable being he laid down an important principle of one universal formless material stuff. This boundless mass is the primal stuff of this world of particulars. Anaximenes stated that particulars cannot account for this formless general principle. This is the monistic theory of creation.

Ans to Q No 9: a) Logical and definite thinker b) Condensation and rarefaction c) Democritus

Ans to Q No 10: a) True b) False c) False d) True

Ans to Q No 11: (a) mobility, (b) changeability, and (c) inner vitality

Ans to Q No 12: Knowing how

3.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Very short Questions

Q 1: Is Ionist School considered as materialistic school?

Q 2: Who are called Hylozoists?

Q 3: Write the names of Ionist thinkers.

Q 4: Mention two hylogists thinkers.

Q 5: Who considers - 'water is only primary stuff'.

Q 6: What is the primordial stuff of the universe, to Anaximenes?

Q 7: What are the characteristics of air?

Q 8: What is condensation?

Q 9: Who formulated the theory of 'reduction of qualitative difference to quantitative terms?

Q 10: Give an example of monistic theory of creation.

B) Short Questions (Answer in about 150 words)

Q 1: What are the three basic features of Greek Philosophy?

Q 2: What are the fundamental issues relating to the problem of change?

Q 3: Briefly comment on the two opposite principles of air provided by Anaximenes.

Q 4: Briefly point out the differences between condensation and rarefaction.

Q 5: What do you mean by the method of knowing how? Briefly explain after the name of Anaximenes.

C) Long Questions (Answer in about 300 words)

Q 1: Explain the philosophy of Thales as a cosmologist thinker.

Q 2: Why Thales is called as the father of Greek philosopher? Explain

Q 3: Why does Anaximenes support that the universe is a living organism? Discuss

Q 4: Explain the difference between Pythagoras and his predecessors.

Q 5: How Pythagoras has influenced Plato and other rationalist thinkers? Explain

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UNIT 4: THE PARADOXES OF ZENO

UNIT STRUCTURE

4.1 Learning Objectives

4.2 Introduction

4.3 Life and his Writings

4.4 Dialectic

4.5 Zeno's Arguments against Plurality and Motion

4.6 Space

4.7 Criticism

4.8 Let Us Sum

4.9 Further Reading

4.10 Answer to Check Your Progress

4.11 Learning Objectives

4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- Explain Zeno's arguments against Plurality or Multiplicity
- Conceive Zeno's Paradox of Motion
- Understand Zeno's Dialectic
- Understand Zeno's importance in Western philosophy.

4.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit introduces to you Zeno's argument against motion and plurality. Zeno was a pre-Socratic Greek philosopher of Magna Graecia and a member of the Eleatic School founded by Parmenides. He was the third and last important thinker of the Eleatic school. He is best known for his paradoxes. The main sources of the nature of Zeno's arguments on motion are the writings of Aristotle and Simplicius of Cilicia. Aristotle in his Sophist called Zeno the inventor of dialectic.Zeno's arguments perhaps the first examples of a method of proof called reductio ad absurdum also known as proof by contradiction, the literal meaning is 'reduce to the absurd'.

Zeno supported Parmenides in the doctrine of Being. In attempting to support the Parmenidean doctrine from a new point of view he developed certain ideas about the ultimate character of space and time. Parmenides had taught that the world of sense is illusory. Multiplicity and motion are the two characteristics of the false world of sense. Therefore, against multiplicity and motion Zeno put some arguments which are known as the paradoxes of Zeno

Zeno's paradoxes are devises to show that motion is nothing but an illusion. Some of the famous paradoxes of Zeno are: The Race Course, the Paradox of Achilles and the Tortoise, the Arrow Paradox and the Moving rows (The stadium). Zeno's paradoxes have fascinated logicians and mathematicians for hundreds of years and may be credited as a source of the dialectic method of Socrates.

4.3 LIFE AND WRITINGS

Zeno was a pre-Socratic Greek philosopher of the Eleatic school.He was born around 490 B.C.E.in Elea, now Velia, in southern Italy; and died 430 B.C.E.He was a student and friend of Parmenides. There is little reliable information about Zeno's life.The primary source of the information about Zeno's life is Plato's Parmenides and Aristotle's physics. The date of birth of Zeno is arrived at by making him forty years younger than Parmenides. In the dialogue of Permenides, Plato describes a visit to Athens by Zeno and Parmenides, at a time when Parmenides is 'about 65' and Zeno is 'nearly 40', and Socrates is'a very young man'. Assuming an age for Socrates of around 20 and taking the date of Socrates' birth as 469 BC.and the meeting of Parmenides and Zeno with the young Socrates suggest an approximate date of birth for Zeno of 490 BC.

Plato tells us that Zeno was tall and of a graceful appearance.His was the son of Teleutagoras and the pupil and friend of Parmenides. He was famous for the paradoxes whereby, in order to recommend the Parmenidean doctrine of the existence of 'the one' he sought to controvert the common

sense belief in the existence of 'the many'. Zeno tried to show that the assumption of the existence of a plurality of thingsin time and space carried with it more serious inconsistencies. Zeno's paradoxes contributed to the development of logical and mathematical rigour which were insoluble until the development of precise concepts of continuity and infinity.

Zeno composed a prose treatise in which he developed his philosophy and it is known from Plato's commentary in his Parmenides.Like Parmenides, Zeno played a part in the politics of his native city.



LET US KNOW

- According to Plato's commentary in his Parmenides, Zeno brought a treatise with him when he visited Athens. It was said to be a book of paradoxes defending the philosophy of Parmenides. A thousand years after Zeno, the Greek philosophers Proclus and Simplicius commented on the book and its arguments. They had access to some of the book, perhaps to all of it, but it has not survived. Proclus is the first person to tell us that the book contained forty arguments. Unfortunately, we know of no specific dates for when Zeno composed any of his paradoxes, and we know very little of how Zeno stated his own paradoxes.
- Before Zeno, Greek thinkers presented their philosophical views by writing poetry. Zeno shifted from poetry to prose that contained explicit premises and conclusions.

4.4 DIALECTIC

Aristotle in his Sophist called Zeno the inventor of dialectic, though the beginnings of this method of arguing were contemporary with the foundation of the Eleatic school. Dialectic originally meant simply discussion, but it has come to be a technical term in philosophy, and used as for that type of

reasoning which seeks to develop the truth by making the false refute and contradict itself. Thus, dialectic or dialectics, also known as the dialectical method, is a discourse between two or more people holding different points of view about a subject but wishing to establish the truth through reasoned arguments.

Zeno's paradoxes bring out the contradiction in motion and plurality. He attempted to refute multiplicity and motion by showing that, if we assume them as real, contradictory propositions will fellow from that assumption. Two propositions which contradict each other cannot both be true. Therefore the assumptions from which both follow, namely, multiplicity and motion, cannot be real things.Arguments of Zeno on the impossibility of motion are called aporia. Aporia in ancient Greek philosophy is conceived as a problem or puzzle which is difficult tosolve because of some contradiction in the concept itself.

4.5 ZENO'S ARGUMENTS AGAINST PLURALITY AND MOTION

The cardinal principle of the Eleatic school, 'All is one' was best represented by Parmenides and Zeno. For Parmenides only Beingis truly real and there is no change in it. Zeno supported Parmenides in the doctrine of Being. He attempted to establish that reality is not dynamic. Being is absolutely static and unchangeable. Parmenides had taught that the world of sense is illusory and false. The essentials of that world are two- multiplicity and change. For Parmenides, the concept of change is logically neither thinkable nor expressible. He maintains that 'whatever exists must be absolutely or not at all. Zeno accepts the view of Parmenides that senses give a false view of things. Thus, the world of sense with its apparent motion or change and plurality or multiplicity is merely an illusion. The 'true being' behind the illusion is absolutely one and has no plurality and furthermore it is static and unchangeable. Only thought gives us the reality. Zeno stated that the very conception of movement is self- contradictory.

He rejected the philosophy of flux. Before Zeno and Parmenides, cosmologists assumed that things like motion and change were real. Zeno, thus directed his arguments against multiplicity and motion and attempted to support the conclusions of Parmenides that multiplicity and motion are impossible.



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- He employed the method of indirect proof in his paradoxes. This method of indirect proof or reductio ad absurdum probably originated with his teacher Parmenides, but Zeno used it more systematically.
- Zeno probably created forty paradoxes of which only the ten are known. And the first four have standard names.

4.5.1 Arguments Against Plurality or Multiplicity or Many:

Zeno argued that, if we assume plurality we involve ourselves in contradiction. So the concept of plurality is self-contradictory. Zeno's rgumentsagaintplurality are the following.

1. Large and Small: Zeno refutation of plurality is this: If the whole of being is a plurality, it is made up of many parts, and this whole can be proved to be both infinitely small and infinitely large.

(a) The many must be infinitely small:

If reality is many, then each thing must be composed of units. But ultimately each unit must be indivisible, for an infinitely divisible unit is no unit at all. That is, if they can be further divided, they will not be regarded as units. Since they are indivisible they can have no magnitude for where there is magnitude is divisible. Thus, the many which is composed of units will have no magnitude. If each unit is without magnitude then its aggregate too can have no magnitude. It shows that if none of the parts of the many

have magnitude, the many as a whole has none. Therefore the many is infinitely small.

(b) The many is infinitely large:

On the other hand, if a unit is infinitely divisible then it is composed of parts which are themselves infinitely divisible. What is divisible is magnitude. Hence each unit has magnitude and as such they are further divisible into parts. Thus many is divisible ad infinitum. The reality then becomes a collection of infinite magnitude. But the smallest magnitude, multiplied by infinity, becomes an infinite magnitude. Therefore reality becomes infinitely large. Thus, if there is plurality, then the world is riddled with contradiction. It becomes both infinitely small and infinitely large. And this is self-contradictory. Therefore plurality is an illusion.

2. Limited and unlimited:If we accept the reality of plurality, the world becomes at once limited and unlimited.

(a) The many must be limited

If we accept the reality of plurality, the world becomes at once limited and unlimited. If the units are indivisible, then it must be limited, for each unit remain enclosed in its magnitude. But if each is limited, then the world as a whole as the sum-total of limited units, itself becomes limited.

(b) The many must be unlimited:

Again, if each unit to be must have some magnitude and magnitude is infinitely divisible. Hence the world as the sum-total of an infinitely divisible units, itself becomes unlimited.

3. Alike and Unlike:

Zeno says, if things are many, then they must be both like and unlike. But that is impossible; unlike things cannot be like, or like things unlike. Zeno's point is -suppose there is a plurality of things for example, some

people and some mountains. These things have in common the property of being heavy. It means that they really are all the same kind of thing and so they are not a plurality.

Here, Plato accuses Zeno and says a thing can be alike some other thing in one respect while being not alike in a different respect. For example, people and mountain are all alike in being heavy, but are unalike in intelligence.



ACTIVITY: 4:1

I Explain Zeno's Dialectic with spectial reference to Hegel.

Ans: ……

……

……

I What do you mean reductio ad absurdum ?

Ans: ……

……

……

4.5.2 Arguments against Motion or Change:

Zeno argues that just as plurality is illusory, so, movement or change is also illusory. Zeno advanced four arguments against the possibility of motion which are commonly referred to as Zeno's paradoxes of motion. Zeno's paradoxes seemed to show that commonly held beliefs in things such as motion were absurd. His paradoxes were one of the first examples of a method of proof called reductio ad absurdum, a kind of dialectical syllogism or proof by contradiction. That is, a paradox is an argument which starts with statements thought to be true, that are then shown through logical reasoning to be absurd because of a logical contradiction. Thus, Zeno employed the method of indirect proof in his paradoxes. Although

Parmenides himself may actually have been the first to use this style of argument, Zeno became the most famous.

Movement means covering a distance between A and B. This A and B can be represented by a line. But each line is infinitely divisible into infinite parts and an infinite number of parts require an infinite time to traverse. Hence, any distance no matter however short will require infinite time, which no finite man can have. So, no motion is possible between any distances whatsoever.

1. The Paradox of Race Course: This paradox states that in order to travel a distance, a body must first travel half distance. There remains half left for it still to travel. It must then travel half the remaining distance. There is still remained. This progress proceeds infinitely, but there always a remainder unravelled. Therefore, it is impossible for a body to travel from one point to another.

2. The Paradox of Achilles and the Tortoise: Achilles and the tortoise run a race. If the tortoise is given a start, Achilles can never catch it up. For, in the first place, he must run to the point from which the tortoise started. When he gets there, the tortoise will have gone to a point further on. Achilles must then run to a point, and finds then that the tortoise has reached a third point. This will never catch up the tortoise.

3. The Paradox of Arrow: Zeno proves that no arrow can ever move. If there be an arrow, then either it is at one moment of time where it is or where it is not. That is, at any particular moment in its flight the arrow is in place and not in two. But to be in one place is to be at rest. So an arrow at any moment of time remains where it is.If the arrow is at any moment of time where it is, then it will be said to be stationary. That is, in each and every moment of its flight it is at rest. Thus, an arrow does not move. It means that motion is impossible.

4. The Paradox of Stadium: This paradox states that half the time may be equal to double the time. Suppose there are three rows of bodies namely

A B and C. A is at rest while B and C are moving with equal velocity in opposite directions. By the time they are all in the same part of the course, B will have passed twice as many of the bodies in C as in A. Therefore the time which it takes to pass C is twice as long as the time it takes to pass A. But the time which B and C take to reach the position of A is the same. Therefore double the time is equal to the half.

This argument of Zeno appeals to the relativity of observed motions: The variable and conflicting testimony of the senses, dependingupon whether a moving object is observed from a position at rest or in motion at various speeds, undermines the very possibility of motion as such.



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- In modern times, this type of argument is called "antinomy". An antinomy is a proof that, since two contradictory propositions equally follow from a given assumption, that assumption must be false.

4.6 SPACE

Zeno's arguments against multiplicity and motion can equally be applied to space, to time or to anything which can be quantitatively measured. So space is impossible for similar reason. If we say that all being is in space, we must assume that this space is in a space, and so ad infinitum.

Zeno's idea of infinite space itself is a contradiction. It states that there must be in existence as much as there is, no more. This means that there must be a definite and limited amount of space. So space is finite. On the other hand, it is impossible to conceive a limit to space. Beyond the limit there must be more space. Therefore space is infinite.

What Zeno is really arguing against space is his attempt to distinguish space from the body that occupies it. If we insist that body must be in

space, then we must go on to ask what space itself is in. This is a 'reinforcement' of the Parmenidean denial of the void.



ACTIVITY: 4:2

I Describe Zeno's philosophy and its impact on western philosophy.

Ans: ……

……

……

4.7 CRITICISM

Zeno's arguments, in reality may be said to be the variations of one argument. His arguments are based upon the one argument which may be called the 'antinomy of infinite divisibility'. It applies equally to space, to time or to anything which can be quantitatively measured. Though Zeno's arguments against motion or plurality are impressive, it seems to be fallacious.

1. Zeno's paradox is due to the confusion between two standpoints namely, geometrical standpoint and factual standpoint. A geometrical line has length but no breadth. On the other hand factual line has breadth. Similarly, a geometrical point has no magnitude, but a factual point has magnitude. In the same manner a geometrical line is infinitely divisible but no actual line is infinitely divisible.

2. Zeno confuses between analyticand synthetic statements. An analytic proposition does not require any observation for the verification of its truth or falsity. But a synthetic proposition is true if it corresponds to the actual fact. A distance is infinitely divisible or time is infinitely divisible into moments is an analytic statement. But actual distance traversed in some observed time is not infinitely divisible. It a synthetic statement.

3. Zeno talks of space and time as if they are separate entities. Therefore Zeno thinks that infinite parts of space to be traversed will require infinite moments of time. But in modern times they are called space-time continuum. Space and time are not separated as two distinct entities.Space and time can be distinguished in thought, but not in reality.

Zeno said that motion and multiplicity are not real. But what does it mean? Did Zeno mean to say that when he walked about the streets of Elea, it was not true that he walked about? Did he mean that it was not a fact that he moved from place to place? Zeno's position is that he does not deny the existence of the world. What he denies is the truth of existence. The objects around us have existence, but they have no independent existence.

However, Zeno had immensely contributed to the western philosophy by working out the opposition between sense and reason. Kant has tried to reconcile the rival claims of sense and reason. Further, Kant drew from these contradictions the conclusion that to comprehend the infinite is beyond the capacity of human reason. Zeno'sparadoxes also remind one of the antinomies of Kant and their synthesis in the dialectic method of Hegel.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1.

a) According to Zeno multiplicity is real. Is it true?

b) Who was inventor of dialectic?

c) 'Plurality is an illusion'- Is it true according to Zeno ?

d) 'Movement or change is illusory'-Is it true according to Zeno ?

e) Who is the founder of paradox of motion?

2. Fill in the blanks

a) Zeno belongsto_____school.

b) Zeno supports _____in the doctrine of Being.

c) According to Zeno reality is_____

d) Zeno was a student of _____

3. Is the world of sense real?
4. Is reality dynamic?
5. What does dialectic originally mean?
6. What are the four famous Paradoxes of Motion in Zeno's philosophy?



4.8 LET US SUM

Zeno was a pre-Socratic Greek philosopher of Magna Graecia and a member of the Eleatic School founded by Parmenides.Parmenides holds that reality is one, eternal and indestructible, and the plurality and change are appearances and are illusory. For him senses reveal to us that the world consists of manyness and change. Zeno accepts this ontology of Parmenides and support this by presenting arguments. Zeno also holds that senses give a false view of things. Only thought gives us the reality. But thought shows that manynessis false. Zeno argued that if we assume plurality and motion, we involve ourselves in contradictions.

Zeno advanced four famous proofs for the impossibility of motion, which are commonly refered to as Zeno's paradoxes of motion. So, he is best known for his paradoxes. The four paradoxes of Zeno are: The paradox of race course, the paradox of Achilles and the tortoise, the paradox of arrow and the paradox of stadium.

Zeno's arguments against plurality and motion are impressive, but in our times they are known to be fallacious. He confuses between analytic and synthetic statements. But the importance of his argumentshighly admitted. As long as the concepts of space and time were not precise, the paradoxes of Zeno served as a powerful challenge to thinkers.

4.9 FURTHER READING

(1) Iep.utm.edu/zeno: Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy

(2) W. T. Stace: A Critical History of Greek Philosophy

(3) John Burnet: Early Greek Philosophy

(4) Y. Masih: A Critical History of Western Philosophy

(5) F. Thilly: A History of Philosophy

4.10 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS



1. a) No

b) Aristotle said Zeno to be the inventor of dialectic.

c) Yes

d) Yes

e) Zeno

2. a) Eleatic

b) Parmenides

c) One

d) Parmenides

3. No

4. No

5. Dialectic originally means discussion.

6. The four famous Paradoxes of Motion are: The Paradox of Race Course, The Paradox of Achilles and the Tortoise,The Paradox of Arrow and the The Paradox of Stadium.

4.11 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1. To which school Zeno was associated?

Q 2. Who was the founder of the Eleatic school?

Q 3. Does Zeno support multiplicity and motion as real things?What are the fundamental paradoxes of Zeno?

Q 4. Write two arguments against motion.

Q 5. What is antinomy?

Q 6. Explain Zeno's arguments against multiplicity.

Q 7. Zeno was the inventor of dialectic. Explain

Q 8. 'Motion is impossible'- explain with reference to Zeno's philosophy.

Q 9. Critically describe Zeno's view on plurality and motion.

Q 10. Describe Zeno's contribution to the realm of western philosophy.

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UNIT 5: DEMOCRITUS: ATOMISM

UNIT STRUCTURE

5.1 Learning Objectives

5.2 Introduction

5.3 Life and his Writings

5.4 Development of Atomism

5.5 Anaxogoras and Democritus

5.6 The Atomism of Democritus

5.7 The Weight of the Atoms

5.8 Let Us Sum

5.9 Further Reading

5.10 Answer to Check Your Progress

5.11 Possible Questions

5.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- Understand the theory of atoms
- Explain the distinction between perception and thought
- Describe Democritus' materialism
- Explain Democritus' view on ethics and psychology.

5.2 INTRODUCTION

Democritus was a pre-Socratic Greek philosopher. He was born at Abdera, in Thrace. Building on Leucippus' atomism, he developed the atomic theory in The Little World-System and in numerous other writings. Leukippus and Democritus have been jointly regarded as the atomists. According to Leucippus and Democritus, if matter were divided far enough, ultimately we come to indivisible units. Thiese indivisible units are called atoms. Thus, atoms are the ultimate constituents of matter.

In response to the Eleatics' argument that the impossibility of non-being entailed that there is no change, the atomists posited the existence of a

plurality of tiny indivisible beings i.e. the atoms and non-being (the void, or empty space). Atoms do not come into being or perish, but they move in the void, making possible the existence of a world, and indeed of many worlds. The atoms are solid bodies with countless shapes and sizes, apparently having weight or mass, and capable of motion. All other properties are in some way derivative of these basic properties.

Democritus extended the theory of atoms and void to explain epistemology, ethics and metaphysics. For Democritus even the soul is nothing but an aggregate of atoms. The soul consists of those atoms which have the essence of fire. He makes a sharp distinction between perception and thought. They do not differ in kind but only in degree. For him, perception gives us the information about the world of becoming; but thought gives us the knowledge of being. He laid emphasis on happiness which is the state of the soul, and not of the body or of the senses. Democritus tried to explain morality with the help of his thoroughgoing mechanism and materialism.

Democritus had no immediate successor, but a century later Epicurus transformed his ethics into philosophy of consolation founded on atomism.

5.3 LIFE AND HIS WRITINGS

The founders of the school of atomists were Leucippus and Democritus. We know almost nothing about Leucippus. The teaching of Leucippus was fully incorporated into the writings of Democritus. But Theophrastos distinguished the atomism of Leucippus from that of Democritus. Aristotle with others regarded him as the originator of the atomism and Demcritus had said to have popularized and extended the theory of atomism. Democritus carried the fundamentals of into ontological materialism and mechanical epistemology.

Democritus was a citizen of Abdera in Thrace. He was a man of the widest learning. He wasborn about460 B.C. He travelled extensively and wrote many books on physics, metaphysics, ethics and history. He travelled

largely in Egypt, also probably in Babylonia. The date of his death is unknown, but certainly he lived to a great age.

5.4 DEVELOPMENT OF ATOMISM

The history of atomism expresses the distinction between philosophical atomism and scientific atomism. Philosophical atomism is as old as Greek philosophy. In philosophical atomism, attention was focused not on the detailed explanation of all kinds of concrete phenomena but on some basic general aspects of these phenomena and on the general lines according to which a rational explanation of these aspects was possible. With the development of a scientific atomic theory, the general philosophical problems gradually disappeared into the background. All attention is focussed on the explanation of the concrete phenomena. Classical atomism spoke mainly of material atoms but this theory is extended to the phenomena of electricity. Logical atomism which is developed by the eminent philosopher and logician Bertrand Russell and by the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstien is another form of atomism and more removed from the original form of atomism. Logical atomism supposes that a perfect one-to-one correspondence exists between an 'atom' of language and an atomic fact. Thus, language mirrors reality. Monadology is the another form of atomism which is developed by the philosopher scientist G. W. Leibnitz. Leibnitz said, the ultimate constituents of things are not mathematical but metaphysical points which he calls 'monads'. In psychology, atomism is a doctrine about perception. According to empiricist philosopher David Hume impressions are separate and distinct with no logical connection between them. This is known as Humean atomism.

5.5 ANAXOGORAS AND DEMOCRITUS

The atomists theory agree with their predecessors. But they deny the view of Empedocles and Anaxogoras that particles of reality have qualitative properties. For Empedocles there are only four ultimate kinds of matter,

which are qualitatively distinguished. There is a significant difference between the qualitative theory of Anaxogoras and the atomic theory of Democritus.

Firstly, Anoxogoras posited an unlimited number of qualitatively differeingelements but Democritus admited an infinite number of atoms, differing from one another solely in quantitative respects such as shape, size etc. Secondly, Anaxogoras admitted of infinite subdivision of elements into smaller and smaller particles but the atoms of Democritus were simple and physically indivisible i.e. they are incapable of being split into parts ad infinitum. Thirdly, Anaxogoras said nothing about empty space but Democritus insisted on the reality of empty space as a condition of the motion of the atoms. Fourthly, Anaxogoras explained motion by reference to mind but Democritus considered motion as an intrinsic property of the atoms. Finally Anaxogoras considered mind to be a teleological principle but the atoms of Democritus were subject to mechanical laws. The atomists developed the theory of particles after eliminating the inconsistencies of their predecessors.

5.6 ATOMISMOF DEMOCRITUS

The founders of the school of atomists are Leucippus and Democritus. According to this theory the ultimate realities are atoms and the void. Atoms are indivisible units.Atomism explains complex phenomena in terms of aggregates of fixed particles or units. In essence this theory is analytic. It regards observable forms in nature not as intrinsic wholes but as aggregates. Atomism in the strict sense is characterised by three points: the atoms are absolutely indivisible, qualitatively identical, and combinable with each other only by justaposition. Usually atomism is associated with a realistic and mechanistic view of the world. It is realistic because atoms exist in actual reality. They are not considered as subjective constructs of the mind.

The theory of atomism appeared in both ancient Greeek and ancient Indian philosophical tradition. The ancient Greek atomists theorised that

nature consists of two fundamental principles: atom and void. The Atomists developed the theory of particles.

According to Greek atomists Leucippus and Democritus, if matter were divided far enough, we should ultimately come to indivisible units. These indivisible units are called atoms. Thus, atoms are ultimate constituents of matter. Some points can be highlighted about the theory of Democritus' atomism.

- **Atoms are infinite in number:** For the atomists atoms are infinite in number and they are too small to be perceptible to the senses.

- **Atoms are physically indivisible particles:** Atom is not a mathematical point for it has magnitude or extension. Since it is extended, it is not a mathematically indivisible point but a physically indivisible particle. That means, it cannot be physically divided into parts.

- **All atoms are alike in quality:** All atoms are composed of exactly the same kind of matter. They possess no quality. Empedocles assumed four different kinds of matter. But, for atomists there is only one kind of atom and they are non-qualitative. They are neither earth, air, fire or water nor are they germ of specific kinds. They differ only in quantity i.e. in their shape and size. So, the actual qualities of objects due the arrangement and position of the atoms.It is a logical development of the mechanism of Empedocles.

- **Atoms are bounded:** Atoms are bounded and separated from each other. Atoms are separated by empty space. Atoms can move because empty space is there.

- **Atoms and empty space are the realities:** Acoording to the atomists there are two ultimate realities. They are atoms and empty space. The atomists agree with the Eleatics that reality is in essence permanent. But at the same it is admitted that things are in constant motion. Hence atomists insist that there is empty space.

This view corresponds to the view of Being and non-being of Eleatics. OfcourseEleatics denied any reality to non-being but atomists affirmed the reality of non-being (empty space). Theyviewed, empty space is as real as being. Democritus said, "Being is by nothing more real than nothing."

- **Atoms are not different from empty space:** Atoms possess no quality. Since they are non-qualitative, they differ in no respect from empty space save they are 'full'. Therefore atoms are called 'plenum' and void is called 'vacuum'. For the atomists Being or the full and non-being or the void are equally real.

- **Atoms are building stones:** Atoms are the building stones of reality from which different objects are formed. All bodies are combinations of atoms and spaces. Origin means union and destruction means separation. Bodies are different from each other because atoms constitute them in different ways. Atomists said that fire is composed of smooth round atoms. The soul is also composed of smooth round atoms. They are pure and refined fire. At death the soul atoms are scattered. Hence, there is no question of future life.

- **Motion is inherent in atoms:** Democritus considered motion as an intrinsic property of the atoms.Motion causes atoms to unite and separate is the motion. The motion of the atoms is governed by inexorable mechanical laws. The inherent motion of the atoms is uncaused like the atoms themselves. Atoms have been in motion from the beginnig. The Atomists said that all movements are under the force of 'necessity'. Anaxogoras taught that all motion of things is produced by a world intelligence. But for Democritus all phenomena and all becoming are completely determined by blind mechanical causes.



LET US KNOW

- The term atomism is derived from the Greek word atoma meaning- 'things that cannot be cut or divided.'
- Democritus extended this theory of atomism to explain cosmology, epistemology and metaphysics

5.6.1 Cosmology

The cosmos consists of numberless atoms of various shapes, sizes and motions. They impinge on one another from different directions and form as a result of their impact a vortex. This vortex motion brings together atoms of similar shape and size and thereby generates composite things such as fire, air, earth and water. The whirling motion extends farther and farther and thus multitudes of world are produced. The earth is one of the bodies that created. Fiery atoms account for the heat of the living organism.



LET US KNOW

- Vortex is a mass of air or water that spins around very fast and pulls objects into its empty centre.

5.6.2 Epistemology

Democritus'epistemology is explained by his materialism and mechanism.Democritus made a distinction perception and thought. Perception and thought differ in degree not in kind. Perception gives us information about the world of becoming but thought gives us the knowledge of being. Knowledge provided by perception is relative and transitory. Further, intellectual knowledge is universal and objectively valid knowledge. Thought gives us knowledge of the true atom-forms. In explaining the

difference between perception and thought Democritus takes the help of images. The images of things can pass both through the sense-organs and thought. In thought the images impress directly on the fire-atoms of the body but in perception these images are distorted by air and possibly by the senses. Thus, Democritus showed that reason is superior than sense.Besides, in perception coarse images make impact on the fire atoms through the senses violently but in thought the finest images ditectly impinge on the fire-atoms of the soul in a gentle, fire motion yielding genuine insight into the atomic structure. Further, the materialism of Democritus has no room for consciousness which characterizes the soul.



LET US KNOW

- According to materialism, matter alone is the fundamental stuff of the cuniverse.

5.6.3 Ethics

The view that reason is superior to sense is extended to the sphere of ethics. Democritus emphasized on happiness which means the surplus of pleasure over pain. It can be traced to the outlines of refined hedonistic ethics. The goal of all conduct is well-being which he means not the pleasure of the sense alone. According to Democritus pleasure of the senses is not the true pleasure. Because first, pleasure of the senses depends on external things. Secondly they are fleeting. For Democritus the true end of life is happiness, which he describes as a inner state of satisfaction depending on the tranquillity, harmony fearlessness of the soul. Thus, happiness lies in cheerfulness, in other words the state of the soul, not of the body or of the senses. Happiness results from the right insight into fiery atoms. This insight secures peace, and guards the soul from emotional disturbance. This view is more akin to the view of Socrates that 'Virtue is knowledge, and Vice is ignorance' than the hedonistic view that pleasure is the ultimate end of life.

5.6.4 Psychology

Democritus explains the nature the soul with the help of his thoroughgoing materialism. The soul is composed of the finest, roundest, and fiery atoms. These atoms are scattered over the entire body. We inhale and exhale soul-atoms. Life exists so long as this process continues. At death, the soul -atoms are scattered. Democritus as rationalist thinker holds that soul and reason are the same thing.

5.6.5.Theology

The atomists hold that God is also composed of atoms. The Gods are mortal like men though live long. The gods are more powerful than man. Gods possess reason of a high order. Like all other things, gods are subject to the impersonal law of the motion of the atoms.



ACTIVITY: 5.2

- Explain critically Greek atomism.

Ans: ……

……

……

- Explain how did Democritus extend his materialism to the sphere of metaphysics, ethics, epistemology, cosmology and theology?

Ans: ……

……

……

5.7 THE WEIGHT OF THE ATOMS

Atoms are always in motion. Motion is required for the separation and aggregation of atoms. As all becoming is due to the separation and aggregation of atoms, a moving force is required. As space is infinite and

the atoms go on falling eternally, there must have been innumerable worlds of which our world is only one. When aggregated atoms fall apart again, this particular worldwill cease to exist. Allthese lead to the question whether atoms have weight or not. Epicurus held that the atoms were naturally heavyand therefore fell in the infinite void.They held that the original movement of the atoms is due to their weight. According to professor Burnet, Democritus assigned two properties to atoms, magnitude and form to which Epicurus added a third viz. weight. Thus for Democritus the weight of atoms is a later addition of the Epicureans.

Now question arises, if weight of atom is a later addition, how the early atomists explained the original movement of atom? If there was no weight, what was their moving force?``Professor Burnet said, "It is safest to say that it is simply a confused motion this way and that."But motion itself cannot be confused. It is only our ideas of motion which can be confused. If this theory is correct, then we can only say that the atomists had no definite solution of the problem of the origin of motion and the character of the moving force.



5.8 LET US SUM

The theory of Democritus states that everything is composed of 'atoms' which are physically, but not geometrically indivisible. There lies empty space between atoms. Atoms are indestructible. They have always been and always will be in motion. There is an infinite number of atoms. They are entirely non-qualitative. The only difference between them is in quantity. The atoms are separated from each other. They are separated by empty space. Thus atomists accepts two realities viz. atom and emply space or void. Atoms and void are also called the plenum and the vacuum respectively.

According to the atomists even the soul of man consists of atoms alone. The distinctive feature of soul is that it is constituted of fire-atoms. The

difference between man and all other animals is one of number of fire-atoms.

Democtritus explained thought and sensation through the impact of one atom on another. Similarly, the ethical theories are also explained on the basis of mechanical laws.The materialism of Democritus has a great impact in the realm of science.

5.9 FURTHER READING

(1) W. T. Stace: A Critical History of Greek Philosophy

(2) John Burnet: Early Greek Philosophy

(3) Y. Masih: A Critical History of Western Philosophy

(4) F. Thilly: A History of Philosophy www. Britannica.com



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Answer the following

a. Who is the father of Atomism?

b. What is atomism?

c. Who is the disciple of Leukippus?

d. Was Democritus a materialist?

e. What is materialism?

f. What is the nature of fiery atoms?

2. Fill in the blanks

a. Democritus accepts the theory of _____and _____.

b. Soul is an aggregate of_____.

c. Thought and perception differ in____.

d. Perception gives us the information about the world of _____.

3. Answer the following

a. What is atom?

b. What is Plenum and Vacuum?

c. Name the philosopher who has popularized atomism of Luecippus?

d. How the atomists have explained empty space?

5.10 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer:1

a. Leucippus

b. Atomism is an ancient philosophical theory developed by Democritus, that the ultimate constituents of the universe are atoms.

c. Democritus

d. Yes

e. Materialism is that docrine of ontology according to which matter alone is the fundamental stuff of the universe.

f. Fiery atoms are the finest, smoothest, roundest and most mobile.

Answer 2:

a. atom , void.

b. atoms.

c. Degree

d. Becoming.

3. a. The indivisible units are called atoms.

b. Atoms are called plenum and void is called vacuum.

c. Democritus

d. All atoms are separated from each other. They are separated by empty space. Further, Democritus explains all becoming of change by the mixing and unmixing of atoms which is possible by the movement of the atoms. Because nothing can move if there is no empty space.



5.11 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Long questions (write the answer in about 300-500 words)

Q 1. Explain materialism of Democritus.

Q 2. What is an atom?How does Democritus explain the world by means of atoms.

Q 3. Explain critically Democritus' theory of toms.

Q 4. How the atomists have explained empty space?

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UNIT 6: SOCRATES: VIRTUE AND KNOWLEDGE

UNIT STRUCTURE

6.1. Learning Objectives

6.2. Introduction

6.3. The Concept of Virtue ethics

6.4. The Concept of knowledge in Greek philosophy

6.5. Socrates concept of virtue and knowledge

6.6. Let us sum up

6.7. Further Reading

6.8. Answer to check your progress

6.9. Model Questions

6.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able-

- To know about the concept of virtue in Greek philosophy.
- To know about what is Virtue ethics
- To know about the concept of knowledge in Greek philosophy.
- To know about what Socrates maintained about the concepts of virtue and knowledge.

6.2 INTRODUCTION

Virtue (Latin: virtus, Ancient Greek: "arete") is moral excellence. A virtue is a trait or quality that is deemed to be morally good and thus is valued as a foundation of principle and good moral being. Personal virtues are characteristics valued as promoting collective and individual greatness. The opposite of virtue is vice.

The four classic cardinal virtues are temperance, prudence, courage, and justice. Christianity derives the three theological virtues of faith, hope and love (charity) from Corinthians. Together these make up the seven virtues. Buddhism's four brahmavihara ("Divine States") can be regarded as virtues in the European sense. The Japanese Bushid? code is

characterized by up to ten virtues, including rectitude, courage, and benevolence.

A virtue is an excellent trait of character. It is a disposition, well entrenched in its possessor-something that, as we say, goes all the way down, unlike a habit such as being a tea-drinker-to notice, expect, value, feel, desire, choose, act, and react in certain characteristic ways. To possess a virtue is to be a certain sort of person with a certain complex mindset. A significant aspect of this mindset is the wholehearted acceptance of a distinctive range of considerations as reasons for action. An honest person cannot be identified simply as one who, for example, practices honest dealing and does not cheat. If such actions are done merely because the agent thinks that honesty is the best policy, or because they fear being caught out, rather than through recognizing "To do otherwise would be dishonest" as the relevant reason, they are not the actions of an honest person. An honest person cannot be identified simply as one who, for example, tells the truth because it is the truth, for one can have the virtue of honesty without being tactless or indiscreet. The honest person recognizes "That would be a lie" as a strong (though perhaps not overriding) reason for not making certain statements in certain circumstances, and gives due, but not overriding, weight to "That would be the truth" as a reason for making them.

6.3. THE CONCEPT OF VIRTUE ETHICS:

Virtue ethics (or aretaic ethics from Greek arete) are normative ethical theories which emphasize virtues of mind and character. Virtue ethicists discuss the nature and definition of virtues and other related problems. For example, how are virtues acquired? How are they applied in various real life contexts? Are virtues rooted in a universal human nature or in a plurality of cultures?

Like much of the Western tradition, virtue theory seems to have originated in ancient Greek philosophy. Virtue ethics began with Socrates,

and was subsequently developed further by Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics. Virtue ethics refers to a collection of normative ethical philosophies that place an emphasis on being rather than doing. Another way to say this is that in virtue ethics, morality stems from the identity and/or character of the individual, rather than being a reflection of the actions (or consequences thereof) of the individual. Today, there is debate among various adherents of virtue ethics concerning what specific virtues are morally praiseworthy. However, most theorists agree that morality comes as a result of intrinsic virtues. Intrinsic virtues are the common link that unites the disparate normative philosophies into the field known as virtue ethics. Plato and Aristotle's treatment of virtues are not the same. Plato believes virtue is effectively an end to be sought, for which a friend might be a useful means. Aristotle states that the virtues function more as means to safeguard human relations, particularly authentic friendship, without which one's quest for happiness is frustrated.

Discussion of what were known as the Four Cardinal Virtues - wisdom, justice, fortitude, and temperance - can be found in Plato's Republic. The virtues also figure prominently in Aristotle's moral theory. Virtue theory was inserted into the study of history by moralistic historians such as Livy, Plutarch, and Tacitus. The Greek idea of the virtues was passed on in Roman philosophy through Cicero and later incorporated into Christian moral theology by St. Ambrose of Milan. During the scholastic period, the most comprehensive consideration of the virtues from a theological perspective was provided by St. Thomas Aquinas in his Summa Theologiae and his Commentaries on the Nicomachean Ethics.

Though the tradition receded into the background of European philosophical thought in these centuries, the term "virtue" remained current during this period, and in fact appears prominently in the tradition of classical republicanism or classical liberalism. This tradition was prominent in the intellectual life of 16th-century Italy, as well as 17th- and 18th-century Britain and America; indeed the term "virtue" appears frequently in the work of

Machiavelli, David Hume, the republicans of the English Civil War period, the 18th-century English Whigs, and the prominent figures among the Scottish Enlightenment and the American Founding Fathers.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Fill up the blanks:

(a) A virtue is ……. or …… that is deemed to be morally good and thus is valued as a foundation of principle and good moral being.

(b) The four classic cardinal virtues are temperance, prudence…….. and justice.

(c) Virtue theory seems to have originated in ……..philosophy

(d) We can found discussions upon Plato's …….

6.4. THE CONCEPT OF KNOWLEDGE IN GREEK PHILOSOPHY:

Socrates identifies knowledge with virtue. Thus, Socrates states virtue can be taught. He believes "the unexamined life is not worth living." One must seek knowledge and wisdom before private interests. In this manner, knowledge is sought as a means to ethical action. Knowledge, for Socrates is possible only after we pursue the proper method; we must define our terms correctly, and we must carry our reasoning back to first principles. A first principle is a basic, foundational, self-evident proposition or assumption that cannot be deduced from any other proposition or assumption. Knowledge is concerned with the general and typical, not with the particular and accidental. This is the point that the sophists failed to understand, and Socrates sets them right. In one important respect, however, he agreed with the Sophists: He shared with them the belief in the futility of cosmological and metaphysical speculations. "Indeed, in contrast to others, he set his face against all discussions of such high matters as the nature of the universe; how the 'cosmos', as the savants phrase it, came into being; or

by what forces the celestial phenomena arise. To trouble one's brain about such matters was, he argued, to play the fool." His interests were ethical and practical, and he did not see what was to come of such speculations.

The method which Socrates employed in his philosophical analysis is skeptical; it begins with Socrates' real or professed ignorance of the truth of the matter under discussion. This skepticism Socrates shared with the Sophists and in his adoption of it; he may have been influenced by them. Socrates' doubt and assumed ignorance, like the initial doubt of Descartes, is an indispensable first step in the pursuit of knowledge.

Socrates' method is conceptual or definitional, in that it sets as the goal of knowledge the acquisition of correct definitions of concepts, such as the ethical concepts of justice, piety, wisdom, courage and the like. Socrates tacitly assumes that truth is embodied in correct definitions-an assumption which is scarcely tenable; precise definitions are no doubt indispensable to knowledge, but definitions alone cannot constitute knowledge.

6.5. SOCRATES CONCEPT OF VIRTUE AND KNOWLEDGE:

Socrates' faith in knowledge, in clear and reasoned thinking, is strong-so strong that he sees in it the cure of all our ills. He applies his method to all human problems, particularly to the problems of morality, and seeks to find a rational basis for conduct. The radical thinkers, as we saw, looked upon the ethical ideas and practices of their times as mere conventions; after all, might makes right. The conservatives regarded them as self-evident: rules of conduct are not things about which one can reason; they have to be obeyed. Socrates endeavours to understand the meaning of morality, to discover a rational principle of right and wrong, a criterion by which to decide moral issues. The questions uppermost in his mind are: how shall I order my life? What is the rational way of living? How ought a reasoning being, a human being, to act? The Sophists cannot be right in saying that man is the measure of all things in the sense that whatever

pleases me, the particular me, is right for me; that there is no universal good. There must be more to the matter than that; there must be some principle, or standard, or good, which all rational creatures recognize and accept when they come to think the problem through. What is the good, what is the good for the sake of which all else is good, the highest good?

Knowledge is the highest good, so Socrates answers. The central thesis of the Socratic ethics is contained in the formula: "Knowledge is virtue." Right thinking is essential to right action. In order to steer a ship or rule a state, a man must have knowledge of the construction and function of the ship, or of the nature and purpose of the state. Similarly, unless a man knows what virtue is, unless he knows the meaning of self-control and courage and justice and piety and their opposites, he cannot be virtuous; but, knowing what virtue is, he will be virtuous. Knowledge is both the necessary and the sufficient condition of virtue: without knowledge virtue is impossible, and its possession insures virtuous action. "No man is voluntarily bad or involuntarily good." "No man voluntarily pursues evil or that which he thinks to be evil. To prefer evil to good is not in human nature; and when a man is compelled to choose between two evils, no one will choose the greater when he may have the less." The objection is raised that "we see the better and approve of it and pursue the evil." Socrates would have denied that we can truly know the good and yet refuse to choose it. With him knowledge of right and wrong was not a mere theoretical opinion, but a firm practical conviction, a matter not only of the intellect, but of the will.

Socrates deduces a number of other implications from his identification of knowledge and virtue. Since virtue is knowledge it follows also that virtue is one: Knowledge is a unity, an organized system of truth and hence the several virtues are merely so many different forms of virtue as such. Furthermore, virtue is not only good in itself; it is to a man's interest. The tendency of all honorable and useful actions is to make life painless and pleasant; hence the honorable is also the useful and good. Virtue and true happiness are identical; no one can be happy who is not temperate and brave and wise and just.

"I do nothing, say Socrates in the Apology, but go about persuading you all, old and young alike, not to take thought for your persons or properties, but first and chiefly to care about the greatest improvement of the soul. I tell you that virtue is not given by money, but that from virtue comes money and every other good of man, public as well as private.

And the last words which he speaks at his trial are these:

"Still I have a favor to ask of them [my condemners and accusers]. When my sons are grown up, I would ask you, oh my friends, to punish them; and I would have you trouble them as I have troubled you if they seem to care about riches or about anything, more than about virtue; or if they pretend to be something when they are really nothing-then reprove them, as I have reproved you, for not caring about that for which they ought to care, and thinking that they are something when they are really nothing. And if you do this, both I and my sons will have receives justice at your hands."

Socrates did not construct a system of metaphysics nor did he offer a theory of knowledge or of conduct. It remained for his pupils to build upon the foundations laid by the master. Some made the logical problems suggested by his method the subject of their study, others turned their attention to the questions implicit in his ethical techniques, and attempted to work out theories of ethics. The Megarian school, founded by Euclides (450-374 B.C.), combined the Socratic teaching that virtue is knowledge with the Eleatic doctrine of the unity of being: the notion of the good constitutes the eternal essence of things; nothing else-neither matter, motion, nor the changing world of sense-has real being. Hence, there can be but one virtue, and hence, also, external goods can have no value.

The Cynics exaggerated the Socratic thesis that virtue, which is identical with knowledge, is something worthwhile for its own sake, apart from any rewards in the form of pleasure. It is accordingly man's duty to be virtuous and to seek independence of all wants. The emphasis on independence

and freedom from want is an exaltation of traits exemplified by Socrates-his personal independence and indifference to the opinions of others. The ethics of virtue and duty led its exponents to extremes of discipline, restraint, self-renunciation and complete independence of possessions-in other words to asceticism. It also led to a rejection of the artificialities of civilization and to the advocacy of a return to a state of nature. The Cynics rejected pleasure theory and advocated the doctrine of virtue for virtue's sake.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 2: Write short notes on:

(a) The concept of knowledge in Greek philosophy.

(b) Socrates concept of virtue and knowledge

Question 3: State whether true or false:

(a) Socrates identified virtue with knowledge.

(b) The method which Socrates employed in his philosophical analysis is skeptical

(c) The central thesis of the Socratic ethics is contained in the formula: "Knowledge is virtue."

(d) Knowledge is both the necessary and the sufficient condition of virtue: without knowledge virtue is impossible, and its possession insures virtuous action.



6.6. LET US SUM UP:

- Virtue (Latin: virtus, Ancient Greek:"arete") is moral excellence. A virtue is a trait or quality that is deemed to be morally good and thus is valued as a foundation of principle and good moral being.
- The four classic cardinal virtues are temperance, prudence, courage, and justice.
- A virtue is an excellent trait of character. It is a disposition, well entrenched in its possessor-something that, as we say, goes all the

way down, unlike a habit such as being a tea-drinker-to notice, expect, value, feel, desire, choose, act, and react in certain characteristic ways.

- To possess a virtue is to be a certain sort of person with a certain complex mindset.
- Virtue ethics (or aretaic ethics from Greek arete) are normative ethical theories which emphasize virtues of mind and character.
- Virtue ethics began with Socrates, and was subsequently developed further by Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics.
- Virtue ethics refers to a collection of normative ethical philosophies that place an emphasis on being rather than doing.
- There are four cardinal values - wisdom, justice, fortitude, and temperance - can be found in Plato's Republic.
- Socrates identifies knowledge with virtue. Thus, Socrates states virtue can be taught.
- Knowledge, for Socrates is possible only after we pursue the proper method; we must define our terms correctly, and we must carry our reasoning back to first principles.
- The method which Socrates employed in his philosophical analysis is skeptical; it begins with Socrates' real or professed ignorance of the truth of the matter under discussion.
- Socrates' method is conceptual or definitional, in that it sets as the goal of knowledge the acquisition of correct definitions of concepts, such as the ethical concepts of justice, piety, wisdom, courage and the like.
- Socrates' faith in knowledge, in clear and reasoned thinking, is strong-so strong that he sees in it the cure of all our ills. He applies his method to all human problems, particularly to the problems of morality, and seeks to find a rational basis for conduct.

- Knowledge is the highest good, according to Socrates. The central thesis of the Socratic ethics is contained in the formula: "Knowledge is virtue."
- Knowledge is both the necessary and the sufficient condition of virtue: without knowledge virtue is impossible, and its possession insures virtuous action.
- Socrates deduces a number of other implications from his identification of knowledge and virtue. Since virtue is knowledge it follows also that virtue is one: Knowledge is a unity, an organized system of truth and hence the several virtues are merely so many different forms of virtue as such.
- Socrates maintained that virtue is not only good in itself; it is to a man's interest.
- The Cynics exaggerated the Socratic thesis that virtue, which is identical with knowledge, is something worthwhile for its own sake, apart from any rewards in the form of pleasure. It is accordingly man's duty to be virtuous and to seek independence of all wants.



6.7. FURTHER READING

1. Thilly, Frank, A History of Philosophy, Central Publishing House, Allahabad.
2. Masih, Y., A Critical History of Western Philosophy (Greek, Medieval, Modern), Motilal Banarsidass Publishers private limited, Delhi.
3. Wright, M.R., Introducing Greek Philosophy, Routledge.
4. Stace. W.T. A Critical History of Greek Philosophy, MacMillan and Co. limited, London.



6.8. ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. (a) Ans: trait or quality

(b) Ans: courage

(c) Ans: ancient Greek

(d) Ans: Republic

2.(a) Ans: Socrates identifies knowledge with virtue. Thus, Socrates states virtue can be taught. He believes "the unexamined life is not worth living." One must seek knowledge and wisdom before private interests. In this manner, knowledge is sought as a means to ethical action. Knowledge, for Socrates is possible only after we pursue the proper method; we must define our terms correctly, and we must carry our reasoning back to first principles. A first principle is a basic, foundational, self-evident proposition or assumption that cannot be deduced from any other proposition or assumption. Knowledge is concerned with the general and typical, not with the particular and accidental. This is the point that the sophists failed to understand, and Socrates sets them right. In one important respect, however, he agreed with the Sophists: He shared with them the belief in the futility of cosmological and metaphysical speculations. "Indeed, in contrast to others, he set his face against all discussions of such high matters as the nature of the universe; how the 'cosmos', as the savants phrase it, came into being; or by what forces the celestial phenomena arise. To trouble one's brain about such matters was, he argued, to play the fool." His interests were ethical and practical, and he did not see what was to come of such speculations.

The method which Socrates employed in his philosophical analysis is skeptical; it begins with Socrates' real or professed ignorance of the truth of the matter under discussion. This skepticism Socrates shared with the Sophists and in his adoption of it; he may have been influenced by them. Socrates' doubt and assumed ignorance, like the initial doubt of Descartes, is an indispensable first step in the pursuit of knowledge.

Socrates' method is conceptual or definitional, in that it sets as the goal of knowledge the acquisition of correct definitions of concepts, such as the

ethical concepts of justice, piety, wisdom, courage and the like. Socrates tacitly assumes that truth is embodied in correct definitions-an assumption which is scarcely tenable; precise definitions are no doubt indispensable to knowledge, but definitions alone cannot constitute knowledge.

(b) Ans: Socrates' faith in knowledge, in clear and reasoned thinking, is strong-so strong that he sees in it the cure of all our ills. He applies his method to all human problems, particularly to the problems of morality, and seeks to find a rational basis for conduct. Socrates endeavours to understand the meaning of morality, to discover a rational principle of right and wrong, a criterion by which to decide moral issues. The questions uppermost in his mind are: how shall I order my life? What is the rational way of living? How ought a reasoning being, a human being, to act? The Sophists cannot be right in saying that man is the measure of all things in the sense that whatever pleases me, the particular me, is right for me; that there is no universal good. There must be more to the matter than that; there must be some principle, or standard, or good, which all rational creatures recognize and accept when they come to think the problem through. What is the good, what is the good for the sake of which all else is good, the highest good?

Knowledge is the highest good, so Socrates answers. The central thesis of the Socratic ethics is contained in the formula: "Knowledge is virtue." Right thinking is essential to right action. In order to steer a ship or rule a state, a man must have knowledge of the construction and function of the ship, or of the nature and purpose of the state. Similarly, unless a man knows what virtue is, unless he knows the meaning of self-control and courage and justice and piety and their opposites, he cannot be virtuous; but, knowing what virtue is, he will be virtuous. Knowledge is both the necessary and the sufficient condition of virtue: without knowledge virtue is impossible, and its possession insures virtuous action.

Socrates deduces a number of other implications from his identification of knowledge and virtue. Since virtue is knowledge it follows also that virtue is

one: Knowledge is a unity, an organized system of truth and hence the several virtues are merely so many different forms of virtue as such. Furthermore, virtue is not only good in itself; it is to a man's interest. The tendency of all honorable and useful actions is to make life painless and pleasant; hence the honorable is also the useful and good. Virtue and true happiness are identical; no one can be happy who is not temperate and brave and wise and just.

Socrates did not construct a system of metaphysics nor did he offer a theory of knowledge or of conduct. It remained for his pupils to build upon the foundations laid by the master. Some made the logical problems suggested by his method the subject of their study, others turned their attention to the questions implicit in his ethical techniques, and attempted to work out theories of ethics. The Megarian school, founded by Euclides (450-374 B.C.), combined the Socratic teaching that virtue is knowledge with the Eleatic doctrine of the unity of being: the notion of the good constitutes the eternal essence of things; nothing else-neither matter, motion, nor the changing world of sense-has real being. Hence, there can be but one virtue, and hence, also, external goods can have no value.

3. (a) Ans: false

(b) Ans: true

(c) Ans: true

(d) Ans: true



6.9. MODEL QUESTIONS:

A. Very short questions:-

Q 1. Define virtue.

Q 2. What are the four classical cardinal virtues?

Q 3. By what name Buddhists concept of virtue is known as?

Q 4. What is virtue ethics?

Q 5. Who has started virtue ethics in ancient Greek philosophy?

B. Short questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1. The concept of virtue in Socratic philosophy

Q 2. Virtue ethics

Q 3. The concept of knowledge according to Socrates

C. Short notes (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1. Virtue in Greek philosophy

Q 2. Four cardinal virtues

Q 3. Socrates' concept of knowledge

D. Long questions: (Answer each question within 300-500 words)

Q 1. Explain the concept of cardinal virtues as found in Greek philosophy.

Q 2. Explain how Socrates connected the concept of knowledge with virtue.

Q 3. Illustrate the concept of virtue ethics as found in Socratic philosophy.

Q 4. What is the Greek concept of knowledge? Analyze.

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UNIT-7: PLATO: THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

UNIT STRUCTURE

7.1: Learning Objectives

7.2: Introduction

7.3: Plato's theory of knowledge

7.4: Knowledge is not perception

7.5: Knowledge is not opinion

7.6: All Knowledge is Knowledge Through concept

7.7: Four Grades of Knowledge

7.8: Knowledge as Justified True Belief

7.9: Conclusion

7.10: Let us sum up

7.11: Further Reading

7.12: Answer to check your Progress

7.13: Model Questions

7.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to

- Know what is Plato's theory of knowledge
- Know that Knowledge is not perception
- Know that Knowledge is not opinion.
- Know that all knowledge is knowledge through concept
- Know Four Grades of Knowledge
- Know that Knowledge is Justified true belief

7.2 INTRODUCTION

The theory of knowledge consists of the philosophical study of the nature, origin and, scope, and the conditions of its validity and the limitation of knowledge. The fundamental issue that remains unsolved in epistemology is the definition of knowledge. Philosophers at different time have proposed different definition of knowledge. Plato opens the discussion of knowledge

by telling first what knowledge is not. In defining knowledge his main object is to refute the false theories regarding knowledge.

7.3: PLATO'S THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE:

The first false theory which Plato refutes is that knowledge is perception. To refute this is the main object of the "Theaetetus."

7.4: KNOWLEDGE IS NOT PERCEPTION:

1. That knowledge is perception is the theory of Protagoras and the Sophists. What it amounts to is that what appears to each individual true is true for that individual. In other words, what appears to me is true for me, and, what appears to you in perception is true for you. But this is at any rate false in its application to our judgement of future events. For example, it may appear to me that I shall be Chief Justice next year. But instead of that I find myself, perhaps, in prison.

2. Perception yields contradictory impression. The same object appears large when near, small when removed to a distance. To know which is true, we must be able to exercise a choice to prefer one to another, to accept this and reject that. But if knowledge is perception, then we have no right to give one perception preference over another. For all perceptions are knowledge. All are true.

3. This doctrine renders all teachings, all discussion, proof, or disproof, impossible. Since all perceptions are equally true, the child's perceptions must be just as much the truth as those of his teachers. For if so, there is nothing to dispute about.

4. If perception is truth, man is the measure of all things, in his character as a percipient being. But since animals are also percipient beings, the lowest brute must be, equally with man, the measure of all things.

5. The theory of Protagoras contradicts itself. For Protagoras admits that what appears to me true is true. If, therefore, it appears to me true that the doctrine of Protagoras is false, Protagoras himself must admit that it is false.

6. It destroys the objectivity of truth and renders the distinction between truth and falsehood wholly meaningless.

7. If perception is knowledge and memory is not, and then it results is absurd. If a man shuts his eyes after seeing something, but remembers it, then he has no knowledge of what he remembers.

   So on the basis of above discussion we can conclude that knowledge is perception is an absurd doctrine.

7.5: KNOWLEDGE IS NOT OPINION:

The second false theory that Plato seeks to refute is that knowledge is opinion. Wrong opinion is clearly not knowledge. But even right opinion cannot be called knowledge. We often feel intuitively, or instinctively, that something is true, though we cannot give any definite grounds for our belief. The belief may be quite correct, but it is not, knowledge according to Plato. It is only right opinion. To possess knowledge, one must not only know that a thing is so, but why it is so. One must know the reasons. Knowledge must be full and complete understanding, rational comprehension, and not mere instinctive belief. It must be grounded on reason, and not on faith. It may chance that my belief or opinion turns out to be true. Suppose I believe that it will rain tomorrow. Tomorrow it rains. But still my belief is not knowledge, because I based my belief on intuition or instinct, not on reason-Right opinion or belief may often be a blind guess. According to Plato, it is not knowledge. To possess knowledge, one must not only know that a thing is so, but why it is so. One must know the reasons. Belief is false when it does not correspond to fact. It is true when it corresponds to facts. But even true belief is not always knowledge, in the proper sense of the terms. May be it

is a lucky guess. Belief, when supported by evidence and rational justification only, rises to the level of knowledge. I may believe that tomorrow it will rain. My belief is not supported by evidence. So even if it comes to be true and rains tomorrow my belief is not knowledge. But when the meteorological departure announces that it will rain tomorrow, it is knowledge, because this statement is supported by sufficient evidences. Only true belief is not knowledge. Again, opinion or belief may be true or false. But knowledge is always true. Again the object of opinion or belief is particular things and beings. But the object of knowledge is reality, the Ideas, or the Forms. The false theories being refuted, Plato passes on to the positive side of his theory of knowledge.

7.6: ALL KNOWLEDGE IS KNOWLEDGE THROUGH CONCEPT:

If knowledge is neither perception nor opinion, what is it? Plato adopts without alteration, the Socratic doctrine that all knowledge is knowledge through concepts. A concept, being the same thing as a definition, is something fixed and permanent, not liable to mutation according to the subjective impressions of the individual. It gives us objective truth. The concept 'man' does not change with individual human beings. Individual man may come and go, but the concept 'man' remains unchanged-knowledge has for its objects these concepts which are fixed and permanent. These are the same as definitions. Concepts are not subjective. These do not vary with individuals. This gives us objective truth. Knowledge is founded on reason, and reason is the faculty of concepts. Plato thus believed that genuine knowledge means knowledge of concepts. But he differs from Socrates when he says that these concepts not only belong to our minds, but they really exist outside our mind. Our concepts are true according as they correspond to the real concepts or Ideas or Forms. Knowledge is for Plato "the correspondence of thought and reality or being."

7.7: FOUR GRADES OF KNOWLEDGE:

In 'Republic' Plato speaks of four grades of knowledge corresponding to four knowing abilities of human mind. These are following:

The first two levels make the level of opinion or belief (perception). The second two levels are super-sensible levels of reason.

(1) The lowest grade of knowledge is connected with our imagination. It deals with illusion and dream images of particular things and beings, e.g., the so called knowledge of the image or copy of particular 'man'- this or that man. This level of knowledge is not at all 'knowledge' in the true sense.

(2) The next higher level of knowledge consists in perceptual belief and opinion, e.g., knowledge of a particular man. This we get through perception. Individual man is the copy of the Idea 'man'. Here the object of knowledge is copy of concepts.

According to Plato neither of these two levels are knowledge proper.

(3) The next higher level of knowledge consists in knowledge of numbers and figures as is found in Mathematics and Geometry. Here the knowing ability is understanding or intellect. Which is inferior to reason according to Plato? This knowledge, though rational, is based on some self-evident principles that intellect cannot justify categorically but takes them for granted hypothetically.

(4) The highest level of knowledge is based on Pure Reason. Here we have knowledge of the Ideas or Forms e.g., the knowledge of 'man' in general, or the Idea or Form 'Man'. This knowledge is infallible, and is of Reality.

7.8: KNOWLEDGE AS JUSTIFIED TRUE BELIEF:

One most widely held definition of knowledge is knowledge is justified true belief. Plato in his book "Theaetetus" discussed this definition of knowledge. This definition of knowledge entails three conditions of knowledge.

The first condition is that truth condition of knowledge. This condition simply implies that what we claim to know must be true.

The second condition of knowledge is belief condition. We must not only know that something is true but we must also believe that it is true. One cannot legitimately say that I know that P is true, but I don't believe it.

The third condition of knowledge is the justification condition. If someone claims that he knows P than he must have a evidence for P or he must have a reason to believe P. we may formulate these conditions as follows _ " If S knows that P" then s is completely justified in believing that P". Here letter S stand for subject of knowledge and letter P stand for proposition. On the basis of this definition, conditions for knowledge can be provided in the following way.

S knows that P iff (1) P is true

(2) S believes that P

(3) S is justified in believing that P

But the definition of knowledge as justified true believe is criticised by various philosopher. The most famous criticism was put forwarded by the Edmund Gettier in his paper "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" which is published in 1963. In this paper Gettier through various counter examples tried to show that even though all the three conditions of knowledge are satisfied, we cannot claim to have knowledge. For example let us consider one counter example. Someone may look at clock to see the time. Normally the clock gives the right time. But the clock happens to have stopped. But

it stopped at 12.00 PM and co- incidentally he looks at the clock at 12.00 PM itself. But he got accidently correct time. So here all the three conditions are fulfilled, but still we will not say that he has knowledge. But in spite of such criticism this definition of knowledge has continued to remain highly influential.

7.9: CONCLUSION:

On the basis of the above analysis we can conclude that although Plato has started his theory of knowledge negatively by saying that what knowledge is not. He concluded his theory of knowledge by giving positive definition of what knowledge is. First positive definition is that he accepted the Socrates definition of knowledge that all knowledge is knowledge through concept. Plato believed that genuine knowledge means knowledge of concepts. Knowledge is founded on reason, and reason is the faculty of concepts. In "Theaetetus" Plato give another definition of knowledge that knowledge is justified true belief. This definition of knowledge remains highly influential in epistemology although it faces some criticism.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1: "Knowledge is perception"- who said this?

Q2: "Man is the measure of all things"- who said this?

Q3: "Knowledge is opinion"- who rejected this?

Q4: "All Knowledge is Knowledge Through concept"- who first define this?

Q5: What is the definition of knowledge according to Plato?

Q6: "Knowledge as Justified True Belief" who gives counter example to this definition?

Q7: what are the three conditions of knowledge according to Plato?



7.10: LET US SUM UP

- In defining knowledge, first of all Plato tried to refute the false theories regarding knowledge.
- The first such false theory which he refutes is that knowledge is perception.
- That knowledge is perception is the theory of Protagoras and the Sophists.
- Perception yields contradictory impression. The same object appears large when near, small when removed to a distance.
- If perception is truth, man is the measure of all things.
- "Knowledge is perception"- this doctrine destroys the objectivity of truth
- That Knowledge is opinion is the second false theory that Plato seeks to refute.
- Wrong opinion is clearly not knowledge.
- But even right opinion cannot be called knowledge. We often feel intuitively or instinctively, that something is true, though we cannot give any definite grounds for our belief. The belief may be quite correct, but it is not, knowledge according to Plato. It is only right opinion.
- To possess knowledge, one must not only know that a thing is so, but why it is so. One must know the reasons.
- After refuting the false theories Plato passes on to the positive side of his theory of knowledge
- Plato adopts without alteration, the Socratic doctrine that all knowledge is knowledge through concepts.

- A concept, being the same thing as a definition, is something fixed and permanent, not liable to mutation according to the subjective impressions of the individual. It gives us objective truth.
- In 'Republic' Plato speaks of four grades of knowledge corresponding to four knowing abilities of human mind.
- The highest level of knowledge is based on Pure Reason. Here we have knowledge of the Ideas or Forms
- The lowest grade of knowledge is connected with our imagination.
- The next higher level of knowledge consists in perceptual belief and opinion, e.g., knowledge of a particular man
- The next higher level of knowledge consists in knowledge of numbers and figures as is found in Mathematics and Geometry.
- Plato in his book "Theaetetus" gives the definition of knowledge as knowledge is justified true belief.
- The first condition is that truth condition of knowledge.
- The second condition of knowledge is belief condition. We must not only know that something is true but we must also believe that it is true
- The third condition of knowledge is the justification condition. If someone claims that he knows P than he must have a evidence for P.
- Edmund Gettier in his paper "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" which is published in 1963 criticized the definition of knowledge as justified true belief.



7.11: FURTHER READING

1) Feldman, Richard. (2003). Epistemology. Prentice-Hall, Upper Saddle River.

2) Gettier, Edmund L. (1963). "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" Analysis 23(6):121-123

3) Masih, Y. (1993). A Critical History of Western Philosophy. Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass Pvt Ltd.

4) Russell, Bertrand.(2004). History of Western Philosophy. London, Routledge Classics.

5) Thilly, Frank.(1983)). A History Of Philosophy. New Delhi, SBE Publishers.

7.12: ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q 1: "Knowledge is perception"- Protagoras said this.

Ans to Q 2: "Man is the measure of all things"- Protagoras said this.

Ans to Q 3: "Knowledge is opinion"- Plato rejected this.

Ans to Q 4: Socrates. Plato accepted Socrates definition.

Ans to Q 5: Plato adopts without alteration, the Socratic doctrine that all knowledge is knowledge through concepts. Plato in "Theaetetus" defines knowledge as Justified True Belief.

Ans to Q 6: Edmund Gettier in his paper "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" which is published in 1963.

Ans to Q 7: 1.Truth Condition

2. Belief Condition

3. Justification Condition

7.13: MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Questions:

Q 1: What is the first condition of knowledge?

Q 2: What is the second condition of knowledge?

Q 3: What is the third condition of knowledge?

Q 4: What is the highest level of knowledge?

Q 5: what is first false theory about knowledge that Plato refutes?

Q 6: what is second false theory about knowledge that Plato refutes?

B. Short Questions: (Write in about 150 words)

Q 1: Write briefly why perception is not knowledge according to Plato?

Q 2: Write briefly why knowledge is not opinion according to Plato?

Q 3: Briefly explain what are the four grades of knowledge according to Plato?

Q 4: What is the counter example to the definition of knowledge as justified true belief?

C. Long Questions: (Write in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: Explain the Plato's theory of knowledge.

Q 2: Explain broadly how Plato refutes the false theories regarding knowledge.

Q 3: Explain broadly the concept that all knowledge is knowledge through concept.

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8: PLATO: DOCTRINE OF IDEAS

UNIT STRUCTURE

8.1 Learning Objectives

8.2 Introduction

8.3 Plato's Concept of Form or Ideas

8.4 Characteristics of Plato's Theory of ideas

8.5 Criticism of Plato's theory of ideas

8.6 Conclusion

8.7 Let Us Sum Up

8.8 Further Reading

8.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

8.10 Model Questions

8.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- Know what Plato's theory of idea or form is
- Explain the main concept of Plato's theory of idea
- Explain the main characteristics of the Plato's theory of idea
- Know the criticisms of Plato's theory of idea

8.2 INTRODUCTION

In this unit we are going to learn and discuss about the Plato's doctrine of ideas. This theory of Plato is occupying a very significant role in philosophy. Plato's theory of ideas or form can be regarded to be one of the most important contributions of Plato to philosophy. According to Plato ideas or forms are ultimate reality of this universe. We can also say that according to Plato, ideas or forms are the universal essences, which have ontological status of their own. They can also be regarded to be the original, eternal and transcendental archetypes of things. Ideas are something, which is actually prior to the particulars and which actually exists independently to the particulars. So in this unit, we are going to know about the Plato's concept of form or ideas in details.

8.3 PLATO'S CONCEPT OF FORM OR IDEAS

While discussing the Plato's concept of Ideas or form, one point is to be very clear that his doctrine of ideas was very much influenced by two doctrines. One of them is the Socratic doctrine of concepts and the other is the Eleatic doctrine of being. According to Heraclitus, an Eleatic philosopher, reality is a constsant flux. He further said that one cannot step in to same water of a river twice. Because it is constantly in the flowing mood, same is the case with reality too. From Heraclitus, Plato has learnt that the visible universe is in a state of constant flux. Plato concluded that truth is not a thing that is to be found in the world of senses. Truth is rather to be found in the world of ideas. According to Plato truth is rather to be found in the world of ideas. It is remarked by many later philosophers that Plato's theory of idea is nothing but the modification of Socratic theory of concepts.

That is why for Plato, the forms or ideas are those changeless, eternal and non-material essences or patterns of which the actual visible objects that we see are only poor copies. As for example, we can mention about an apple. Actually there is a form or idea of an apple and all we see is the mere form of that apple. So far as pre-Socratic philosophers are concerned, for them reality is a material stuff of some sort, Plato now designated the non-material Ideas or forms as the true reality. The cognition of the ideas alone can be called knowledge. The world of ideas is not the visible world. It is the intelligible world. So far as ideas are concerned, ideas or forms are the entities, which are neither present in space nor in time. It is already been discussed that ideas or forms are not spatio-temporal entities. One important point which is to be mentioned here is that according to Plato, for their existence, ideas do not have to depend on our mind. They are totally independent of our knowing mind. They live in their own heaven of ideas. From this point of view, it can be said that Plato's theory of ideas has quality of both idealism and realism. It can be regarded to be Idealism in the sense that only ideas are real and whatever we perceive is the mere copies of those ideas or forms. Again it can be regarded to be realism in the sense

that ideas have nothing to do with our mind. They are totally independent of our knowing mind and reside in their own heaven of ideas. So form the above interpretation, it is found that Plato's theory of idea or form is in itself a very unique theory as it possessed the quality of both idealism and realism.

8.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF PLATO'S THEORY OF IDEAS

While discussing about the Plato's theory of ideas or form, some important and basic point is to be mentioned. They can be mentioned as follows:

1. Ideas or forms are the eternal patterns of the reality and whatever we perceive are the mere copies of those ideas. As for example any beautiful object is nothing but the copy of the idea of beauty.

2. So far as the ideas or forms are concerned, they are the objects corresponding to the abstract concept. One important point that is to be mentioned here is that ideas are not something which is depending on the knowing mind. They exist in their own world or as they are not spatio-temporal entity, so it can better be said that they subsist in their own world. The world of idea is regarded to be the heaven of ideas. In this particular point one question is found to be arisen, i.e. if the ideas are truly real and if they embody Being, they must be at some place. But how can the ideas, which are totally immaterial, have a location, as it can hardly be said that ideas are located spatially. In this regard, Plato has given his answer and has tried to clear the problem. He said that ideas are separate from the things. They exist or subsist apart from the things we observe. Here by the terms apart from and separate from, Plato merely means that the forms have an independent existence. They persist even though particular things perish. Ideas or forms actually do not have any dimensions. But the question of their location comes up as a consequence of our language.

3. Again so far as an idea or a form is concerned, it is something which is superior to a particular in terms of degree of reality and value. The form can be regarded to be a model or archetype of which the particular is a copy. According to Plato, in the doctrine of ideas, an idea can be related to particular things in three ways. These may be three ways of stating the same thing. First, the idea is a cause of the essence of a thing. Secondly, a thing may be said to participate in a form. Lastly, a thing may participate simultaneously in a plurality of forms. When it undergoes change it participates successively in different forms.

4. Another important point that can be mentioned here is that according to Plato all the ideas or forms form a system. All of them are logically interrelated. Plato moreover said that there is hierarchy of ideas. Some ideas are regarded to be higher while some other ideas are regarded to be lower. It is said by Plato that the higher ideas use to communicate with the lower ideas.

5. The ideas cannot be apprehended by the senses. Had they been spatio-temporal entities, they could have been apprehended by the senses. According to Plato, they can be apprehended by reason. Of course the senses may provide the occasion and stimulus for the apprehension of the idea copied by a particular thing.

6. According to Plato, though all ideas are subordinate to the idea of Goods, yet there are a great variety of ideas or forms. As for example, we can say that there are ideas of values, like goodness and beauty. Again there are ideas of quality like whiteness and solidity, roundness etc. Again there are ideas of classes of things like house, dog, man etc. There are ideas of relations like equality, resemblance etc.

7. Plato again said that there are quite a few different ways in which the mind discourses the ideas, first there is recollection. Before it was united with the body, the soul was acquainted with the forms or idea. Men now recollect what their soul knew in their prior state of existence. Visible

things remind them of the essences or ideas previously known. Secondly, men arrive at the knowledge of forms through the activity of dialectic.

8. So far as Plato's doctrine of ideas is concerned, it is seen that according to one interpretation, Plato put forward the view that the universe is three-tier universe. The first tier is occupied by the idea of Good. The second tier is occupied by the other ideas. The third tier is occupied by the concrete particular things. In this interpretation the ideas are metaphysical principles. But according to another interpretation Plato's ideas are logical essences. The universe of Plato's conception is, according to this interpretation a one-tier universe.



ACTIVITY: 8.1

Q. 1. Can Plato's theory of ideas be regarded as a form of idealism or it is a form of realism? Discuss the point.

Ans: ……

……

……

8.5 CRITICISM OF PLATO'S THEORY OF IDEAS

Plato's theory of ideas or form can be regarded to be one of the most important theories of philosophy. But this theory of Plato is also not free from criticism. This theory of Plato is mainly criticized in a particular point. It has been pointed out by many philosophers that Plato could not give an adequate explanation of the relation between Ideas and the particular copies of ideas. It is said by Plato that particulars are nothing but the mere copies of ideas. But according to the critics, if it is the case then a third something will be requires to explain the relation between the ideas and the particular things. That third something will have to be related to the ideas by a fourth something and this process will go till infinity. As a result of it, Plato's theory

of idea will commit a fallacy. This fallacy is regarded to be the fallacy of infinite regress. So committing of this fallacy can be regarded to be one serious drawback of Plato's theory of ideas or forms. One important point regarding this is that Plato himself was aware of this problem of his later dialogue. But this criticism appeared in its most pronounced form in the writings of Aristotle.

8.6 CONCLUSION

This is in brief about the Plato's theory of idea or form. Though some criticisms are present in this theory, but it is also true that this theory has played an important and significant place in the field of western philosophy. It can also be mentioned that Plato's theory is something which can be regarded to be the first step towards the growth of idealism. Many philosophers have even regarded it to be the Platonic realism. According Plato ideas or forms are real and exist in their own world of heaven of ideas; they are not simply the mind created entities. That is why it must have to be mentioned that Plato's theory of idea is unique theory in itself. So finally we can conclude that Plato's theory of idea or form is playing a significant role in the western philosophy. Many later theories and schools have been found to be influenced by Plato's theory of ideas or form.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What according to Plato is the ultimate reality?

Ans : ……

Q 2: From which philosopher, Plato learns that the visible universe is in a state of constant flux?

Ans : ……

Q 3: Are Plato's ideas are spatio-temporal entities?

Ans : ……

Q 4: In terms of what, ideas or forms are regarded to be superior to the particulars?

Ans : ……

Q 5: What cannot be apprehended by the senses?

Ans : ……

Q 6: Who said that all the ideas are subordinate to the idea of Goods?

Ans : ……

Q 7: According to Plato, ideas are apprehended by what?

Ans : ……

Q 8: Before uniting with the body, the soul is acquainted with what?

Ans : ……

Q 9: According to Plato, how many tiers are there in the universe?

Ans : ……

Q 10: Plato's doctrine of ideas or form has committed a fallacy. What is the name of that fallacy?

Ans : ……

Q 11: How Heraclitus has defined the reality?

Ans : ……



8.7 LET US SUM UP

- According to Plato ideas or forms are ultimate reality of this universe.
- According to Plato, ideas or forms are the universal essences, which have status of their own.
- Ideas are something, which is actually prior to the particulars and which actually exists independently to the particulars.
- For Plato, the forms or ideas are those changeless, eternal and non-material essences or patterns of which the actual visible objects that we see are only poor copies.
- The cognition of the ideas alone can be called knowledge.

- The world of ideas is not the visible world but it is the intelligible world.
- Ideas or forms are the eternal patterns of the reality and whatever we perceive are the mere copies of those ideas.
- Ideas or forms are not spatio-temporal entities. It means ideas or forms are beyond space and time. It has neither beginning nor end.
- Ideas use to live in their world of ideas, which is called heaven of ideas.
- An idea or a form is is something which is superior to a particular in terms of degree of reality and value.
- The form can be regarded to be a model or archetype of which the particular is a copy.
- According to Plato, in the doctrine of ideas, an idea can be related to particular things in three ways. These may be three ways of stating the same thing. First, the idea is a cause of the essence of a thing. Secondly, a thing may be said to participate in a form. Lastly, a thing may participate simultaneously in a plurality of forms. When it undergoes change it participates successively in different forms.
- Plato said that there is hierarchy of ideas. Some ideas are regarded to be higher while some other ideas are regarded to be lower.
- It is said by Plato that the higher ideas use to communicate with the lower ideas.
- The ideas cannot be apprehended by the senses as they are not saptio-temporal.
- The ideas are apprehended by the reason.
- According to Plato, though all ideas are subordinate to the idea of Goods, yet there are a great variety of ideas or forms.

- There are ideas of values, like goodness and beauty. Again there are ideas of quality like whiteness and solidity, roundness etc. again there are ideas of classes of things like house, dog, man etc. There are ideas of relations like equality, resemblance etc.
- It is said by Plato that before soul is united with the body, the soul is acquainted with the forms or idea.
- According to Plato, the universe is three-tier universe.
- According to Plato, the first tier of the universe is occupied by the idea of Good.
- The second tier of the universe according to Plato is occupied by the other ideas.
- The third tier of the universe according to Plato is occupied by the concrete particular things.
- In the three tier interpretation of the universe, ideas are regarded by Plato to be metaphysical principles.
- According to another interpretation, Plato's ideas are logical essences and from this interpretation, the universe of Plato's conception is a one-tier universe.
- Many philosophers have criticized Plato's theory of ideas in the point that Plato could not give an adequate explanation of the relation between Ideas and the particular copies of ideas.
- Plato's theory of idea or form has committed the fallacy of infinite regress.



8.8: FURTHER READING

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8.9: ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q No 1: Ideas or forms

Answer to Q No 2: Heraclitus

Answer to Q No 3: No

Answer to Q No 4: In term of degree

Answer to Q No 5: Ideas or forms

Answer to Q No 6: Plato

Answer to Q No 7: Reason

Answer to Q No 8: Ideas or forms

Answer to Q No 9: Three

Answer to Q No 10: Fallacy of Infinite Regress

Answer to Q No 11: According to Heraclitus, reality is a constsant flux

8.10: MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Very Short Questions:

Q 1. Which are the universal essences according to Plato?

Q 2: What kind of status an idea owns?

Q 3: Ideas are what kind of archetype of things?

Q 4: What are the two doctrines from which, Plato's theory of ideas have been influenced with?

Q 5: Are ideas depends on our knowing mind?

Q 6: According to which interpretation, Plato's doctrine of ideas are one tier in nature?

Q 7: How Plato was influences with Socrates theory of concept?

B) Short Questions: (Answer within 100-150 words)

Q 1: From which two doctrines, Plato's doctrine of ideas or form has been influenced with?

Q 2: Why Plato's doctrine of ideas has been regarded as changeless, eternal and non-material essences or patterns?

Q 3: Briefly explain the statement, "Ideas are not something which is depending on the knowing mind"

Q 4: How ideas are related with the reality and value?

Q 5: In Plato's doctrine of ideas, Universe is considered as a three tier universe or one tier universe? Briefly explain.

Q 6: Briefly explain why Plato's doctrine of Ideas has committed the fallacy of infinite regress?

C) Long Questions: (Answer in within 300-500 words)

Q 1: Critically discuss Plato's doctrine of ideas or forms.

Q 2: What are the main characteristics of Plato's theory of ideas? Explain

Q 3: "Plato's doctrines of ideas are not spatio-temporal entity"- discuss the statement.

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