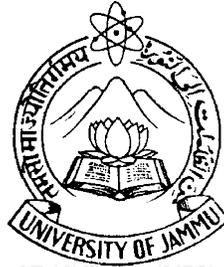


***DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION***

**UNIVERSITY OF JAMMU**

**JAMMU**



**SELF LEARNING MATERIAL**

**B.A. SEMESTER - IV**

**SUBJECT : PHILOSOPHY  
COURSE CODE : PL 401**

**UNIT : I-V  
LESSON : 1 TO 20**

**DR. HINAS. ABROL**  
*COURSE CO-ORDINATOR*

*<http://www.distanceeducationju.in>  
Printed & Published on behalf of the Directorate of Distance Education,  
University of Jammu by the Director, DDE, University of Jammu, Jammu.*

---

# PHILOSOPHY

---

*Course Contributors :*

**Dr. Satish Kumar Sudan**

**Prof. Shalini Gupta**

**Mr. Ritu Raj**

*Edited by :*

**Prof. Shalini Gupta**

---

© Directorate of Distance Education, University of Jammu, Jammu, 2021

---

- All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced in any form, by mimeograph or any other means, without permission in writing from the DDE, University of Jammu.
- The script writer shall be responsible for the lesson/script submitted to the DDE and any plagiarism shall be his/her entire responsibility

---

**Printed by :-Sushil Printers/2021/200**

**SYLLABUS**  
**PHILOSOPHY B.A. SEMESTER-IV**  
**EXAMINATIONS TO BE HELD IN THE YEARS 2016, 2017 AND 2018**  
**ONWARDS**

Course no. PL 401 (Theory)  
Course Title : Contemporary Philosophy (Western and Indian)  
Max. Marks : 100  
Theory Exam : 80  
Internal Assessment : 20  
Duration : 3 Hours

**UNIT-I : PRAGMATISM**

- Lesson 1 Pragmatism- Its origin as a school of philosophy
- Lesson 2 Chief characteristics of Pragmatism
- Lesson 3 Meaning of philosophy from the pragmatic point of view
- Lesson 4 Instrumentalism (John Dewey)
- Lesson 5 Concept of Truth (William James)

**UNIT-II : EXISTENTIALISM**

- Lesson 6 Origin and Chief characteristics of Existentialism
- Lesson 7 Stages of Existence (Soren Kierkagaard)
- Lesson 8 Humanism (Jean-Paul Sartre)
- Lesson 9 Concept of Human Freedom (Jean - Paul Sartre)

**UNIT-III : NEO-REALISM**

- Lesson 10 Meaning and chief features of Neo-Realism
- Lesson 11 Refutation of idealism (G.E. Moore)

Lesson 12 Theory of Sense Data (Bertrand Russell)

Lesson 13 Theory of Description (Bertrand Russell)

**UNIT-IV : ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY**

Lesson 14 Origin and Development of Analytic Philosophy

Lesson 15 Picture Theory of Meaning (Ludwig Wittgenstein)

Lesson 16 Use theory of Meaning (Ludwig Wittgenstein)

**UNIT -V : INDIAN PHILOSOPHY**

Lesson 17 Universal Religion - S. Vivekananda

Lesson 18 Concept of Non-Violence - Mahatama Gandhi

Lesson 19 Religion of Man-Rabindranath Tagore

Lesson 20 Self-Knowledge and Freedom - J.Krishnamurthi

**Notes for Paper Setting**

The question paper will contain of two sections, vize A and B

Section 'A' will consist of 10 long answer type questions 02 questions from each unit with internal choice. Each question will be of 12 marks. The candidates will be required to answer 05 questions, selecting 01 question from each unit. Total weightage will be of  $12 \times 5 = 60$  marks.

Section 'B' will consist of 10 short answer type questions, 02 questions from each unit with internal choice. Each question will be of 04 marks. The candidates will be required to answer 05 questions, selecting 01 question from each unit. Total weightage will be of  $04 \times 5 = 20$  marks.

## CONTENT

Lesson Nos.	Title of the Lesson	Page No.
Lesson No. 1	Pragmatism its Origin as a School of Philosophy	4
Lesson No. 2	Chief Characteristics of Pragmatism	11
Lesson No. 3	Meaning of Philosophy from the pragmatic point of view	16
Lesson No. 4	Instrumentalism : John Dewey	22
Lesson No. 5	Concept of Truth : William James	30
Lesson No. 6	Origin and Chief characteristics of Existentialism	37
Lesson No. 7	Existentialism : Stages of Existence (Soren Kierkagaard)	51
Lesson No. 8	Humanism (Jean-Paul Sartre)	61
Lesson No. 9	Concept of Human Freedom (Jean-Paul Sartre)	67
Lesson No. 10	Meaning and Chief features of Neo-Realism	76
Lesson No. 11	Neo-Realism : Refutation of idealism (G.E. Moore)	84
Lesson No. 12	Theory of Sense Data- Bertrand Russell	91
Lesson No. 13	Theory of Description (Bertrand Russell)	96
Lesson No. 14	Analytic Philosophy : Origin and Development of Analytic Philosophy	101
Lesson No. 15	Picture Theory of Meaning (Ludwig Wittgenstein)	116
Lesson No. 16	Theory of Meaning (Ludwig Wittenstein)	131
Lesson No. 17	Indian Philosophy : Universal Religion - S. Vivekananda	146
Lesson No. 18	Concept of Non-Violence - Mahatama Gandhi	162
Lesson No. 19	Religion of Man- Rabindranath Tagore	171
Lesson No. 20	Self-Knowledge and Freedom - Jiddu Krishnamurthi	176

**PRAGMATISM ITS ORIGIN AS A SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY**

**Dr. Satish Kumar Sudan**

**Structure:**

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Objectives
- 1.3 Pragmatism : Its Origin as A School of Philosophy
- 1.4 Pragmatism as a movement in Philosophy
- 1.5 To sum up
- 1.6 Glossary
- 1.7 Self-Assessment Questions
- 1.8 Suggested Reading and References
- 1.9 Exercise (Answer the Questions)

**1.1 Objectives:**

- To elaborate the origin of Pragmatism
- To explain the maxim advocated by Pragmatism

## 1.2 Introduction :

Pragmatism was a philosophical movement which emerged at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was an original and distinctive contribution to the world of philosophical community. It deeply resented the subjectivists conception of truth. Pragmatism as a philosophy was introduced by Charles Peirce in 1878. He is considered as the Father of Pragmatism. The core of Peirce's pragmatism is a new explanation of how words acquire their meaning. He coined the word pragmatism from Greek word 'Pragma' meaning act or action, in order to emphasize the fact that words derive their meaning from action of some sort. Our idea is clear and distinct only when we are able to translate it into some other mode of operation.

## 1.3 Pragmatism: It's Origin as a School of Philosophy:

In the nineteenth century, there were some thinkers who denied that there is a systematic body of truth. Henri Poincaré (1854-1912) was conventional in the area of philosophy of science; he argued that scientific laws and theories are mere conventions rather than statements about reality. Hans Vaihinger (1852-1933) revived the doctrine of conventionalism with the framework of Kantian philosophy; he believes that the categories of mind fixed by Kant are guides for understanding the arts and sciences but reality is no more than the reality of a convenient fiction. Thus these contributions provided the general platform in which the classical pragmatism was to develop its actual foundations.

It was initiated by Charles Sanders Peirce in an epoch-making article entitled *How To Make Our Idea Clear* which appeared in popular science monthly in January 1878. He deeply resented the subjectivists conception of truth. According to him, truth has an objective status; it is discovered and not created. On the basis of linguistic and logical ground, he defended that *every proposition is a hypothesis and no knowledge can be taken as final*. Peirce was a many-faceted philosopher, who dealt with a wide variety of problems ranging from logic and science to metaphysics and value theory. His solutions to the problems of clarifying the meaning of an intellectual concept and of justifying belief provided certain methodological principles called by the name pragmatism. According to Peirce, in order to ascertain the meaning of an intellectual concept, one should consider what practical consequences might be conceived by the truth of that concept. The immediate implication of this statement is:

1. To speak of the meaning of a concept is to speak of the totality of practical anticipation to which it leads.
2. To speak of a practical anticipation is to speak of a future event that may be empirically verified.
3. An idea which is not empirically verifiable is without meaning.
4. When we use two apparently desperate ideas that carry the same practical consequences, we are in fact employing only one idea.

Thus, pragmatic maxim provides radically new direction for philosophical inquiry. Since all universal propositions are anticipatory of events or predictive in nature, their proper form is that of the conditional rather than categorical statements. Thus to say ‘all diamond is hard’ is really to say “if something is a diamond then it will remain unaltered under specific conditions of scratching.”

Regarding the problem of justifying belief, Peirce insisted that inquiry is a psychological process, initiated by the irritation of doubt that we avoid and issue the calm of belief that we are going to achieve. *Inquiring refers to the process by which the human organism responds to the difficulties of social and physical environment when his instinctive and habitual responses fail.* But the question is that what method of inquiry is most effective? How do we distinguish between effective guiding beliefs that suggest themselves, when we are confronted with a problem? In the view of this, Peirce reviewed the various possibilities; he dismissed the “method of tenacity” (a method in which we meet the future by blindly adhering to inherited convictions because its only defense against competing ideas is the intensity with which it is held) ; secondly, he dismissed the “method of authority” (a method which we submit to an institutional regulated set of beliefs because it encourages the suspension of man’s natural process of inquiry).

Thirdly, he dismissed “a priori method” (a method whereby we seek to base all our beliefs on a few self-evident principles because there is no criterion for self-evidence that insulates us from whims of our understanding tastes and preferences.) Thus Peirce accepts only the general method of science, method that employs hypothesis but requires

the empirical verification because it guides relevant and objective solutions to our concrete problems.

Furthermore, the scientific method alone is self-corrective in the sense that it states its claims on continuing rather than past success. His movement became widely popular through the brilliant essay of William James. These discourses were methodically implemented into daily affairs of life in the American institution by John Dewey (1859-1952). However, this movement did not sustain for long. It declined during the first half of the twentieth century. In 1970, philosophers such as Richard Rorty, Hilary Putnam and Robert Brandom revised the pragmatist maxims to trace their practical consequences. They declare that:

*Philosophy must be practical and that practical consist of dispensing with the absolute principle and standard that there is no such things as objective reality/permanent truth and that truth is that which works as its validity can be judged only by its consequences-that no fact can be known with certainty in advance and anything may be rule of thumb-reality is not firmness but fluid and indeterminate.*

#### **1.4 Pragmatism as a movement in Philosophy:**

We have seen that there was cumulative impact of Empiricism, Utilitarianism and Scientific thought to which Darwin's theory of evolution had most recent authoritative thought about man. The drift of this tradition was in the direction of looking at the *world and man as a part of mechanical or biological process* in which mind occupied the status either of observer or reflector of these natural physical processes. The mind, in short, itself is naturalized; the function of thought can no longer be conceived in terms of eternal principles or natural law. It is not essential to look back to grasp the fixed structures. Mind is always looking forward to the consequences in order to secure those conditions that will best serve human purpose in support of experimental science. On the other hand, pragmatists are *very critical of the older systems of thought like the rationalist philosophy of Rene Descartes, absolute idealism of Hegel and revised Idealism of neo-Hegalians* to construct theories about the whole nature of things. According to pragmatists, old-

philosophical systems had made a mistake of looking for ultimate, absolute, eternal and essential substances, fixed principles; and the metaphysical nature is 'block system'. The pragmatists had strongly emphasized on empirical sciences for changing world and its problems upon nature as the all-inclusive reality.

### 1.5 To Sum Up:

To sum up, it can be said that pragmatists hold that there is lack of objectives in rationalist and idealist philosophy. We know things from different perspectives, and we must try to settle for pluralistic approaches in the field of knowledge. The rationalist and idealist philosophy, mostly discuss God, free will and also hold that morality and religion have significant effect in our life. However, pragmatist principle would ask what kind of difference it would make to accept one theory rather than the other. Thus pragmatists rejected their argument on purely logical procedures such as coherence as a method of thought for either fact or values.

### 1.6 Glossary:

**Substance:** A separate and distinct thing which underlies phenomena; the essence of thing.

**Essence:** The chief characteristic, quality, or necessary function which makes a thing what it uniquely is.

**Utilitarianism:** An action is considered good or right if it results in greatest happiness of the greatest number.

**Empiricism:** The theory which says that experience is the source of all knowledge, thereby denying that human beings possess inborn knowledge.

**Pragmatism:** It tries to interpret each notion (or theory) by tracing its respective practical consequence. As a theory of truth, James says 'an idea is true if it works in daily life'.

**Prescriptivism:** It is doctrine derived from Kant and revived by Hare that ethical judgments are essentially commands or imperative rather than representations of fact.

**1.7 Self-Assessment Questions:**

- Elaborate the origin of Pragmatism.
- Who was the founder of Pragmatism in philosophy? Discuss.
- Who are the leading exponents of Pragmatism?
- What were the chief features of Pragmatism movement?

**1.8 Suggested Reading and References:**

- Fuller, B.A.G., A History of Philosophy, Henry Hall and Company, 1946
- Robert Audi (ed.) The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy Cambridge University Press, 1995.

**1.9 Exercise (Answer the Questions):**

Q1. Define Pragmatism.

---

---

---

---

Q2. What are the maxims of Pragmatist movement?

---

---

---

---

Q3. Elaborate the origin of Pragmatism

---

---

---

---

### **CHIEF CHARACTERISTICS OF PRAGMATISM**

**Prof. Shalini Gupta**

**Structure:**

- 2.1 Objectives
- 2.2 Introduction
- 2.3 Characteristics of Pragmatism
- 2.4 To Sum Up
- 2.5 Glossary
- 2.6 Self-Assessment Questions
- 2.7 Suggested Reading and References

**2.1 Objectives:**

- To explain the characteristics of Pragmatism

**2.2 Introduction:**

Pragmatism is a trend of contemporary philosophy. It is a movement in philosophy which generally stresses the practical consequences as constituting the essential way of determining meaning, truth or value. It originated in the United States in 1870. The main

proponents of pragmatism were Charles Sanders Peirce, William James and John Dewey. Pragmatism showed a spirit of protest against absolutism, intellectual rationalism and idealism. Pragmatists are the practical persons who hold that workability is the test of truth. However pragmatism declined in the twentieth century. It was only in the 1970's that interest in the writings of pragmatists became widespread. As a reaction against the existing notions of reality and knowledge, pragmatism is unique in many ways as compared to contemporary schools. Pragmatism is a way of looking at life and its problems. Its not a systematic theory of doctrines. It is expression of dissatisfaction with any view which implies denial of the reality of change, human freedom and individuality.

### **2.3 Characteristics of Pragmatism:**

The word pragmatism is derived from the Greek 'pragma' which means 'action' or 'affair'. Pragmatism is an attitude, a method which is based on the principle that the usefulness, workability and practicality of ideas and policies are the criteria of their merit. It holds that ideas borrow their meanings from consequences and their truths from their verification.

The following characteristics of Pragmatism will help us to understand it more clearly:

- 1. Pragmatism is opposed to absolutism:** absolute truth, absolute good ,absolute reality. For pragmatists, everything is relative to time ,needs and utility. They hold that we should learn from experience and modify our conduct for better adjustment.
- 2. Pragmatism has deep faith in democracy because democracy is a way of life:** Pragmatism believes in humanism which is upheld by democracy. Only a democratic set up provides conditions to an individual which help him to develop his personality.
- 3. There are no eternal values according to pragmatism:** Values are relative; they change with time. It is not essential that whatever was good yesterday may continue to be good in future also. Life always changes; so values also keep on changing.
- 4. Pragmatism believes in the principle of utility:** Only that thing is useful which gives satisfaction. For pragmatists, only those ideas and things are useful which have some use for man.

**5. The pragmatists do not distinguish between truth and knowledge:** They hold that when we have apprehended a truth, it is knowledge. So they believe that if it is knowledge, it must be true. False knowledge is a contradiction to them. All knowledge therefore is an activity and practically useful if it

- a. promotes understanding and explains observation
- b. helps in our practical dealings.

**6. Pragmatism does not make any sharp distinction between mind and self:** It considers mind as a function or an activity interacting in the environment. Similarly it considers self also as a function but it emerges only in a situation. Mind is not permanent but changes with the environment. Regarding self, the pragmatists hold, that each person has a self on the basis of which he differs from others.

**7. Pragmatism holds that man is the measure of all things:** Human behavior is intelligent and helps man to achieve growth and progress. Whenever conflicting situation comes in man's life, his intelligence comes into play. Pragmatism upholds complete faith in human capacities and generates hope in the life of human beings.

**8. Pragmatism is inspired by actual human experience:** Thus pragmatists derive their lessons from concrete realities of life, directly experienced. They do not start with pre-suppositions. They hold that notions of reality should be open to verification and modification with the help of experience.

**9. Pragmatism stresses the importance of experimentation:** It holds that every statement should be tested by finding out its practical implications. Only that thing is good which emerges useful after experimentation.

**10. Pragmatism holds that truth is a belief evolved through the test of individual and social experiences:** A belief isolated from real conditions of life and not tested and verified in actual experiences has to be rejected. Verifiability through experience is the real test of truth.

Pragmatism is a way of looking at life and its problems. Its not a systematic theory of doctrines. It is expression of dissatisfaction with any view which implies denial of the reality of change, human freedom and individuality.

#### **2.4 To Sum Up:**

Thus pragmatism is a philosophy which holds that it is futile to discuss those questions which have no relevance to our concrete problems. The approach of pragmatism is essentially practical. All our theories are useless , if they have no relation with practical life and problems connected with it. If we take the term pragmatism in the literal sense , it implies that each person should adopt beliefs which suit him in his practical life without consideration of agreement with other people. Pragmatism is a philosophy with no fixed standards. The pragmatists want a universe of real possibilities, real beginning, real ends ,real evils, a real god and a real moral life.

#### **2.5 Glossary:**

**Absolutism:** The holding of absolute principles in political, philosophical, or theological matters.

#### **2.6 Self-Assessment Questions:**

- Describe the features of Pragmatism.
- Why Pragmatism is opposed to absolutism?
- Values are not eternal according to Pragmatism. Why?

#### **2.7 Suggested Reading and References:**

- <https://Plato.stanford.edu>
- Murphy, J. Pragmatism: From Peirce to Davidson Boulder, Westview Press, 1990.
- Thayer, H. S. Meaning and Action: A Critical History of Pragmatism, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.

Indianapolis: Hackett, 1981.

- Fuller, B.A.G. A History of Philosophy, Henry Hall and Company, New York: 1946.
- Robert, Audi (ed.) The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy, Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Frank, Thilly: A History of Philosophy, Henry Hall and Company, New York: 1916.
- Sheldon, P. Peterfreund And Theodore, C. Denise: Contemporary Philosophy And Its Origin.

**2.8 Exercise (Answer the Questions):**

Q1. Workability is the test of truth. Explain.

---

---

---

---

---

Q2. Pragmatism believes in Humanism. RExplain.

---

---

---

---

---

\*\*\*\*\*

**MEANING OF PHILOSOPHY FROM THE PRAGMATIC POINT OF VIEW**

**Structure:**

- 3.1 Objectives
- 3.2 Introduction
- 3.3 Meaning
- 3.4 Pragmatic point of view
- 3.5 To Sum Up
- 3.6 Glossary
- 3.7 Self-Assessment Questions
- 3.8 Suggested Reading and References
- 3.9 Exercise (Answer the Questions)

**3.1 Objectives:**

- To explain the basic concerns of Pragmatic Philosophy.
- To contrast Pragmatism with other philosophical systems.
- To explain Pragmatic views on Truth, Knowledge and Self.
- To stress on the Pragmatists' idea of Practicality.

### 3.2 Introduction:

Pragmatism is a philosophical school which was dominant in the United States in the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It considers that something is true only in so far as it works. It argues that meaning of any concept can be equated with the practical consequences of whatever the concept is. The 'founding fathers' of pragmatism are Charles Sanders Peirce, William James and John Dewey. The new pragmatists include Rorty, Putnam, Quine etc. The pragmatic philosophers and scientists opposed the modern metaphysics and the dichotomy of theory and practice. Pragmatism concentrates on the practical situations and does not concentrate on the theoretical situations. The philosophy of life is the Philosophy of Action.

### 3.3 Meaning:

The word Pragmatism is derived from the French word '*Pragma*' and the Greek word '*Pragmat*' both of which mean '*things done*', '*business*' or '*affair*'. A pragmatist is a practical person who is concerned with consequences, facts and fruits of the actions "*here and now*." Pragmatism considers man as the problem solver. It revolts against fixed values and locates values and ideals in experience. It holds that nothing should be taken for granted unless it is proved true and workable. It, therefore, contends that instead of truth being fixed, *the truth is man made*.

Pragmatism is based on the principle that the *usefulness, workability and practicality* of ideas, policies and proposals are the criteria of their merit. It emphasizes *action over theory and experience over fixed principles*. It holds that ideas borrow their meanings from their consequences and their truths from their verification. Getting things done in business and public affairs, is often said to be pragmatic.

The pragmatists lay down standards which are *realistic and realizable*. Whatever they wish to do, they examine its utility and do it immediately. They are not concerned with transcendental and metaphysical investigations and believe in the philosophy of immediate action. Carlyle says, "Our grand business is not to see what shines dimly in the distance but to do what lies clearly at hand". The pragmatists live in the world of reality and not in the world of abstraction. They are not bothered about cosmic purposes and divine truths. Instead of day-dreaming about the spiritual and the metaphysical, they want to grapple with the *concrete situations*.

### 3.4 Pragmatic point of view :

The point of view of the pragmatists in dealing with the problems of life is different from other philosophers. Since their approach is *Practical and Utilitarian*, they consider *Workability to be the test of Truth*. They say that an idea is true if it works and leads to fruitful consequence. Ideas and judgements are not true until they are verified by their fruitful consequences. When they lead to successful activities, they are true; when they lead to unsuccessful activities, they are false. *Fruitful Consequence, Workability and Pragmatic Utility are the tests of truth*. The truth is not absolute but it is relative since it changes with man, time and place.

Pragmatists deal differently with the problem of truth, reality and mind etc. They believe that the reality of the external world can be reconstructed through creative intelligence. The future depends on man's actions.

The pragmatists do not make any sharp distinction between mind and self. Mind is not a substance or matter but it is a function for them. They believe in the *Practical Self* and consider the growth of personality as a product of *actions and discovery*.

Regarding their views about knowledge, *they differ from the idealists*. They consider only that knowledge as valid which is of *Practical Utility*. They also do not believe in a fixed scale of values. For them, *values are Relative and Change with the time*.

The pragmatic philosophers are practical persons who indulge in solving the practical problems with practical methods only. For them the *Past Is Dead* and tomorrow will come with its own problems and its own solutions. Whatever is true is present only. All our actions should be directed towards the betterment of present.

The pragmatists live in the world of facts and not ideals. They are *Opposed to Absolutism, Absolute Truth, Absolute Good and Absolute Reality*. Pragmatism recommends learning from experiences, which enables us to modify our conduct for better adjustment in life. In fact, it is a way of looking at life and its problems. It is a *Forward Looking Philosophy* of life which ensures better future.

The novel outlook of the pragmatists can be noticed from their point of view regarding different concepts. As for them, *Truth is the name of whatever proves to be Good and Useful. Truth is Utility and Utility is Truth.* The pragmatists believe that truth is neither absolute, nor universal, nor eternal. In this changing world, *Nothing Is True Forever.* Truth is made just as health, wealth or strength is made in the course of experience.

Pragmatists consider it unnecessary to find solutions of the puzzles that go beyond reality. To them, only that thing is true which can be verified by personal observation and public evidence e.g., that a lemon is yellow and has a sour taste is verified by visual perception and by tasting it. They maintain that no statement can have meaning unless verified by sense experience and apply the same rule to the practical situations of life.

Pragmatism as a philosophical attitude and point of view is *against purely logical and intellectual basis* of philosophy. According to pragmatism, philosophy should be vitally related to human life and existence. All our theories are useless if they have no relation with practical life and problems connected with it.

Rejecting the logic of traditional philosophy as barren intellectual exercise, pragmatism holds that our thought process must not be divorced from practical life. It is practical utility that determines truth and reality.

*Pragmatists are humanist* in approach as they make human experience the basis of truth. As a contemporary school of philosophy, pragmatism did its duty by denouncing absolutism. It brought philosophy from its transcendentalism to the empirical level of the common man. Pragmatism is *full of hope for the future of mankind.*

Pragmatism *represents the empiricist attitude* and, thus, makes concrete human experience as the basis of all our knowledge. It turns away from abstract thinking and verbal solutions of problems. Rather it turns towards facts, concrete truths and actions. Pragmatism represents a method and an approval rather than a system of orientation. *It is looking away from the first principle and towards fruits, consequences and facts.*

### 3.5 To Sum Up:

To sum up, it can be stated that pragmatic philosophy is a practical philosophy with no fixed standards. The values change with the change in time. The pragmatists want a universe of “real possibilities, real beginnings, real ends, real evils, a real God and a real moral life”.

### 3.6 Glossary:

**Pragmatic:** Dealing with things sensibly and realistically in way that is based on practical rather than theoretical considerations.

**Idealism:** A system of thought in which the objects of knowledge are held to be in some way dependent on the activity of mind.

### 3.7 Self-Assessment Questions:

- What do you mean by pragmatism? Elaborate.
- Elaborate the nature of pragmatic point of view.

### 3.8 Suggested Reading and References:

- [www://britannica.com](http://www.britannica.com)
- <https://plato.stanford.edu>
- Murphy, J. Pragmatism: From Peirce to Davidson. Boulder: Westview Press, 1990.
- Thayer, H. S. Meaning and Action: A Critical History of Pragmatism. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1981.
- Fuller, B.A.G. A History of Philosophy 3<sup>rd</sup> edition.
- Robert, Gen. Editor: Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy.
- Frank, Thilly: A History of Philosophy.
- Sheldon, P. Peterfreund And Theodore, C. Denise: Contemporary Philosophy And Its Origin.

**3.9 Exercise (Answer the Questions):**

Q1. What is meant by the term 'Pragmatism'?

---

---

---

---

Q2. What is meant by saying that the pragmatist approach is practical and utilitarian?

---

---

---

---

Q3. Discuss the pragmatic notion of truth.

---

---

---

---

Q4. What is the pragmatic understanding of reality?

---

---

---

---

**INSTRUMENTALISM: JOHN DEWEY**

**Dr. Satish Kumar Sudan**

**Structure:**

- 4.1 Objectives
- 4.2 Introduction
- 4.3 Instrumentalism of John Dewey
- 4.4 To Sum Up
- 4.5 Glossary
- 4.6 Self-Assessment Questions
- 4.7 Suggested Reading and References
- 4.8 Exercise (Answer the Questions)

**4.1 Objectives:**

- To explain Dewey's Instrumentalism
- To elaborate how Dewey's pragmatism is directed towards actual and social well-being.

**4.2 Introduction:**

John Dewey, a younger contemporary of William James, influenced not only

philosophers but also educators and social scientists. His prolific writings and their application to the different phases of human life aimed to better organization of human life. Dewey approaches are felt beyond the boundaries of United States. It had a great impact on China and Japan. Dewey's Pragmatism was directed toward the actual achievement of personal and social well-being, through instrumentality of social action. He found in the formulation of Hegelian absolutism, a unity and wholeness that was intellectual pleasing. But he turned to the concrete, particular and practical issues to overcome the extreme over-individualistic concept of society. By drawing his living from social experience rather than from abstract thoughts, he holds highly abstruse theory of mind as symbolic functioning of events which was laid down by C.S Peirce.

### **4.3 Instrumentalism of John Dewey:**

For Dewey knowledge is not retrospective, it is wholly perspective. For knowledge is not mere copying revelation of any pre-existing realities but it is a preparation for future action. Our past experience contributes a large share to our present knowledge. The experimental way of new knowledge has been admitted by Dewey to be a real Copernican revolution. His views on instrumental way is that men lived in an unfinished world. Man's mind is like an instrument for observation. Mind is one thing and nature is another, so that the process of knowing is a simple activity of looking as a spectator. Thinking is always instrumental in solving problem.

Dewey found that the true nature of philosophy is that there is no single objection in the history of western philosophy. The chief division of modern philosophy like Idealism in its different kinds. Realism in various branches, Agnosticism, Relativism, etc have grown around the general relation of subject and object. In epistemological question regarding the subjectivity and objectivity of sense-data, the direct and the representational character of perception arise from the false assumption, that the consciousness is something outside the nature watching it as a detached spectator. Dewey also attacked the doctrine of the atomicity of the sense-data. The notion/analysis of sense-data may be legitimate for certain purposes but the theories which depart from the atomistic sense-data rather than the ordinary perception of thing thereby generate an artificial and insoluble problem. He did not flout the method of traditional metaphysics and epistemology which aim at realities lying behind

the process of nature and the search for their realities by means of rational forms transcending the ordinary mode of perception and inference. We have seen that shadow of old empiricism can still be seen in his retention of sensation as the ideal of knowledge. The sense-perception of Locke is not only the initial but also the higher reflective thought which as we saw must progressively lead to sense-acquaintance with the object. However, Dewey shakes off this last vestige of sensationalistic empiricism and develops what he likes to be called experimental empiricism. For each idea, there is something corresponding in reality. It is through knowing that what is supposed to happen gets modelled. This idea he calls “*a spectator theory of knowing*”

Dewey insisted that major ills of human society are caused by the absolutistic moral set forth in categorical fashion with no genuine respect for actual circumstances of moral experience. The mind was viewed as an instrument for considering what is fixed and certain in nature. Nature is one thing and mind is another. Knowing is relatively the simple activity of looking as a spectator. Thus the view of knowledge is more intricate than his over simplifications. Dewey was much influenced by Darwin’s theories. He looked upon man as a biological organism. Man can best be understood in relation to environment; man’s struggle for survival. Although, Dewey gave up Hegal’s conflict of ideas, but not a conflict in the material/natural environment. Dewey’s grand concept was, therefore to experience a concept he employed for the purpose of connecting man as a dynamic biological entity with man’s precarious environment. If both man and his environment are dynamic, it is clear that a simple spectator type of theory of knowledge will not work. The mind is more specifically intelligence, not a fixed substance and knowledge is not a set of static concepts. Intelligence is the power man possesses to cope with his environment.

All thinking says Dewey has two aspects namely “perplexed and trouble situation at the close”. He gave his theory the name instrumentalism to emphasize that thinking is always instrumental in solving problems. The mind does not know simple individual things. It functions as a mediator between man as an organism and his environment. The mind spreads itself over a range of things as there bear upon the person desire, doubt and danger. Knowing may very well consist of a cognitive act of an activity in the mind but the full description of knowing must include the environment origin of the problem or situation that calls forth the cognitive act. In this way the theory of instrumentalism differs from

empiricism and rationalism. Instrumentalism holds that reflective thought is always involved in transforming a practical situation. Thinking is not quest for the truth as though the truth was a static and eternal quality in things. It is act of trying to achieve an adjustment between man and his environment.

If human impulse reflects itself from time after time, he considers that it was not a mechanical necessity but only the product of human habits. Habit is the only a way of persons to deal with certain classes of stimuli. In reality, there is no necessary connection between them. Most importantly it is noted that Dewey gave a very new insight to the analysis of human nature (Social and evil) and holds that evil is not the product of permanent instinct in human. Rather it is outcome of permanent effect. Intelligence is also a habit by which human organism adjust his relation to the environment. Habits are not a necessary mode of behavior but they are clue to overcoming personal and social evil. The habit is nothing more important than education in remolding society.

Dewey built his theory of instrumentalism as it is problem-solving theory of knowing, around his special view of human nature. He proposes the following argument that human nature's impulse or intinct will work differently under differently conditions. At some times these capacities are flexible. If an impulse reflect itself always in the same way time after, it is not mechanical necessity but only the way a person deals with certain classes of stimuli, standing predilection and aversions. Habit is only one way of responding to the stimuli with one's impulses. There is no necessary connection between a person's natural impulses and any particular response. It means that response is acquired through the interaction between human nature and culture. Thus habit does not represent the eternal form of human behaviour.

Besides it, when Dewey analysed about the nature of social and human 'evil', he said that it is not the product of some permanent instinct/ impulse in human nature. Rather it is the product of culture which shaped and conditioned man's impulse. In the view of this "*evil is the product of inertness of established habit*". Intelligence itself is a habit by which human organism adjusts his relation to its environment. Thus habit is not only way of reacting to certain stimuli but also way of thinking about the environment. The clue is that to overcome personal and social evil is to alter a society's habits, its habit of response and its habit of thought.

Nothing is more important than education in remolding a society. If man is a creature of habit, education should provide the conditions for developing the creative habit. Dewey regretted that in the past progress was achieved only when some major social upheaval broke the spell of long-standing habits. Instead of resolution, change was achieved through the skillful alteration of habits through education. The spirit of education should be experimental because the mind is fundamentally a problem-solving instrument. It is more important to try alternative means for successfully solving problems than to pursue neat theoretical formulations. His instrumentalism is governed by the pre-supposition of science, like science education should recognize the intimate connection between action and thought, between experiment and reflection. Thus most crucial questions concern the problem of ends. Improvement assumes a scale of value; and means are employed towards ends. How does man or a society discover its ends or the foundation of its value? Dewey addressed himself fact to value, science to morality and in the process fashioned a new theory of value. Values are not eternal entities, they are discovered by theoretical mind. Every person experiences the problems of choosing between two or more possibilities. The simple question arises that when the choice has to be made. Choice is most often regarded as means for achieving ends. When an end is clear, the value judgement concerning the means can be pursued.

Dewey's novel approach was his rejection of any theory of value. He said that standard of value, whether moral, social, political or economic is to be found in the essence of things. Value must always mean that consequences are satisfactory. But it is not possible to decide beforehand upon a limited number of consequences that will be called good. Life is too dynamic and the circumstance of behaviour too diverse to permit the making of any kind of list rules. Moreover, he says that there are only relative and no absolute, and fixed structures.

#### **4.4 To Sum Up:**

To conclude it can be said that the chief principle of Dewey's analysis is purely experimental base of knowledge because mind is a problem solving instrument. Dewey's notion of instrumentalism was governed by the pre-supposition of science. Scientific education should recognize the intimate connection between action and thought, experiment

and reflection. He holds that reflective thought is always involved in transforming a practical situation. Thinking is not a quest for truth. It is an art of trying to achieve an adjustment between man and his environment. Man can no longer continue to hold the spectator view of reality. Knowledge does not merely reflect the world. It reshapes and changes it. He was not in favor to set up the universe in analogy with the cognitive side of human nature, as a system of fixed element in fixed relations; and making all other phases of man's nature-belief, aversion, affection are mere epiphenomena. Reality is for him- the evolutionist, not a complete given ready-made fixed system. According to Dewey, thought has no objective outside of experience and no being of its own apart from experience. But it is a practical instrument for dealing with each specific situation as it arises. Every case has to be judged on its own merit. So there can be no hard and fast universal ways of dealing with experience. Our experience is in constant flux, since, it involves continuous re-adjustment to changing circumstances.

Dewey's instrumentalism is an attempt to constitute a precise logical theory of concepts. The sole verifiable object of knowledge is the particular set of changes. It had generated the object of inquiry, together with the consequences that flows from it. No intelligible question can be asked about the whole essence behind specific changes.

#### **4.5 Glossary:**

**Relativism :** The philosophical view which emphasizes the ability of human reason to grasp fundamental truths about the world without the aid of sense-impression.

**Instrumentalism :** John Dewey's theory of how thought functions by emphasizing the practical function of thought in determining future consequences : Thought is therefore viewed as instrumental in producing consequences.

**Subjectism :** Any philosophical view that attempts to understand in a subjective manner what at first glance would be seen to be a class of judgment that are objectively either true/false.

**Agnosticism :** It is a form of skepticism which is applied to meta physics. Thomas Henry Huxley in 1869 wrote, I neither affirm nor deny the immortality of man. I see no reason for believing it. I have no means of disproving it.

**4.6 Self-Assessment Questions:**

- Human nature is dynamic, not static in Dewey’s perspective Justify.
- How Dewey’s analysis of mind is an instrument of solving problem?

**4.7 Suggested Reading and References:**

- Fuller, B.A.G., A History of Philosophy, Henry Hall and Company, 1946
- Robert Audi (ed.) The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Samuel Enoch Stumpf, Socrates to Sartre A History of Philosophy, McGraw Hill, 2007.

**4.8 Exercise (Answer the Questions):**

Q1. Define instrumentalism.

---

---

---

---

Q2. Discuss Instrumentalism of John Dewey.

---

---

---

---

Q3. Through experimental way, knowledge is not retrospective but perspective. Justify

---

---

---

---

**CONCEPT OF TRUTH: WILLIAM JAMES**

**Dr. Satish Kumar Sudan**

**Structure:**

- 5.1 Objectives
- 5.2 Introduction
- 5.3 William James Concept of Truth
- 5.4 To Sum Up
- 5.5 Glossary
- 5.6 Self-Assessment Questions
- 5.7 Suggested Reading and References
- 5.8 Exercise (Answer the Questions)

**5.1 Objectives:**

- To explain the analysis of the notion of truth by William James
- To explain the principle discovered by James to find the notion of truth

## 5.2 Introduction:

William James expanded Peirce's theory of meaning into a theory of truth. He laid the foundations of physiological science of mind and a philosophy of radical empiricism. James, like the British empiricists founded his theory of knowledge upon the revelation of sense-perception. But his study of consciousness leads him to different conclusions. In the first phase, he classifies the methodological features of Pierce's philosophy: secondly, a theory of truth that allowed for subjective as well objective factors. Each of his philosophical essays and books is characterized by an appeal to personal thought. When James expanded the method of Pierce for establishing belief to include the most comprehensive question of life, he says that just as in the final analysis an engineer engages in abstract calculation which beam will properly support a bridge; similarly a speculative metaphysician develops abstractions because he encounters frustration in understanding the world about him: the difference here is one of degree rather than of kind.

## 5.3 William James Concept of Truth:

In his popular Book *On Psychology*, William James describes a very dynamic nature of the functioning of human mind. It was a clear presentation of faith, showing how the pragmatic principle can be applied to the solution of the philosophical problems like *meaning of truth, Will to believe and the Pluralistic way*. He said that:

*If you follow the pragmatist method you cannot look on any such universal word as closing your quest...it appear less as a solution than as a program for more work, and more particularly as an indication of the things in which existing realities may be changed.*

When the German idealism popularized by the great english idealist, dominated the American universities, James appeared on the scene as a radical who tried to voice the unexpressed feelings of his own country and free it from the foreign interference. He protested against intellectualism, rationalism and idealism which had over-powered the then America. James always looked towards the facts instead of the first principle. According to him, the rigorist deterministic system of both materialistic and idealistic monism cannot satisfy us. If

everything included is the mere effect of the primitive nebula/infinite substance, then what will become of moral responsibility, freedom of action, individual efforts and aspiration. By this he meant that the individual doesn't become a mere puppet in the hand of absolute substance. He holds that reality is pluralistic in nature rather than monistic/dualistic. All knowledge is founded on sense-perception which flows through consciousness; consciousness displays itself through interest, desire and attention. It is volitional as well as sensory rather than intellectual. It selects and dwells upon parts of its contents, and rejects and neglects the rest. What is selected and attended to is made real and vital, what is rejected and pushed away becomes relatively unimportant and unreal.

His approach is very concrete with a concern for life. He believes that there is no single definition of man's purposes. No formulation of science, theology and philosophy provides us with final consequences. All the concepts and doctrines are mere approximation. Instead of mere consistency, he focused on to bring in each word practical cash value.

*Through radical empiricism, James opposes both the classical rationalism and English empiricism.* He believes that there is no logical connection between them. The statement of fact and the relation between conjunctive as well as disjunctive is just a matter from which choice can be made. On reaching reality, we must go behind the conceptual function and look to the more primitive flux of the sensational life for reality in true shape.

Philosophy should, of course, seek this kind of living understanding but it is more a matter of the passionate vision than of logic. James agrees that in general idealism, scientific understanding mutilates and that our ordinary sense experience doesn't reveal reality in its true sense. *Reality is not ready-made and complete from all eternity. It is still in the making, unfinished and growing where thinking being is at work.* James doesn't deny the existence of things beyond our experience. He urges that whatever philosopher discusses cannot be fully experienced. James insists that we should wisely recognize this fact and agree on the practical rule. His views are totality pluralistic in outlook.

Pragmatism as developed by James embraces not only a theory of truth but also a technique for ascertaining the practical utility of 'concept', or 'idea', etc. He believes:

*The true is only expedient in the way of thinking just as right is expedient in the way of behaving.*

Each of his philosophical essay is characterized by an appeal to personal thought for the philosophy which is so important in each of us. It is our individual way of just seeing and feeling the total push and pressure of the cosmos.

James is expanding Peirce's method for establishing belief to include the most comprehensive questions of life. The central insight of James' theory of truth is that *the truth of any hypothesis is measured by its success in resolving the problem which has occasioned it*. Besides, the varying formulations of the criteria of truth to be found in James' writing can be examined in these three statements:

- a. *"Idea become true just in so far as it helps us into satisfactory relation with other parts of our experience"*
- b. *"True ideas are those that we can assimilate, validate, corroborate and verify. False ideas are those that we can not"*
- c. *"The true is the name of whatever proves itself to be good in the way of belief and good to for definite, assignable reason"*

In the above said, the first formulation emphasizes that experience is continuous and organic in its nature rather than discrete. True idea is that which facilitates our entering into a harmonious relationship with the continuous experience, as both participant and observer. In the second formulation, James is denying that experience is continuous and that we may respond to it conceptually at certain stages; he reminds us that our typical circumstance places us in direct perceptual relationship with concrete and specific situation. In third formulation, some of the fundamental problems in the domain of religion and morality-problems that are of utmost concern to many of us as individual – must be settled on a rational basis. For example the reality of God is emotional and volitional in character rather than logical. It demands an adjustment of one's passionate nature. If our volitional action in such circumstances result in emotional satisfaction, then our belief is true. Thus his theory of truth exhorts sensitivity to the demands of reason. It is ultimately a voluntaristic theory. James follows the mathematician's view of logical consistency as the chief criterion

of truth and the scientific views of experimental verification as the final test of truth which are themselves rooted in personal preferences:

*Our belief in truth, for instance, that there is a truth, and that our Needs and it are made-what is it but a passionate affirmation of Desire, in which our social system back us up? We want to have a truth; we want to believe that our experiments and studies and discussion must put us in a continually better and better position towards it; and on this line we agree to fight out our thinking lives. But if a pyrrhonic sceptic ask us how we know all this, can our logic and find a reply? No certainly it cannot. It is just one violation against another- we willing to go in for life upon trust / assumption which he, for his part does care to make*

#### **5.4 To Sum Up:**

James holds that the truth of an idea is not a stagnant property inherent in it. He didn't hold the copy view of truth and he suggested that an idea is true if it copies what is out there accurately. He means that idea becomes true only when it is made by true event. The true idea is regarded as forecast of agreeable and satisfying experience.

#### **5.5 Glossary :**

**Determinism :** The theory that every fact/event in the universe is determined or caused by previous fact or event. According to it human being do not possess freedom of the will/the power to originate independent choice.

**Substance :** A separate and distinct thing, that which underlines phenomenon; the essence of thing.

**Idealism :** The view that mind is the ultimate reality in the world.

**Morality :** An informal public system applying to all rational persons, governing behavior that affects others, having the lessening of evil/or harm as its goal and including what are commonly known as the moral rules, moral ideas and moral virtues.

**Volition :** a mental event involved with the initiation of action, "to will", is sometimes taken to be the corresponding verb form of volition.

**5.6 Self-Assessment Questions:**

- Why James is looking towards the fact instead of first principle ?
- What are the techniques to find the practical utility of truth?

**5.7 Suggested Reading and References:**

- Fuller, B.A.G., A History of Philosophy, Henry Hall and Company, 1946
- Robert Audi (ed.) The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Frank Thilly, A History of Philosophy. H. Halt and Company New York, 1914
- Sammuel Enoch Stumpf, Socrates to Sartre A History of Philosophy, McGraw Hill, 2007.

**5.8 Exercise (Answer the Questions):**

Q.1 Briefly explain the nature of Truth.

---

---

---

---

Q2 How sense-perception flows through consciousness?

---

---

---

---

Q.3 Reality is not readymade and complete. Justify

---

---

---

---

**ORIGIN AND CHIEF CHARACTERISTICS OF  
EXISTENTIALISM**

**Prof. Shalini Gupta**

**Structure:**

- 6.1 Objectives
- 6.2 Introduction
- 6.3 Origin of Existentialism
- 6.4 Meaning of Existentialism
- 6.5 Characteristics of Existentialism
- 6.6 Conclusion
- 6.7 Glossary
- 6.8 Self-Assessment Questions
- 6.9 Suggested Reading and References
- 6.10 Exercise (Answer the Questions)

### **6.1 Objectives:**

- To explain the origin of Existentialism
- To elaborate the meaning of Existentialism
- To discuss the features of Existentialism

### **6.2 Introduction:**

Existentialism is the attempt of man to describe his existence and its conflicts, the origin of these conflicts and the possibility of overcoming them. Existentialism is a philosophy of reaffirming and regaining the lost status of man in the advanced scientific and technological society. Hence it is a theory of individual meaning which asks each man to think over the reason for his existence.

Man has been dealing with the problem of being and existence since ancient times. Thus existential themes and ideas can be located and a wide variety of work can be traced throughout the ages. Modern philosophers and writers who identify themselves as existentialists have relied on these works.

### **6.3 Origin of Existentialism:**

Existentialism emerged after World War I and became influential after the World War II. The destructive events of war led to human sufferings like uncertainty about human existence, anxiety, depression, etc. The two wars shattered to pieces all hopes and confidence of man in himself and God. Man realized that omniscient and omnipotent God was no more or, perhaps never was; that his existence in this chaotic world has been left without any dependable philosophical control and that the existing philosophies of pure thought and reason put together are unable to help him out of this helpless situation; that the earlier securities, certainties and meaningfulness of life have now been reduced to insecurities, uncertainties and absurdities; and that he has become for himself the biggest and the most mysterious problem for the solving of which he has to solely rely on his own sense of judgement, power of discretion and freedom of choice in all matters of life. Thus man sets out to discover new meanings and values in the life and comes to discover and define the modern philosophy of existentialism.

*The roots of existentialism are found in the Socratic dictum 'know thyself'. It was Socrates (469-399B.C) who first questioned human existence and saw man as a problem in himself and stressed that self enquiry and self knowledge must be made the beginning as well as the end of life. He held that it is impossible for a man to live a genuine and fruitful life on earth unless first fully discovered. But Socrates' philosophy cannot be taken as the existentialism proper as apart from his famous dictum, it contains nothing of an existential character. Socrates' disciple Plato had many existentialist elements in his thinking. Plato used existential terms when he spoke of the transition from existence to essence or from essence to existence; of the seeming but not true character of the world of appearances and opinions; or of the bondage of the soul in the cave of shadows. St. Augustine has an existentialist viewpoint of human fallenness, an emphasis on the existing individual and an existential attitude of involvement.*

Further *Blaise Pascal*, an early forerunner of existentialism, had insisted on the uncertain and insecure position of man situated between Being and Nothingness. Pascal's unfinished notes, "the *Pensees*" ("Thoughts") in 1670, put forward many of the fundamental themes of existentialism.

The requirement to know man in his particularity and, therefore, in terms of a procedure different from scientific procedure to obtain knowledge of natural objects was dealt with by *Wilhelm Dilthey*. He viewed 'understanding' as the procedure and thus as the proper method of the human sciences.

In the later portion of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, a number of writers contributed to the growth of existentialism. *The Russian writer Fyodor Dostoevsky* is often considered to be a forerunner of existentialism and his "Notes from Underground" is thought to be a rich source of existentialist thought. Poets such as Holderlin (1770-1843) and Rilke (1875-1926) addressed themselves into the problem of man overcoming his alienation from God. Henri Bergson (1859-1941), a French philosopher was opposed to the tyranny of scientific concepts in the area of human existence. He held that the price we pay for excessive dependence on intellectual analysis is the loss of our very identities. Paul Tillich's (1886-1965) most important contribution to existentialism is his exploration of three types of anxiety which are genuinely existential- the anxiety of fate and

death, the anxiety of emptiness and meaninglessness and the anxiety of guilt and condemnation. Karl Barth (born 1886) united Christianity and existentialism.

*Martin Buber* (1878-1965) held that one's love of God must be expressed through his love of each particular man. Furthermore, it is the uniqueness in each particular man rather than generic 'man' that is the proper object of rest. Thus the existentialist theme that 'existence is prior to essence' is presupposed by Buber's philosophy.

*Franz Kafka* described human existence as the quest for a stable, secure and radiant reality that continually eludes it or he described it as threatened by a guilty verdict about which it knows neither the reason nor the circumstances but against which it can do nothing - a verdict that ends with death.

*Hegel and Arthur Schopenhauer* also influenced the development of Existentialism, because the philosophies of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche were written in response or in opposition to them. *Kierkegaard and Nietzsche*, like Pascal, were interested in people's concealment of the meaninglessness of life. In Kierkegaard's case, this resulted in the "knight of faith", who puts complete faith in himself and in God, as described in his 1843 work "Fear and Trembling". In Nietzsche's case, the "Übermensch" (or "Superman") attains superiority and transcendence without resorting to the "other-worldliness" of Christianity, in his books "Thus Spake Zarathustra" (1885) and "Beyond Good and Evil" (1887).

*Martin Heidegger* was an important early philosopher in the movement, particularly his influential (1927) work "Being and Time". His views on ontology is rooted in an analysis of the mode of existence of individual human beings.

In the mid-20th Century, the existentialist thought was contributed by the works of the French existentialists, *Jean-Paul Sartre*, *Albert Camus* (1913 - 1960) and *Simone de Beauvoir* (1908 - 1986). *Maurice Merleau-Ponty* (1908 - 1961) is another influential French Existentialist of the period.

Sartre's "Being and Nothingness" (1943) is his most important work, and his novels and plays, including "Nausea" (1938) and "No Exit" (1944), helped the movement gain a pace.

In “The Rebel”(1951), Albert Camus described the ‘metaphysical rebellion’ as the movement by which a man protests against his condition and against the whole of creation. Simone de Beauvoir wrote about feminist and existential ethics in her works, including “The Second Sex” (1949) and “The Ethics of Ambiguity” (1947).

Although Sartre is considered by most thinkers to be the pre-eminent Existentialist, others are not much impressed by his contributions. Heidegger himself thought that Sartre had merely taken his own work and regressed it back to the subject-object orientated philosophy of Descartes and Husserl, which is exactly what Heidegger had been trying to free philosophy from. Some see Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908 - 1961) as a better Existentialist philosopher.

However the official founder of existentialism is the Danish philosopher and Christian fundamentalist, Soren Aabye Kierkegaard who is also called as the Father of Existentialism.

#### **6.4 Meaning of Existentialism:**

*Existentialism is a philosophy that emphasizes individual existence, freedom and choice.* It is the view that humans define their own meaning in life, and try to make rational decisions despite existing in an irrational universe. It focuses on the question of human existence, and the feeling that there is no purpose or explanation at the core of existence.

*Existentialism as a movement* is used to describe those who refuse to belong to any school of thought. Although it has much in common with nihilism, existentialism is more a reaction against traditional philosophies, such as rationalism, empiricism and positivism, that seek to discover an ultimate order and universal meaning in metaphysical principles or in the structure of the observed world. It asserts that people actually make decisions based on what has meaning to them, rather than what is rational.

*Existentialism originated with the 19th century philosophers Soren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche,* although neither used the term in their work. In the 1940s and 1950s, French existentialists such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus (1913 - 1960), and Simone de Beauvoir (1908 - 1986) wrote scholarly and fictional works that popularized existential themes, such as dread, boredom, alienation, the absurd, freedom, commitment and nothingness.

Existentialism in the broader sense is a 20th century philosophy that is centered upon the analysis of existence and of the way humans find themselves existing in the world. The notion is that humans exist first and then each individual spends a lifetime changing their essence or nature. An existentialist believes that a person should be forced to choose and be responsible without the help of laws, ethic rules, or traditions. Existentialism takes into consideration some of these basic concepts like human free will; human nature is chosen through life choice; a person is best when struggling against their individual nature, fighting for life; decisions are not without stress and consequences; there are aspects of life that are not rational and personal responsibility and discipline is crucial.

*Existentialism can be described as an attempt to philosophize from the stand point of an 'actor' rather than of spectator.* The existentialist does not stand back from the problem as an impersonal analyst or spectator, but grapples with them as one who is involved there. Existentialism functions as a corrective to the traditional tendency of engulfing the human in the physical cosmos. It stands as a protest against all that threatens humans unique position as an 'existent'. Heidegger calls the human from being the *they self* to *one's ownmost self*.

Existentialism believes that individuals are entirely free and must take personal responsibility for themselves (although with this responsibility comes angst, a profound anguish or dread). It emphasizes action, freedom and decision as fundamental, and holds that the only way to rise above the essentially absurd condition of humanity (which is characterized by suffering and inevitable death) is by exercising our personal freedom and choice (a complete rejection of Determinism).

In brief, existentialism is a philosophy concerned with finding self and the meaning of life through free will, choice, and personal responsibility. The belief is that people are searching to find out who and what they are throughout life as they make choices based on their experiences, beliefs, and outlook. And personal choices become unique without the necessity of an objective form of truth. An existentialist believes that a person should be forced to choose and be responsible without the help of laws, ethnic rules, or traditions. Thus existentialism takes into consideration the following:

- Human free will
- Human nature is chosen through life choices
- A person is best when struggling against their individual nature, fighting for life
- Decisions are not without stress and consequences
- There are things that are not rational
- Personal responsibility and discipline is crucial
- Society is unnatural and its traditional religious and secular rules are arbitrary
- Worldly desire is futile

Existentialism does not support the following:

- wealth, pleasure, or honor make the good life
- social values and structure control the individual
- accept what is and that is enough in life
- science can and will make everything better
- people are basically good but ruined by society or external forces

There is a wide variety of philosophical, religious, and political ideologies that make up existentialism; so there is no universal agreement on the set of ideals and beliefs held by existentialism. Now it becomes worthwhile to discuss the characteristics of Existentialism:

## 6.5 Characteristics of Existentialism:

1. **A movement of protest:** Existentialism is basically a movement of protest against traditional philosophy. It is against Greek Rationalism and Hegel's Absolute Idealism. It opposes naturalism, which tries to explain life through cause and effect opposing the naturalistic view point.
2. **Existence before essence:** Existentialism asserts that "Existence precedes essence." Life can be understood only in terms of an individual's existence, his particular life experience. Nothing is above human existence. It says a person **lives** (has existence) rather than is (has being or essence), that every person's experience of life is different from another's, and that individuals' lives can be understood only in terms of their commitment to living responsibly. Man's actual existence cannot be conceptualized. *Man is the centre of the universe to the existentialist. The primacy of human existence is emphasized.* And from this view, comes much of the rest of existentialism. Among the leading atheistic existentialist philosophers are Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Sartre, and Camus. The "essence" or "purpose" of an individual is not predetermined like an inanimate object.
3. **Importance on human subjectivity:** Existential philosophers have laid importance on human subjectivity. Existentialism rejects materialism and idealism. It holds that Truth is Subjective and cannot be known apart from the subject's inner feelings. It cannot be expressed in proposition. It is a matter of experience.
4. **Reason is unable to deal with the depths of life:** As opposed to the traditional philosophers who assert that man is essentially rational, the existentialists hold that man is guided by passion and not by reason. They contend that we often commit acts which seem to defy reason, to make no sense. Existentialism unites reason with the irrational portions of the psyche, insisting that man must be taken in his wholeness and not in some divided state; that the *whole of a person contains not only intellect, but also anxiety, guilt and the will to power*, which can

change and sometimes overcome reason. Existentialism accepts not only man's capability to think, but his fallibility, frailty, body, etc. and above all, his death. The existentialists lay importance on will to power, self consciousness, feelings and emotions, tastes, individual likes and dislikes.

5. **Alienation:** Existentialism holds that man has slowly been alienated from concrete earthly existence since renaissance. It is believed that *individuals live in a fourfold condition of alienation: from God, from nature, from other people, and from our own "true" selves.* Man has become hollow, powerless, faceless. Man is suffering from guilt, dread, anguish and despair. At a time in our history when mankind's command over the forces of nature seems to be unlimited, existentialism depicts human beings as weakened, ridden with nameless dread. In fact, since the last century, man has expressed concern over his sense of alienation from and meaningless existence in this world. Man feels himself as an outsider in this world, where he must reside. During the 19th century, some thinkers like Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Dostoevsky and few others were continuously raising their voice against the lamentable condition of man in this world.
  
6. **Fear and Trembling and Anxiety:** After extremely negative global events like second world war, the underlying emotions within society are pessimism, anxiety and fear. Another kind of anxiety facing individuals in the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the philosophy of existentialism develops is "the anguish of Abraham," the necessity which is laid upon people to make "moral" choices on their own sense of responsibility. The existentialists claim that each of us must make moral decisions in our own lives which involve the same anguish that faced Abraham.

In this parable, Abraham is commanded by God to sacrifice his son Isaac. Abraham thus becomes the paradigm of one who must make a choice, in this case between his love for his son and his love for God, between the universal law which states, "thou shalt not kill," and the unique inner demand for his religious faith. Abraham's decision, which violates the abstract and collective law of man, is not made in arrogance, but in "fear and trembling," one of the inferences being that sometimes, one must take an exception to the general law because he is

(**existentially**) an exception; an individual whose existence can never be completely controlled by any universal law.

7. **The encounter with nothingness:** According to the existentialists, for individuals alienated from God, from nature, from other people and even from themselves, what is left at last is only Nothingness, the absolute void.
8. **Freedom:** Existentialism emphasizes the freedom of the individual. Man is free but he is overpowered by sorrow, fear, pain, dread and guilt. These are “Angst of life”. Man should find out the cause of these emotions, feelings and sufferings. Nietzsche asserts that “Will to power” and “faith in self” will help us to be free from the “Angst of life”. Man has immense choices within his reach. He needs to work upon them and also accept the responsibility for them. A genuine or authentic self exists, accepts choices, takes decision and accepts responsibility for them. Existentialism, in fact, asserts that man should strive for such an existence that thrives even in the face of frustration and the impersonality of modern civilization.

## 6.6 Conclusion:

From the characteristics of existentialism that have been discussed above, one might be led to believe that this is a philosophy of hopelessness. It *asserts the possibility of improvement, if not hope.*

Most pessimistic belief systems find the source of their despair in the fixed imperfection of human nature or of the human context; however, the existentialist, denies all absolute principles and holds that human nature is fixed only in that we have agreed to recognise certain attributes. *Therefore, for the existentialist, the possibilities of altering human nature and society are unlimited, but at the same time, individuals can hope for help in making such alterations only from within themselves.*

## 6.7 Glossary:

- **Dread:** Great fear or apprehension

- **Nihilism:** A viewpoint that traditional values and beliefs are unfounded and that existence is senseless and useless.
- **Rationalism:** The theory that reason rather than experience is the foundation of certainty in knowledge.
- **Empiricism:** The theory that all knowledge is based on experienced derived from the senses. It developed in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, expounded in particular by John Locke, George Berkeley and David Hume.
- **Positivism:** A philosophical system recognizing only that which can be scientifically verified or which is capable of logical or mathematical proof.
- **Freedom:** To be free is to recognize one's complete independence; to make one's own life through one's own initiative; to reject any idea of absolute good or absolute evil and to accept no judge or mentor except one's own conscience.
- **Existence precedes essence:** Freedom is existence, and in it existence precedes essence. This means that what we do, how we act in our life, determines our apparent "qualities." It is not that someone tells the truth because she is honest, but rather she defines herself as honest by telling the truth again and again.
- **Subjectivism:** Means the freedom of the individual subject, and that we cannot pass beyond subjectivity.
- **Choice:** I am my choices. I cannot choose. If I do not choose, that is still a choice.
- **Alienation :** The feeling that you have no connection with the people around you.
- **Facticity:** Signifies all of the concrete details against the background of which human freedom exists and is limited. For example, these may include the time and place of birth, a language, an environment, an individual's previous choices, as well as the inevitable prospect of their death.

## 6.8 Self-Assessment Questions:

- Elaborate the origin of existentialism as a school of philosophy.
- Explain existentialism.

- What are the features of existentialism? Discuss.
- Define Nothingness.
- How and why man is alienated?

### **6.9 Suggested Reading and References:**

- <https://schoolworkhelper.net/what-is-existentialism/>
- <http://www.kkhsou.in/main/philosophy/existentialism.html>
- <https://quizlet.com/120736518/6-general-characteristics-of-existentialism-flash-cards/>
- [http://www.philosophybasics.com/branch\\_existentialism.html](http://www.philosophybasics.com/branch_existentialism.html)
- <https://www.allaboutphilosophy.org/existentialism.htm>
- D.R. Bali: Introduction to Philosophy, Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1989
- H.J.Blackham: The Six Existentialist Thinkers, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952
- Dilip Kumar Chakravarty: Perspective in Contemporary Philosophy, Ajanta Publications, New Delhi, 1998
- D.K. Chakravarty : Fundamentals Questions of Epistemology and Metaphysics, Omsons Publications, 2000
- Margaret Chatterjee: The Existentialist outlook, Orient Longman, 1973
- Dharendra Mohan Datta: The Chief Currents of Contemporary Philosophy, The University of Calcutta, Kolkata, 1952
- J.N. Sinha: Introduction to Philosophy, New Central Book Agency, Calcutta, 1985
- H Harold Titus: Living Issues In Philosophy, Eurasia Publishing House, New Delhi, 1968

- John Macquarrie : Existentialism, Penguin Books, 1973
- Mary Warnock: Existentialism, Oxford, University Press, 1970
- [http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/21100/7/11\\_chapter2.pdf](http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/21100/7/11_chapter2.pdf)

**6.10 Exercise (Answer the Questions):**

Q1. Define existence precedes essence.

---

---

---

---

Q2. Why reason is not able to cope with the depth of life?

---

---

---

---

Q3. Truth is subjective. Discuss.

---

---

---

---

Q4. Is existentialism a philosophy of hope? Discuss.

---

---

---

---

**EXISTENTIALISM**  
**STAGES OF EXISTENCE (SOREN KIERKEGAARD)**

**Prof. Shalini Gupta**

**Structure:**

- 7.1 Objectives
- 7.2 Introduction
- 7.3 Importance of Subjectivity
- 7.4 Works of Kierkegaard
- 7.5 Three stages of life
- 7.6 To Sum Up
- 7.7 Glossary
- 7.8 Self-Assessment Questions
- 7.9 Suggested Reading and References
- 7.10 Exercise (Answer the Questions)

## 7.1 Objectives:

- To introduce Kierkegaard as an existentialist philosopher
- To explain the three stages of life given by Kierkegaard

## 7.2 Introduction:

Soren Kierkegaard was a 19th-century Danish philosopher who has been called the “*Father of Existentialism*”. He posed the fundamental existential question ‘what it means to exist’? His philosophy has been a major influence in the development of 20th-century philosophy, especially existentialism. He wanted to carve out for himself a real existence. He wanted to become a unique individual different from others and exist as ‘that individual’. For this, Kierkegaard first turned to Christianity but soon realized that Christianity offered not much scope to an individual to exist as an ‘individual’ by and for himself. So he then turned to Hegel’s philosophy of pure thought and being for solution to his problem of existence, but here again he was disappointed as Hegel’s philosophy of pure thought too, offered no scope to a man to exist as a sovereign individual. The disillusionment with speculative philosophy and his continuing despair sent him back to the Christian faith again and he then aimed to reform traditional Christianity and to make it acceptable to the existential beings.

He criticized organized Christianity and protested against the Danish state church of his time because in his view it prevented the individual’s confrontation with God and thus made real religious experience impossible. Further, it was ignoring the individual subjective element that is always paramount in religious experience and was engulfing the individual and the realities of his own experience. From 1846 to 1850, Kierkegaard published a series of works examining ‘what it meant to be a Christian?’ “Training in Christianity”, published in 1850, is a summation of Kierkegaard’s interpretation of what it means to follow the teachings of the Bible. Kierkegaardian philosophy is fundamentally indirect antithesis to Hegelianism. The main element in Hegel’s idealism that Kierkegaard attacked is objectivity and determinism. In opposition to Hegel’s objectivity of history, according to which, the world process is all-inclusive and completely logical, whatever happens in history must happen; whatever is, is right, Kierkegaard emphasized the essentially subjective existence of the individual and his passionate involvement in his existence.

In opposition to determinism, Kierkegaard emphasized the freedom of the individual to choose and the necessity of this choosing, together with the individual's awareness of his crucial character.

According to Kierkegaard, the crucial question 'what should man do and what should he believe'? should be asked and answered. Most people live their lives without ever asking themselves why they live as they do and whether they ought to live as they do. Hence Kierkegaard felt that his first task was to disturb people, so that they would begin to look at themselves and at the way they lived. Kierkegaard attempted to make each of us aware of our primal subjectivity, so that we may live authentically, without the crutch of antecedent social and intellectual guides. One can only live authentically – become a person – by bearing the sole responsibility for his decisions rather than by appealing to the authority of custom or even of one's own past patterns of thought. This awareness of the conditions for becoming authentic constitutes a part of self knowledge.

Kierkegaard found despair as the fundamental human condition. He also described three forms of despair. The investigation of the modes of despair constitute Kierkegaard's most remarkable treatise on human psychology.

Further Kierkegaard criticized the philosophical systems that were brought on by philosophers such as Hegel. He was also indirectly influenced by the philosophy of Immanuel Kant. He measured himself against the model of philosophy which he found in Socrates, which aims to draw one's attention not to explanatory systems, but rather to the issue of how one exists.

### **7.3 Importance of Subjectivity:**

One of Kierkegaard's recurrent themes is the importance of subjectivity. In his work *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, he argues that "subjectivity is truth" and "truth is subjectivity." What he means by this is that most essentially, truth is not just a matter of discovering objective facts. While objective facts are important, there is a second and more crucial element of truth, which involves how one relates oneself to those matters of fact. Since how one acts is, from the ethical perspective, more important than any matter of fact, truth is to be found in subjectivity rather than objectivity.

#### **7.4 Works of Kierkegaard:**

Major works by Kierkegaard include “Either\Or” (1843), “Fear and Trembling” (1843), “Philosophical Fragments” (1844), “Concluding Unscientific Postscript”(1846), “The Sickness unto Death” (1849) and “Edifying Discourses”. In his work “Either\Or”, the focus is on the task and rewards of adopting an ethical in preference to a consciously hedonistic or ‘aesthetic’ way of life. In “Philosophical Fragments” and “Concluding Unscientific Postscript”, Kierkegaard’s principle philosophical pseudonym attacks the Hegelian notion of an objective science of human spirit for obscuring the nature and place of Christian faith, as well as for the subjective viewpoint from which alone the questions which prompt faith can meaningfully be raised. “The Sickness Unto Death” offers a systematic psychopathology of progressively deliberate renunciations of a Christian ideal of human fulfillment. Kierkegaard also published in his own name a large number of “Edifying Discourses” dedicated to ‘that individual’. His works were translated into other languages, mostly after his death and had tremendous influence. Because of this great later influence and his concerns with the existential themes of existence and the ‘authenticated’ man, he is known as ‘the Father of Existentialism’.

Kierkegaard’s early works - and Either/Or, Fear and Trembling and Stages on Life’s Way were all written under pseudonyms. Kierkegaard wanted to enter into different ways of seeing the world in order to help people see their own situations more clearly, and in order that they might be able to come to their own conclusions. In these early works, Kierkegaard distinguishes between three primary modes of life: the aesthetic, the ethical and the religious. He held that people should progress through these different modes of life in order to arrive at the religious mode of life which is the best of the three. Roughly speaking, the three modes of life are as follows:

(1) Aesthetic, (2) Ethical, and (3) Religious.

#### **7.5 Three stages of Life:**

*Kierkegaard described three stages of life experience: (1) aesthetic, (2) ethical, and (3) religious.* These represent three attitudes towards life, three philosophies of life. Some people progress from one stage to the next, while others never go beyond the first stage. Kierkegaard sometimes fused together the second and third stages, referring to

them as the religio-ethical. The third stage is the superior. All the three stages reflect man's attempt to win salvation, to gain satisfaction for life's greatest good, while it is still within reach. Kierkegaard discussed these stages in a number of his writings, but he devoted a most famous work, "Either/Or", to a detailed analysis of the first two stages.

**The Aesthetic:** In this stage, man looks for fulfillment from his outside activities and from within himself. He may seek romance, pleasure or intellectual pursuits as means to satisfy himself. However, these activities are not enough and hence not ultimately satisfying. The man becomes bored with himself and his activities. This boredom turns into despair. If not checked, the despair ends in suicide.

According to Kierkegaard, many people spend most or all of their lives in this mode. In the aesthetic stage, the person lives as a slave to their senses - they do, eat etc. only what their senses tell them to do. They define 'good' as that which brings them pleasure, and all their decisions are made based upon this criterion.

During this stage it is likely that the person may develop feelings of emptiness and meaninglessness - our modern definition of angst. In fact, this is where the word originates from. Kierkegaard regarded Angst as a positive thing; it is an opening that can lead into a better, more meaningful way of living. The purpose of life in the aesthetic stage is to satisfy boredom, and when the person can no longer do this, they will begin to feel Angst.

*The aesthetic persons live for the moment.* They have no deep commitments to one thing or another. They're not totally impulsive, but will only pursue long term goals as long as they're appealing, and will drop them once they're bored or something more funny appears on the horizon. They see life in terms of possibilities to be considered and enjoyed, not in terms of projects to pursue or ideals to live out.

The aesthetic person is basically passive, and seeks satisfaction in things over which they have no control, dependent on what happens externally. Because the aesthetic person's life has such an uncertain foundation, it may appear pretty meaningless. There's probably some awareness of the possibility of a higher form of life, but the aesthetic person tries to deal with this either by keeping so busy that they don't have time to think about it, or by starting to see themselves as a melancholy person, for whom sorrow is the meaning

of life - at least this can't be taken away. They might regard their melancholy as a fate, seeing themselves as a tragic hero, but by seeing themselves in such fatalistic terms, they absolve themselves from any responsibility for themselves and any obligation to take action and change their situation.

The elements of the aesthetic person can be seen both in an average small child, whose thought processes seem (from the outside at least) to go something like this: ooh, shiny thing, let's go and look at that, let's pull their hair. These examples portray the aesthetic person.

**The Ethical:** *In this stage, Kierkegaard gives the remedy for aesthetic despair.* According to him commitment gives meaning to life. The person achieves selfhood through commitment. The individual becomes aware. His choices are made with passion and emotional commitment. The person now chooses and acts, thereby establishing his selfhood and integrity.

In this stage, the person develops their own personal system of morals, and lives consistently adhering to these morals. Reason and duty take priority over emotion and beauty. Their definition of 'good' is no longer that which they find aesthetically pleasing, but rather that which they consider to be ethically correct. People living in this stage may also begin to feel bored and fed up of living so strictly, and may relapse into the aesthetic way of life.

The ethical stage seems to be focused on 'choosing oneself' - the ethical person sees themselves as a goal, and where the aesthete is constantly distracted by and concerned with external things, the ethical person directs their attention and efforts towards their own nature, being something over which they have control. They examine themselves to discover what they really want, and what's important isn't so much whether they achieve the things they set out to achieve, but more the extent to which they throw their whole selves into their activities. The ethical life is basically one long training montage.

One of Kierkegaard's pseudonyms says that the ethical person expresses the universal in their own life, rather than developing their own individual ideas of right and wrong, but towards the end of Either/Or, the ethical stage starts to seem more problematic, and it is

acknowledged that certain exceptional individuals might struggle to express the ethical universal in their own life.

**The Religious:** The third and greatest stage, the stage where man finally finds contentment, is the religious stage. In the first stage the person looks for fulfillment and in the second stage he commits himself, but in this religious stage, his commitment is to one who is able to satisfy completely - God.

*In this stage, man is finally content because of his commitment to God. Selfhood cannot be achieved ultimately and completely within the self. The self must be committed to the one beyond, to God. Faith is the key word for this stage. A person in the religious stage transcends the aesthetic and moral standards, and learns to accept faith over reason. He accepts that his own truth must be supported by faith, and not necessarily logic, to be absolute. This is why Kierkegaard took to Christianity. His life was completely devoted to Christian ideals, as he thought that utter devotion was essential in order to hold faith.*

“If I am capable of grasping God objectively, I do not believe, but precisely because I cannot do this I must believe. If I wish to preserve myself in faith I must constantly be intent upon holding fast the objective uncertainty, so as to remain out upon the deep, over seventy thousand fathoms of water, still preserving my faith.” - Kierkegaard

Though this is applicable to Christians, people of all other beliefs have taken ideas from Kierkegaard's stages of existence theory. The main idea was that people should spend their entire lives striving to fulfil their duty or purpose and preserve their faith by and with commitment and seriousness. His 'subjective truth' idea also gave rise to the existentialist school of thought.

The religious mode of life is presented in Kierkegaard's work *Fear and Trembling*. *Fear and Trembling* is basically about the inability of the ethical to comprehend faith. Faith is something, which takes a person outside of the realm of socially acceptable behaviour, outside of the limits of human reason. It requires a 'leap of faith' because it can't be done by human rationality. In this stage man is finally content because of his commitment to God. Selfhood cannot be achieved ultimately and completely within the self. The self must be committed to the one beyond, to God.

Some of Kierkegaard's themes which can be seen in this stage are: the impossibility of fitting Christianity into socially acceptable middle-class beliefs and behaviours, the failure of attempts to reduce faith to human reason, the isolation which comes from following God, and the difficult choices which God requires of us. Hence, these are the stages of life described by Kierkegaard.

## 7.6 To Sum Up:

Thus Kierkegaard's original and extremely important contributions to existentialist philosophy include 1) his interpretation of the essentially subjective nature of human existence; his insistence on the complete freedom of the individual to choose and to become what he wills himself to become and his consequent denial of determinism and of the priority of essence over existence. 2) His protest against institutionalized Christianity and emphasis on the personal encounter with God which is the only true religious experience. 3) His analysis of human condition as being one of despair and anxiety.

A major part of Soren Kierkegaard's philosophy was that people live in one of three 'stages' or ways of living at any one time, though they may move from one to the other in different parts of their life. These three stages were termed the aesthetic stage, the ethical stage and the religious stage.

## 7.7 Glossary:

- **Angst:** Angst is a feeling of anxiety and frustration that is not specific. People often feel angst about the state of the world, or about the state of their homework. Angst is anxiety that is mixed with frustration and negativity.
- **Despair:** Hopelessness, distress, pain, happiness.
- **Boredom:** Lack of enthusiasm, lack of interest, lack of concern, apathy
- **Melancholy:** Feeling of pensive sadness, typically with no obvious cause
- **Selfhood:** The quality that constitutes one's individuality, the state of having an individual identity.

- **Fatalistic:** It is the characteristic of the belief that all events are predetermined and therefore inevitable.

### 7.8 Self-Assessment Questions:

- Name the different works of Kierkegaard.
- Explain the aesthetic and ethical stages of life given by Kierkegaard
- Discuss the various influences on Kierkegaard.
- Define authentic living.
- Why did Kierkegaard criticize the organized Christianity?
- Elaborate the different stages of life stated by Kierkegaard.

### 7.9 Suggested Reading and References:

- <https://everything2.com/title/The+three+stages+of+existence>
- <http://marikablogs.blogspot.in/2009/03/kierkegaard-on-aesthetic-ethical-and.html>
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy\\_of\\_S%C3%B8ren\\_Kierkegaard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy_of_S%C3%B8ren_Kierkegaard)
- <http://www.sparknotes.com/philosophy/kierkegaard/themes.html>
- H.J. Blackham: The Six Existentialist Thinkers, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952
- John Macquarrie: Existentialism, Penguin Books, 1973
- Mary Warnock: Existentialism, Oxford, University Press, 1970

### 7.10 Exercise (Answer the Questions):

Q1. Why did Kierkegaard criticize Hegel's philosophy?

---



---

---

---

Q2. Explain the importance of subjectivity in Kierkegaard's philosophy.

---

---

---

---

Q3. Why Kierkegaard is known as the "Father of Existentialism"?

---

---

---

---

Q4. Why religious stage is considered as superior to other stages of existence?

---

---

---

---

**HUMANISM**  
**(JEAN-PAUL SARTRE)**

**Prof. Shalini Gupta**

**Structure:**

- 8.1 Objectives
- 8.2 Introduction
- 8.3 Sartre's Humanism
- 8.4 To Sum Up
- 8.5 Glossary
- 8.6 Self-Assessment Questions
- 8.7 Suggested Reading and References
- 8.8 Exercise (Answer the Questions)

**8.1 Objectives:**

- To explain Humanism of Sartre
- To discuss Sartre as a Humanist

## 8.2 Introduction:

Sartre's *Existentialism And Humanism* provides a good introduction to a number of key themes in his major work of the same period, *Being and Nothingness*, and to some of the fundamental questions about human existence. *Existentialism And Humanism* is one of the most widely read of all the philosophical writings of Sartre but Sartre himself came to regret the publication of the book and later repudiated parts of it. It is in Sartre that we have a discourse on Humanism. Sartre is an atheist. He says that the very idea of God is self-contradictory. Consciousness is always consciousness of something which is itself not consciousness. All consciousness is then inclusive of something other than itself, and any notion of a self-identical consciousness is self-contradictory. For, consciousness and self-identity are mutually exclusive, since the aforesaid internal rift is the essence of consciousness. As a result, God as an absolute, infinite, self-identical consciousness, cannot exist.

## 8.3 Sartre's Humanism:

In his *Existentialism And Humanism*, Sartre replies to reproaches against Existentialism. The reproaches at hand interpret existentialism as “*an invitation to dwell in the quietism of despair*” and a movement that strives to highlight those aspects of human nature that lack the charm and beauty that belong to the “*brighter side of human nature*”. In this context, there are some of Sartre's replies in which he expresses his view about the nature of man and *humanism*.

As an existentialist he attributes existence only to man, and as an atheist he denies the existence of God on grounds above mentioned. If there be no God, *there is*, says Sartre, ‘at least one being whose existence comes before its essence, a being which exists before it can be defined by any conception of it. That being is man or, as Heidegger has it, the human reality’. Since ‘*existence precedes essence*’, man first of all exists as nothing and it is only later on that he defines himself, i.e. makes himself what he is, and thereby forms a conception of himself. And since there is no God, there remains none to preconceive his nature; so that there cannot be anything like the general human nature.

Sartre says that every man has to mould himself according as he himself proposes or wills to be, in order that he might conceive of himself. ‘Man simply is not that he is simply what he conceives himself to be, but he is what he wills, and as he conceives himself after

already existing, as he wills to be after that leap towards existence. Man is nothing else but that which he makes himself'. Unlike other things and beings, viz. trees, moss, or fungus, man is not simply given and does not blindly submit to the order of the universe.

Sartre holds that *every man has got a subjective life*, and by projecting himself towards the future, he is capable of being aware of his own existence. Sartre says that man primarily exists- that man is, before all else, something which propels itself towards a future and is aware that he is doing so. According to Sartre, therefore, every individual man is the master of himself. He is the sole authority to decide what he wills to be, as also to determine the means to the end. It is up to him to choose what he will do and how. He is the best judge of his own good.

There is *no universal moral principle, nor is there any universal code of conduct*. There is no ultimate ideal life, nor is there any objective standard of truth. In short, for Sartre, there is nothing objective or universal. There is no supramundane absolute authority higher than the authority of an individual man. *A man is absolutely free and is therefore fully responsible for himself*. Since he has to shoulder the entire responsibility of himself, the freedom he enjoys is but a burden to him; he is condemned to be free, so to say. He is in a state of abandonment, he is forlorn, as he has got no dependable guarantor of the values of life, viz. God, no such supreme Being as could have determined the best possible way of life on behalf of him and could have administered justice. He is embarrassed in absence of such a divine guardian of law and order.

As Sartre himself puts it: "we are left alone, without excuse. That is what I mean when I say that *man is condemned to be free*. Condemned, because he did not create himself, yet is nevertheless at liberty, and from the moment that he is thrown into this world he is responsible for everything he does." *Every individual is thus the architect of his own future*. For if his future is predetermined by any other higher power, viz. God, that is, in fact, no future. "If, however, it means that, whatever man may now appear to be, there is a future to be fashioned, a virgin future that awaits him-then it is a true saying. But in the present one is forsaken". Not only that one is unaided by any objective principle in formulating one's future, but that, as Sartre maintains, one cannot even be guided in this case by one's own feeling or passion. Because, it is an act of love, e.g. that authenticates one's passion of love. One can be said to love one's mother, only if one actually acts accordingly.

As Sartre himself says: “feeling is formed by the needs that one does; therefore I cannot consult it as a guide to action. And that is to say that I can neither seek within myself for an authentic impulse nor can I expect, from some ethic, formulae that will enable me to act”. *Activity shapes our feelings and also estimates its intensity and value.*

Sartre points out that since man is absolutely free and that *there is no general human nature a priori*, it is unpredictable how an individual will act under a particular act of circumstances and it remains equally unforeseen whether his efforts will be crowned with success. In spite of that if he starts his efforts with some definite anticipations, he falls victim to a mental state called ‘despair’, in case he fails to achieve the anticipated results.

Being thus abandoned one is confined within my one’s own individual ‘subjectivity’. Besides, in case if one fails in his efforts, one is thrown into the ocean of despair; one becomes a pessimist. One is left alone, as one is the sole author of everything. That is the reason why existentialism has been criticized as a philosophy of quietism and despair and as a philosophy that confines man within his individual ‘subjectivity’.

#### **8.4 To Sum Up:**

Sartre says that humankind is not an end; it is self–creating, it is in a state of re-invention and self–attainment. There is no human nature. For Sartre, there is no essence before our existence. There is nothing before we exist, and our only essence comes from our own commitment, our own actions and from our own freedom. And , it is in this sense Sartre says that it is not God that gives us grounds for hope but simply our own freedom.

#### **8.5 Glossary:**

- **Humanism:** It is a system that is concerned mainly with human and not with the divine interest, or with the human race a whole.
- **Quietism:** Calm acceptance of things as they are without attempts to resist or change them.
- **Despair:** Hopelessness, distress, pain, happiness.
- **Our acts define us:** “In life, a man commits himself, draws his own portrait, and there is nothing but that portrait.” Our illusions and imaginings about ourselves, about what we could have been, are nothing but self-deception.

- **We continually make ourselves as we are:** A “brave” person is simply someone who usually acts bravely. Each act contributes to defining us as we are, and at any moment we can begin to act differently and draw a different portrait of ourselves. There is always a possibility to change, to start making a different kind of choice.
- **Our power to create ourselves:** We have the power of transforming ourself indefinitely.
- **Existence precedes essence:** “Freedom is existence, and in it existence precedes essence.” This means that what we do, how we act in our life, determines our apparent “qualities.”

**8.6 Self-Assessment Questions:**

- Elaborate Sartre’s idea of Humanism.
- Is Sartre a Humanist? Discuss.

**8.7 Suggested Reading and Reference:**

- <http://www.sparknotes.com/philosophy/kierkegaard/themes.html>
- H.J. Blackham: The Six Existentialist Thinkers, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952
- John Macquarrie: Existentialism, Penguin Books, 1973
- Mary Warnock: Existentialism, Oxford, University Press, 1970

**8.8 Exercise (Answer the Questions):**

Q1. Discuss “man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself”.

---



---



---



---

Q2. Is Sartre a Humanist? Discuss.

---

---

---

---

Q3. Elaborate Sartre's idea of Humanism.

---

---

---

---

**CONCEPT OF HUMAN FREEDOM**  
**(JEAN-PAUL SARTRE)**

**Prof. Shalini Gupta**

**Structure:**

- 9.1 Objectives
- 9.2 Introduction
- 9.3 Concept of Human Freedom
- 9.4 Conclusion
- 9.5 Glossary
- 9.6 Self-Assessment Questions
- 9.7 Suggested Reading and References
- 9.8 Exercise (Answer the Questions)

**9.1 Objectives**

- To explain Sartre's concept of freedom

- To differentiate between the being in itself and being for itself

## 9.2 Introduction:

Jean Paul Sartre is one of the most important philosophers of existentialism. He held that human freedom is absolute and it is the defining characteristics of man. Each individual is free to add to their essence but cannot change that fundamental aspect. He wanted to show that in man's life 'existence precedes essence'. He said freedom is an act of choice and humans are free to make choices. According to Sartre, "Man is condemned to be free" because we did not create ourselves. Therefore we must choose and act from within whatever situation we find ourselves. Sartre's theories on existentialism and freedom make him the most influential Western philosophers of the 20th-century and beyond.

Born in Paris on June 21, 1905, Sartre's early work focused on themes of existentialism as exemplified by his first novel *Nausea* and later the essay *Existentialism and Humanism*. After spending nine months as a German prisoner of war in 1940, Jean-Paul Sartre began exploring the meaning of freedom and free will and in 1940, he came out with his principal philosophical work — *Being and Nothingness: a phenomenological essay on ontology*.

## 9.3 Concept of Human Freedom:

In his work *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre turns down the traditional view of freedom and frames the issue in a new, existential framework. Sartre's existential philosophy stems from his new vision of consciousness, and by answering the question of the being in a new way, he provides a different understanding of our existence in this world. In his philosophy, Sartre has divided the being into two categories: the for-itself and the in-itself. Sartre's philosophy is also comprised of the concept of nothingness.

Nothingness is the for-itself, and the for-itself is an empty negation of the non-conscious being which is called the in-itself. In simpler terms, the consciousness of human beings is the for-itself, and the non-conscious being of human beings is the in-itself. Although it seems that these two terms divide the being of humans into two separate parts, Sartre explains that because the for-itself is nothing more than the negation of the in-itself, they are irrevocable linked, and we can avoid the pitfall of having a dichotomy at the heart of being.

Freedom plays a key role in the determination of consciousness. For Sartre, freedom is the being of humans, and is linked to the for-itself.

Sartre maintains that human beings are necessarily free, always, and it is impossible for a human to fail to be free. To fail to be free is the same as to cease to be. The highest moral value of man is freedom, which is to say that all values are revealed through choices and subsequent actions. To act is to create a sense of responsibility in man: one has no excuse in the world because one always has a free choice. However choices or responsibilities are not always easy. In fact, the recognition of responsibility creates a feeling of nausea : man trembles because of his responsibility; it is a crushing realization to understand that one is abandoned in the world and must take credit for both one's successes and failures. Thus Sartre ends up with redefining the role of freedom as the mode of being of the for-itself. It provides for a new way of looking at our lives, and Sartre helps us in our understanding of ourselves and our choices in the world. To have freedom is to instill anguish in the individual. Sartre declares that our freedom is a fact, that determinism of any kind is a lie and an excuse, and that the consequence of this reality is that man has both responsibility and dignity.

Sartre explores the meaning of freedom and how man comes to have it. Freedom itself simply means the ability to choose. Man comes to have this ability due to his having consciousness. In order to understand Sartre's concept of freedom and its role, it's important to start at the foundation of his existentialism, and that is the duality of the Being-for-itself and the Being-in-itself.

Sartre's essential description of consciousness is simply that consciousness is always consciousness of something, but by itself is nothing. Without something to be conscious of, consciousness cannot exist. Therefore consciousness itself is nothing. Consciousness is nothing more than an empty container that defines itself in relation to the objects that it is conscious of. This is the initial step in his reversal of the traditional ontology of being.

He argues that consciousness is being nothingness. However, consciousness is self-aware of itself as consciousness. But how can consciousness, which in itself is nothing, be aware of itself?

Sartre explains this by exploring at the cogito of Descartes, but introduces a new term to describe what he finds is even more fundamental: the pre-reflective cogito.

The concept of a pre-reflective cogito sounds like it should be a contradiction, for how can one be conscious of a self before self-consciousness? But Sartre claims that there is an implicit sort of self-reflective consciousness that is prior to the explicit self-consciousness of the cogito itself. “When I see a table, I am implicitly conscious of myself as not being the table which I see.”

In other words, the act of existing and being conscious of objects immediately implies that there is a consciousness which is conscious of the said objects. In the implicit relation to consciousness that exists in the pre-reflective cogito, Sartre is able to claim consciousness, which is nothing, is nevertheless aware of itself.

This is where the for-itself comes into being, “because consciousness is always self-aware Sartre says that it has being-for-itself: its very existence involves an internal relation to itself.” This internal relation to itself is the link to consciousness by the pre-reflective cogito. The in-itself is now made clear as well, for only things that are the object of consciousness—concrete, existing, objects—can have being-in-itself. Thus consciousness itself, which is never explicitly an object of its own consciousness, cannot have being-in-itself, but only being-for-itself.

The for-itself contains the inherent nothingness. Consciousness is empty. The for-itself, in fact, is nothing but the pure nihilation of the in-itself. From this point, Sartre concludes that “existence precedes essence.”

As the fundamental being of consciousness is nothingness, but nevertheless consciousness exists, consciousness has the task of defining itself by what it projects upon itself.

Sartre talks about two things in relation to the nothingness of the for-itself: time and freedom. Sartre begins by saying that consciousness is separated by its past and its future by the nothingness of its being.

The for -itself, by being completely empty, has the ability to define itself at any moment. This is its freedom. Freedom allows the for-itself to redefine itself in every instant, it gives

it the power to break from the past and to redefine the future. Freedom is the essential being of consciousness in the way that to be conscious is to have freedom. Thus instead of saying that consciousness is separated by nothingness from its past and future, it can be said that consciousness is separated by freedom from its past and future. Here what Sartre means by freedom is, It “does not mean ‘to obtain what one has wished’, but rather ‘by oneself to determine oneself to wish’. In other words, success is not important to freedom.”

Sartre coins two terms that define and explain the role of freedom—the facticity of freedom and its situation. The facticity of freedom is the fact that human beings are not free to not be free. Human beings do not have the freedom of choosing whether or not they are free—they simply are, essentially, free. Another way of putting this is that “we are condemned to freedom [...], thrown into freedom.” We are forced to be free, Sartre claims, even when we do not want to. The facticity of freedom is fundamentally what allows Sartre to build up his concept of bad faith, which is our attempt to avoid our own freedom by lying to ourselves. If we do not wish to own up to our own essential freedom, we treat ourselves as an in-itself, by explaining something as determined by our past, or by saying that something is foreordained for the future. But these are inauthentic explanations, for as we are forced to be free, we continuously choose our own past and future.

What Sartre calls situation completes his view of the role of freedom in everyday life, and it is the most fascinating part about his philosophy as a whole.

#### **9.4 Conclusion:**

The statement “existence precedes essence” combined with man’s freedom implies that the conventional idea of human nature is false. Sartre equates essence to human nature, it is what human beings *must* be. Sartre says that man is not an object but is a subject. This quality gives him his dignity, which derives from our freedom to choose. If man was to have a certain *nature*, then his choices would be mere chance and not intentional. It is only through intentional choices by which a man can come to live a dignified life, granted that he made good choices for himself. Man’s nature is not ‘fixed’ like a stone or a tree is; he is a creature with the ability to choose, and decides what he shall become. Man decides what he shall become, and he is responsible for the choices which come to define him.

To be responsible is to have that feeling of nausea. Freedom is conjoined with responsibility because the conscious being, the being-for-itself has made the actual choice. He offers many metaphors to elucidate this anguish. In one example, he offers the scenario in which a young man might either go fight for his country in war or stay home and care for his sick mother. Existentially, he is free to choose and must make a choice in the wake of time's passage. Both choices come with consequences; in the former he is a man who abandons his sick mother, in the latter he is a man who evades the dangers of war. The factual reality of the world has put the young man into an impossible position: he cannot be all of the things he wants to be. Forcing him to make a choice, to define himself, causes the existential anguish. Sartre says that "[this] is freedom with suffering, contrary to their idea of what freedom ought to be". When a person acts in bad faith, he is not being authentic. Sartre says that "to exist authentically in the highest degree ... is the aim that existentialism sets before every man. And it is tantamount to real human freedom". Sartre claims that man must admit that he is self-determined.

## 9.5 Glossary:

- **Nausea:** Nausea is the feeling of repulsion that overtakes us when we become aware of the absurdity of existence, the "meaninglessness" of life.
- **Authentic:** Individuals who have grasped and accepted the fact that they are free, who have realized what their situation is, and who have, within that situation, chosen to engage themselves responsibly in the world around them so as to affirm their liberty.
- **Choice:** Individuals are condemned, because they are free, to choose what they are going to be through their daily actions. The choice also implies the attitude of others and hence is another source of anguish.
- **Bad Faith:** Bad faith, or self-deception, is the attitudes of those who seek to escape from the anguish and the nausea that inevitably follow the realization that individuals are free and the world is ultimately absurd.

- **Freedom:** To be free is to recognise one's complete independence; to make one's own life through one's own initiative; to reject any idea of absolute good or absolute evil and to accept no judge or mentor except one's own conscience.
- **Nothingness:** a state where nothing is present, or where nothing exists that is important or gives meaning to life; the absence or cessation of life or existence.
- **Condemned to be free:** We are condemned because we did not create ourselves. We must choose and act from within whatever situation we find ourselves.
- **Subject rather than object:** Humans are not objects to be used by God or a government or corporation or society. We must look deeper than our roles and find ourselves.
- **Choice:** I am my choices : I cannot not choose. If I do not choose, that is still a choice.
- **Abandonment:** I am abandoned in the world... in the sense that I find myself suddenly alone and without help.
- **Ontology:** The study of being, of what constitutes a person as a person, is the necessary basis for psychoanalysis.

#### 9.6 Self-Assessment Questions:

- Why did Sartre criticize the traditional views on freedom?
- Define Nausea.
- Elucidate authentic living.
- What does it mean to be responsible in Sartre's idea of freedom?
- Why man is condemned to be free according to Sartre?

**9.7 Suggested Reading and References:**

- <https://yourstory.com/2017/06/jean-paul-sartre-philosophy-existentialism-freedom/>
- <https://20th-century-philosophy.wikispaces.com/Jean-Paul+Sartre+Freedom+and+Determinism>
- [http://web.sonoma.edu/users/d/daniels/sartre\\_sum.html](http://web.sonoma.edu/users/d/daniels/sartre_sum.html)
- H.J.Blackham: The Six Existentialist Thinkers, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952
- John Macquarrie : Existialism, Penguin Books, 1973
- Mary Warnock: Existentialism, Oxford, University Press, 1970

**9.8 Exercise (Answer the Questions):**

**Q1.** Differentiate between the being in itself and being for itself.

---

---

---

---

---

**Q2.** Define Nothingness.

---

---

---

---

---

**Q3.** Elaborate the concept of Freedom by Jean Paul Sartre.

---

---

---

---

**Q4.** Elucidate Bad Faith.

---

---

---

---

**MEANING AND CHIEF FEATURES OF NEO-REALISM**

**Prof. Shalini Gupta**

**Structure:**

- 10.1 Objectives
- 10.2 Introduction
- 10.3 Kinds of Realism
- 10.4 Features of Neo- Realism
- 10.5 Criticism
- 10.6 Glossary
- 10.7 Self-Assessment Questions
- 10.8 Suggested Readings and References
- 10.9 Exercise (Answer the Questions)

**10.1 Objectives:**

- To define Realism
- To differentiate between the kinds of Realism

- To elaborate the characteristics features of Neo-Realism

## 10.2 Introduction:

Realism is the theory that holds that the existence of objects is real. For this reason it is also called as objectivism. In epistemology, realism holds that in the process of knowledge things are independent of the existence and influence of the knower. Hence the main tenet of this theory in the epistemological field is that the object and its qualities are independent of and uninfluenced by the knower and the process of knowledge.

## 10.3 Kinds of Realism:

**1. Naive realism:** This is a theory propounded by common sense according to which objects are independent of mind whether they are known or not. Knowledge does not affect the object.

**2. Representationism:** This theory is product of Locke's mind. It states that the object's existence is independent of knowledge but metaphysical thought depends upon the mind. Thoughts are the representations of objects. Knowledge of objects is direct in the case of simple thoughts but indirect in the case of complex ones.

**3. Neo- realism:** This theory believes that the total object is not the subject of knowledge but its aspects are, and they are independent of knowledge.

**4. Critical realism:** This theory was first propounded in America at the turn of the century and is critical in nature. It also believed that the existence of objects does not depend upon knowledge in any way. The object is possessed of qualities and is directly known.

These different theories of realism have been arranged in order of their historical appearance and none of them has been found to satisfy completely. Each and every one has been objected to and found wanting in some respect.

## 10.4 Features of Neo-Realism:

Neo-realism is the novel form of Plato's realism. According to this theory, objects and ideas are equally real while the objects exist independent of ideas. The chief tenet of

neo-realism is that for an object to exist it is not necessary to be related to some mind. In England neo-realism has found proponents in Bertrand Russell and G.E. Moore while in the United States of America it has been propagated by E.B. Holt, W.T. Marvin, W.T. Montague, R.B. Perry, W.B. Pitkin and E.G. Spaulding.

Neo realism bears important and significant parallels to naive realism.

The chief difference between the two theories is in respect to the unit of knowledge. According to the naive realists the object in itself is the unit of knowledge, different objects being known individually. For example, as subjects of knowledge chair is one unit of knowledge while table, bed, etc., are independent and separate units. On the other hand, the neo-realists hold that the real unit of knowledge is not the complete object but its aspects; aspects that are neither conscious nor unconscious, neither of the nature of idea nor of the nature of object. They are believed by the neo-realists to be neutral entities. The reason behind this consideration is that the aspect which is unconscious and objective as an element in the subject becomes subjective when it enters the field of knowledge and becomes part of it. In itself, therefore, it is neutral, neither conscious nor unconscious; neither objective nor subjective. If it is subjective then it cannot be objective, and the reverse is equally true. However the features of neo-realism are as:

- 1. Objects are independent of knowledge:** It holds that the existence of the object is independent of knowledge. As Perry expresses it, "Things may be, and directly experienced without owing either being or their nature to that circumstance." It should be noted that here the neo-realism is not referring to the complete object but to its aspects which are neutral entities.
- 2. Qualities are part of the known object:** All qualities inhere in the object itself not in the knowledge of them. It also does not make any distinction between primary and secondary qualities, accepting that all qualities are the subject of experience.
- 3. Nature of object is not influenced by knowledge of it:** It is accepted that all relations are external in the process of knowledge and that no relation is internal. Our consciousness does no more than light up objects as a searchlight does.

Objects and their qualities exist even when there is no consciousness to take cognizance of them.

4. **Objects are what they appear to be and appear to be what they are:** Neo-realism accepts that there is no difference between the object and its conception, that all impressions of the object are as real as the object itself. Any theory of this nature cannot provide any adequate explanation of the phenomenon of error. Neo-realism accepts that error takes place and also tries to explain it in numerous ways but none of these efforts is satisfactory.
5. **Objects are known directly:** The neo-realists and the naive realists are in complete agreement on this point; the only difference being that the naive realists believe that the object is known completely while the neo-realists are of the opinion that the subjects of our perceptions are not complete objects but some of their aspects.
6. **Objects are public:** Objects are public, with the one difference that neo-realists hold that the logical entities of the object, and not the object itself, are public. Our knowledge is limited to some aspects of the object. When many people perceive an orange, the orange is the basis of their perceptions and knowledge but in fact each views some specific aspect of the orange, and each such aspect is private rather than public.

### 10.5 Criticism:

From the philosophical standpoint, the neo-realist theory of knowledge is open to numerous objections, the chief ones being the following:

1. **It does not help empirical science:** Although neo-realism provides mathematical entities and concepts with a useful philosophical background by treating them as subsistents, it fails to provide any basis for an empirical science. Such empirical science as education and psychology believe that the process of knowledge follows an evolutionary pattern in which the meanings of our concepts expand continuously. But according to the neo-realist theory the concept of knowledge does not change,

meaning that knowledge remains as it is. This notion obstructs any further progress in the field of knowledge.

- 2. It cannot provide an explanation for illusion hallucination or creative imagination:** Another respect in which neo-realism resembles its naive counterpart is in its failure to explain adequately such phenomena as illusion, hallucination and creative imagination. According to the neo-realists consciousness performs the task of organizing independent objects and that we have direct knowledge of such objects. It follows from this that consciousness itself cannot create an experience, that all experiences are objectively stimulated. Hence, the subjects of hallucination and illusion should also be objective and real. Neo-realism does not believe in any kind of mental function, since memory, imagination and thinking all have subjects that are actually present.
- 3. Refutation of mental causes in the construction of objects:** According to the neo-realists no mental causes or physical causes help to fashion the object of perception. Mind's only function lies in organizing real objects, having no other function of its own. Besides, no organic or extra-organic factors play any part in knowledge. It need hardly be stated that this view of physical working is refuted not only by modern psychology but even by common sense.
- 4. Wrong theory of consciousness:** Another defect lies in the explanation of consciousness as something which contains nothing within itself and whose sole reality lies in creating external relationships between objects. According to Russel, consciousness is only a specific perspective of looking out at the world. If it is possible for two people to adopt each other's perspective, it should be possible for a similar transference of consciousness to take place. But do the neo-realists grant this transference? They do not. It follows that their elucidation of the consciousness is faulty and untenable.
- 5. Concept of external relation is not satisfactory:** The neo-realists believe in external relations since they hold primarily that objects are independent. This independence is true not only in the external world but even in the event of their becoming subjects of some consciousness in which event the objects take on

external relations. This concept is proved false by modern Gestalt psychology. It is not possible to accept the independence of objects when any mutual dependence between them is not postulated. In its absolute form an independent object cannot be the subject of experience or knowledge.

6. **It is not possible to establish a subsistent world distinct from the existent world:** The neo-realists distinguish between the realm of existence and the realm of subsistence and believe that the realm of subsistence is as real, if not more so, as the realm of existence. This is nothing more than an unwarranted flight of imagination, irrespective of what help it might render to the mathematician and logician in granting reality to this concept and symbol.
7. **Neo-realism cannot comprehend the principle of causality:** According to the neo-realist tenet consciousness is not the cause of knowledge, the subject of knowledge bear only external relations to each other. In the same way there is no relation of causality between the different aspects of an external object. An object consists of the organization of its aspects, neither the object itself nor the various aspects being causes of the other. Obviously, the neo-realist theory does not accept the principle of causality as part of its epistemological theory.
8. **Mind and subject are not inseparable:** Some neo-realists believe that the mind and its subject are inseparable. But another neo-realist Samuel Alexander has refuted this and stated that the mind and its subject differ in their nature, mode of working and the respective means of knowledge. They cannot, therefore, be treated as inseparable.

#### 10.6 Glossary:

- **Principle of Causality:** It states that for everything there is a cause.
- **Gestalt psychology:** A movement in psychology founded in Germany in 1912, seeking to explain perceptions in terms of gestalts rather than by analyzing their constituents.

**10.7 Self-Assessment Questions:**

- What is neo-realism? Elaborate its features.
- Critically discuss neo-realism.
- Name few neo-realist philosophers.

**10.8 Suggested Reading and References:**

- Ram Nath Sharma: History of Western Philosophy, Kedarnath Ram Nath, 1994.

**10.9 Exercise (Answer the Question):**

Q1. Define realism. Discuss the types of realism.

---

---

---

---

Q2. What is neo-realism? Elaborate its features.

---

---

---

---

Q3. Critically discuss neo-realism.

---

---

---

---

Q4. Name few neo-realist philosophers.

---

---

---

---

**NEO - REALISM**  
**REFUTATION OF IDEALISM (G.E. MOORE)**

**Structure:**

- 11.1 Objectives
- 11.2 Introduction
- 11.3 Refutation of Idealism
- 11.4 Criticism of Idealism
- 11.5 To Sum Up
- 11.6 Glossary
- 11.7 Self Assessment Questions
- 11.8 Suggested Reading and References
- 11.9 Exercise (Answer the Questions)

**11.1 Objectives**

- To explain the Idealist position in philosophy.
- To elaborate Moore's Refutation of Idealism .

- To distinguish between the analytic and the synthetic propositions.
- To lay bare the shortcomings of Idealism.

## 11.2 Introduction:

Neo-Realism started in the writings of GE Moore. George Edward Moore [1873-1958] was an influential English philosopher of the early twentieth century. He spent his career mainly at Cambridge University, where he taught alongside Bertrand Russell and, later Ludwig Wittgenstein. The period of their overlap there has been called the 'golden age' of Cambridge philosophy. Moore's main contributions to philosophy were in the area of metaphysics, epistemology, ethics and philosophical methodology. In epistemology, Moore is remembered as a defender of commonsense realism. He rejected skepticism and metaphysical theories that would invalidate the commonsense beliefs of 'ordinary people'. He broke away from the 'absolute idealism' then popular among his colleagues and was a staunch defender of the 'common sense' approach to philosophy, and intuitionism in ethics. His philosophy is a revolt against German transcendentalism and absolutism. He supported the realist philosophy in comparison to the idealist thought. The most popular among his articles is 'The Refutation of Idealism' which serves as a foundation of modern realism.

## 11.3 Refutation of Idealism :

Moore states in the introduction to his paper that idealism holds that the universe is spiritual. Idealism takes reality to consist of minds. Moore refutes idealism by rejecting the proposition central to any idealist argument: *Esse Est Percipi*.

Moore in his paper *The Refutation of Idealism* points out that all forms of idealism are based on one ultimate premise, i.e. *esse est percipi* (to exist is to be perceived), or whatever is, is experienced or is something mental. Although this is not the only premise behind idealistic thinking but it forms a major part of idealistic thought. Moore attacks the untenability of this premise of idealism.

Moore takes 'percipi' first and shows that its real meaning is sensation. But most idealists mean by it not sensation only but thought also. In the statement 'esse est percipi' the word 'est' (is) depicts three meanings:

- (1) Existence of a thing is its sense-perception.
- (2) Existence is one of the qualities of perception.
- (3) Existence is only an inference derived from perception.

As per the first meaning, esse and percipi are synonymous and have identical meaning.

As per the second statement, esse is essentially engrained in percipi in the same way as animality is deeply inside humanity. So 'Esse' and 'Percipi' are co-existent. For example, to quote 'x is a table' is to imply that x is being perceived.

As per the third statement, esse and percipi are contingent and not essential e.g. after seeing smoke we may infer that there is fire. It is in this way that esse is inferred from percipi. Hence all inference logically proceeding is probable or contingent and never necessary.

Moore by logical analysis shows that the idealist position is not self-evident as the external objects of the world cannot be disproved. The dictum arrived at by Berkeley has not been proved by Moore. He believes that:

- (1) When 'esse' is analysed, it does not connect us to percipi (being perceived).
- (2) Secondly, a relation is essential, if and only if its opposite is not conceivable.
- (3) Esse Est Percipi is not a self-evident statement.
- (4) The analytical propositions do not add materially to our knowledge. They only explain the given elements. There are two possibilities for Moore regarding 'Esse Est Percipi' if it is taken as an analytical statement:
  - (a) It cannot treat of existence in experience.
  - (b) If it is taken as non-analytical, then it is contingent and, therefore, non-necessary.

(5) Fundamentally propositions are of two types:

(a) Analytical

(b) Synthetic

Analytical propositions are necessary and tautologous. These are either always true and never false or always false and never true, e.g. 'this circle is square.' These propositions are invariably true or invariably false, simply because they do not refer to any actual state of affairs.

Synthetic propositions are sometimes true and sometimes false, e.g. the proposition 'all crows are black' is contingent as many a times white crows can also be found.

With regard to 'Esse Est Percipi,' following facts can be deduced:

(a) The proposition is a tautology.

(b) It maintains a relation between Esse and Percipi removing all distinctions. So this becomes non-productive in relation to providing knowledge.

(c) In the third alternative, where Esse is inferred from Percipi, the distinction between Esse and Percipi can be maintained. Just like smoke and fire, they are not identical. Such a proposition is synthetic and synthetic proposition is never necessary. No proposition can be both analytical and synthetic ; as such it is synthetic.

(6) The Hegelian logic which forwards no contradiction between 'is' and 'is not' is fully contradictory.

#### **11.4 Criticism of Idealism:**

According to Moore, the two elements involved in the awareness of a thing have been confused by the idealists. For e.g. when we see a red rose and a pink lotus, the awareness in both the cases is same but it involves the distinction of red and pink as per the

awareness. This logical distinction is applied by Moore to undermine the position of the idealists and refute idealism.

Besides these *logical arguments*, Moore has forwarded *metaphysical arguments* to refute idealism as:

- (A) The commonsense knowledge, according to Moore, is that red is different from blue and blue from green. This distinction is not due to our awareness as the visual mechanism is same. This distinction is only due to the difference between green and blue and red objects. This follows that awareness and its contents are different.

Our consciousness implies:

- (i) A consciousness is responsible for awareness.
  - (ii) The content of consciousness makes one awareness different from the other.
- (B) According to idealists, awareness and its content cannot be separated. But according to Moore, consciousness and its object are not identical. The blue belongs to the sky and red to flowers and not to our awareness of the thing.

Idealists hold that blue sky or green leaf is nothing but a mental image which is inseparable from the mind. But according to Moore, “To have a mental image of an object is not the same thing as knowing the existence of the object.”

### **11.5 To Sum Up:**

Hence, Moore’s argument can be put forth as :

- (1) The external object is independent of the knowing mind.
- (2) The content of consciousness is always external and not given in our consciousness.
- (3) For him, knowledge is a direct relation between the knower and the known.

Moore shows by logical analysis that the idealist position is not self-evident. i.e. *Esse Est Percipi* is not a self-evident proposition. Also, the awareness of a thing involves two distinct elements. As when we see a red rose and a green leaf, the awareness in both the cases is same; both involve vision. But red and green are distinct as these are the content of awareness. This commonsense distinction by Moore in his *The Refutation of Idealism* has undermined the idealists' position.

**11.6 Glossary :**

**Esse Est Percipi :** To be means to be perceived, is Berkeley's famous principle.

**11.7 Self Assessment Questions :**

- How does Moore refute Idealism? Discuss.
- Elaborate criticism of Moore's refutation of Idealism.

**11.8 Suggested Reading and References :**

<https://philpaper.org>

**11.9 Exercise (Answer the Questions):**

Q1 What does 'Esse Est Percipi' mean? How does Moore analyse this statement?

---

---

---

---

Q2 What are the two types of propositions?

---

---

---

---

Q3 List the metaphysical arguments given by Moore in order to refute idealism.

---

---

---

---

**THEORY OF SENSE DATA - BERTRAND RUSSELL**

**Structure:**

- 12.1 Objectives
- 12.2 Introduction
- 12.3 Russell's Concept of Sense Datum
- 12.4 Criticism
- 12.5 To Sum Up
- 12.6 Glossary
- 12.7 Self Assessment Questions
- 12.8 Suggested Reading and References
- 12.9 Exercise (Answer the Questions)

**12.1 Objectives:**

- To explain Russell's distinction between the object and the sense data.
- To describe Russell's position on knowledge, knower and the physical objects.
- To elaborate the possibility of attaining knowledge from beyond sense data.

## **12.2 Introduction :**

In the philosophy of perception, the theory of sense - data was a popular view held in the early twentieth century by philosophers as Bertrand Russell, CD Broad etc. Sense-data are taken to be mind dependent objects whose existence and properties are known directly to us in perception.

## **12.3 Russell's Concept of Sense Datum:**

Bertrand Russell used the word 'Sense-data' to refer to the things which are immediately known by sensation like colour, sound, smell, softness, hardness etc. People call such things as sensation. Russell believes that whenever we see a colour, we have a sensation of the colour, but the colour is sense-datum and not the sensation according to Russell.

Russell tries to distinguish between sense-datum or sensation and the physical object e.g. a chair which gives rise to different sense-data like colour, shape, sound etc. is not directly known by us. We get acquainted only with the appearance of the chair through the sense-data which are immediately intuited. The chair is known by inference. The real chair is not immediately known to us at all, but is just an inference from what is immediately known. Russell does not consider sense-data as the properties of the chair. His reason for this is that without some physical and physiological conditions, chair cannot cause any sensation like colour, sound etc. He believes that "All knowledge..... must be built up upon our instinctive beliefs and if these are rejected, nothing is left." He believes, "we can never prove the existence of things other than ourselves and our experiences." But certain things are based on the instinctive beliefs e.g. the existence of an external world is in harmony with the instinctive belief, so it is acceptable.

Russell believes that there is no error in knowledge by acquaintance. Truth consists in some form of correspondence between belief and fact. An error arises in the case when one draws inferences from the sense-data having no correspondence.

Knowledge obtained by acquaintance is always self-evident. Sense-data, he believes, are always certain but in case of passing from perception to judgement, chances of error arise.

Regarding the existence of the physical objects he believes that the sense-data are not mere appearances of the external objects but they reveal these extra-mental objects. An object involves several sensations. The different sensations synthesized, provide actual knowledge of object. So the external world can only be constructed out of sense data. He also believed that the unperceived data regarding the external world can also be proved through 'instinctive belief' supported by inference.

Regarding the existence of a knower, Russell tries to reduce the subject to merely a fictitious idea. The sense-datum involves something given to the subject. When the subject is separated from knowledge, the distinction between sensation and sense-datum ceases to be.

Russell explains the sense-datum as following "a datum is a form of words which a man utters as the result of a stimulus, with no intermediary of any learned reaction beyond what is involved in knowing how to speak."

Sense data are among the things with which we have acquaintance. But they do not exhaust our knowledge because we have the knowledge of past besides the knowledge of present as well as the truths about sense-data. So we have to obtain knowledge other than the sense-data also.

*The first kind of knowledge beyond sense-data is the knowledge attained by 'memory'.* For many things regarding past we depend upon our memory and not on inference. This is the only way to know about the past.

*The second kind of knowledge beyond sense data is acquaintance by 'Introspection'.* It is a fact that while we are aware of things, we are often aware of being aware of them, e.g. when I desire food, I am also aware of the desire of food. My desiring food is the knowledge with which I am acquainted. But what goes on in

others' minds is known to us through our perception, through the sense-data in us which gets associated with their bodies. Animals have acquaintance with sense-data but they do not become aware of this sense-data. A man always gets acquainted with two different things e.g. food and the feeling of having food. All acquaintance involves the relation between the person and the sense-datum e.g. the food and the person having the feeling to have food. This involves that a person be acquainted with sense-datum.

#### **12.4 Criticism :**

Russell's concept of sense data is problematic. Russell takes it as given that sense-data are the building blocks of perception. We look at a table and we sense its brownness, its hardness and its rectangularity. From these sense-data, we construct our idea of the table. But other philosophers argue that, upon seeing a table, we are immediately aware of the object as a table, and it is only later, when we stop to concentrate on what we see, that we consciously notice the object's colour, its texture or its shape. These philosophers hold that sense-data as defined by Russell cannot be the direct element of experience because it requires too much conscious effort to be aware of them.

#### **12.5 To Sum Up :**

To sum up, we can say that we have acquaintance in sensation with the data of the outer senses and acquaintance in introspection with the thoughts, feelings etc. in the inner sense.

#### **12.6 Glossary :**

**Self-evident :** evident in itself without proof or demonstration; axiomatic

**Sense-datum :** an immediate object of perception, which is not a material object; a sense impression.

#### **12.7 Self Assessment Question :**

- Discuss Russell's theory of Sense-data.

**12.8 Suggested Reading and References :**

- Russell, Bertrand (1914), Our knowledge of the External World as a Field for Scientific Method in Philosophy.
- Russel, Betrand, The Principles of Mathematics, Cambridge University Press (1903).
- <http://cdl.fisher.su.oz.au/stanford/entries/russell/>

**12.9 Exercise (Answer the Questions):**

Q1 What does Russell mean by sense datum? How is it different from a physical object?

---

---

---

---

Q2 Elaborate the distinction between memory and introspection.

---

---

---

---

**THEORY OF DESCRIPTION (BERTRAND RUSSELL)**

**Structure:**

- 13.1 Objectives
- 13.2 Introduction
- 13.3 Russell's analysis of Definite Descriptions
- 13.4 Criticism
- 13.5 To Sum Up
- 13.6 Glossary
- 13.7 Self Assessment Questions
- 13.8 Suggested Reading and References
- 13.9 Exercise (Answer the Questions)

**13.1 Objectives:**

- To Explain the identification of definite descriptions in daily discourse and otherwise.
- To present through Russell's analysis and Strawson's critique an idea of how a philosophical debate progresses.

### **13.2 Introduction:**

The theory of descriptions is Bertrand Russell's most significant contribution to the philosophy of language. It is also known as Russell's theory of descriptions. It was put forth in his essay 'On Denoting', published in the journal of philosophy in 1905. The theory holds that indefinite description (eg an F) contribute only a bare existence claim to the truth-conditions of the sentences in which they appear, whereas definite descriptions (eg. the F) contribute both existence and uniqueness claims.

### **13.3 Russell's analysis of Definite Descriptions:**

Russell's theory offers a method for understanding statements that include definite descriptions. A definite description is a word, name, or phrase that denotes a particular, individual object as Bill Clinton, Malaysia, that chair etc. Definite description is a denoting phrase in the form of "the X" where X is a noun-phrase or a singular common noun. The definite description is proper if X applies to a unique individual or object. For example the definite descriptions "the first person in space" and "the 42nd President of the United States of America" are proper. The definite descriptions "the person in space" and "the Senator from Ohio" are improper because the noun phrase X applies to more than one thing and the definite descriptions "the first man on Mars" and "the largest prime number" are improper because X applies to nothing. Improper descriptions raise some difficult questions about the law of excluded middle, denotation, modality and mental content.

Consider the statement "The present King of France is bald". Is this statement true? It is false? Is it meaningless? It does not seem to be true, for there is no present King of France, France being a republic. But if it is false, then one would suppose that the negation of the statement, that is, "it is not the case that the present King of France is bald", or its logical equivalence, "The present King of France is not bald", is true. But that seems no truer than the original statement. Is it meaningless then? One might suppose so (and some philosophers have) because it certainly does fail to denote in a sense, but on the other hand it seems to mean something that we can quite clearly understand.

Bertrand Russell, extending the work of Gottlob Frege, who had similar thoughts, proposed in his ‘theory of descriptions’ that when we say “the present King of France is bald”, we are making three separate assertions:

1. There is an  $x$  such that  $x$  is the present King of France.
2. For every  $x$  that is the present King of France and every  $y$  that is the present King of France,  $x$  equals  $y$  (i.e., there is at most one present King of France).
3. For every  $x$  that is the present King of France,  $x$  is bald.

Since assertion (1) is plainly false and our statement is the conjunction of all three assertions, our statement is false. Similarly, for “the present King of France is not bald”, we have the identical assertions (1) and (2) and (3). For every  $x$  that is the present King of France,  $x$  is not bald, so “the present King of France is not bald”- because it consists of a conjunction, one of whose terms is assertion (1) is also false. The law of the excluded middle is not violated here because by denying both “the King of France is bald” and “the King of France is not bald”, we are not asserting the existence of some  $x$  which is neither bald nor not bald but denying the existence of some  $x$  which is the King of France.

There is a second way of stating “the present King of France is not bald”. Instead of substituting  $x$  in the sentence “ $x$  is not bald” as we have done above, we may negate (1) yielding “it is not the case that there exists an  $x$  and  $x$  is bald” (alternatively “it is not the case that there exists an  $x$ , therefore it is not the case that there exists an  $x$ , where  $x$  is neither bald nor not bald”). This sentence is true as opposed to the statement obtained by the previous method. Secondly, it is easier to see that it does not violate the law of excluded middle. Russell’s analysis has been attacked by P.F. Strawson, Keith Donnellan and others and it has been defended and refined by Stephen Neale. Strawson argued that Russell had misrepresented what one means when one says “The present King of France is bald”. According to Strawson, this sentence is not contradicted by “No one is the present King of France”, for the former sentence contains not an existential assertion, but attempts to use “the present King of France”

as a referring (or denoting) phrase. Since there is no present King of France, the phrase fails to refer and so the sentence is neither true nor false.

#### **13.4 Criticism :**

PF Strawson argued that Russell had failed to correctly represent what one means when one says (The king of France is bald). Strawson points out that this statement does not make an existential claim. This statement is not contradicted by 'There is no king of France'. Strawson believed that this shows that rather than making an existential claim the former statement creates an existential implication. Russell seems to assume that rather than being an implication, the sentence contains this existential claim.

#### **13.5 To Sum Up :**

Russell's theory of descriptions can be appreciated against the background of Russell's view about the connections between language and the world, although this view is not itself a part of the theory. Russell's theory of descriptions is used to analyse sentences in which definite descriptions occur in places in which proper names may occur. It is an early work in analytic philosophy, and represents one form of philosophical analysis.

#### **13.6 Glossary :**

- **Definite Description :** A definite description is a denoting phrase in the form of 'The X' where X is a noun-phrase or a singular common noun. The definite description is proper if X applies to a unique individual or object.

#### **13.7 Self-Assessment Questions :**

- Describe Russell's Theory of Descriptions.

#### **13.8 Suggested Reading and References**

- Russell, Bertrand (1912), Problems of Philosophy, DUP
- Russell, Bertrand (1913/1992), Theory of knowledge: 1913 Manuscript, Routledge

- Russell, Bertrand, 'On denoting', Mind (1905)
- <https://philpapers.org>

**13.9 Exercise (Answer the Questions):**

Q1 What is meant by a definite description?

---

---

---

---

Q2 How does Russell analyse the sentence 'The present king of France is bald?'  
Is it meaningless or carries meaning?

---

---

---

---

**ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY**  
**ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY**

**Mr. Ritu Raj**

**Structure:**

- 14.1 Objectives
- 14.2 Introduction
- 14.3 Origin of Analytic Philosophy
- 14.4 Development of Analytic Philosophy
  - 14.4.1 First phase (1900 to 1910)
  - 14.4.2 Second phase (1910-1930)
  - 14.4.3 Third phase (1930-1945)
  - 14.4.4 Fourth phase (1945- 1965)
  - 14.4.5 Fifth phase (1960- 1980)
- 14.5 To Sum Up
- 14.6 Glossary
- 14.7 Self-Assessment Questions

14.8 Suggested Reading and References

14.9 Exercise (Answer the Questions)

14.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

#### **14.1 Objectives:**

- To elaborate the origin of Analytic Philosophy.
- To identify the aims of Analytic Philosophy.
- To explain the different phases in the development of Analytic Philosophy.
- To explain the Ideal Language and Ordinary Philosophy
- To explain certain key themes in the history of Analytic Philosophy.

#### **14.2 Introduction:**

Analytic philosophy is a 20<sup>th</sup> century movement in philosophy which holds that philosophy should apply logical techniques in order to attain conceptual clarity; philosophy should be consistent success of modern science. For many analytic philosophers, language is the only tool, and philosophy consists in clarifying how language can be used.

Analytic philosophy attempts to clarify the meaning of statements and concepts by analysis. To analyse means to break something down into its constituent parts. Many traditional philosophical problems are dismissed because their terms are too vague, while those that remain are subjected to a rigorous logical analysis. Analytic philosophy is more interested in conceptual questions i.e. questions about the meaning of words and statements and their logical relation. The advantage of reading analytic philosophy is that once we understand particular author's terms, and the vocabulary of logical analysis, their arguments become clear and precise.

#### **14.3 Origin of Analytic Philosophy:**

Analytic philosophy is a philosophical trend in contemporary philosophy with its own distinct methodology and content. It began in Great Britain at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup>

century. It is distinguished from continental philosophy which takes its name from the European continent. *The main founders of analytic philosophy were the Cambridge philosophers, G.E Moore and Bertrand Russell. The precursors of the trend include Gottlob Frege, in part, F. Brentano.*

Russell's and Moore's rebellion against British Idealism has often been taken as signaling the birth of analytic philosophy. It is one of the key events in the emergence of analytic philosophy. For Russell, what was crucial was his concern with the foundations of mathematics. He came to the conclusion that it was only by rejecting the neo- Hegelian doctrine of internal relations that an adequate account of mathematics could be provided. Relation propositions are fundamental in mathematics, and according to Russell, relation had to be treated as 'real' constituent of propositions in order for mathematics to consist of truths.

For Moore, what was crucial was his dissatisfaction with the idealist's denial of mind-independent objects. Moore came to believe that the world is quite literally composed of concepts. In understanding propositions, we grasp the constituent concepts that the propositions are actually about. Both Russell and Moore then came to adopt crude form of direct realism, and this was at the heart of their rebellion against British Idealism.

However, both Moore and Russell were influenced by the German philosopher and mathematician Gottlob Frege. So, on this Frege must be counted as one of the co-founders of analytic philosophy. Many more leading proponents of analytic philosophy such as Ludwig Wittgenstein, Rudolph Carnap, Karl Popper, Otto Narath, and Herbert Feigl have come from German and Austria. Analytic Philosophy is also used as a catch-all phrase to include all branches of contemporary philosophy not included under the label Continental Philosophy, such as Logical Positivism, Logicism and Ordinary Language Philosophy.

Moreover, Analytic Philosophy as a specific movement was led by Bertrand Russell, Alfred North Whitehead, G. E. Moore and Ludwig Wittgenstein. Turning away from then-dominant forms of Hegelianism, (particularly objecting to its Idealism and its almost deliberate obscurity), they began to develop a new sort of conceptual analysis based on new

developments in Logic, and succeeded in making substantial contributions to philosophical Logic. The three main foundational planks of Analytical Philosophy are:

- That there are no specifically philosophical truths and that the object of philosophy is the logical clarification of thoughts.
- That the logical clarification of thoughts can only be achieved by analysis of the logical form of philosophical propositions, such as by using the formal grammar and symbolism of a logical system.
- A rejection of sweeping philosophical systems and grand theories in favour of close attention to detail, as well as a defense of common sense and ordinary language against the pretensions of traditional Metaphysics and Ethics.

Analytic philosophy sees that analyses is the proper method to resolve definitively the problems that are within the philosophy. Behind this trend is at least one of the two following assumptions; that the problems of philosophy arise from conceptual confusion capable of being dispelled by analyses, and that analysis consists in carefully discerning and exhibiting the simple constituents of more complex notions. The objects of analysis were said to be concepts or propositions. But by the 1930's, a linguistic turn became clearly noticeable. Language came to be regarded as the fundamental object of analysis, and analytic philosophy was often called linguistic philosophy. For analytic philosopher, language is the principle, and philosophy consists in clarifying how language can be used. Linguistic philosophy is a set of approaches to philosophical problems, dominant in Anglo-American Philosophy. It emphasizes the study of language and logical analysis of concepts.

#### **14.4 Development of Analytic Philosophy:**

Analytic Philosophy essentially dealt with the movement of linguistic analysis, which led to a renaissance in the history of philosophy. This is called as analytic age. *Analytic philosophers adopted the linguistic in order to solve the philosophical problems.* Early developments in Analytic Philosophy arose out of the work of the German mathematician and logician Gottlob Frege (widely regarded as the father of modern philosophical logic). His development of Predicate Logic and Bertrand Russell's "Principia

Mathematica” and their development of Symbolic Logic, attempted to show that mathematics is reducible to fundamental logical principles. However, the history of development in analytic philosophy is divided into five phases.

#### **14.4.1 First phase (1900 to 1910):**

In its first phase, *analytic philosophy was a form of opposition to neo-Hegelian metaphysics, which was cultivated in England by F. H. Bradley, J. M. McTaggart, and others.* Both Moore and Russell disagreed with the idealism and the method of this form of metaphysics. Moore felt that Idealism (according to which mind and world are interdependent) - was an erroneous metaphysical view and that, where possible, there should be a return to Realism (according to which there is an external world that is constituted independently of operations of mind). Moore thought that up to that time philosophers had not put sufficient weight on precision in the formulation of theses or on the exact definition of the meaning of the terms they used. This negligence led them to make absurd statements at odds with common sense. Although the detailed analysis of concepts is not the ultimate end of philosophy, it should be an introductory step in any well-ordered philosophy. According to Russell, when philosophers considered a proposition, they too often took its grammatical form to be the same as its logical form. In order to show explicitly the logical form, we must translate the proposition from ordinary language into a proposition expressed in the categories of contemporary formal logic. His theory of description is an example of this kind of analysis. This theory provided a way to avoid certain paradoxes associated with references to non-existent objects. By 1910, both Moore and Russell had abandoned their propositional realism—Moore in favor of a realistic philosophy of common sense, Russell in favor of a view he developed with Ludwig Wittgenstein called Logical Atomism.

#### **14.4.2 Second phase (1910-1930):**

The method of analysis ultimately led Russell to think that artificial formal languages are closer to reality than is ordinary language. This idea *marked the beginning of a form of analytic philosophy called the philosophy of Ideal Language. It included the logical atomism of B. Russell and L. Wittgenstein.* According to Logical Atomism, the structure of reality is adequately reflected by the language of contemporary logic (or more precisely, logic in the form in which it appears in B. Russell’s *Principia Mathematica*). The world is

composed of atomic facts which are ontologically independent of one another; in an ideal logical language, atomic propositions which are independent of each other in content would correspond to these facts. Composite facts are the models for composite propositions, which are built from simple atomic propositions with the help of truth functions.

*L. Wittgenstein's logical atomism is presented in his work Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus (1921). In Tractatus Wittgenstein put forward the picture theory of meaning. Wittgenstein suggested that the world is merely the existence of certain states of affairs which can be expressed in the language of first-order predicate logic, so that a picture of the world can be built up by expressing atomic facts in atomic propositions, and linking them using logical operators, a theory sometimes referred to as Logical Atomism.*

A picture may mirror reality by showing objects and arrangement of objects. Wittgenstein argued that sentences contain names that refer to objects in the world. A sentence which did not give picture was devoid of meaning. The only statement which pictures the world is statement about facts and is meaningful also. The statement about ethics, religion and much of philosophy is not, strictly speaking, meaningful.

#### **14.4.3 Third phase (1930-1945):**

*The third phase, approximately 1930-1945, is characterized by the rise of logical positivism, a view developed by the members of the Vienna Circle. It was popularized in England by A. J. Ayer and later took roots in the United States. The Vienna Circle consisted of a group of philosophically minded scientists and logicians. Moritz Schlick was the official leader; other members included Rudolf Carnap and Otto Neurath. The circle was heavily influenced by the work of Frege and Russell. The basic task of philosophy is the logical analysis of scientific language or the logical structure of scientific theories.*

The logical positivism that the circle practiced can be seen as a development of Wittgenstein's Tractatus. They accepted the verification theory of meaning. As Schlick puts it, "The meaning of a proposition is the method of its verification". Anything that was not empirically verifiable was meaningless. Statements about God, Ethics and Metaphysics, were, for the circle literally nonsense. This emphasis on positivism was a reaction against

the romantic Idealism that had been influential in German philosophy. The role of philosophy was seen as handmaiden to science, content simply to clarify concepts.

#### **14.4.4 Fourth phase (1945- 1965):**

*The fourth phase is characterized by the turn to ordinary-language analysis, developed in various ways by the Cambridge philosophers Ludwig Wittgenstein and John Wisdom, and the Oxford philosophers Gilbert Ryle, John Austin, Peter Strawson, and Paul Grice. In the 1930's Wittgenstein became critical of his earlier picture theory of meaning. In his later work, he uses a tool metaphor for language; the meaning of a word is no longer its relation to some atomic facts; the meaning of a word is in its use. We use language in a variety of ways. The later Wittgenstein does not agree with the logical positivists that scientific statements have meaning. Science is only one way to talk about the world; only one 'language game'. A language game reflects a human activity, a form of life. Words derive their meaning from their function; they perform within the 'language games'.*

Words are no longer seen as having a particular essence, or to refer to a particular object. A word has a variety of usages; what these different usages have in common, Wittgenstein calls a 'family resemblance'. Members of a family bear a resemblance to each other, but no two members of a family (apart from twins) look exactly alike. The same is true for the use of words. Hence, the task of the analytic philosopher is not to reform language, but to describe particular language games. Philosophical analysis is primarily therapeutic since it is not concerned with solving philosophical problems but with removing them.

Because of his positive views on language, Wittgenstein came to be regarded as a representative of the philosophy of ordinary language. This group also included a group of Oxford philosophers (J. L. Austin, G. Ryle, and in part H. P. Grice and P. F. Strawson). They held the idea that ordinary language has its own coherent logic, and this logic cannot be fully comprehended by any formal system. Both in removing illusory philosophical problems and in solving real problems, we abide by this logic.

#### **14.4.5 Fifth phase (1960- 1980):**

*During the 1960s, criticism from within and without caused the analytic*

*movement to abandon its linguistic form. Linguistic philosophy gave way to the philosophy of language, the philosophy of language gave way to metaphysics, and this gave way to a variety of philosophical sub-disciplines.* Thus the fifth phase, beginning in the mid 1960s and continuing beyond the end of the twentieth century, *is characterized by pluralism.* This post-linguistic analytic philosophy cannot be defined in terms of a common set of philosophical views or interests, but it can be loosely characterized in terms of its style, which tends to emphasize precision and thoroughness about a narrow topic and to deemphasize the imprecise discussion of broad topics.

At the end of the 1960s some philosophers began to try constructing a systematic theory of meaning for natural languages, and on the basis of such a theory to formulate specific metaphysical statements. This means that the more powerful theses of the analytic philosophers who had gone before, that the analysis of language enables us to avoid or resolve traditional philosophical problems, was replaced by the weaker thesis, that the philosophy of language is the central philosophical discipline and that its conclusions have an essential influence on the shape of philosophy as a whole. Davidson and M. Dummett developed theories of meaning along these lines. The central idea in Davidson's conception is that the meaning of a proposition is equivalent to the conditions of its truth, namely the conditions whose occurrence makes the proposition true. Dummett and those who continued his work (e.g., C. Wright) are firmly opposed to describing the meaning of propositions in this way, since in many cases we cannot recognize whether the truth conditions have occurred, which would lead to the conclusion that we do not know the meaning of many of the propositions we frequently use. The meaning of a proposition is rather the conditions for its verification, its rational justification, or more generally, its assertability.

In the 1970s following the work of S. A. Kripke and H. Putnam, analytic philosophers formulated a new theory of designation (reference) which based designation on the causal connection between the users of a language and the objects designated. It postulated the existence of the essences of things.

Starting in the 1980s, the philosophy of language began to lose its central position to the philosophy of thought. This was influenced by internal aspects of analytic philosophy (the idea that we cannot understand how language functions or how it is related to reality

without understanding the nature of the mind and its connections with the world), and by external factors (the rapid development of the sciences with respect to the brain and cognitive processes).

#### **14.5 To Sum Up:**

To sum up, we can say that the analytic philosophy has been the dominant academic philosophical movement in English speaking countries from about the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century up to about the 1970's or 1980's. It holds that philosophy should apply logical techniques in order to attain conceptual clarity. It attempts to clarify the meaning of statements and concepts, by analysis. For many analytic philosophers, language is the tool and philosophy consists in clarifying how language can be used. Analytic philosophers adopt the linguistic turn in order to solve the philosophical problems. Linguistic turn may be explicated in two stages. The first stage is concerned with artificial language analysis. On the other hand the second stage deals with ordinary language analysis. Centering on the two types of analysis of language, analytic philosophers can be categorized in two groups. The first group associated with formal language or logical language includes philosophers like Russell, early Wittgenstein and logical positivist like Mortiz Schlick, Carnap etc.: in contrast to this the second group related to ordinary language or natural language includes philosophers as later Wittgenstein, G.Ryle, Strawson, J.L.Austin etc.

As it is evident from the typical subject matter analytic philosophy deals with, it is usually concerned with developing analysis and solution to philosophical problems. This is done by careful, often formal- logical analysis of philosophical terms and arguments and by methodical thinking and weighing of evidence. Today, analytic philosophy may best be characterized by a common method to common tenet, but by a common tradition, which was initiated by Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell and G.E Moore.

#### **14.6 Glossary:**

**Proposition:** Those sort of things expressed by sentences which are either true or false.

**Theory of verification:** The theory, which holds that an empirical statement is meaningful iff it is verifiable by appeal to experience.

**Ordinary Language:** Informal everyday language

**Analytic philosophy:** It is a division of philosophy where by the application of modern logic to metaphysics, via language, one tries to provide new insights into the relations between word, thought and language and thereby into the nature of philosophy.

#### 14.7 Self-Assessment Questions:

- Explain the origin and meaning of Analytic philosophy
- Describe the various phases in the development of Analytic Philosophy.
- Discuss the origin and development of Analytic Philosophy.

#### 14.8 Suggested Reading and References:

- Grayling, A.C. *Philosophy 2*. Oxford: OUP, 1998.
- Ayer, A.J. *Russell and Moore: The Analytic Heritage*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971.
- Irvine, A., and Wedeking, G. *Russell and Analytic Philosophy*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993.
- L.J. Cohen, *The Dialogue of Reason. An Analysis of Analytic Philosophy*. Oxford: OUP, 1986.
- Dummett, Michael. *The Origins of Analytic Philosophy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993.
- M. Black, *Philosophical Analysis: Collection of Essays*. New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1950.
- M.K. Munitz. *Contemporary Analytic and Linguistic Philosophies*. New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1983.

- Weitz, Morris. *Twentieth Century Philosophy: The Analytic Tradition*. New York: Free Press, 1966.
- Barry R. Gross, *Analytic philosophy*, California: Pegasus, 1970.

**14.9 Exercise (Answer the Questions):**

Note: a) Use the space provided your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of this unit.

Q1) Explain briefly Russell's and Moore's rebellion against British Idealism

---

---

---

---

Q2) What is Analytic Philosophy?

---

---

---

---

Q3) Explain briefly the first phase in development of Analytic Philosophy.

---

---

---

---

Q4) Define Logical Atomism.

---

---

---

---

Q5) What is Logical Positivism?

---

---

---

---

Q6) Briefly state the Ordinary Language philosophy?

---

---

---

---

**14.10 Answers to Check Your Progress:**

1) Russell's and Moore's rebellion against British Idealism has often been taken as signaling the birth of analytic philosophy. It is one of the key events in the emergence of analytic philosophy. For Russell, which was crucial was his concern with the foundations of mathematics. He came to the conclusion that it was only by rejecting the neo- Hegelian doctrine of internal relations that an adequate account of mathematics could be provided. Relation propositions are fundamental in mathematics, and according to Russell, relation had to be treated as 'real'

constituents of propositions in order for mathematics to consist of truths. For Moore, what was crucial was his dissatisfaction with the idealist's denial of mind-independent objects. Moore came to believe that the world is quite literally composed of concepts. In understanding propositions, we grasp the constituent concepts that the propositions are actually about. Both Russell and Moore then came to adopt crude form of direct realism, and this was at the heart of their rebellion against British idealism.

- 2) Analytic philosophy attempts to clarify the meaning of statements and concepts by analysis. To analyse means to break something down into its constituent parts. Analytic philosophy sees that analyses as the proper method to resolve definitively the problems that are within the ken of philosophy. Behind this trend is at least one of two following assumptions; that the problems of philosophy arise from conceptual confusion capable of being dispelled by analyses, and that analysis consists in carefully discerning and exhibiting the simple constituents of more complex notions. The search for conceptual clarity led to a painstaking, attention to detail, in contrast to the broad imaginative sweeps of grander theory. The objects of analysis were said to be concepts or propositions; But by the 1930's a linguistic turn became clearly noticeable. Language came to be regarded as the fundamental object of analysis, and analytic philosophy was often called linguistic philosophy. For analytic philosopher, language is the principle, and philosophy consists in clarifying how language can be used.
- 3) In its first phase, analytic philosophy was a form of opposition to neo-Hegelian metaphysics, which was cultivated in England by F. H. Bradley, J. M. McTaggart, and others. Both Moore and Russell disagreed with the idealism and the method of this form of metaphysics. Moore felt that Idealism (according to which mind and world are interdependent) - was an erroneous metaphysical view and that, where possible, there should be a return to Realism (according to which there is an external world that is constituted independently of operations of mind). Moore thought that up to that time philosophers had not put sufficient weight on precision in the formulation of theses or on the exact definition of the meaning of the terms they used. This negligence led them to make absurd statements at odds with common

sense. Although the detailed analysis of concepts is not the ultimate end of philosophy, it should be an introductory step in any well-ordered philosophy. According to Russell, when philosophers considered a proposition, they too often took its grammatical form to be the same as its logical form. In order to show explicitly the logical form, we must translate the proposition from ordinary language into a proposition expressed in the categories of contemporary formal logic. This theory of description is an example of this kind of analysis. This theory provided a way to avoid certain paradoxes associated with references to non-existent objects.

- 4) According to logical Atomism, the structure of reality is adequately reflected by the language of contemporary logic (or more precisely, logic in the form in which it appears in B. Russell's *Principia Mathematica*). The world is composed of atomic facts which are ontologically independent of one another; in an ideal logical language, atomic propositions which are independent of each other in content would correspond to these facts. Composite facts are the models for composite propositions, which are built from simple atomic propositions with the help of truth functions.
- 5) Logical positivism is a view developed by the members of the Vienna Circle. It was popularized in England by A. J. Ayer and later took root in the United States. The Vienna circle consisted of a group of philosophically minded scientists and logicians. The basic task of philosophy is the logical analysis of scientific language or the logical structure of scientific theories. The logical positivism that the circle practiced can be seen as a development of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*. They accepted the verification theory of meaning. One verifiable statements were meaningful, as Schlick put it, "The meaning of a proposition is the method of its verification". Anything that was not empirically verifiable was meaningless. Statements about God, Ethics and Metaphysics, were, for the circle literally nonsense.
- 6) The fourth phase is characterized by the turn to ordinary-language analysis, developed in various ways by the Cambridge philosophers Ludwig Wittgenstein and John Wisdom, and the Oxford philosophers Gilbert Ryle, John Austin, Peter Strawson, and Paul Grice. In the 1930's Wittgenstein became critical of his earlier

picture theory of meaning. In his later work, he uses a tool metaphor for language; the meaning of a word is no longer its relation to some atomic facts; the meaning of a word is in its use. We use language in a variety of ways. The latter Wittgenstein does not agree with the logical positivists that scientific statements have meaning. Science is only one way to talk about the world; only one 'language game'. A language game reflects a human activity, a form of life. Words derive their meaning from their function; they perform within the 'language games'.

**PICTURE THEORY OF MEANING**  
**(LUDWING WITTGENSTEIN)**

**Mr. Ritu Raj**

**Structure:**

- 15.1 Objectives
- 15.2 Introduction
- 15.3 Wittgenstein's Picture Theory of Meaning
  - 15.3.1 Language as the picture of world
  - 15.3.2 Name- Object Relationship
  - 15.3.3 Meaning as Truth function
  - 15.3.4 Logical Form
  - 15.3.5 What cannot be pictured
- 15.4 To Sum Up
- 15.5 Glossary
- 15.6 Self-Assessment Questions
- 15.7 Suggested Reading and References

15.8 Exercise (Answer the Questions)

15.9 Check Your Progress

### 15.1 Objectives:

- To list the works of Wittgenstein.
- To explain the picture theory of meaning.
- To elaborate the relationship between language and reality.
- To identify the problems with picture theory of meaning.

### 15.2 Introduction:

Analytical philosophy is basically concerned with four central problems: viz; the nature of meaning, language use, language cognition, and the relationship between language and reality. Philosophers of language inquire into the nature of meaning and seek to explain what it means to “mean” something. Topics in that vein include the nature of synonymy, the origin of meaning itself, and how any meaning can ever really be known. Second, they would like to understand what speakers and listeners do with language in communication, and how it is used socially. Third, they would like to know how language relates to other minds of both the speaker and the interpreter. Finally, they investigate how language and meaning relate to truth and world. The central question that it tries to answer is, ‘what is meaning?’ The development of philosophical views on meaning over the last 130 years offering coverage of all the leading thinkers in the field include Frege, Russell, Wittgenstein, Austin, Quine, Chomsky, Grice, Davidson, Dummett and many others. However, Wittgenstein is unique in viewing the above question. His uniqueness is reflected in both of his major works i.e. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* and *Philosophical Investigations*.

The early Wittgenstein is epitomized in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. It is the later Wittgenstein recognized in the *Philosophical Investigations*, who took the more revolutionary step in critiquing the traditional philosophy including its climax in his own early work. Moreover the idea of meaning is treated differently in his two above mentioned works. Meaning in *Tractatus* has been understood in terms of relation between language

and reality: and he calls it as the picture theory of meaning. Language has been exercised as a picture to understand the reality. Wittgenstein asserts that language as a picture of reality. And something is meaningful if there is a pictorial relationship between language and world. But it is not the same with the *Philosophical Investigations*. In the theory of meaning, Wittgenstein emphasizes the use of words and language: it is the way an expression is used that gives its meaning.

### **15.3 Wittgenstein's Picture Theory of Meaning:**

The theory of meaning set out in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus-Logico-Philosophicus* is one which locates a connection between language and the world through the relation of picturing. Implicit in this theory is the belief in two distinct realms, language and the world. The purpose of a linguistic act is to represent the world so as to make it intelligible for the others. Language is seen as capable of communicating facts about the world to the extent that its components are capable of capturing the facts of the world. One of Wittgenstein's main tasks in the *Tractatus* is to formulate the nature of language which pictures the world. It therefore discusses the nature of language as well as the world and how the latter is pictured by the former.

To give a clear idea about language as viewed by Wittgenstein, one needs to understand the nature and function of language. In fact, the story of picture theory of meaning is revealed in understanding language. *Language is conceived as the totality of propositions in the Tractatus*. All propositions can be analyzed into two types i.e. elementary and non-elementary propositions. Elementary propositions are combinations of simple names. This notion of simple names is not as the ordinary name like table, chair or Plato. They are simple in a logical sense which cannot by definition be further analyzed. However, these non-elementary propositions can be understood via elementary propositions in the sense that elementary propositions are ingredients of non-elementary propositions. To make it clear an elementary proposition is inherited in a non-elementary proposition. And it is Wittgenstein's conviction that for every proposition (both elementary and non-elementary) must have a structure or form which is called logical form and that is essential to any proposition.

He extends this view to the idea of world as well. The similar mechanism has been followed in case of world also. The rhetoric line of *Tractatus*, ‘the world is the totality of facts and not of things’ (1.1). Facts are existent state of affairs (T2), which are combination of objects. And facts can be of two types as propositions are atomic and non-atomic facts. An atomic fact is the combinations of simple objects and non-atomic facts are combinations of complex objects. The world or a fact must have structure or form which is essential to every fact. Wittgenstein believes that there is a one to one correspondence between names and objects in particular and language and world in general. This is the main crux of the picture theory of meaning which is explained in the next following lines.

### **15.3.1 Language as the picture of world:**

According to Wittgenstein, if language and the world are considered as two distinct realms, the problem then arises of what exactly is the relationship between them. This is precisely the question which occupies Wittgenstein in his earlier work. As the *Tractatus* unfolds, it becomes clear that the connection between language and the world resides in the picturing nature of propositions. A congruence, or isomorphism, is established between language and the world, and this is the essence of the picture theory of meaning. It is language that “makes picture of facts”. “Pictures are model of reality” (T2.12) and are made up of elements that represent objects, and the combination of objects in the picture represents the combination of objects in the state of affairs. The logical structure of the picture, whether in thought or in language, is isomorphic with the logical structure of the state of affairs which it pictures. ‘That is how a picture is attached to reality; it reaches right out to it’ (T2.1511). The picture can picture the world but cannot picture its own pictorial form.

The world, Wittgenstein writes, is made up of facts. The simple in language - “names” - correspond to the simplest elements of the facts of the world - “objects”. Basic concatenations of names - “elementary propositions” - correspond to the simplest configuration of objects in the world - “atomic facts”. How is a picture possible? ‘What constitutes a picture is that its elements are related to one another in determinate way’. A picture of situation, say X is a picture of X and not Y because the way the elements of the picture are related –the form of picture, is the same way the elements of X are related-the form of X.

*A proposition is a model of reality as we imagine it (T4.01).* A proposition has a sense if it describes a possible state of affairs, otherwise it is meaningless. As Wittgenstein puts it, the logical structure of the picture and situation pictured, is identical. The elementary proposition “pictures” reality through this correspondence of its elements to the objects in the world, together with its bearing of the same “logical structure” as the atomic fact. The elementary propositions, in turn, can be conjoined by truth-connectives to produce overall “propositions”, which correspond simply to the “facts” which constitute the world.

Indeed language overall is equal to the set of possible propositions, which in turn corresponds to the totality of possible facts - “the world”. The language-world relation can be construed as a kind of mapping, or transformation, which takes a possible fact or “state of affairs” and subjects it to a particular set of rules in order to yield a proposition as the result. This proposition “pictures” the possible state of affairs. Of course, Wittgenstein does not attempt to provide the entire set of rules for effecting such a transformation but rather the minimum conditions which any such process must satisfy in order to be capable of successfully producing meaningful sentences at all. These minimum conditions for the meaningfulness of propositions must, therefore, facilitate the unambiguous determination of possible states of affairs in the world. If a sentence is to be meaningful at all, it must enable us to know precisely what the world must look like -what “is the case” - if it is true.

*According to the picture theory of meaning, the proposition must “determine” reality precisely, whether rightly or falsely.* In the proposition, Wittgenstein writes, ‘a state of affair is, as it is, put together for the sake of experiment.’ (4.031) In this respect it would be misleading to think of true propositions as mirroring a possible state of affairs accurately, and false propositions, inaccurately. In order to be a legitimate proposition at all, a statement must picture a possible state of affair in a determinate way. It must pinpoint exactly those conditions which are necessary and sufficient to render the proposition true - i.e. its “truth-conditions”. What the proposition asserts is that these conditions are satisfied, and this is what may be judged true or false depending on the actual facts of the world. Wittgenstein writes, “The proposition determines reality to this extent that one only needs to say “Yes” or “No” to make it agree with reality.”(4.023) The proposition is akin to an arrow pointing to an exact place; it determines “a place in logical space”. In this way, even false sentences must precisely mirror the world of possible facts, for they also determine a

“logical place” - or possible state of affairs- but simply one which happens not to be the case in reality.

### 15.3.2 Name- Object Relationship:

*Naming is the pivotal aspect of the picture theory of meaning: it is the fixed point around which the entire language-world relation revolves.* The congruence of names - the simplest elements of language - and objects - the simple elements of the world - form the unchanging, solid foundation of the entire picturing relation. Naming is seen as primary, and from this unshakable bond between language and the world, every other aspect of the language-world connection simply falls into place. The elementary proposition, which is the “building block” of language, is simply “a connexion, a concatenation, of simple names.” The determinateness of sense, which Wittgenstein seeks to establish the minimum conditions for, finds its basis in the naming relation. The connection between names and the objects constitute precisely the firm foundation for meaningfulness which Wittgenstein is anxious to establish. If the meaning of a proposition is to be determinate, there must first be “one and only one complete analysis of the proposition”. (T3.25)

Further, the basic elements we get to when we progressively divide the “complex” into the “simple”, through analysis, must be fixed and sharply delineated. Names must signify unique objects, and each object must have a unique name. If this is the case, then there is no ambiguity in the end – i.e. when we get down to the most basic level of the language-world relation. Wittgenstein writes: We must not say, “The complex sign ‘aRb’ says ‘a stands in relation R to b’”; but we must say, “That ‘a’ stands in a certain relation to ‘b’ says that aRb. This contains a key to understanding the picture theory of meaning. What do you think he means by this? He means that sentences aren’t arbitrary signs of some content, proposition, but that they stand in an isomorphic relationship to that content— just as a photograph may be said to picture you by being mapable onto your features, so too, a sentence pictures the fact it reports by being so mapable.

In this way, the name-object relation is the foundation of the picture theory of meaning, and the means for securing determinateness of sense at the most basic level. In fact, the entire approach of the *Tractatus* to language is one of progressively dissecting it, dividing it up into its most basic elements. To begin with, the world divides into facts.

These correspond to the propositions. The facts then divide into atomic facts, which correspond to the elementary propositions, the independent and irreducible units of sense. The atomic facts in turn divide into the simplest objects. The objects are linked to the simplest elements of the elementary propositions through the naming relation. We have now reached, finally, the limiting elements of language - its basic constituent parts which cannot be further divided.

### **15.3.3 Meaning as Truth function:**

It is essential to the very nature of the proposition that its truth-conditions be pinpointed in a determinate way. Therefore, Wittgenstein writes: "The sense of a proposition is its agreement and disagreement with the possibilities of the existence and non-existence of atomic facts." If we understand a proposition at all, i.e. recognize its sense, we must know exactly "what is the case, if it is true". Since for Wittgenstein "sense" resides in the truth-conditions of a proposition, and since it is only complex propositions that can be declared true or false according to the agreement or disagreement of their truth-conditions with reality, it is only complex propositions that can possess a sense.

In the picture theory of meaning, the elementary proposition is therefore a self-contained and irreducible unit of "sense". The basic units of meaning, elementary propositions can be conjoined to form complexes of meaning through the use of truth-connectives. All propositions, in fact, are seen as truth-functional by nature. Wittgenstein writes, 'All propositions are the results of truth-operations on the elementary propositions.' To determine the truth-value of a proposition, it suffices, therefore, to reduce the proposition to its constituent elementary propositions, which represent the possibility of the existence and non-existence of certain atomic facts. The truth-values of these elementary propositions are independent of each other, because atomic facts are independent. Wittgenstein writes, "Propositions are truth-functions of elementary propositions. (An elementary proposition is a truth-function of itself.)" What is pivotal to the proposition is not simply that it pictures a possible state of affairs, but specifically that it is a logical picture of a possible state of affairs. Every picture, Wittgenstein claims, is also a logical picture.

#### **15.3.4 Logical Form:**

A picture must have something in common with what it pictures in order to be capable of representing it at all – rightly or falsely - and this common property is termed as “logical form”. The congruence between a proposition and the possible state of affair is shared by logical form of these two. The logical form is something rather mysterious and inexpressible, yet if we were to attempt to define it, we might say that it is that which all pictures must share with what they represent in order for them to be pictures at all. For it is the minimum condition of picturing; it is that which is essential to the representing relation. The logical form is, in fact, the very possibility of structure of the atomic fact, rather than simply the accidental structure of a particular atomic fact.

Significantly, the definitive aspect of the representing relation - the shared logical form of the proposition and what it pictures - is something which cannot itself be pictured. It cannot be said meaningfully. Propositions cannot say anything about themselves; they cannot describe their own essential properties, for in order to do this they would have to contain themselves and this is impossible. Wittgenstein writes, “No proposition can say anything about itself, because the propositional sign cannot be contained in itself...” A picture cannot represent the representing relation itself – i.e. the fact of the shared logical form of the picture with what it pictures - since this picture would itself have to bear the logical form of representation in order to be a picture at all. Pictures, that is, such as propositions, cannot step outside themselves to a higher level in order to describe their own necessary properties. There are no “meta-propositions” which are capable of speaking about the set of all propositions.

Furthermore, in seeking out the “general form of the proposition”, Wittgenstein attempts to find the essence of the proposition, the basic form which all propositions must have in order to be logical pictures of reality at all. Every possible sense should be able to be expressed by a symbol which falls under this general propositional form, and every possible symbol which falls under it should be capable of expressing a sense.

#### **15.3.5 What cannot be Pictured:**

In picture theory of meaning, Wittgenstein asserts that all meaningful propositions are of equal value. According to him, “Most of the propositions and questions are to be

found in philosophical works are not false but nonsensical. Consequently we cannot give any answer to questions of this kind, but can only establish that they are nonsensical. He ends the journey with the admonition concerning what cannot and what should not be said, leaving outside the realm of the sayable the propositions of ethics, aesthetics, and metaphysics. Wittgenstein says that, Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent.(T7)

According to Wittgenstein, only contingent propositions can speak about the world or the matters of fact. None other than contingent propositions can picture the world. Thus in the *Tractatus*, the ideas of unalterable simple objects, logical form, the idea of totality of facts cannot be pictured. Thus, Wittgenstein claims them as showable and not sayable. These propositions about the unsayable are real metaphysical propositions. Ethical and spiritual values also are in the realm of the mystical. Wittgenstein says we will not find values among the facts of the world, for everything is what it is (T 6.41.). Therefore, the sense of the world, what constitutes its value, must lie outside the world. It cannot be one more fact among the scientifically observable facts in the world. Consequently he held that ‘ethics cannot be put into words. Ethics is transcendental’ (6.421). Language can represent the world but it cannot represent the essence of it. For him,” In order to be able to represent logical form, we should have to be able to station ourselves with propositions somewhere outside logic that is to say outside the world”. That is why logical form of the world remains unsayable and therefore beyond language. The question remains that whether these statements which cannot be pictured are meaningful or not. They are not sheer nonsense but there will not be a truth value of those propositions.

#### **15.4 To Sum Up:**

To sum up, Wittgenstein’s picture theory in a line, it can be said that language represents the reality in the pictorial relationship between them. It is criticized that there is a fundamental, abstract link between names and objects. With regard to possible objections to the picture theory of meaning, the supposed solidness of the foundations of meaning which the naming relation purportedly gives, perhaps a weakness of the theory rather than strength. For, in placing so much weight on the name-object relation, Wittgenstein betrays a disregard for all other elements of language, expecting that they will simply “take care of themselves”. In particular, the linguistic acts such as questions, exclamations, etc., which

are not simply descriptive sentences appear to have no place in Wittgenstein's picture theory of meaning: for only descriptive sentences can be propositions which picture states of affairs. Since only those combinations of words which can be pictures of reality, with determinate truth-conditions, can be attributed with "sense", then presumably only descriptive sentences can be meaningful. The picture theory of meaning, therefore, cannot adequately account for meaning in those types of linguistic expressions which are not merely descriptive. However, the propositions which cannot be pictured can they be meaningfully stated in his much celebrated use theory of meaning.

### 15.5 Glossary:

**Picture theory of Meaning:** Pictures are model of reality and are made up of elements that represent objects, and the combination of objects in the picture represents the combination of objects in the state of affairs.

**Proposition:** Those sort of things expressed by sentences which are either true or false.

**Fact:** A fact is something that is postulate to have occurred. The usual test for a statement of fact is verifiability- that is, whether it can be demonstrated to correspond to experience.

**Logical form:** The logical form of a proposition is the form obtained by abstracting from the subject matter of its content terms or by regarding the content terms as mere placeholder.

### 15.6 Self-Assessment Questions:

- Describe Wittgenstein's Picture theory of meaning.
- State and examine Picture theory of meaning.
- Explain the relation between language and world.

### 15.7 Suggested Reading and References:

- Wittgenstein, L. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Tr. C.K.Ogden and F.P.Ramsay, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1992.
- David Pears. *Wittgenstein*. London: Fontana Press, 1971.
- Irving M.Copi and Robert W. Beard. *Wittgenstein's Picture theory of language*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966.
- Ramesh.C.Pardhan. *Recent Development in Analytic Philosophy*. New Delhi: Pauls Press/ICPR, 2001.
- Glock, H. *A Wittgenstein Dictionary*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996.
- Hacker P.M.S. *Wittgenstein's Place in Twentieth-Century Analytical Philosophy*: Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.
- Monk, R. *Ludwing Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*. London: Vintage, 1991.

**15.8 Exercise (Answer the Questions):**

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of this unit.

Q1. Name the Wittgenstein's earlier Work.

---



---



---



---

Q2. According to Wittgenstein, the world is totality of .....and language is totality of.....

---

---

---

---

Q3. State briefly in what way language pictures the world.

---

---

---

---

Q4 Write short note on name- object relationship.

---

---

---

---

Q5 Explain the concept of meaning as truth function.

---

---

---

---

Q6 Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent. Explain

---

---

---

---

### 15.9 Answers to check your progress :

- 1) Tractatus-Logico-Philosophicus
- 2) Facts, Proposition.
- 3) If language and the world are considered as two distinct realms, the problem then arises of what exactly is the relationship between them. As suggested, this is precisely the question which occupies Wittgenstein in his earlier work. As the *Tractatus* unfolds, it becomes clear that the connection between language and the world resides in the picturing nature of propositions. It is language that “makes picture of facts”. “Pictures are model of reality” (T2.12) and are made up of elements that represent objects, and the combination of objects in the picture represents the combination of objects in the state of affairs. The logical structure of the picture, whether in thought or in language, is isomorphic with the logical structure of the state of affairs which it pictures.

The world, Wittgenstein writes, is made up of facts. The simples in language - “names” - correspond to the simplest elements of the facts of the world - “objects”. Basic concatenations of names - “elementary propositions” - correspond to the simplest configurations of objects in the world - “atomic facts”. How is a picture possible? ‘What constitutes a picture is that its elements are related to one another in determinate way’. A picture of situation, say X is a picture of X and not Y because the way the elements of the picture are related –the form of picture, is the same way the elements of X are related-the form of X. A proposition has a sense if it describes a possible state of affairs; otherwise, it is meaningless. As Wittgenstein puts it, the logical structure of the picture and situation pictured is identical. The elementary proposition “pictures” reality through this correspondence of its elements to the objects in the world, together with its bearing of the same “logical structure”

as the atomic fact. The elementary propositions, in turn, can be conjoined by truth-connectives to produce overall “propositions”, which correspond simply to the “facts” which constitute the world.

- 4 Naming is the pivotal aspect of the picture theory of meaning: it is the fixed point around which the entire language-world relation revolves. The congruence of names - the simplest elements of language - and objects - the simple elements of the world - forms the unchanging, solid foundation of the entire picturing relation. Naming is seen as primary, and from this unshakable bond between language and the world, every other aspect of the language-world connection simply falls into place. The elementary proposition, which is the “building block” of language, is simply “a connexion, a concatenation, of simple names.” The determinateness of sense, which Wittgenstein seeks to establish the minimum conditions for, finds its basis in the naming relation. The connection between names and the objects constitute precisely the firm foundation for meaningfulness which Wittgenstein is anxious to establish. If the meaning of a proposition is to be determinate, there must first be “one and only one complete analysis of the proposition”. (T3.25)
- 5 It is essential to the very nature of the proposition that its truth-conditions be pinpointed in a determinate way. Therefore, Wittgenstein writes: “The sense of a proposition is its agreement and disagreement with the possibilities of the existence and non-existence of atomic facts.” If we understand a proposition at all, i.e. recognize its sense, we must know exactly “what is the case, if it is true”. Since for Wittgenstein “sense” resides in the truth-conditions of a proposition, and since it is only complex propositions that can be declared true or false according to the agreement or disagreement of their truth-conditions with reality, it is only complex propositions that can possess a sense. In the picture theory of meaning, the elementary proposition is therefore a self-contained and irreducible unit of “sense”. The basic units of meaning, elementary propositions can be conjoined to form complexes of meaning through the use of truth-connectives. All propositions, in fact, are seen as truth-functional by nature. Wittgenstein writes, “All propositions are the results of truth-operations on the elementary propositions.” To determine the truth-value of a proposition, it suffices therefore to reduce the proposition to

its constituent elementary propositions, which represent the possibility of the existence and non-existence of certain atomic facts. The truth-values of these elementary propositions are independent of each other, because atomic facts are independent. Wittgenstein writes, "Propositions are truth-functions of elementary propositions. (An elementary proposition is a truth-function of itself.)" What is pivotal to the proposition is not simply that it pictures a possible state of affairs, but specifically that it is a logical picture of a possible state of affairs. Every picture, Wittgenstein claims, is also a logical picture.

- 6 In picture theory of meaning, Wittgenstein asserts that all meaningful propositions are of equal value. According to him, "Most of the propositions and questions are to be found in philosophical works are not false but nonsensical. Consequently we cannot give any answer to questions of this kind, but can only establish that they are nonsensical. He ends the journey with the admonition concerning what cannot and what should not be said, leaving outside the realm of the sayable the propositions of ethics, aesthetics, and metaphysics. Wittgenstein says that, Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent. (T7) According to Wittgenstein, only contingent propositions can speak about the world or the matters of fact. None other than contingent propositions can picture the world. Thus in the *Tractatus*, the ideas of unalterable simple objects, logical form, the idea of totality of facts cannot be pictured. Thus, Wittgenstein claims them as showable and not sayable.

**THEORY OF MEANING (LUDWING WITTGENSTEIN)**

**Mr. Ritu Raj**

**Structure:**

- 16.1 Objectives
- 16.2 Introduction
- 16.3 Use theory of meaning
  - 16.3.1 Language Game
  - 16.3.2 Family Resemblance
  - 16.3.3 Form of Life
- 16.4 To Sum Up
- 16.5 Glossary
- 16.6 Self-Assessment Questions
- 16.7 Suggested Reading and References
- 16.8 Exercise (Answer the Questions)
- 16.9 Answer to check your progress

### 16.1 Objectives:

- To elaborate the Use theory of Meaning
- To compare Wittgenstein's earlier and later theory of Meaning.
- To analyse the terms Language Games and Family Resemblance

### 16.2 Introduction:

Wittgenstein's theory of Meaning is epitomized in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Meaning in *Tractatus* has been understood in terms of a relation between language and reality: he calls it *picture theory of meaning*. Wittgenstein asserts that *language is a picture of reality*. And something is meaningful if there is a pictorial relationship between language and world. In this lesson we will study Wittgenstein's use theory of meaning. It is the later Wittgenstein recognized in the *Philosophical Investigations*, who took the more revolutionary step in critiquing all traditional philosophy including its climax in his own early work. The *Philosophical Investigations* is interesting precisely in the way that it does not seem to fit into any particular context. In the *Investigations*, Wittgenstein is concerned primarily with the very impulse to think philosophically more than he is with any particular philosophical view. Moreover, Meaning in *Philosophical Investigations* has been recognised in terms of language use, that he calls it as *use theory of Meaning*. In *use theory of meaning* Wittgenstein emphasizes the use of words and language: the way an expression is used gives it its meaning. The meaning of an expression is identified with its uses, but meaning cannot be identified with any particular aspect of the usage environment, i.e. neither the referent nor a mental idea. According to Wittgenstein, it is a mistake to try to locate meaning of a word in some realm or the other, to look for a certain sort of entity that constitutes meaning. Instead, meaning depends on the context of use, the whole language game, the whole 'form of life', that participants share.

### 16.3 Use theory of meaning:

Underlying the semantics of speech acts the general framework of language–use has been very prominently emphasized by later Wittgenstein. It is the semantic framework that promises to bring all structural elements of language under a single frame of language-

use. The semantic dictum “Meaning is use” makes it clear that not only meaning but also truth and reference as connected with meaning are to be explained with the help of the concept of use. Use makes both truth and meaning available in language. The meaning of a proposition or a sentence is its use, is the call of later Wittgenstein. Without language being used by people, there is no question of there being any meaning or truth in language. The origin of Meaning lies in the use of language. Understanding the language means understanding the meaning itself. Thus the meaning of a language can be situated in language-use. That is, it can be placed in the structure of the language insofar as the use represents that structure in its rules.

Meaning is thus explained in and through language-use. *‘The meaning of word wrote is its use in language’ (PI43)*. The use of the word in practice is its meaning. When investigating meaning, according to the later Wittgenstein, the philosopher must “look and see” the variety of uses of the word in the language; ‘Don’t think but look!’ (PI66). We learn the meaning of words by learning how to use them, just as we learn to play chess, not by associating the pieces with objects, but by learning how they can be moved. This is connected with the emphasis on description alone for the use of word is something that is available for description it is not an entity or process that is hidden from us, as was the meaning (that is objects) of the *Tractatus*.

It may seem obvious that in describing how a word is used, we describe its meaning and that knowing what its meaning is the same as knowing how to use it. For in the sense there have been theories of meaning, Wittgenstein’s account is not a theory. In theories of this kind it is claimed that there is something other than words which bestows meaning on them (does in a uniform way). In the *Tractatus* as we saw, this role is played by the corresponding objects.

According to verification principle of the logical positivists, it was the method of verification which constituted the meaning of any given statement. Another common view has been that meaning is bestowed by something in the speaker’s mind, a thought or image perhaps. In all these cases the meaning of words or sentences are to be fixed by something outside language. But Wittgenstein’s use is not anything outside language. The meaning of word is its use in the language. It is the meaningful use of words that he is talking about. Hence, he is not explaining what meaning is, by reference to something other than meaning.

Here the words, there the meaning as one might speak separately of the money and the cow that you can buy with it.

Wittgenstein suggests that instead of comparing the relationship between the word and the meaning to that between the money and the cow that you can buy with it, we should compare it to the relationship between money and its use. The use of money is not an object separable from the money and the specific use of money to buy things is only a part and makes sense only in a larger and much more complicated way. Money has value within a given community because of the way it is used. Thus we might say that 'the value of money is its use.' It is sometimes complained that Wittgenstein did not specify what he meant by use. But this is hardly surprising, given his rejection of the idea of an essence of language. The meaning of use will be as multifarious and as resistant to definition as the various uses of language are. Similarly it is a mistake to look for definition of his terms 'language-game' and 'forms of life' which are discussed in detail later. But the meanings of these terms like others will depend on the use he makes of them in particular context. When Wittgenstein speaks of 'use', does he mean ordinary use? Wittgenstein is known as an ordinary language philosopher for he proposes to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use.

The identification of meaning with use was expressed by Wittgenstein in various ways; sometimes just by running the two words together, as when he speaks of the use-the meaning-of word. But in one place there is a statement which has caused misunderstandings. Wittgenstein says:

'For a large class of cases- though not for all- in which we employ the word 'Meaning' it can be defined thus: the meaning of a word is its use in the language' .PI43

Why only for a large class of cases? Are there others in which meaning and use are, after all distinct? And is the words explain in this passage, compatible with the descriptive? This- admittedly rather-trickily passage is not meant to state the identity of meaning and use nor to put forward a general explanation of meaning. It is about how the word meaning might be explained in a particular case. Sometimes (for a large class of cases) one would do it in terms of use. For example, if someone asks for the meaning of traumatic then we take it that what he wants to know is how this word is used to explain it according. So it is right

to say that the use explains the meaning of an expression. Wittgenstein says: “The meaning of a word is what is explained by explanation of the meaning” i.e. if you want to understand the use of the word “meaning” look for what are called “explanations of meaning” (PI560). The explanation of meaning shows exactly what meaning is all about? In explaining the function of a word, we have already explained what the meaning of a word is. Meaning determination does not depend on anything extraneous to language. We cannot go out of language to tell what the meaning is. So we have to look into the function of language to know its meaning. Meaning is neither a mental reality nor is it an entity in the abstract platonic sense. It is internal to the language-system and so is autonomous.

It is quite clear that here Wittgenstein is not offering the general theory that ‘meaning is use,’ as he is sometimes interpreted as doing. The main rival views that Wittgenstein warns against are that the meaning of a word is some object that it names—in which case the meaning of a word could be destroyed, stolen or locked away, which is nonsense—and that the meaning of a word is some psychological feeling—in which case each user of a word could mean something different by it, having a different feeling, and communication would be difficult if not impossible.

One exception to the meaning-is-use rule of thumb is given in *Philosophical Investigations*, where Wittgenstein says that “the word “is” is used with two different meanings (as the copula and as the sign of equality)” but that it’s meaning is not its use. That is to say, “is” has not one complex use (including both “Water is clear” and “Water is H<sub>2</sub>O”) and therefore one complex meaning, but two quite distinct uses and meanings. It is an accident that the same word has these two uses. It is not an accident that we use the word “car” to refer to both Fords and Hondas. But what is accidental and what is essential to a concept depends on us, on how we use it.

This is not completely arbitrary, however. Depending on one’s environment, one’s physical needs and desires, one’s emotions, one’s sensory capacities, and so on, different concepts will be more natural or useful to one. When a person says something, what he or she means depends not only on what is said but also on the context in which it is said. However, it is incomplete to describe Wittgenstein’s ‘use theory of meaning’ without explaining the idea of language game and the role of grammar and his much celebrated concept called ‘forms of life’. A brief discussion of all these ideas is given below.

### 16.3.1 Language Game:

Wittgenstein used the term “language-game” to designate the countless multiplicity of uses, their un-fixedness and their being part of an activity and connected by family resemblance. The concept was intended ‘to bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity, or a form of life’ (PI23). The concept is based on the following analogy: The rules of language (grammar) are analogous to the rules of games; meaning something in language is thus analogous to making a move in a game. The analogy between a language and a game brings out the fact that only in the various and multiform activities of human life do words have meaning. Wittgenstein’s thought is that in language we are playing with words. Wittgenstein asks the following question concerning games; ‘What is common to them all? - Don’t say; ‘There must be something common, or they would not be called ‘games’ - but look and see whether there is anything common to all.- For if you look at them you will not see something that is common to all, but similarities, relationships, and a whole series of them at that’ (PI66). The classic example of a language-game is the so-called “builder’s language” The language is meant to serve for communication between a builder A and an assistant B. A is building with building-stones: there are blocks, pillars, slabs and beams. B has to pass the stones, in the order in which A needs them. For this purpose they use a language consisting of the words “block”, “pillar” “slab”, “beam”. A calls them out; B brings the stone which he has learnt to bring at such-and-such a call.

*Wittgenstein introduces the concept of ‘language games’ with the analogy between using language and playing a game according to certain rules. It was his contention that our whole use of language was similar to game playing: we can easily imagine people amusing themselves in a field by playing with a ball so as to start various existing games, but playing many without finishing them and in between throwing the ball aimlessly into the air, chasing one another with the ball and bombarding one another for a joke and so on. And now someone says: The whole time they are playing a ball-game and following definite rules at every throw. At every step we are following the rules, but not the same rules at every step. In the same way our use of language is always governed by rules but not always by the same rules, we partake in a large number of ‘language games’ and confusion usually arises when a statement in one ‘language game’ is interpreted according to the rules of another. We can also think of the whole process of using words in as one of those games by means of which children learn their native language.*

The playing of 'language games' is a necessary step in the learning of language; we learn to use a language through a variety of games. It seems we must already have some prior idea of what role numbers play in the language, but what is this prior idea? Wittgenstein discusses this by analogy with the game of chess, telling the chess player, 'This is the king,' will only tell him anything if, 'he already knows the rules of the game up to this last point.' He goes on to ask how we might teach someone the game if they did not already understand what a playing piece was. The rules of the game and the meaning of, 'this is the king,' have to co-exist, we cannot have one without the other. The rules do not precede the meaning and the meaning does not precede the rules. The meaning and the rules are so deeply intertwined as to be inseparable. Wittgenstein claimed that words derive meaning from their use in 'language games', words by themselves have no intrinsic meaning - 'the meaning of a word is its use in the language. Each word has meaning in as much as it has a use in a particular language game, outside of the language game, there is no meaning.

However, the rules of a language-game may change, and different rules may be applied to different games. According to Wittgenstein, there is no single rule which is common to all games. Wittgenstein describes the activity of using language as similar to playing a game of chess. Words are like the pieces on a chessboard. Each word has a different use or function in the language-game. Wittgenstein also argues that the uses or meaning of words may change, according to changes in the circumstances and scene of a language-game. To use words meaningfully, people must decide which language-game they want to play, and how they want to play it. Wittgenstein does not define what a 'game' is, but gives examples of various games, such as chess, tennis, cricket, etc. Each game has its own set of rules, and each is played differently.

### **16.3.2 Family Resemblance:**

*Wittgenstein introduces family resemblance to help us understand how some concepts actually work, how they function in language.* Wittgenstein's point was that things which may be thought to be connected by one essential common feature may in fact be connected by a series of overlapping similarities, where no one feature is common to all. Wittgenstein calls this network of similarities 'family resemblances' (PI 67). It is here that Wittgenstein's rejection of general explanations and definitions based on sufficient and

necessary conditions are best pronounced. Instead of these symptoms of the philosophers craving for generality, he points to family resemblance as the more suitable analogy for the means of particular uses of the same word. Wittgenstein's examples are various games, which have no one single thing in common. He compares board-games, card-games, ball-games, olympic games etc. What is common to them all? There must be something common or they would not be called games- but look and see whether there is anything common to all. If we look for what is common to all, we will find only similarities and relationships. We can find more similarities among board-games, or among ball-games, but there is no one characteristic common to all. And the result of this examination is: 'we see a complicated network of similarities, overlapping and criss-crossing' (PI 66). Sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail.

Now, the question is whether such a concept with blurry edges has meaning at all. Wittgenstein's answer is that the meaning of the word is its use in a language game. Therefore, the concept game has a meaning in referring to various games, without having one simple definition of game common to various games. Wittgenstein invites us to consider, for example, the proceedings that we call games "...[to] look and see whether there is anything common to all". And we can go through the many, many other groups of games in the same way; we can see how similarities crop up and disappear. And the result of this examination is that we see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing. I can think of no better expression to characterize these similarities than "family resemblances"; for the various resemblances between members of a family: build, features, colour of eyes, gait, temperament, etc. overlap and criss-cross in the same way. And I shall say: "games" form a family. Al and Jack have the same eyebrows, while Elmer and Bob have the same ears and Al and Bob have the same smile. There is no common feature among them yet they all resemble each other.

In the last we can say that these phenomena have no one thing in common which makes us use the same word for all; but that they are related to one another in many different ways. And it is because of this relationship, or these relationships, that we call them all language. What we call language is a collection of 'language games' which are related, but not in a fixed way. Wittgenstein called these relationships 'family resemblances' because the similarities between 'language games' can be likened to the similarities between

members of a family. Language is not a passive thing to be picked up and cast aside as necessary; it is something that is a part of us - we shape the use of language as language shapes us.

### 16.3.3 Form of Life:

Wittgenstein's Form of Life reveals the intricate relationship between language and life throughout his work. According to *Tractatus* language is an autonomous, abstract system of symbols in which the role of the human subject is insignificant. In striking contrast, for later Wittgenstein, language is something living and growing. Language use is an activity that takes place within the stream of life. It is easy to imagine a language consisting only of orders and reports in battle. '*To imagine a language means to imagine a form of life*' (PI 19). Wittgenstein introduced the term 'language-game' 'to bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity, or a form of life' (PI 23). In Wittgenstein's terms, agreement is required 'not only in definitions but also in judgments' (PI242), and this is 'not agreement in opinions but in form of life' (PI241). Does it mean that human agreement decides what is true and what is false? It is what human beings say that is true and false and they agree in the language they use. That is agreement in opinions but in form of life.

Form of life can be understood as changing and contingent dependent on culture, history, etc; this appeal to form of life grounds a relativistic reading of Wittgenstein. Our language and customs are fixed not by laws so much as by what Wittgenstein calls forms of life, referring to the social contexts in which language is used. In other words, the most fundamental aspect of language is that we learn how to use it in social contexts, which is the reason why we all understand each other. We do not understand each other because of a relationship between language and reality. Wittgenstein gives the example of a student who obeys the rule add 2 by writing 1002 after 1000 and insisting that this is a correct application of the rule. In such an instance, there is nothing we can say or do to persuade the student otherwise because the misunderstanding lies at a deeper level than explanation can reach. Such examples do not occur in ordinary life not because there is some perfectly unambiguous explanation for add 2 but because we share forms of life: people, on the whole, simply understand one another, and if this basic understanding is missing,

communication would be impossible. This is clearly a universalistic turn, recognizing that the use of language is made possible by the human form of life.

#### **16.4 To Sum Up:**

We can assume that Wittgenstein has advocated *use theory of meaning* in order to develop his early work to his later work. That is why the philosophy that Wittgenstein preaches and practices in the *Investigations* is concerned primarily with dissolving problems rather than solving them. In *use theory of meaning*, Wittgenstein believes that meaning of the word lies in its use. It is not something which is fixed relationship between name and objects, propositions and facts as in the *Tractatus*. Therefore he says that the meaning is dependent upon its use. Later Wittgenstein's interest was in language games and their usefulness as a tool for attacking the idea of fixed meaning. Wittgenstein is wary of theories of language, fearing that they are too simplistic. Any attempt at discussing how words have meaning is liable to assert that there is a single, fundamental link between language and reality and through this link the meanings of words are fixed in place. One of Wittgenstein's fundamental ideas is that words do not have fixed meaning but rather carry a family of related meanings. Wittgenstein develops the concept of language games as a tool for counteracting the tendency toward theorizing about language. Language games are his tool, for showing that no single theory of language can possibly account for the diversity of linguistic phenomena.

Wittgenstein was willing to embrace the meaninglessness of meta-logic in the *Tractatus*. By the time of the *Philosophical Investigations*, he seems to have come around to the view that there can be correct and incorrect explanations of language; hence, it is not profitable to call sentences without truth conditions meaningless if they do in fact possess different modes of use. Questioning and declaring are two different language-games, and rephrasing a question as a declaration, does not bring the different language-games any closer together. In any event, questioning is just one such alternative language-game, and many others could be listed in its place with greater or lesser ease of transposition, e.g., giving orders, joking, speculating, requesting, thanking, cursing, play-acting, etc. Thus, for the sentence as well as the word, meaning is to be founding the way it is used in a language- game rather than its correspondence to some aspect.

While *Tractatus* argues that language corresponds to reality by virtue of sharing a common logical form, Wittgenstein's later philosophy abandons the idea of any abstract link between language and reality. Instead, he asserts that language has meaning simply by virtue of how it is used. Unlike the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein later philosophy does not present a grand, tidy theory that explains how everything falls into place. Instead, the later philosophy is profoundly antitheoretical that there is no way to organize the various aspects of language and experience into a single, unified whole.

### 16.5 Glossary:

**Language-games:** Similar to the diversity of games, our multiple ways of language use do not conform to a single model and just as we cannot give a definition of 'game', so we cannot find 'what is common to all these activities and what makes them into language or parts of language.' So herein the usages of language are compared with a game.

**Family resemblance:** Family resemblance is a philosophical idea made popular by Ludwig Wittgenstein, with the best known exposition being given in the posthumously published book *Philosophical Investigations* (1953) It argues that things which may be thought to be connected by one essential common feature may in fact be connected by a series of overlapping similarities, where no one feature is common to all.

### 16.6 Self-Assessment Questions:

- Discuss Wittgenstein's Use theory of meaning in detail.
- Write an essay on Use theory of meaning.
- Explain the concept 'Language-game' and 'Family Resemblance'.

### 16.7 Suggested Reading and References:

- Wittgenstein, L. *Philosophical Investigations*. Tr. G.E.M. Anscombe. Oxford: Blackwell, 1953.

- David Pears. *Wittgenstein*. London: Fontana Press, 1971.
- Ramesh.C.Pardhan. *Recent Development in Analytic Philosophy*. New Delhi: Pauls Press/ICPR, 2001.
- Ramesh.C.Pardhan. *Language, Reality, And, Transcendence, An Essay on the Main Strands of Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy*. USA: Brown Walker Press Bocca Raton, India: Overseas Press. 2009.
- Glock, H. *A Wittgenstein Dictionary*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996.
- Hacker P.M.S. *Wittgenstein's Place in Twentieth-Century Analytical Philosophy*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.
- Monk, R. *Ludwing Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*. London: Vintage, 1991.

**16.8 Exercise (Answer the Questions):**

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of this unit

Q1. Discuss briefly Use theory of Meaning.

---



---



---



---

Q2. What do you understand by Language Games?

---



---



---

---

Q3. How does Wittgenstein interpret family resemblance.

---

---

---

---

Q4. What is 'form of life' according to Wittgenstein?

---

---

---

---

**16.9 Answers to check your progress:**

- 1) Underlying the semantics of speech acts the general framework of language–use which has been very prominently emphasized by later Wittgenstein. It is the semantic framework that promises to bring all structural elements of language under a single frame of language-use. The semantic dictum ‘Meaning is use’ makes it clear that not only meaning but also truth and reference as connected with meaning are to be explained with the help of the concept of use. Use makes both truth and meaning available in language. The meaning of a proposition or a sentence is its use is the call of later Wittgenstein. Without language being used by people there is no question of there being any meaning or truth in language. The origin of Meaning lies in the use of language. Understanding the language means understanding the meaning itself. Thus the meaning of a language can be situated in language-use. That is, it can be placed in the structure of the language insofar as the use represents that structure in its rules. Meaning is thus explained in and through language-use.

‘The meaning of word wrote is its use in language’ (PI43). The use of the word in practice is its meaning. When investigating meaning, according to the later Wittgenstein, the philosopher must “look and see” the variety of uses of the word in the language; ‘Don’t think but look!’(PI66). We learn the meaning of words by learning how to use them, just as we learn to play chess, not by associating the pieces with objects, but by learning how they can be moved. This is connected with the emphasis on description alone for the use of word is something that is available for description it is not an entity or process that is hidden from us, as were the meaning (that is objects) of the *Tractatus*. It may seem obvious that in describing how a word is used, we describe its meaning and that knowing what its meaning is the same as knowing how to use it.

- 2) Wittgenstein used the term “language-game” to designate the countless multiplicity of uses, their un-fixedness and their being part of an activity and connected by family resemblance. The concept was intended ‘to bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity, or a form of life’(PI23). The concept is based on the following analogy: The rules of language (grammar) are analogous to the rules of games; meaning something in language is thus analogous to making a move in a game. The analogy between a language and a game brings out the fact that only in the various and multiform activities of human life do words have meaning. Wittgenstein’s thought that in language we are playing with words. Wittgenstein asks the following question concerning games; ‘What is common to them all?- Don’t say; ‘There must be something common, or they would not be called ‘games’ - but look and see whether there is anything common to all.- For if you look at them you will not see something that is common to all, but similarities, relationships, and a whole series of them at that”(PI66). The classic example of a language-game is the so-called “builder’s language” The language is meant to serve for communication between a builder A and an assistant B. A is building with building-stones: there are blocks, pillars, slabs and beams. B has to pass the stones, in the order in which A needs them. For this purpose they use a language consisting of the words “block”, “pillar””slab”, “beam”. A calls them out; -B brings the stone which he has learnt to bring at such-and-such a call.

- 3) Wittgenstein introduces family resemblances to help us understand how some concepts actually work, how they function in language. Wittgenstein's point was that things which may be thought to be connected by one essential common feature may in fact be connected by a series of overlapping similarities, where no one feature is common to all. Wittgenstein calls this network of similarities 'family resemblances' (PI 67). It is there that Wittgenstein's rejection of general explanations and definitions based on sufficient and necessary conditions, is best pronounced. Instead of these symptoms of the philosophers craving for generality he points to family resemblance as the more suitable analogy for the means of particular uses of the same word. Wittgenstein's examples are various games, which have no one single thing in common. He compares board-games, card-games, ball-games, Olympic games etc. What is common to them all? - Don't say: There must be something common or they would not be called games- but look and see whether there is anything common to all. - If we look for what is common to all, we will find only similarities and relationships. We can find more similarities among board-games, or among ball-games, but there is no one characteristic common to all. And the result of this examination is: 'we see a complicated network of similarities, overlapping and criss-crossing' (PI 66). Sometimes overall similarities sometimes similarities of detail.
- 4) Wittgenstein's Form of Life reveals the intricate relationship between language and life throughout Ludwig Wittgenstein's work. According to *Tractatus* language is an autonomous, abstract system of symbols in which the role of the human subject is insignificant. In striking contrast, for later Wittgenstein, language is something living and growing. Language use is an activity that takes place within the stream of life. It is easy to imagine a language consisting only of orders and reports in battle. 'To imagine a language means to imagine a form of life' (PI 19). Wittgenstein introduced the term 'language-game' 'to bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity, or a form of life' (PI 23). In Wittgenstein's terms, agreement is required 'not only in definitions but also in judgments' (PI 242), and this is 'not agreement in opinions but in form of life' (PI 241).

**INDIAN PHILOSOPHY**  
**UNIVERSAL RELIGION – SWAMI VIVEKANANDA**

**Mr. Ritu Raj**

**Structure:**

- 17.1 Objectives
- 17.2 Introduction
- 17.3 Vivekananda's views on religion
- 17.4 Vivekananda's concept of Universal Religion
  - 17.4.1 Three essential parts of religion
  - 17.4.2 Unity in Diversity
  - 17.4.3 Concept of God in Universal Religion
- 17.5 To Sum Up
- 17.6 Glossary
- 17.7 Self-Assessment Questions
- 17.8 Suggested Reading and References
- 17.9 Exercise (Answer the Questions)
- 17.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

### **17.1 Objectives:**

- To elaborate the concept of Universal Religion.
- To explain the larger vision of Unity in Diversity implied in the teachings of Swami Vivekananda's philosophy.
- To dispel from the human race the clouds of inhibitions of fear, ignorance, superstitions, religious and cultural slavery.
- To bring about lasting world peace through the unification of all the world religions under one universal religion.

### **17.2 Introduction:**

Swami Vivekananda was a great social reformer and a very inspiring personality. He was born of a well to do family in Calcutta and his given name was Narendra Nath Datta. He made an immense contribution to purify the souls of people. As a young man he met Ramakrishna and thereafter devoted himself completely to his teachings. After the death of Ramakrishna in 1886, he undertook an extensive travel of almost whole India. In 1893 he went to United States where he represented Hinduism in World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago. After four years of teaching in the west, he returned to India where he organized the Ramakrishna Mission and engaged in a strenuous campaign to encourage a national renaissance. The mission of Vivekananda's life was to establish spiritual oneness of existence among mankind. According to him the same divinity exists behind each and everything. The philosophy of Vivekananda arises from his awareness of the social, religious and economic conditions of the Indian masses. Vivekananda's philosophy is deeply influenced by ancient Hindu philosophy – especially of the Vedanta. His basic belief in the essential unity of everything owes its origin to the Vedanta.

### **17.3 Vivekananda's views on religion:**

Vivekananda discussed the concept of religion in a very practical way, not only in individual life but also in social life. For him, religion is not just a talk and doctrines or theories, nor is it sectarianism. Religion, for him, does not mean any creed, dogma or cult; but realisation of the divineness of one's very self within. Every religion, according to

Vivekananda, should cultivate this fundamental principle for world peace and harmony. He explains that religion does not consist in erecting temples or building churches or attending public worship. Religion consists in realization. Religion does not consist in subscribing to a particular faith or creed, but in spiritual realisation. Vivekananda further adds that religion transcends not only the limitations of the senses, but also the power of reasoning or of pure intellectual deliberation. Religion does not have a value and significance for the individual only, but it has a social aspect also. Religion, Vivekananda says, provides a secure foundation and an ultimate sanction to morality also. True religion does not need any outer show. Religion means realisation of God and it can only be attained by purity of heart. Through purity of heart, we can love all, we can embrace all and at last we can realise the truth that is unity of existence. The realisation of unity of existence is our goal and we can only achieve our goal through purity of heart.

#### **17.4 Vivekananda's concept of Universal Religion:**

Universal Religion may be said to be the most general concept which reveals the very unity and the unique nature of all religions of the world. The very heart underlying all religions in the world is the same. Universal religion expresses the sameness of the fundamental principles as well as the teachings of each and every religion that exists. Just as the universal brotherhood of man is there; so also universal religion is there. Universal religion is neither the product of discursive understanding nor a synthesis of the vital elements of the different religions. It is the reification that the different religions are expression of one basic truth. Explaining the concept of universal religion, Vivekananda said that all religions in the world are looking at truth from different stand points which may of course vary according to our birth, education, surrounding and so on. This idea was that all religions are different forces in the realm of God; each religion is working for the good of mankind.

##### **17.4.1 Three essential parts of religion:**

Religion, according to Vivekananda, is in essence, man's way of living in the name of truth. *In every religion there are three parts, namely, philosophy, mythology and ritual.* Describing these three parts of religion, Vivekananda said, philosophy presents the whole scope of that religion, setting forth its basic principles, the goal and the means of reaching it. The second part is mythology, which is philosophy made concrete. It consists

of legends relating to the lives of men, or of supernatural beings, and so forth. It is the abstraction of philosophy concretized in the more or less imaginary lives of men and supernatural beings. The third part is the ritual. This is still more concrete, and is made up of forms and ceremonies, various physical attitudes, flowers and incense, and many other things that appeal to the senses. Though philosophy is thus shown to be the central theme of religion and mythology and ritual as only the outer sheath, certain problems centering round individual's spiritual experiences and approaches create disagreement even in philosophies.

By universal religion, he does not mean a religion that will have one universal philosophy, or one universal mythology or one universal ritual; they may all differ from sect to sect or even from individual to individual, and yet the universal religion is there. Now, if the conflict of religions arises on account of the fact that different religions have different philosophy, mythology and rituals, the religious harmony can be attained only by having a universal religion that rises above these differences. But then the question arises if there is any universality in religion or if there can be any universal form of religion?

Vivekananda says that such a religion already exists but we have lost it because of external divergences of religions. These external conflicts affect the essence of religion. Behind the external differences, there is essential sameness. Thus, though universal religion already exists, for example, in the form of universal brotherhood of man, people fail to notice its presence in their own life. So universal religion is there although some of us are not aware of it. But, what can be its nature? Does it comprehend the common elements of all religions? Has it succeeded in discovering some such aspects of religion that would give comfort to every one? Vivekananda is aware that this is a difficult task. Different religions emphasise different qualities of religion and as such, it is not possible to find the common elements. Islam, for example, lays emphasis on universal brotherhood, Hinduism on spirituality, Christianity on self-purification for entering into the kingdom of god. It is difficult to compare these and, therefore, the tenets of universal religion would not be the common characters of different religions. Vivekananda is not dismayed by this because he recognizes the natural necessity of variation.

Swami Vivekananda says it is difficult to find any universal features in regard to religion, and we know that they exist. We must first of all know that we all are human

beings and that we are not equal. We are not equal in our physical strength because one man is stronger than the other, some have more power and some have less power and some are men and some women. There are many differences between us. But along with these differences we have one element which is common in all of us. We all are human beings, we all belong to one humanity. If I am sure of anything, it is of this humanity which is common to us all. It is through this common entity that I see you as a man or a woman.

#### **17.4.2 Unity in Diversity:**

Vivekananda says that unity in diversity is the scheme of universe. We are all men, and yet we are all distinct from one another. Men and women are different from each other but as human beings, they are same. As living beings, men, animals and plants are all one. We are all men, and yet we are all distinct from one another. As a part of humanity I am one with you and as Mr. so and so I am different from you. As a man you are separate from woman; as a human being you are one with woman. As a human being you are separate from the animals; but as a living being, man, woman, and animal are all one. And as existence you are one with the whole universe. That universal existence is God, the ultimate unity in the universe.

*The idea of a universal religion does not mean that one doctrine should be followed by all mankind.* It is impossible. There will not be one universal mythology or one set of rituals accepted by all religions. Such a state of one universal mythology and rituals can never come into existence; if it ever did, the world would be destroyed. Because variety is the first principle of life. We recognize the natural necessity of variation. Just as we have recognized unity, we must also recognize variation. We must learn that truth may be expressed in a hundred thousand ways, and that each of these ways is true as far as it goes. We can learn about something from different angles and that this thing while being different from different points of view, is nevertheless one and same.

Suppose a man standing on the earth looks at the sun when it rises in the morning; he sees a big ball. Suppose he starts on a journey towards the sun and takes a camera with him, taking photographs at every stage of his journey until he reaches the sun. The photographs of each stage will be seen to be different from those of the other stages; in fact, when he gets back, he brings with him so many photographs of so many different suns, as it would appear; and yet we know that the same sun was photographed by the

man at different stages of his progress. As these different photographs are of the same sun: *different religions are likewise different ways of reaching the same goal.*

It is historical fact that there have been various religious organizations having different religious codes and beliefs. This also is a historical fact that they have been quarreling with each other almost throughout history. Each religious sect has claimed its exclusive right to live on the ground that it considers its own doctrines and its own organization superior to any other. The peculiarity about this is that in spite of open and ever bitter conflicts, most of the major religious sects have at least continued to live. These internal and external conflicts, instead of weakening these sects, have added vitality to them and have enabled them to expand and to live.

Religion has got the tremendous forces to mould the destinies of human beings. If anyone claims that only his religion is true and God has given certain truths only to him, he is wrong. If all the truths are given in one book, then why would there be so many sects? And why will they be quarrelling with each other? What is the main cause of this difference? The answer is very clear that we have failed to understand the essence of religion. If the claim of any one religion that it has all the truth, and that God has given it all the truth in a certain book, be true, why then are there so many sects? If God has put all the truth in certain books, He does not give us those books in order that we may quarrel over texts.

Each sect interpreted the Holy Book in its own way and each one claims that it alone can interpret that book. The other sects cannot understand it. Here is the reason behind all this variety and multiplicity. For instance, all the sects that exist among the Christians. Each one puts its own interpretation upon the same text, and each says that it alone understands that text and all the rest are wrong. So is with every religion. There are many sects among the Mohammedans and among the Buddhists, and hundreds among the Hindus.

The conflicts are only apparent, and that they do not affect the inner vitality or the core or the essence of religion. The variety and multiplicity are, however, not unnatural. For it is not possible that all men believe in one method of thinking. Indeed, if all people think the same thing, there would be no thought to think.

Variation is the sign of life, it must be there. But then, a question arises, how can all varieties be true? On an answer to a question like this would depend the fate of universal religion. If there is ever to be a universal religion, it must be one which will have no location in place or time; which will be infinite like the God it will preach, and whose sun will shine upon the followers of Krishna and of Christ, on saints and sinners alike; which will not be Brahminic or Buddhistic, Christian or Mohammedan, but the sum total of all these, and still have infinite space for development it will be a religion which will have no place for persecution or intolerance in its polity, which will recognize divinity in every man and woman, and whose whole scope, whose whole force, will be created in aiding humanity to realize its own true, divine nature.

*A universal religion if really universal, must satisfy at least two condition; first it must open its gates to every individual, it must admit that no body is born with this or that religion, whether he takes to one religion or the other ultimately be left to his inner likes and choices. In this sense, by individualizing religion we really universalize it. Secondly, a really universal religion must be able to give satisfaction and comfort to every religious sect. After all, the universal religion has to supersede the conflicts of these sects and therefore, must appear satisfying and reasonable to them all. We have seen that variety is inevitable, that all these various minds and attitudes have to be there. Therefore, if there is going to be an ideal religion- a really universal religion, it must be broad and large enough to supply food to all these minds.*

Does a religion of this kind exists? Or, is it possible to have religion of this kind- a really universal religion? Vivekananda believes that such a religion is already there. We are lost so much in the external conflicts of religion that we fail to notice its presence. Vivekananda demonstrates this in a very clear manner. He says, that a simple insight into the nature of different religions will show that they are not actually contradictory to each other. They are, infact, supplementary to each other. The truth of religion is so comprehensive that different religions concentrate only on one aspect or on a few aspects of religion. They concentrate their energy on their chosen aspect in such a vehement manner that they come to assume that there are no other aspects. Therefore, *every religion is adding to the rich variety that religion is capable of generating, and it is also adding to the development*

*of religion in its own ways.* Vivekananda says, man never progresses from error to truth, but from truth to truth - from lesser truth to higher truth, but never from error to truth.

Vivekananda wishes to make it clear that there may be contradictory points of view of the same thing. If we take photographs of the same object from different angles, no two photographs will be alike- they may even give opposite impression ; but that are photographs of the same object.

The element of universal religion would consist in recognizing that there may be various and different ways of approach to the religious object. It gives perfect liberty to the individual in this regard. But at the same time, the spirit of universal religion demands that every approach must be large- hearted enough to have respect for the other ones. *Universal religion is all pervasive.* It gives the essential unity of all great religions of the world. The one watchword for universal religion, according to Vivekananda, is acceptance. Acceptance is not just tolerance. Tolerance is negative in its import. It implies at least at times that something is being allowed in spite of its being wrong. Vivekananda recommends positive acceptance. He says, " One watchword, then will be acceptance, not exclusion. Not only tolerance, for so-called toleration is often blasphemy, and I do not believe in it. I believe in acceptance. Why should I tolerate? Tolerance means that I think that you are wrong and I am just allowing you to live."

Vivekananda says that he can worship in any form with any individual or sect. He says that he can enter and offer his prayers anywhere, in a temple, or a church, or a mosque, or any other place. He says that he accepts all religions that were in the past, and worship with them all. He further says that worship God with every one of them, in whatever form they worship Him. The gospel of Universal Religion is based on the realization of the essential truth underlying the teachings of the saints and prophets of different religions. The sense of fundamental unity is provided by the universal acceptance and religious tolerance of all other religions. Religious harmony means tolerance and acceptance, not exclusion. The fact is that the essence of Vedas, the Bible and the Quran is one and the same. Religious unity and mutual goodwill in the context of religious plurality would be a reality only when all religions are accepted in a spirit of give and take. *The believer in Universal Religion must be broad-minded and open-hearted; he must be ready to learn from*

*the scriptures of all religions, and keep his soul open for what may come in the future.*

He says, "I shall go to the mosque of the Mohammedan; I shall enter the Christian's church and kneel before the crucifix; I shall enter the buddhistic temple, where I shall take refuge in Buddha and in his law. I shall go into forest and sit down in meditation with the hindu, who is trying to see the light which enlightens the heart of every one."

Religions are different in beliefs, attitudes and practices, but they are one in essence. It indicates the unity in diversity of the universe. The different religions are the various expressions of the One Eternal Religion and are merely the different stages of the spiritual growth. They are only different pathways meeting at the same point. Though the different rivers originate from different sources but merge in the same ocean, losing their names and forms; so the various religious paths that human beings take, will lead them to the same goal.

#### **17.4.3 Concept of God in Universal Religion:**

Vivekananda wants to discover at least one such element which can be said to be common to all religions in a general way, which consequently may represent the essence of universal religion. That common point is God. Even things that are apparently different may be similar in a particular sense. Men and women are different, but as human beings they are alike. As living beings, men, animals and plants are all one. In that way, although different religions talk of different aspects of the truth, as aspects of the same Truth, they are all one. According to Vivekananda Truth is God. In Him we are all one. The word God is being used in its most comprehensive sense; it may be the Personal Omnipotent and Good God, or it may be described as the Universal Existence or the Ultimate Unity of the Universe. Every religion, consciously or unconsciously is struggling towards the realization of this unity or God. Therefore, this may be said to represent the ideal of Universal Religion.

All religions are based upon the concept of the oneness of God. God is indeed the one unifying principle of all religions. Different religions describe the same supreme being (God) in different ways. The one Supreme Being is the substratum of all religions. God is the common source of inspiration. It is the ultimate reality in so far as it is known and comprehended by the human mind.

Different conceptions of God found in different religions are different forms of expression of the same all-comprehensive being. They are divergent perspectives of the same reality, appropriate in different historical circumstances, and useful for different human societies at different stages of evolution. God is the supreme being as revealed to the human soul. God is the focal point of man's religious sentiments. God may be defined in different ways and by different names. Vivekananda says, "My idea, therefore, is that all these religions are different forces in the economy of God, working for the good of mankind; and that not one can become dead, not one can be killed." This search for God is religion. 'The sum total of this whole universe is God Himself,' said Vivekananda.

The goal of all religions is also the same in essence. According to him, "The ultimate goal of all mankind, the aim and end of all religions, is but one — re-union with God, or, what amounts to the same, with the divinity which is every man's true nature."

The aim of all religions, Vivekananda taught, was the spiritual integration of mankind. He said, we must learn that truth may be expressed in a hundred thousand ways, and that each of these ways is true as far as it goes. Suppose we all go with vessels in our hands to fetch water from a lake: one has a cup, another Jar, another a bucket, and so forth, and we all fill our vessels. The water in each case naturally takes the form of the vessel carried by each one of us. So is in the case of religion; our minds are like these vessels and each one of us is trying to arrive at the realization of God. God is like that water filling these different vessels, and in each vessel, the vision of God comes in the form of the vessel yet He is one. He is God in every case. This is the only recognition of universality that we can get.

*Universal religion is that it has to be acceptable to all minds.* It has to satisfy the largest possible proportion of mankind; therefore it must be able to supply food to the various types of mind. Vivekananda says, all these various minds, all these various types are necessary. If there ever is going to be an ideal religion, it must be broad and large enough to supply food for all these minds. It must supply the strength of philosophy to the philosopher, the devotee's heart to the worshipper; to the ritualistic, it will give all that the most marvelous symbolism can convey; to the poet, it will give as much of heart as he can take in, and other beings besides. To make such a broad religion, we shall have to go back to the time when religions began and take them all in.

Therefore, Vivekananda says that the ideal religion must harmoniously balance all the aspects of religion namely, philosophy, emotion, work and mysticism and this religion is attained by what we, in India, call Yoga-union. To the worker, it is union between men and the whole of humanity, to the mystic, between his lower and Higher Self, to the lover, union between himself and the God of Love, and to the philosopher, it is the union of all existence. This is what is meant by Yoga, and the aim of yoga is union, realization of oneness. Vivekananda says, Religion is realization, not talk, nor doctrine, nor theories. . . . It is being and becoming, not hearing or acknowledging; it is the whole soul becoming changed into what it believes.

### **17.5 To Sum Up:**

Thus it follows that Universal Religion should not be treated as one more religion including the many existing from beforehand; rather it should be treated as the only religion pre-existent by nature all over the world which will be acceptable to and followed by all religious persons alike. This religion will become the religion of all religious men, and it will be not of one specific group or society. In this way Universal Religion will become the universally accepted religion. It has been a matter of feeling that once Universal Religion is realized from within, all bloodshed and enmity in the name of religion will be fully over and the real role of religion then will be played, i.e. the role of uniting all people of the world by one thread of universal brotherhood. Hence Vivekananda's concept of Universal Religion may be a safeguard of decaying morality in the society of ill practices, malice and hatred to other faiths. The concept of Universal Religion which teaches to caste love against hatred and compassion against violence with calm and dignity is highly required in the present day context with a view to reshaping the ideals of man. Vivekananda's philosophy may be regarded as the philosophy of fundamental unity underlying in all religions. He inspired mankind to understand and follow the Universal Religion through religious tolerance and universal acceptance.

### **17.6 Glossary:**

- **Mythology:** A mythology is a collection of myths or stories about a specific culture, religion, or any group with shared beliefs.

- **Religion** : The belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power, especially a personal God or gods.
- **Vedanta** : The final philosophy of the Vedas as expressed in the Upanishads. It is one of the six systems of philosophy accepted in India. It maintains the ultimate reality to be Brahman.
- **Yoga** : Yoga is union of the individual soul with the ultimate Reality. It is also the method by which this union is achieved. There are four kinds of Yoga : Raja, Jnana, Karma, Bhakti

#### 17.7 Self-Assessment Questions:

- Elaborate Vivekananda's concept of Universal Religion.
- Explain Vivekananda's views on Universal Religion.

#### 17.8 Suggested Reading and References:

- Vivekananda, Swami, "*Complete works of Swami Vivekananda*", Vol. I-IX.; Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Almora, Himalayas, Eighth Edition, 1962.
- Narvana, Dr. V.S., "*Modern Indian Thought*", Asia Publishing House, Bombay-1, 1964.
- Pavitrananda, Swami, "*A short life of Swami Vivekananda*", Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Almora, Himalayas, 1940.
- Lal, B.K., "*Contemporary Indian Philosophy*", Motilal Banaras Publishers. Delhi
- Vivekananda, Swami, *What Religion is: in the words of Swami Vivekananda*, John Yale, Julian Press, New York, 1962.

#### 17.9 Exercise (Answer the Questions):

Note: a) Use the space provided your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of this unit

Q1) Discuss briefly Vivekananda's views on Religion.

---

---

---

---

Q2) What are three essential parts of Universal Religion?

---

---

---

---

Q3) What are the two conditions of Universal Religion?

---

---

---

---

Q4) Universal religion gives the \_\_\_\_\_ of the world.

Q5) According to Vivekananda different religions are, in fact \_\_\_\_\_ to each other.

Q6) Name the one watchword for Universal Religion.

---

---

---

---

Q7) Discuss briefly the concept of God in Universal Religion.

---

---

---

---

Q8) Explain Swami Vivekananda's views on Ideal Religion.

---

---

---

---

**17.10 Answers to Check Your Progress:**

1. Vivekananda discussed the concept of religion in a very practical way, not only in individual life but also in social life too. For him religion is not just a talk and doctrines or theories, nor is it sectarianism. Religion for him does not mean any creed, dogma or cult; but realisation of the divineness of one's very self within. He explains that religion does not consist in erecting temples or building churches or attending public worship. Religion consists on realization. Religion means realisation of God and it can only be attained by purity of heart. Through purity of heart, we can love all, we can embrace all and at last we can realise the truth that is unity of existence. The realisation of unity of existence is our goal and we can only achieve our goal through purity of heart.

2. Religion, according to Vivekananda, is in essence man's way of living in the name of truth. In every religion there are three parts, namely, philosophy, mythology and ritual. Describing these three parts of religion, Vivekananda said, philosophy presents the whole scope of that religion, setting forth its basic principles, the goal and the means of reaching it. The second part is mythology, which is philosophy made concrete. It consists of legends relating to the lives of men, or of supernatural beings, and so forth. It is the abstractions of philosophy concretized in the more or less imaginary lives of men and supernatural beings. The third part is the ritual. This is still more concrete, and is made up of forms and ceremonies, various physical attitudes, flowers and incense, and many other things that appeal to the senses. Though philosophy is thus shown to be the central theme of religion and mythology and ritual as only the outer sheaths, certain problems centering round individual spiritual experiences and approaches create disagreement even in philosophies.
3. A universal religion if really universal, must satisfy at least two conditions; first it must open its gates to every individual, it must admit that no body is born with this or that religion, whether he takes to one religion or the other ultimately be left to his inner likes and choices. In this sense, by individualizing religion we really universalize it. Secondly, a really universal religion must be able to give satisfaction and comfort to every religious sect. After all, the universal religion has to supersede the conflicts of these sects and therefore, must appear satisfying and reasonable to them all. We have seen that variety is inevitable, that all these various minds and attitude have to be there. Therefore, if there is going to be an ideal religion- a really universal religion, it must be broad and large enough to supply food to all these minds.
4. Essential unity of all religions.
5. Supplementary
6. Acceptance
7. Vivekananda wanted to discover at least one such element which can be said to be common to all religions in a general way, which consequently may represent the essence of universal religion. That common element is God. Even things that are

apparently different may be similar in a particular sense. Men and women are different, but as human beings they are alike. As living beings, men, animals and plants are all one. In that way, although different religions talk of different aspects of the truth, as aspects of the same Truth, they are all one. According to Vivekananda that Truth is God. In Him we are all one. The word God is being used in its most comprehensive sense, it may be the Personal Omnipotent and Good God, or it may be described as the Universal Existence or the Ultimate Unity of the Universe. Every religion, consciously or unconsciously is struggling towards the realization of this unity or God. Therefore, this may be said to represent the ideal of Universal Religion.

8. Universal religion is that it has to be acceptable to all minds. It has to satisfy the largest possible proportion of mankind; therefore it must be able to supply food to all the various types of mind. Vivekananda says, all these various minds, all these various types are necessary. If there ever is going to be an ideal religion, it must be broad and large enough to supply food for all these minds. It must supply the strength of philosophy to the philosopher, the devotee's heart to the worshipper; to the ritualistic, it will give all that the most marvelous symbolism can convey; to the poet, it will give as much of heart as he can take in, and other beings besides. To make such broad religion, we shall have to go back to the time when religions began and take them all in. Therefore, Vivekananda says that the ideal religion must harmoniously balance all the aspects of religion namely, philosophy, emotion, work and mysticism and this religion is attained by what we, in India, call Yoga-union. To the worker, it is union between men and the whole of humanity, to the mystic, between his lower and higher self, to the lover, union between himself and the God of Love, and to the philosopher, it is the union of all existence. This is what is meant by Yoga, and the aim of yoga is union, realization of oneness.

**CONCEPT OF NON-VIOLENCE: MAHATMA GANDHI**

**Structure:**

- 18.1 Objectives
- 18.2 Introduction
- 18.3 Concept of Ahimsa
- 18.4 Satyagraha
- 18.5 To Sum Up
- 18.6 Glossary
- 18.7 Self-Assessment Questions
- 18.8 Suggested Reading and References
- 18.9 Exercise (Answer the Questions)

**18.1 Objectives:**

- To explain the idea of Ahimsa as given by Mahatma Gandhi.
- To analyse the significance of Ahimsa as an article of faith for Mahatma Gandhi

- To emphasize Satyagraha as the primary means for realization of the ideal of Ahimsa.
- To elaborate Satyagraha as a whole in its true spirit, in its individual as well as political aspects.

## **18.2 Introduction:**

The revival of Buddha's ethics of Ahimsa or non-violence is seen in the philosophy of Gandhi. He applies it to social, economic and political problems. He evolves a new outlook on life based on the doctrine of ahimsa and aims to solve all social, political and economic problems in the light of this principle. He gives a new orientation to the problems that face humanity today and offers a new solution. According to him, Ahimsa or non-violence is not merely a negative virtue of non-killing and non-injury but a positive virtue of doing good to others. Ahimsa is supreme kindness and supreme self-sacrifice. It is non-violence in thought, word and deed. It is not only abstinence from killing and doing harm. It is also abstinence from causing pain through word or thought. It is non-violence in every form: in thought, word and deed.

## **18.3 Concept of Ahimsa:**

The literal meaning of the word ahimsa is non-injury or non-killing in thought, word and deed; but this constitutes the negative aspect of ahimsa. It has a positive aspect also, which is more important than the negative aspect. It is not only complete absence of ill will towards mankind and sentient creation but involves over-flowing love and affection for them. Ahimsa means non-injury and love. God is *Truth and Love*. And we realize Truth by loving the whole animal world including mankind. "Ahimsa is the basis of the search for Truth. The search is in vain unless it is founded on ahimsa as the basis. The only means for the realization of Truth is ahimsa. A perfect vision of truth can only follow a realization of ahimsa."

Ahimsa requires *Truthfulness and Fearfulness*. Gandhi says, "There is only one whom we have to fear, that is God. When we fear God, we shall fear no man; and

if you want to follow the vow of truth, then fearlessness is absolutely necessary.” This doctrine of fearless pursuit of truth is called Satyagraha (firmness in truth).

Gandhiji says that Ahimsa is the Means, Truth is the End. Ahimsa is our supreme duty. Ahimsa and Truth are so intertwined that it is practically impossible to disentangle and separate them. Non-violence and Truth are inseparable and presuppose each other. He says that Non-violence implies as complete self-purification as is humanly possible. It implies a living faith in the existence of the soul as apart from the body. Non-violence is soul force. It is power of Atman. It is power of Love. It is uttermost selflessness.

Ahimsa does not simply mean non-killing. Anger is the enemy of Ahimsa. *Ahimsa implies conquest of anger and pride.* A Satyagrahi will always try to overcome evil by good, anger by love, untruth by truth, himsa by ahimsa. *Ahimsa implies absence of hatred.* Hate ought to be conquered by love. *In its positive form, ahimsa means the largest love, greatest charity.* Active ahimsa necessarily includes truth and fearlessness. The practice of ahimsa calls forth the greatest courage. Non-violence is the Weapon of the Strongest and Bravest. It is the opposite of cowardice. A violent man can become non-violent. But a coward can never become non-violent. True non-violence is an impossibility without the possession of fearlessness.

*Ahimsa requires true humility for it is reliance not on self, but on God alone.* Non-violence implies restraint upon one’s desire for vengeance. But forgiveness is higher than vengeance. He says that Ahimsa is the extreme limit of Forgiveness. But forgiveness is a quality of the brave. Ahimsa is impossible without Fearlessness. *Thus non-violence implies Truthfulness, Selflessness, Harmlessness, Freedom from Anger, Pride, Hatred, Love for all men and creatures, Fearlessness, and Courage, Humility, Forgiveness, and absolute Self-Surrender to God.* One who believes in non-violence believes in a living God.

We should not try to crush the wrong-doer but try to resist evil by dissociating ourselves from it in all possible ways. Evil cannot stand by itself. Non-co-operate with evil, and it will die of inanition. His moral weapon of non-violent non-co-operation is a most potent weapon to fight an evil system with. It took the forms of passive

resistance and civil disobedience in the field of politics to fight the evil of foreign domination. It is moral resistance to it.

Gandhi says that *Non-violence in its dynamic condition means conscious suffering*. It does not mean meek submission to the evil of the evil-doer, but it means the putting of one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant. It is not non-violence if we merely love those that love us. *It is non-violence only when we love those who hate us.*

Ahimsa is not merely a negative state of harmlessness, but it is a *positive state of love, of doing good even to the evil-doer*. Gandhi says that Non-violence is the law of human race, and is infinitely greater than and superior to brute force. Violence breeds violence. It springs from anger and ill-will. It destroys itself. Non-violence springs from love. Love kills violence. All social, economic, political, religious evils are based on violence. They can be ended by non-violence. Non-violence is not only a moral weapon of an individual. It is a *Moral Weapon* of the masses; organized and well-disciplined mass non-violence is an infallible moral weapon against all kinds of evil, social, economic, religious, national or international. Non-violent non-co-operation is a revolution. *It is an Evolutionary Revolution*. The movement is a revolution of thought, of spirit. Non-co-operation is a process of purification and, as such, it constitutes a revolution in one's idea.

Gandhiji says, "Non-violence implies complete Self Purification". It implies absence of hatred. Gandhiji believes in "Hate the sin and not the sinner". Do not cooperate with evil and it will die of it. He used this weapon of non co-operation against the British in India's freedom struggle.

According to Gandhiji, non-violence is not flight from wickedness. It is not passive submission to the will of the evildoer. It is mental and moral opposition to immoralities. It is deliberate restraint upon desire of vengeance. Retaliation increases wickedness. Non-violence is an active moral fight against wickedness. It is not physical resistance to evil. It is moral resistance to it. It is not the moral weapon of only one individual. It is a moral weapon of the masses. Organized and well disciplined mass non-violence is an infallible means of moral, religious, national or international conflict

resolution. Non-violent non co-operation is a revolution. Non co-operation is a process of purification and as such, it constitutes a revolution in one's ideas.

Mahatma Gandhi wants to evolve a new social order on the basis of love and self-sacrifice. He wants to give every opportunity to an individual to rise to the height of his personality. But he does not want to apply force to divest the privileged classes of their wealth, like Marx.

*He does not believe in class war.* He is not a socialist or a communist. He believes in change of heart and voluntary surrender of superfluous possessions for the benefit of the poor. There is no place of brute force and violence in his scheme of the new social order. Love and non-violence are the foundation of the social structure he wants to evolve. Love is unifying. Hatred is dis-integrating. Love gives unity and harmony, a reign of peace and joy.

Ahimsa according to Gandhiji is the highest moral ideal. Truth can be realized only by means of Ahimsa. Ahimsa and truth are not two separate things but the two sides of the same coin.

Ahimsa according to Gandhiji is the weapon of the brave and not of the cowards. Ahimsa has to be developed as a habit; then only it can be applied to all situations. The following points are of great importance for a votary of Ahimsa. He should know that

- 1) Non-violence is the law of human race; so it is superior to all kinds of physical force.
- 2) Non-violence is only possible for those who have living faith in God.
- 3) Non-violence implies self-sacrifice.
- 4) Non-violence can be universally employed by all in all situations and all circumstances.
- 5) Non-violence implies self-purification.

To conclude, we can say that non-violence is a virtue which can be practiced like other virtues. It is not only a personal virtue but a social virtue.

It is important for a votary of ahimsa to follow the path of Satyagraha.

#### **18.4 Satyagraha:**

According to Gandhiji *Satyagraha means holding fast to truth*. It is a line of action which believes that truth always comes out victorious.

Satyagraha always demands sacrifice and a vow to follow truth. Regarding Satyagraha Gandhiji says, “There is only one whom we have to fear that is God. When we fear God, we shall fear no man, and if you want to follow that vow of truth, then fearlessness is absolutely necessary.” This doctrine of fearless pursuit of truth is called Satyagraha.

Satyagraha is a force of the spirit. It teaches the law of living as well as dying. If a Satyagrahi becomes violent he defeats the very purpose of his struggle. So the sword of a Satyagrahi is love and a firm faith in God. Gandhiji had unshakable faith that Satyagraha is always superior to armed resistance. It is the weapon of the strong and not the weak. A Satyagrahi must fulfill the following conditions to be so called:

- 1) A Satyagrahi must not harbour any ill will or hatred against any one. His heart must be pure.
- 2) A Satyagrahi must fight non-violently till the truth becomes victorious.
- 3) A Satyagrahi must fight non-violently for a just issue.
- 4) The root of Satyagraha is in prayer. So Satyagrahi must rely upon God.
- 5) A Satyagrahi must have firm faith that Satyagraha is always superior to armed resistance.

According to Gandhiji love and truth form the basis of the personality of a Satyagrahi. Fasting and prayer are the necessary conditions for him. Fasting unto death is an integral part of the Satyagraha . *Fast is the last weapon in the armoury*

*of the votary of Ahimsa and Satyagraha.* It quickens the spirit of prayer. According to Gandhiji, a Satyagrahi must observe the following five vows:

- 1) **Truthfulness:** For Gandhiji “God is truth and truth is God”. He was fully convinced that truth is always victorious.
- 2) **Non-Violence:** According to Gandhiji, a Satyagrahi must be non-violent. There is no defeat in non-violence. Satyagrahi must be non-violent in thought, words and actions. A Satyagrahi always wins his opponent by love.
- 3) **Non-Thieving:** Gandhiji suggests everyone to restrict his wants and stop unnecessary accumulation of wealth and other things.
- 4) **Non-Possession:** Gandhiji suggests that a seeker after truth must delimit his wants and embrace voluntary poverty. He should have firm faith in God who will look after his wants.
- 5) **Brahmacharya:** Gandhiji suggests the observance of Brahmacharya in thought, words and actions. It does not only mean sex control but control over one’s senses also.

*In short we can say that a Satyagrahi must cultivate Humility, Silence, Renunciation, Self-sacrifice, Good will and Compassion for all.* He should perform his duties conscientiously and be always ready to serve the humanity. Gandhiji’s various political and social movements grew from his conception of Satyagraha.

### **18.5 To Sum Up:**

Non –violence is an invaluable contribution of Gandhi to world’s culture and civilization. Violence breeds violence. Non-violence purifies an evil system of its evils. It can be applied to the social and economic spheres also. Gandhi says, ‘Exploitation is the essence of violence.’ The principle of non – violence necessitates complete abstention from exploitation in any form. Non-violence requires truthfulness. And the fearless pursuit of Truth is called Satyagraha, which is the force of spirit.

## 18.6 Glossary:

**Satyagrahi:** One who seeks to convert the opponent to the Truth through self suffering and sacrifice.

## 18.7 Self-Assessment Questions:

- What are the two aspects of non – violence?
- Discuss the implications of non-violence.
- Explain the idea of non – violence as given by MK Gandhi.

## 18.8 Suggested Reading and References:

- Gandhi, M.K., The collected works of Mahatma Gandhi. 100 vols. New Delhi Publication Division, Ministry of Information and broadcasting, Govt. of India, 1958-1994.
- JaduNath Sinha, *A Manual of Ethics*, Calcutta: New Central Book Agency India, 1996
- Gandhi, M.K. Hind Swaraj, Ahmedabad: The Narajivan Trust, 1938

## 18.9 Exercise (Answer the Questions):

Q1 Is non-violence passive or active resistance? Explain.

---

---

---

---

Q2 What type of social order does Gandhiji want to evolve?

---

---

---

---

Q3 What is meant by Satyagraha?

---

---

---

---

Q4 List the five vows that are required to be observed by a Satyagrahi.

---

---

---

---

**RELIGION OF MAN: RABINDRANATH TAGORE****Structure:**

- 19.1 Objectives
- 19.2 Introduction
- 19.3 Tagore's views on religion
- 19.4 To Sum Up
- 19.5 Glossary
- 19.6 Self-Assessment Questions
- 19.7 Suggested Reading and References
- 19.8 Exercise (Answer the Questions)

**19.1 Objectives:**

- To elaborate Tagore's message of oneness of all humanity.
- To explain Tagore's grand vision of man and his role in the universe.
- To analyse Tagore's views on Religion.

**19.2 Introduction:**

Tagore [1861-1941] was born in a highly cultured Bengali Brahmin family in

Calcutta. His father Maharishi Devendra Nath Tagore taught him Indian Philosophy, Upanishads, Astronomy etc. He became conscious of the fact that he has to accomplish the mission of bringing human beings close to each other and to God. He has been ranked with the greatest seers and sages of India, who laid importance on human being above everything else. He developed a positive view of life and a love for humanity due to the influence of Upanishads on him. *The Religion of Man (Manusher Dharma)* (1931) is a compilation of lectures by Tagore. He deals with largely universal themes of God, divine experiences, illumination and spirituality.

### **19.3 Tagore's Views on Religion:**

Tagore was a Vedantist. He had a firm faith in the philosophy of Vedas. He believed that the Supreme being (God) is all powerful and pervades everything in this universe. The entire universe is the manifestation of God. Tagore developed a positive attitude towards life and humanity. Like his predecessors, Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Swami Vivekananda, Tagore carried India's message of love and universal brotherhood to all parts of the world. Tagore stressed that man must come out of the narrow shell of his individual self in order to enter into the large self of humanity.

Tagore also recognized the natural divinity of man and so considered man as God. He tried to find harmony between Mohammedan mysticism and traditional theology. He admired Kabir's large heartedness and his love for the whole mankind. Tagore was also influenced by the Humanism of the west. At the same time he rejected the orthodoxy and traditionalism that had crept up in different religions. He felt that it was only on the basis of humanism that the wide gulf between East and West could be bridged. Tagore in fact wanted universal brotherhood irrespective of nationality, colour and religion. *The true religion, according to him, is that which respects humanity.* He held that religion develops human consciousness and enables it to realize the eternal spirit, through science, philosophy, literature, and the arts.

Tagore says that instead of spending crores of rupees on the construction of temples, it is better to give money to a starving man. *True religion does not demand the construction of huge religious buildings but it demands the elevation of man. Tagore considers both God and man as comrades and said that our God is the 'Man God.'*

He wanted man to make the world a beautiful place for the habitation of God. This was the religious ideology of Tagore which he wanted to fulfil through his idealistic philosophy.

Tagore is generally considered as a philosopher of humanity who gives the most important place to man as an instrument of bringing peace and harmony in the society. Since man has spirituality in him, he is a messenger of God according to Tagore. This is man's infinite element which symbolizes perfection. Tagore was inspired by Upanishads and so he formulated the religion of man on their basis.

Tagore outlines how the religion of humanity brings opposites together. Both the Indian tradition of detachment and the western ideal of service to humanity are necessary. Together they can create an ethic of love in action, which is the only way that perfect knowledge can be obtained. This realization of spiritual freedom requires the renunciation of the small, isolated self in order to reveal transubstantial truth, beyond the world of appearances.

He considered *man as manifestation of the infinite*, and suggested everybody to live in complete harmony with each other. Thus Tagore emphasized that the ancient Indian ideals of love and respect for each other could provide a real foundation for the construction of an ideal world. Tagore considers man as above whole of the creation. So he translated everything viz. truth, reality and even God in terms of humanity. Man's spiritual nature finds expression in humanity.

Tagore has recognized two aspects in man's personality: the Biological and the Spiritual. *The Biological Aspect refers to the Animal Passions in man and the Spiritual Element refers to the element of Divinity in Man*. Religion, according to him, consisted in the synthesis of these two contradictory elements in human nature.

In the words of Tagore, "Religion consisted in the endeavour of men to cultivate and express those qualities which are inherent in the nature of man." *Religion of man consisted in the realization that man was the measure of all things*. Both man and God are complementary to each other. Humanity is a necessary factor in the realization of the divine truth. Tagore said, "My religion is the religion of man in which the infinite is defined in humanity". So in Tagore's philosophy, God is not away from man but is his

friend and playmate. The beauty of Tagore's religion lies in the fact that *he has Humanized God and Divinized Man* .

#### **19.4 To Sum Up:**

To conclude, Tagore may be considered as an excellent link between the ancient wisdom of India and the technological development of the modern West. Tagore's religion calls for the fearlessness of the finite. The freedom of the soul is an important truth of religion according to him.

#### **19.5 Glossary:**

**Mysticism:** The belief that there is hidden meaning in life

**Traditionalism:** Adherence to the doctrines or practices of a tradition.

#### **19.6 Self-Assessment Questions:**

- Describe Tagore's views on Religion.
- Discuss Humanization of God and Divinization of Man.

#### **19.9 Suggested Reading and References :**

- Lal, Kumar Basant, Contemporary Indian Philosophy. New Delhi: Moti Lal Banarsidass Publication 1973.
- Tagore, Rabindranath. Towards Universal Man. New Delhi : Asia Publishing House, 1962.
- Tagore Rabindranath. Geetanjali: New Delhi : Hind Pocket Books Pvt. Ltd., 1984.
- The Religion of Man Analysis - eNotes.com

#### **19.8 Exercise (Answer the Questions):**

Q1 What were the main influences on Tagore's thought?

---

---

---

---

Q2 Discuss Tagore's broad conception of humanity.

---

---

---

---

Q3 Enumerate the two aspects of man's philosophy according to Tagore.

---

---

---

---

---

**SUBJECT : PHILOSOPHY**

**UNIT : V**

**B.A. SEMESTER - IV**

**LESSON NO. 20**

---

**SELF-KNOWLEDGE AND FREEDOM  
JIDDU KRISHNAMURTI**

**Mr. Ritu Raj**

**Structure:**

- 20.1 Objectives
- 20.2 Introduction
- 20.3 Self-knowledge
- 20.4 Freedom
- 20.5 To Sum Up
- 20.6 Glossary
- 20.7 Self-Assessment Questions
- 20.8 Suggested Reading and References
- 20.9 Exercise (Answer the Questions)
- 20.10 Answers to check your progress

**20.1 Objectives:**

- To explain the real meaning of Self-knowledge and freedom.

- To discover how self-knowledge brings the deep penetrating knowledge of oneself.
- To elaborate how self-knowledge challenges the authority of different social, political and religious institutions.
- To analyse that true freedom is not physical freedom but the mental one.
- To identify that freedom is necessary for unconditioned mind.

## **20.2 Introduction:**

Jiddu Krishnamurti was born on 11 May 1895 in Madanapalle, a small town in south India. He and his brother were adopted in their youth by Dr Annie Besant, the then president of the Theosophical Society. Dr Besant and others proclaimed that Krishnamurti was to be a world teacher whose coming the Theosophists had predicted. To prepare the world for this coming, a world-wide organization called the Order of the Star in the East was formed and the young Krishnamurti was made its head. In 1929, however, Krishnamurti renounced the role that he was expected to play, dissolved the Order with its huge following, and returned all the money and property that had been donated for this work. From then onwards, for nearly sixty years, until his death on 17 February 1986, he travelled throughout the world talking to large audiences and to individuals about the need for a radical change in mankind.

Krishnamurti is globally regarded as one of the greatest thinkers and religious teachers of all time. He did not expound any philosophy or religion, but rather talked of the things that concern all of us in our everyday lives, of the problems of living in modern society with its violence and corruption, of the individual's search for security and happiness, and the need for mankind to free itself from the inner burdens of fear, anger, hurt, and sorrow. He explained with great precision the subtle workings of the human mind, and pointed to the need for bringing to our daily life a deeply meditative and spiritual quality.

## **20.3 Self-knowledge:**

It is very important to understand one's own self, because self-knowledge is the beginning of radical revolution of which Krishnamurti is talking. For Krishnamurti, the

problems of the world are so colossal, so very complex that to understand and so to resolve them, one must approach them in a very simple and direct manner. That simple and direct manner is the self-knowledge. *Self-knowledge is the master-key for solving the problems of the society.* As he pointed out that the solution of the problems is not to be found through conferences, blue-prints or through the substitution of new leaders for old and so on. The solution lies in the creator of the problems. And the creator of the problems is the individual, not the world. The world is not something separate from the individual. Society by itself is non-existent. It is created by us, by our relationships. Society is the outward projection of all our inner psychological states. So our problems are the world's problems. So world's problems are not to be resolved by the United Nations or by substituting new leaders for the old. For transforming the world, we must begin with ourselves. It is not withdrawal from the world. To be is to be related. Relationship is the process of understanding oneself and to understand oneself moment to moment in daily life is self-knowledge. Self-knowledge in this sense is the beginning of transformation or regeneration. It is important to discover how we can understand ourselves. Krishnamurti says that self-knowledge is not to be found through any book, nor can it be given to us by another. It is to be discovered through intension. *He considered that self-knowledge is essential for transforming oneself.* There is no basis for right thought without knowing oneself. So self-knowledge requires an extra-ordinary alertness of mind. In awareness or alertness of mind there is freedom from all beliefs and idealisation as the beliefs and ideals pervert our true perception of anything.

According to Krishnamurti, the fundamental understanding of oneself does not come through the accumulation of experience, because accumulation of experience is the cultivation of memory. The understanding of oneself is from moment to moment. It is not the following of a pattern. By following a pattern, a system, a method, a means through which we know ourselves, we thereby shape our thinking, our activities according to that pattern or system. So there is no method for self-knowledge. We seek a method for attaining some result. We want to follow authority or a system, an ideology which will give us security. But we don't want to understand ourselves, that is, our impulses and reactions, the whole process of thinking. The pursuit of a system is invariably the outcome of our desire for security which is not the understanding of self-knowledge. To follow a method

may guarantee us what we desire but it is not the way to self-knowledge. Because authority prevents us from having self-knowledge and destroys freedom. There can be creativeness only in freedom which comes through self-knowledge. And creativeness is not a continuous state, it is new movement in which there is not the 'me' or the 'mine'. So we come to know that the understanding of oneself is not a result, or a culmination. It is seeing oneself in the mirror of relationship. *Self can be discovered in relationship*. Krishnamurti is of the opinion that the whole life is only relationship; relationship with things, people and with ideas. In order to transform the world around us with its misery, wars, class divisions and utter confusions, there must be a transformation in ourselves. And to bring about a fundamental revolution in oneself, one must understand the whole process of one's thought and feelings in relationship. That means, *self-knowledge is the only solution to all our problems of human existence*.

Krishnamurti holds that self-knowledge is not only an intellectual discipline; it is also a way of life. He considers self-knowledge as the only state of being in which the individual and the society created by him can look at and see what is, can thereby transcend the level of consciousness that breeds problems, contradictions and inconsistencies. Krishnamurti observes : " It is essential in all things to understand the process of oneself, because without knowing oneself, no human problem can be resolved. Any resolution of a problem without self-knowledge is merely distraction, leading to further misery, confusion, and struggle - this, when one thinks about it, is fairly obvious."

He rightly considers any other approach at solving the problem of existence as distraction. Without understanding and the awareness of the true significance of the self, all human perception is bound to be distorted causing further confusion and conflict. We can say that self-knowledge, in the vision of Krishnamurti, is necessary not only for solving our various problems but also for living sanely, truly and in freedom, peace and prosperity.

So self-knowledge is also necessary to free man from his self-imposed limitations, from his illusions, from sufferings and sorrows. Without self-knowledge, there cannot be any understanding of the whole, the ignorance of which is responsible for the fragmentation of consciousness and the problems arising out of it. It will find these when Krishnamurti emphatically points out: "If you don't understand yourself you will not understand anything

else, you may have great ideals, beliefs and formulations, but they will have no reality. They will be delusions. So you must know yourself to understand the present and through the present, the past. From the known present, the hidden layers of the past are discovered and this discovery is liberating and creative.”

*Another important feature of self-knowledge is that it leads to the silence of mind which makes choiceless awareness possible, and it is choiceless awareness only that can transform the structure of human consciousness by putting an end to the perpetuation of duality.* Since all our problems are the product of fragmentation in consciousness, self-knowledge is the only way to arrive at their resolution. In the words of Krishnamurti: “Truth comes into being only when there is self-knowledge. Self-knowledge brings understanding and when there is understanding, there are not problems. When there are no problems, then the mind is quiet, it is not longer caught up in its own creations. When the mind is not creating problems, when it understands, each problem immediately as it arises, then it is utterly still. This total process is awareness, and it brings about a state of undisturbed tranquility which is not the outcome of any discipline, of any practice or control, but is the natural outcome of understanding every problem as it arises.”

#### **20.4 Freedom:**

There is a compelling environmental influence everywhere. Newspapers tell us what to think, and there are so many five, ten or fifteen-year plans. Then there are these specialists at the economic, scientific and bureaucratic levels; there are all the traditions of everyday activity, what we must do and what we must not do; then there is the whole influence of the so-called sacred books; and there is the cinema, the radio, the newspaper; everything in the world is trying to tell us what to do, what to think and what not to think. We have become such experts in quoting what other people say, or have said, and in the midst of this authoritarian welter where is the freedom? And what do we mean by freedom? Is there such a thing? The word freedom is being used in its most simple sense in which is included liberation, the mind that is liberated, free. Krishnamurti says that we must realize that our minds are really not free. Everything we see, every thought we have, shapes our mind; whatever we think now, whatever we have thought in the past and whatever we are going to think in the future, it all shapes the mind. We think about what we have been told either by the religious person, or the politician, by the teacher in our school, or by books

and newspapers. Everything about we influences what we think. What we eat, what we look at, what we listen to, everything is shaping the mind. That is fairly obvious. Even when we think that there is God or that there is no God, that also is the influence of tradition. So our mind is the field in which there are many contradictory influences which are in battle, one against the other.

While answering the question what is freedom, Krishnamurti says that we often talk of freedom in context with freedom to have a job we like, to do what we like, to choose our partner, generally to do whatever we like; this way life is becoming more and more permissive. We also think that freedom is to have multiple choices. But, does choice give freedom? Why do we have to choose? “If you are very clear, perceive purely, there is no choice.” According to him, having choice points not to freedom but to inner confusion, doubt and uncertainty. We do not know what option to select and that is why we ponder over all the choices that are available. Thought enters here creating time and then action is hindered, suspended.

When we perceive clearly or understand fully a situation, problem etc., action immediately follows. There is no gap which is time between that clear perception and action. This is right action. Quite often while explaining this point Krishnamurti gives the example of one’s action when his house is on fire or when one is confronted with a snake. In such a situation one does not stop and think about the causes of fire or the colour of the snake or different options of action: the right action follows. Pouring water over the fire or running away from the place are the actions that follow immediately. Here there is no choice as such because the danger of the situation is completely taken in instantaneously. The action is not based on choice. Thus Krishnamurti says that having choices is not freedom at all. Freedom, choice and desire are also connected. *Krishnamurti says that as long as the mind is caught up in want or desire, there must be emptiness.* The very fact that we are seeking something suggests that there is emptiness within, there is vacant space. As we become aware of this inner emptiness, we look for things, ideas, and persons to fill the emptiness. This wanting creates a choice. “When there is craving there must be choice, and choice precipitates you into the conflict of experiences. You have the capacity to choose and thereby you limit yourself by your choice. Only when the mind is free from choice is there liberation.” *According to him choice actually prevents freedom.*

Krishnamurti says that many a times freedom is looked upon as an ideal, a goal, something that each one should achieve. *But freedom is not an ideal according to Krishnamurti.* He points out that people cling to the ideal of freedom because they are in a prison; the prison being one's daily life which is full of struggle and strife, sorrow, where one is in the grip of desires and his mind is conditioned from all sides. Living in such conditions is like living in a prison where your conditioning does not allow you to get out of the boundaries set by the conditioning. Once you become aware of this, you try to get out of it, to escape. You try to seek freedom by way of penance etc. But Krishnamurti says that freedom cannot be sought as a goal because the moment you set it as a goal, you are distanced from it, there is division between you and freedom. Then there is struggle for achieving it; different methods or systems are pursued and followed. "You create or invent that ideal of freedom because you cannot escape from your prison." This prison is man-made and it is full of suffering and conflict.

In order to put an end to the suffering etc. an ideal god, an ideal freedom, an ideal truth is created by man, but this is nothing but an emotional or mental escape. He further says, "If you become conscious of that prison, if you become aware of the fact that you are trying to escape, then that awareness destroys the prison; then, instead of pursuing freedom, you will know freedom." And this freedom does not come to him who seeks freedom, meaning if we make efforts by way of penance, following very rigid physical and mental discipline or follow a guru or text, when we set freedom as a goal and strive for it in a particular direction, it will not happen to us because such pursuit is full of division and therefore, conflict. The division would be in the form of goal and path, end and means. Thus freedom cannot be set as a goal or objective.

Krishnamurti says, that freedom is not an idea, a philosophy written about freedom is not freedom. According to him *freedom is something "actual and not a topic of verbal discussion or intellectual understanding alone.* It is something that can be experienced and not something that is on the thought level. Freedom is something that is in the "living active present in daily life". Freedom is firmly rooted in experience; it does not hang in the air. He says that a word is not the object that is indicated by the word. The actual object and the word/ name of the object are two different things. Similarly the word "freedom" and the actual experience/ the state of freedom are two different things. Freedom

cannot be contained in words. Words are static, frozen; freedom is not so. Krishnamurti says that if we create an image of what this freedom is, it is not going to help. Image is not the actual thing and unless we know the actual thing, we cannot experience it.

Krishnamurti says that only a fresh mind, “unclouded by memories or by habitual responses is able to grasp what is. That is understanding truth and only truth liberates, not our desire to be free. This very desire and efforts made in that direction are hindrances to freedom. *Because freedom is not something in the future, it is very much there in the present, in the now* . One cannot understand what it is when one meets it with the past memories. Memories come from the past; they are accumulation from the past. Knowledge, beliefs, experiences all are accumulation from the past and when it comes to understanding what is, this accumulation doesn't help at all; it actually is freedom.

Krishnamurti's main object is to set us free from everything that prevents us from discovering truth for ourselves. To come upon truth the mind must be completely free, without a spot of distortion. Freedom has two expressions. We generally understand freedom as an idea, and as an actuality. We want to be free to think what we like to do, what we want, to express ourselves in different ways. This is the outward expression of freedom. The country where outward freedom is possible, one seeks more and more pleasure, more and more possessions. So in such countries, where there is monarchy, outward freedom seems to be extraordinarily important. On the other hand the inward freedom implies complete and total freedom, which expresses itself outwardly in society, in relationship. The question about the possibility of freedom, whether inwardly or outwardly, is a perplexing one. So, one sees that for mind, there is no possibility of freedom on this earth, either inwardly or outwardly. As a result one begins to invent freedom in another world such as heaven.

## **20.5 To Sum Up:**

Krishnamurti embarked on a mission to set human beings absolutely unconditionally free. What is striking about Krishnamurti's approach is that even while addressing contemporary issues, his answers are rooted in timeless vision of life and truth. He considers the possibility of freedom through self-knowledge or understanding of reality. He does not mean that it can be brought about by any isolated activity like concentration or practicing

meditation. In this regard he talks about the mutation of brain cells, which is another new idea in spiritual field. The idea of complete sterility of all deliberate effort forms an essential part of Krishnamurti's teaching and has been expressed by him with great clarity in his talks. He felt it is the truth that sets one free and not one's effort to be free. In the same tone Christ also says 'seek truth and truth will make you free'. All conscious and deliberate effort, all self compulsion by which we hope to reach some kind of perfection is merely an attempt to shape ourselves according to a pattern and shows a complete misunderstanding of our real nature. However, it is difficult for one to understand that he was totally free from the influences of traditional teachings. Krishnamurti's teachings regarding freedom is, however, unique but it cannot remove the doubts of common people about the applicability of choiceless awareness, self observation etc. To recapitulate, Krishnamurti's observation and exploration of modern man's state is penetrating and profound.

## 20.6 Glossary:

**Awareness:** It is observation without condemnation. Awareness brings understanding, because there is no condemnation or identification but silent observation.

**Freedom:** Freedom is a state of mind, where there is no psychological confusion, in which there is no thought at psychological level. So a mind is absolutely and unconditionally free from traditional thought, conflict, division and sorrow.

**Conditioned Mind:** A conditioned mind is always subjugated (dominated) by some authority and this conditioned mind is internally completely fragmented. The conditioning and fragmentation is cultivated on the name of nationality, culture, propaganda, religion, sect etc. One has to be sufficiently attentive to see the whole significance of this conditioning, how it divides people, nationally, religiously, socially, linguistically. These divisions create tremendous barrier, they breed conflict and violence.

## 20.7 Self-Assessment Questions:

- Explain in detail Self-knowledge and Freedom according to Krishnamurti.

- Elaborate the concept of Freedom according to Krishnamurti.
- Discuss in detail Krishnamurti's concept of 'self-knowledge'.

**20.8 Suggested Reading and References:**

- Krishnamurti, Jiddu *Freedom from the Known*, Chennai: Krishnamurti Foundation India, 1969
- Krishnamurti, Jiddu. *The Flight of Eagle*, Chennai: Krishnamurti Foundation India, 1971
- Krishnamurti, Jiddu. *The First and the Last Freedom*, Chennai: Krishnamurti Foundation India, 1954
- Krishnamurti, Jiddu. *Talks*, Ojai.1947.
- Krishnamurti, Jiddu. *Talks*, New York,1950
- Krishnamurti, Jiddu. *The Awakening of Intelligence*: Harper and Row, USA, 1987
- Commentaries on Living, III Series, Krishnamurti Foundation Of India, Chennai, 1990.

**20.9 Exercise (Answer the Questions):**

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of this unit

Q.1 Explain briefly Krishnamurti's views on 'Self-knowledge'.

---



---



---



---

Q.2 Write a short note on 'Choiceless Awarenesses'.

---

---

---

---

Q3. Write a short note on 'Freedom'?

---

---

---

---

Q.4 What are the two expressions of freedom according to Krishnamurti?

---

---

---

---

**20.10 Answers to check your progress:**

1. According to Krishnamurti, the fundamental understanding of oneself does not come through the accumulation of experience, because accumulation of experience is the cultivation of memory. The understanding of oneself is from moment to moment. It is not the following of a pattern. By following a pattern, a system, method, a means through which we know ourselves, we thereby shape our thinking, our activities according to that pattern or system. So there is no method for self-knowledge. We seek a method for attaining some result. We want to follow authority or a system, an ideology which will give

us security. But we don't want to understand ourselves, that is, our impulses and reactions, the whole process of thinking. The pursuit of a system is invariably the outcome of our desire for security which is not the understanding of self-knowledge. To follow a method may guarantee us for what we desire but it is not the way to self-knowledge. Because authority prevents us from self-knowledge and destroys freedom. There can be creativeness only in freedom which comes through self-knowledge. And creativeness is not a continuous state, it is new movement in which there is not the 'me' or the 'mine'. Krishnamurti holds that self-knowledge is not only an intellectual discipline; it is also a way of life. He considers self-knowledge as the only state of being in which the individual and the society created by him can look at and see what is, can there by transcend the level of consciousness that breeds problem, contradictions and inconsistencies. Krishnamurti observes : " It is essential in all things to understand the process of oneself, because without knowing oneself, no human problem can be resolved. Any resolution of a problem without self-knowledge is merely distraction, leading to further misery, confusion, and struggle - this, when one thinks about it is fairly obvious."

2. Another important feature of self-knowledge is that it leads to the silence of mind which makes choiceless awareness possible, and it is choiceless awareness only that can transform the structure of human consciousness by putting an end to the perpetuation of duality. Since all our problems are the product of fragmentation in consciousness, self-knowledge is the only way to arrive at their resolution. In the words of Krishnamurti: "Truth comes into being only when there is self-knowledge. Self-knowledge brings understanding and when there is understanding, there are not problems. When there are no problems, then the mind is quiet, it is not longer caught up in its own creations. When the mind is not creating problems, when it understands, each problem immediately as it arises, then it is utterly still. This total process is awareness, and it brings about a state of undisturbed tranquility which is not the outcome of any discipline, of any practice or control, but is the natural outcome of understanding every problem as it arises."

3. Krishnamurti says that many times freedom is looked upon as an ideal, a goal, something that each one should achieve. But freedom is not an ideal according to Krishnamurti. He points out that people cling to the ideal of freedom because they are in a prison; the prison being one's daily life which is full of struggle and strife, sorrow, where

one is in the grip of desires and his mind is conditioned from all sides. Living in such conditions is like living in a prison where your conditioning does not allow you to get out of the boundaries set by the conditioning. Once you become aware of this you try to get out of it, to escape. You try to seek freedom by way of penance etc. But Krishnamurti says that freedom cannot be sought as a goal because the moment you set it as a goal, you are distanced from it, there is division between you and freedom. Then there is struggle for achieving it; different methods or systems are pursued and followed. "You create or invent that ideal of freedom because you cannot escape from your prison." This prison is man-made and it is full of suffering and conflict. In order to put an end to the suffering etc. an ideal god, an ideal freedom, an ideal truth is created by man, but this is nothing but an emotional or mental escape. He further says, "If you become conscious of that prison, if you become aware of the fact that you are trying to escape, then that awareness destroys the prison; then, instead of pursuing freedom, you will know freedom." And this freedom does not come to him who seeks freedom meaning if you make efforts by way of penance, following very rigid physical and mental discipline or follow a guru or text, when you set freedom as a goal and strive for it in a particular direction, it will not happen to you because such pursuit is full of division and therefore conflict. The division would be in the form of goal and path, end and means. Thus freedom cannot be set as a goal or objective.

4. Krishnamurti's main object is to set us free from everything that prevents us from discovering truth for ourselves. To come upon truth the mind must be completely free, without a spot of distortion. Freedom has two expressions. We generally understand freedom as an idea, and as an actuality. We want to be free to think what we like to do, what we want, to express ourselves in different ways. This is the outward expression of freedom. The country where outward freedom is possible one seeks more and more pleasure, more and more possessions. So in such countries, where there is monarchy, outward freedom seems to be extraordinarily important. On the other hand the inward freedom implies complete and total freedom, which expresses itself outwardly in society, in relationship. The question about the possibility of freedom, whether inwardly or outwardly, is a perplexing one. So, one sees that for mind, there is no possibility of freedom on this earth either inwardly or outwardly. As a result one begins to invent freedom in another world such as heaven.