

SØREN KIERKEGAARD'S PHILOSOPHY

Søren Kierkegaard was a brilliant Danish 19th century philosopher who authored 22 books, of which three is continuously making his name and influencing people. He is considered as the first existentialist philosopher which garnered him the title “Father of Existentialism”. He was born on the 15th of May 1813 in a wealthy family in Copenhagen. He was the youngest of seven children. At the age of 22, all his siblings died except for Peter Christian. This event triggered him to produce books to the point that on a single day in 1843 he published no less than three works. According to him, he did that to save himself and humanity and that he was not writing for money. Through his themes, he captured the interest of later thinkers like Sartre, Camus and Heidegger. In 1844, he published a book entitled “The Concept of Anxiety” which astonished the existentialists from then and the later thinkers. A great excerpt from this book would be his writing that life can only be understood backwards but must be lived forwards. When he reached the age of 42, he died of an excruciating spinal disease.

Since Kierkegaard is an existentialist, his philosophy is that a sense of meaning is something that we all desire — maybe even need. Kierkegaard's idea is

that we are humans who need purpose, however we are abandoned in a universe full of purposelessness. For him, the meaning of life is not something simply given to us, but it is accomplished through our decisions. Though he is a theist, he disproves the concept that God made the universe, or us with any specific purpose in mind. He often asked questions as to how the precious and rare thing we call life ought to be lived. He suggested that people might effectively choose to live within three modes of existence: the aesthetic, ethical and religious. Wherein aesthetical life refers to a redefined hedonism, embracing the search for pleasure. Ethical life involves strong commitment to one's duty in faith. This is where the concept of good and evil begins to take hold and the idea of responsibility for one's fellow man. Lastly, religious life where people accepted that they could live in the truth or in short, submission to God and only God's will. Another concept of Kierkegaard is the leap of faith, his concept of leap indicates a state in which a person is faced with a choice that cannot be justified rationally and he therefore must leap into it. Thus, a leap into faith which is allowed by it, stems from an inconsistent contradiction between the ethical and the religious. He is against people thinking about religion all day without ever doing anything. For him, faith must be active and not passive.

Søren Kierkegaard's philosophy on how to be a good man revolves on obeying God. According to him, one thing is certain: The greatest thing each person can is to give himself to God utterly and unconditionally—weakness, fears, and all.

For God love obedience more than good intentions or second-best offerings, which are all too often made under the guide of weakness. For him, the reward of the good man is to be allowed to worship in truth.

Kierkegaard's philosophy disproves the concept that God made the universe, or us with any specific purpose in mind. But come to think of it, if the universe was not created by God with a purpose why would he place us here? My response is that he already gives worth and purpose to something even before he creates it. Another point is our existence, don't we already have a purpose ever since we were born? And that purpose is solely because we have to give joy to our parents as their child or to complete a family. For the meantime, that purpose is what keeps us growing. Once we get older, that is where the mentality of existentialists comes in. It is up to us whether to determine who we are but still the way we choose to live is guided by God's plans for us. I do not agree that all we have become is just because of the decisions we have made. We do not write our own essence, it is predetermined. We might be capable of great things, but we must never forget that there is a hand guiding our steps. That hand is whom we call God, and He always guides us according to His will.