

PHI101: Introduction to Philosophy

Faculty: Rashida Akhter Khanum (RAK)

Summer 2019 Handouts

File downloaded from:

www.WuperBooks.org/NSU

www.TutorYouNSU.com/Resource

Table of Contents

Topic	Page Number
1. The External World	3
2. Mind-Body Problem	6
3. Philosophy Of Religion	9
4. The Problem Of Evil	11
5. Moral Philosophy	13
6. Induction	16
7. Pythagoras (580/570 BC – 500BC)	17
8. Plato (427-347 BC)	18
9. Jean Paul Sartre (1905-1983)	20
10. Aroj Ali Matubbar: The Quest For Truth	21
11. Existentialism	23

THE EXTERNAL WORLD

Real

- It is the actual or the existing.
- The term refers to things and events that exist in their own right, as opposed to that which is imaginary or fictitious.
- Real refers to what is.

Reality

- Reality is the state or quality of being real or actually existent, in contrast to what is mere appearance.

Realism

- Realism may mean devotion to fact, to what is the case, as opposed to what is wished, hoped or desired.
- In its strictly philosophical sense, realism is the position that the objects of our senses are real in their own right, they exist independent of their being known to, perceived by or related to mind.
- It assumes the existence of the external world as quite independent of the human mind.
- According to realism, the real world is the world we sense.

Naive Realism or Commonsense Realism

- Man in the street believes that a physical world exists and is there whether we perceive or not.
- There exists a world of physical objects (trees, buildings, hills, etc.).
- Statements about these objects can be known to be true through sense-experience.
- These objects exist not only when they are being perceived but also when they are not perceived. They are independent of perception.
- By means of our senses, we perceive the physical world pretty much as it is. Thus, our claims to have knowledge of it are justified.
- The sense-impressions we have of the physical things are caused by these physical things themselves. For example, my experience of the chair is caused by the chair itself.
- But surely it is a matter of common knowledge that in sense-perception we are sometimes deceived.
- Consider the case of illusion; in illusion case, we perceive things the way they are not.
- Sometime we perceive things that are not even there. This is the case of hallucination. In hallucination, we seem to perceive what does not even exist.

Representative Realism

- John Locke (1632-1704) believes that there are physical objects existing independently of perception, but that the way those objects appear to us is in many ways different from the way they really are.
- Things are known by their qualities: primary and secondary qualities.
- The primary qualities of an object are those qualities it has “in itself” quite apart from any perception, qualities it would have even if there were not sentient beings to perceive them.
- Size, shape, weight for example are the qualities intrinsic to the object.

- But there are secondary qualities, such as, color, smell, taste, tactile quality, which are not really qualities of the object at all. Color depends on the light and also on the condition of the observer. A color-blind person will not perceive certain colors at all.
- Color, smell, taste are not qualities inherent in a thing. They are ideas we have, produced by the secondary qualities or the object.
- A secondary quality is not really a quality of the object at all; the object only contains within itself a power to produce in perceivers certain sense-experience. The power is in the object, but the red and blue exist only as ideas in our minds.
- What these sense-experiences, (blue or red) are will depend on circumstances. The object we call red has no power to produce red sense-experiences in the dark, or in color-blind people, or in people with jaundice.
- The experiences produced in us by secondary qualities, then, are qualities of an object only in a derivative sense.

Idealism

- Idealism asserts that reality consists of ideas, thoughts, minds or selves rather than material objects and forces.
- This theory emphasizes mind in some sense as prior to matter; mind is real and matter is in a sense by-product.
- It believes that the universe is dependent on mind.
- The subjective idealist holds that minds or spirits and their perceptions, or ideas are all that exist.
- The objects of experience are not material things; they are merely perceptions.
- Things such as buildings and trees exist, but exist only in the mind that perceives them.
- The subjective idealist does not deny the existence, in some sense, of what we call the real world; the question at issue is not its existence but how it is to be interpreted. It does not exist independent of a knower.
- For a subjective idealist, all that exist, are minds and their ideas.
- Subjective idealism is best represented by George Berkeley (1685–1753).
- Berkeley called both primary and secondary qualities “ideas” and concluded that what we refer to as a material object is simply a collection of ideas.
- For Berkeley, nothing but minds and their ideas exist. To say that an idea exists means, according to him, that is being perceived by some mind.
- For ideas *Esse est percipi*: “To be is to be perceived”.
- Minds themselves, however, are not similarly dependent for their existence on being perceived.
- Minds are perceivers.
- To be is to be perceived: all that is real is a conscious mind or some perception or idea by such a mind.
- When we assert that we can imagine objects existing when they are not seen and that we do believe in the independent existence of an external world, Berkeley tells us that the order and the consistency of the world of nature are real and are due to the active mind, the mind of God. God, the supreme mind, is the author and the governing spirit of nature, and God’s will is the Law of Nature.
- God determines the succession and the order of our ideas.
- The subjectivist holds that there can be no object, as well as no perception of it, without a knower; that the subject (mind or knower) in some way creates its object (matter or things

that are known); and that all that is real is a conscious mind or a perception by such a mind.

- To say that a thing exists is to say that it is perceived.
- What we see or think is mind-dependent, and that the world is a mental world.

Phenomenalism

- Phenomenalism is the belief that we can know only phenomena and not the ultimate nature of things; we may know objects as they appear to our senses but we cannot know objects as they are in themselves.
- Phenomenon means something that is shown, or revealed, or manifest in experience.
- The phenomena are objects and events as they appear in our experience, as opposed to objects and events as they are in themselves (noumena).
- Phenomena are shaped by the nature of our cognitive faculties; it is because of us that things appear extended in space and time and causally connected.
- Therefore, phenomenalism is the philosophy of perception that elaborates the idea that objects are the permanent possibilities of sensation. (Mill)
- Perception of objects refers to possible or hypothetical existence of objects.
- The theory holds that we are conscious of our experience but not of the external world.
- So, the existence of physical objects are reduced to actual or hypothetical sense experience.
- The important thesis here is “to be is to be perceivable”.
- That we are having certain sense-experiences (say tomato) we cannot doubt, but that there is a physical object as such, we surely can doubt.
- Knowing certain sense-experiences cannot be doubted, these are indubitable. But perceiving a real object that can be doubted, e.g., I can sense reddish and round sense-data without there being a tomato in front of me.
- Physical objects are reached by inference – inference from sense-experience. It is on the basis of certain sense-experiences that we are entitled to make claims about physical objects. The basis is certain but the inference is not.
- According to Kant, the mind has certain innate ways of working.
- Form and order are thrust on nature by the mind.
- Sensory experience merely furnishes mind its content.
- The mind is active; it forms into a system of knowledge all the materials brought in by the senses. Just as the potter takes the formless clay and fashions it into one form or another, so the mind forms or organizes the material of the senses.
- Our thoughts regarding the world are determined in large part by the structure of the mind.
- The understanding prescribes its laws to nature.

MIND-BODY PROBLEM

Interactionism

- The mind is an entirely separate substance from the body, and that its nature is wholly distinct from the nature of anything physical.
- The mind is an incorporeal, invisible, non-spatial, unextended thing which is entirely distinct from the body.
- The mind would not cease to be even if the body did not exist.
- Interactionism holds that body and mind are two distinct substances but they can interact with each other.
- The essence of mind is thought (non-spatial) and the essence of the body is extension (occupying space).
- The main exponent of this theory is Rene Descartes (1596–1650)
- The mind and the body are separate entities each can exist without the other. A disembodied mind is accepted.
- What is spatial cannot be thinking and vice versa.
- There exists causal relation between mind and body, one affects the other.
- Mind interacts with the body through the pineal gland and also the body interacts with the mind through the same gland.

Psychophysical Parallelism (Double-aspect theory)

- The thesis that mind and body never influence one another, but nevertheless progress along parallel paths, as though they interacted.
- The theory accepts that two distinct kinds of beings or substances exist and they are immaterial and material.
- Both mind and body are expressions of some underlying reality that appears as mind when we experience it from inside, or subjectively, and as body when we view it from outside or objectively.
- Bodily and mental events (breaking arm and pain) are merely parallel to each other in the sense that certain bodily events are accompanied by certain mental events and certain mental events are accompanied by certain bodily events.
- The theory denies that there is any causal interaction between minds and bodies but accepts the fact of correlation.
- Parallelism allows causal connection between successive physical events and between successive mental events, although the theory rejects causal connection between physical and mental events.
- Parallelism is held by Spinoza (1632–1677).

Occasionalism

- Propounded by catholic philosopher Malebranche (1638-1715).
- Holds that on the occasion that certain bodily events occur God, who can do all things possible, causes certain mental events and on the occasion that certain mental events occur God causes certain bodily events.
- It asserts that all relations between physical things, or between human minds and physical things, which we intuitively suppose to be causal, are in fact not causal. Instead, the relations are a consequence of God's will.

Pre-established Harmony

- Proposed by Leibniz (1646-1716).
- Holds that the procession of bodily events and the procession of mental events both proceed according to a pre-established plan, presumably God's.
- Mental and physical events are prearranged or predetermined by God.
- The two independent series are so arranged that certain events in the material series are always accompanied by certain events in the mental series and vice versa.
- God created substances in the manner that although they do not causally interact, they behave just as we would expect them to behave were they to causally interact.

Epiphenomenalism

- Propounded by Thomas Huxley (1825-95).
- It is the doctrine that physical states cause mental states, but mental states do not cause anything.
- It implies that there is only one-way of action – from the physical to the mental.
- Physical states cause mental states but the causation never goes the other way.
- Consciousness or mind is an attendant or secondary phenomenon accompanying some bodily processes.
- Mental processes causally influence neither the physical nor even other mental phenomena.
- The stream of consciousness is a phenomenon accompanying certain neurological changes.
- Matter is primary, the one real substance and mind is a by-product only.

Behaviorism

- Two types of behaviorism: methodological behaviorism and metaphysical behaviorism.
- A materialistic theory.
- Holds that mentalistic expressions referring to thoughts, feelings, wishes and like are expressible in purely physicalistic terms.
- By physicalistic term is meant to be behavioral term.
- Methodological behaviorism consists in confining psychological theories and the procedures for evaluating those theories to observable behavior.
- Metaphysical behaviorism is a theory about the nature of consciousness and the analysis of expressions referring to consciousness.
- Conscious activities can be expressed in terms of behavior – overt and covert behavior.
- Behaviorism proposes that we define all expressions involving consciousness in terms of bodily behavior which can be observed in others as easily as in ourselves.
- Our observable behavior can be explained in terms of dispositions to behave.
- Disposition refers to proneness, ability, capacity which are hidden but can be expressed in due course of time and condition. (Bodily change brings mental change. Potential and actual, covert and overt.)
- To attribute consciousness or state of consciousness is to attribute a disposition to behave in a particular way.
- Behaviorism is concerned with an analysis of the meanings of mentalistic terms.
- Behavioristic approach is linguistic, it is concerned with analysis of terms, language and meaning.
- Behaviorism indicates the result of the state.
- The theory is mainly conceptual.

- Behavioristic understanding of mind is hypothetical or inferential.
- Behaviorism is held by Gilbert Ryle (1900-76).

Physicalism (Identity theory)

- Thoughts, feelings, wishes (mental phenomena) are identical with one and the same thing, i.e., states and processes of the brain.
- Whatever is mental is said to be a bodily state. By bodily state is meant the structure of the body processes and the states of the bodily organs and the very cells responsible for the organs.
- Mental phenomena are identical with bodily states.
- Analogies:
 - (i) Morning star means the same as the evening star. (They refer to one object Venus at different times.)
 - (ii) Lightning is a particularly massive electric discharge from one cloud to another or to the earth.
 - (iii) Mental and physical events occur simultaneously.
- Whenever a mental event occurs a physical event of a particular sort occurs and vice versa.
- The identity of the mental with the physical is held to be simultaneous identity rather than identity of a thing at one time with the same thing at a later time.
- Mental and physical events are not correlated but they are one and the same events.
- Thoughts, feelings, wishes and the like are identical with physical states not in the sense that mentalistic terms are synonymous in meaning with physicalistic terms but “identical” in the sense that actual events picked out by mentalistic terms are one and the same events as those picked out by physicalistic terms.
- Physicalism is held by J. J. C. Smart (1920 - 2012)

PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

The Design Argument

- Also known as the teleological argument which is derived from the Greek word 'telos' meaning 'purpose'.
- States that everything in the nature bears evidence of having been designed.
- This is supposed to demonstrate the existence of the Creator.
- From observations of regularity and integration, by some sort of argument from experience, we come to the conclusion that these must be the work of a Designer.
- William Paley claims that the complexity and efficiency of natural objects are evidences that they must have been designed by God.
- The argument goes like just as by looking at a watch we can tell that it was designed by a watch-maker, so, we can tell by looking at objects in nature that they were designed by some sort of Divine Watchmaker.
- This is also known as argument from analogy, i.e., the argument depends on a similarity between two things and states that if two things are similar in some respects then they will very likely be similar in others.
- The simplest form of the argument is one in which we begin with particular cases of design and argue that they can be adequately explained only by supposing that they were produced by an intelligent being.
- Thus, William Paley, in a classic formulation of the argument concentrated on the human eye as a case of design, stressing the ways in which various parts of the eye cooperate in a complex way to produce sight.
- He argued that we can explain this adaptation of means to end only if we postulate a supernatural designer.
- This is the heart of the teleological argument – the claim that adaptation can be explained only in terms of a designer.
- The design argument rests on an analogy with human artifacts.
- Artifacts are certainly cases of design. With artifacts we have some insight into what is responsible for the adjustment of means to end.
- We understand from our experience that the adjustment springs from the creative activity of the maker, guided by his deliberate intention to make the object capable of performing this function.
- In natural cases of adaptation where the source of the adaptiveness is not obvious, we suppose that to stem from conscious planning. We postulate the existence of a planner behind the conscious planning, i.e., God.

The First-Cause Argument

- The argument assumes that each natural thing's existence is caused by something other than itself. There cannot be an infinite series of such causes. Therefore, there is a first cause of existence whose existence is not caused by something other than itself.
- Everything that happens has a cause. But if everything has a cause, the universe too must have a cause and that cause is God.
- God is the uncaused cause.
- The cosmological argument is inductive and based on the principle of sufficient cause – that every event is caused.
- The world is an event, or effect; therefore, it must have had a cause, outside itself, sufficient to account for its existence.

- There must be a cause of the series of causes that we experience.
- Thus we come to a first cause or to a self-existent Being.
- The first-cause cannot be material, since this would involve the qualitatively less (matter) being able to produce the qualitatively greater (mind or spirit) being – which is an absurd notion.
- The argument asserts that we must differentiate between the accidental and the essential features of reality, or between the temporary objects of experience and those that are permanent.
- Every event or change presupposes a cause and logically we must go back to an uncaused, self-existent cause or to a self-existent being.
- God is thus the condition of the orderly development of the universe, as well as its permanent source or ground.
- The causal argument or the first-cause argument is not just a temporal argument from effect to cause but an argument in the 'order of being' in that God is said to be the 'highest order of being' and as such, He is the 'uncaused cause' of whatever exists.

Ontological Argument

- A line of argument which seems to appeal to no contingent fact at all, but only to an analysis of the concept of God.
- St. Anselm's argument is:
 - All perfections are properties of the supreme being.
 - Existence is a property.
 - Therefore, the supreme being exists.
- God is the greatest (most perfect) being conceivable.
- If God did not actually exist, our concept of God would be the concept of a being less great than of one who does exist. Therefore, God exists.
- God being the greatest possible being conceivable, must exist in order to be the greatest.
- If God lacked existence – existed only 'in the understanding' like unicorns – then God would not be as great as if he did exist and thus would not be the greatest being conceivable.
- Greatness includes existence.
- The greatest conceivable being requires existence, else it would lack one necessary element of greatness.
- The argument attempts to prove the existence of God from the idea of God entertained by the human mind.
- We have an idea of God and that this is what we mean by God.
- If God is merely an idea in our minds, we could only conceive of something greater than this, namely a God who existed not merely in our minds but in reality.
- If God were only in thought and we could think of something greater than God, this would contradict our accepted definition of God. We could add existence to the idea and think of a being who was not merely thinkable but had independent existence.
- Thus it is a contradiction to say that perfection (God) does not exist.
- The idea of a being having existence is the idea of a more perfect being than the idea of one having no existence.
- Hence God, as the most perfect being, must exist.
- Thus perfection of God implies His existence.

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

Human Evil

- Human evil means the suffering, which results from morally wrong choices.
- Human evil is sometimes contrasted with natural evil, which is the result of disasters, such as earthquake.
- Previously the term 'evil' is used as a synonym for extreme forms of immorality.
- One problem sometimes discussed is whether people can rationally choose evil as such.
- It is believed that people do not choose evil as such but rather pursue their own interests at the expense of the interests of other people, and evil is a by-product of these pursuits.
- In the 20th century experiences suggest that people can choose evil for its own sake.
- An orthodox theological view is that all human beings have a fallen nature and will inevitably choose evil unless given powerful incentive not to do so and are controlled by state or religious sanctions.

The Problem of Evil

- The problem of evil arises from the problem of reconciling the imperfect world with the goodness of God.
- From religious standpoint God is supposed to be omnipotent and perfectly good, yet clearly there is evil (e.g. pain and other suffering) in the world.
- Atheists have argued that since an omnipotent being could prevent evil if he choose, an omniscient being would know how to do and a perfectly good being would always choose to do so, there is no God of the kind supposed.
- The problem of evil has always been the most powerful objection to traditional theism.
- The usual response of theists to this problem is to deny that a perfectly good being will always choose to prevent evil.
- Existence of evil may be seen as that God allows some evils for a certain time to make possible greater goods.
- There is theodicy which is a part of theology concerned with defending the goodness and omnipotence of God in the face of the suffering and evil of the world.
- The most popular attempt by theodicy is to reconcile the evidence of evil with the goodness of God.
- The defense is that evils are entirely due to bad free choices of human beings.
- It was good of God to create free beings, but bad of them to misuse their freedom.
- So the good God is not responsible for the evils of the world, and we cannot use the evils of the world as an objection to believe in Him.
- Theodicy needs further more defenses to explain why God allows evil of kinds for which humans are not responsible, such as the pain of some unpreventable disease.
- The reply is that such evils give humans opportunities to perform, in response to them, heroic actions of showing courage, patience and sympathy, opportunities which they would not otherwise have.
- This does still leave the problem of what justifies God in allowing some (e.g. battered babies) to suffer for the benefit of others.
- The theist may argue in reply to that God who gives us life has the right to allow some to suffer for a limited time, that it is a privilege to be used by God for a useful purpose, and that there is always the possibility of compensation in an afterlife.
- The crux of the problem is whether such defenses are adequate for dealing with the kinds

and amount of evil we find around us.

- The theists' argument regarding the problem of evil runs like this: If God aims to produce moral good, God must create free creatures upon whose cooperation he must depend, and so divine omnipotence is limited by the freedom God confers on creatures. Since such creatures are also free to do evil, it is possible that God could not have created a world containing moral good but no moral evil.

MORAL PHILOSOPHY

Deontological Ethical Theory

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)

His main works: *Critique of Pure Reason*

Critique of Practical Reason

Foundations of the Metaphysic of Morals

Kant is:

- a deontologist (believes in duty for duty's sake).
- an absolutist (accepts unqualified, unconditional motives as good and believes in no exception).
- a rationalist (faith on reason as the guide of morality).

The Good Will:

- For Kant, a good motive or a good will is central.
- While there are many things which we call good, a good motive is the only thing that has intrinsic value.
- Goodness is to be found in an inner quality of will, motive or intention and not in an outward performance or the consequences of one's act.
- Action done from good motive or good intention is morally good action.
- Kant says that inclinations are irrational and cannot be said to be moral always.
- Moral actions are performed out of a sense of duty.
- An action performed from a sense of duty is judged as moral.
- Other things, like intelligence, courage and happiness are usually good, but they may be used so as to promote evil.
- Intelligence or courage, when used to carry out an evil purpose, may increase the evil.
- In order for the motive to be good, a man must act from a sense of duty.

The Categorical Imperative:

- The moral law expresses in the "categorical imperative".
- The categorical imperative is a direct command to act.
- A hypothetical imperative depends upon an "if" and is conditional.
- According to Kant a hypothetical imperative is not an expression of the moral law.
- The categorical imperative is the voice of duty, the sense of "ought" within the morally sensitive person.
- It is apriori or derived from the reason itself.
- The categorical imperative is expressed in two general rules.
- The first general rule states that "Act only on maxims which you can at the same time will to be universal law".
- It means that we should act in such a way that the principle for our actions could become a universal law.
- Thus in order for an action to qualify as moral we should always be able to affirm that all people at all times and places should follow the same principle of conduct, e.g., promise keeping, truth telling.

- The second general rule states that “Treat every rational being including yourself always as an end, and never as a mere means”.
- It emphasizes respect for persons and affirms that people should not be used just as instruments or objects.
- Lying and suicide are condemned because in both instances we are treating someone (or the individual himself) only as a means. Here human beings are used as objects and not as persons.
- The dignity of persons are denied when we use them as means to get the desired ends.
- Kant holds that we must treat people as ends rather than as means.

Consequential or Utilitarian Ethical Theory

J.Bentham (1748-1832) & J.S.Mill (1806-73)

- Consequentialism as an ethical theory holds that the rightness or wrongness of an action depends not on the intentions of the person performing the action, but rather on the consequences of the action.
- Utilitarianism is known as consequentialism.
- Utilitarianism is based on the assumption that the ultimate aim of all human activity is happiness.
- Utilitarianism is a form of hedonism.
- According to utilitarianism an act is right if it promotes a balance of pleasure over pain.
- Utilitarianism believes that greatest happiness for greatest number is good and the reverse is bad.
- Utilitarianism is based on two main principles: (1) the utility principle implies pleasure, advantage; (2) the consequentialist principle implies result or end of the action.
- Utility is that property in any act or object whereby it tends to produce an advantage, a benefit, pleasure or happiness.
- Consequence refers to the result of the action which it produces.
- Utilitarianism deals with the probable consequences of various possible courses of action in any circumstance.
- From the various possible courses of action whichever is the most likely to bring about the most happiness (or at least the greatest balance of happiness over unhappiness) is the right action.
- For Bentham probable consequences are calculated by hedonic calculus.
- Hedonic calculus serves the quantitative measurement for pleasure and pain experiences.
- The calculus determines some pleasure more preferable to other on the basis of intensity, duration, certainty, nearness, fruitfulness, purity and extent.
- The quantitative measurement is provided by Bentham.
- The qualitative distinction among pleasures plays an important role in Mill’s theory.
- For Mill “It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied. It is better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied”.
- For Mill quality rather than quantity of pleasure determines the moral value of any act.

Negative Utilitarianism

- States that an act which originates less pain and suffering is more ethical than producing more pleasure.
- Emphasizes avoidance of pain and suffering than enhancement of pleasure.
- Believes in minimization of pain and suffering than maximization of pleasure.
- Believes in the prohibition of excessive and unnecessary experiments on animals.
- Puts restrictions on animal farming and meat diets.
- Encourages biodiversity on the basis of preservation and conservation policy regarding forestry and wild animals.
- An act is good if it gives less pain and suffering to the consumers.

INDUCTION

Induction

- A process of reasoning that takes us from empirical premises to empirical conclusion, supported by the premises.
- Induction is the argument in which something beyond the content of the premises is referred to as probable or supported by them.
- Induction is based on empirical statements that are not conclusively falsifiable or verifiable by observation.
- Inductive arguments are not truth-preserving. In contrast to inductive arguments, deductive arguments are truth-preserving.
- An inductive argument involves a generalization based on a certain number of specific observations, e.g., from observing large number of instances of animals with fur we may conclude that “All animals with fur are viviparous”.
- In inductive arguments premises are particular but the conclusion is universal.
- Induction is based on the principle of causality, i.e., every event has a cause.
- Induction tells us that future will resemble the past.
- In induction we get knowledge of the future on the basis of the past, e.g., appearance of Hailey’s comet.
- Induction permits one to make testable predictions, e.g., one can predict the path of a cyclone and the existence of underground natural resources.

Problem of Induction

- Generalization leads to uncertainty to knowledge obtained from induction.
- The reliability of induction is questioned by David Hume, which is known as the problem of induction.
- Probability gives us knowledge which may change in time; probable knowledge is only conditional knowledge.
- The justification of probability also depends on probability.
- We can be very much skeptical of induction.
- Bertrand Russell holds that we can be skeptical but we can hold the knowledge we get from induction as certain until contrary knowledge is obtained.

PYTHAGORAS (580/570 BC – 500BC)

- Pythagoras founded the Pythagorean Society in Italy.
- The Pythagorean Society was religious and moral reformer.

Religion

- The Pythagorean Society was akin to Orphic Sect.
- Orphic religious sect believed in transmigration of souls and believed in the principle of reincarnation and so did the Pythagoreans.
- The Pythagorean Society differed from the Orphic Sect in the manner that they added in their belief the intellectual pursuits, the cultivation of science and philosophy.

Ethics

- The Pythagorean ethical views were rigorous and ascetic in character.
- They insisted upon the utmost purity of life in the members of the society.
- They enforced moral self-control.
- They cultivated arts and crafts, gymnastics, music, medicine and mathematics.

Philosophy

- The first principle of things is number.
- The fundamental principle in the universe is number.
- They tried to interpret every object and relations of objects in terms of number.
- Proportion, order and harmony were observed in the nature, so they thought that things can be explained numerically.
- Unit is the prime number, all numbers arise out of the unit.
- Pythagoras' number theory is clearly related to the bipartition theory. Bipartition means everything is divisible into two parts.
- Numbers are divided into odd and even.
- The universe is composed of pairs of opposites and contradictions and the fundamental character of these opposites is that they are composed of the odd and even.
- The odd and even were identified with the limited and unlimited respectively.
- An even number can be divided by two, and it does not set a limit to bipartition. Hence, it is unlimited.
- An odd number cannot be divided by two and it sets a limit to bipartition.
- The limited and unlimited become therefore the ultimate principles of the universe.
- The Pythagoreans drew up a list of ten opposites of which the universe is composed: (1) limited and unlimited, (2) odd and even, (3) one and many, (4) right and left, (5) masculine and feminine, (6) rest and motion, (7) straight and crooked, (8) light and darkness, (9) good and evil, (10) square and oblong.
- Pythagoreans believed in the conception of "the central fire" at the heart of the universe and that the earth revolves round it.
- They were the first to claim that the earth is itself one of the planets. The central fire is not the sun as they believe that the sun, like the earth, revolves round the central fire.
- They believed in the heliocentric hypothesis.
- Round the central fire revolve ten bodies. First is the "counter-earth", a non-existent body invented by the Pythagoreans; next comes the earth, then the sun, the moon, the five planets, and lastly the heaven of the fixed stars.

PLATO (427-347 BC)

His works:

Republic
Apology
Symposium
Statesman
Law

- Opinion → Appearance → based on sense perception
- Truth → Reality → based on conceptual knowledge
- Dialectical method → A method in which a premise or hypothesis is continuously subjected to counter argument.

Theory of knowledge

- In the process of discovering true knowledge, the mind moves through four stages of development.

Imagining / conjecture

- The lowest level of the line is called imagining.
- By imagining Plato means simply the sense experience of appearances wherein these appearances are taken as true reality.
- The knowledge received from imagining is deceptive and illusory.

Belief

- The next stage after imagining is belief.
- For Plato seeing constitutes only believing.
- There is a degree of certainty that seeing gives us but this is not absolute certainty.

Understanding

- When a person moves from believing to understanding, he moves from the visible world to the intelligible world, from the realm of opinion to the realm of knowledge.
- Visible things are symbols of a reality that can be thought but not seen.
- Knowing is a mental process. Mind knows things symbolically.
- Understanding represents the power of the mind to abstract from a visible object that property which is the same in all objects in that class even though such actual object will have other variable properties.
- Understanding is characterized by symbols as well as hypotheses. By hypothesis, Plato means truth which is taken as self-evident but which depends upon some higher truth.
- Any hypothesis is a firm truth but one that is related to a larger context.
- Understanding helps to discover that all things are related or connected.

Form / Reason

- Form or reason is the highest level of knowledge.
- At this level the mind is dealing directly with the forms.
- The forms are those intelligible objects, such as triangle and man, that have been abstracted from the actual objects.
- The mind deals with the pure forms without any inference from the symbolic character

of visible objects.

- At this level mind no longer uses hypotheses, because they present limited and isolated truths.
- Form helps to see at once the relation of all divisions of knowledge to each other.
- Form therefore means the synoptic view of reality and this, for Plato, implies the unity of the world.
- A form can be related to a thing in three ways.
 - (1) The form is the cause of the essence of a thing.
 - (2) A thing may be said to participate in a form.
 - (3) A thing may be said to be an imitation or a copy of a form.
- The forms/ideas are the changeless, eternal and nonmaterial essence or patterns of which actual visible objects we see are only poor copies (e.g., triangles we see are copies of the form of the triangle).
- The real world is not the visible world but the intelligible world.
- The intelligible world is the most real because it consists of the eternal forms.

JEAN PAUL SARTRE (1905-1983)

Important works by J. P. Sartre

Being and Nothingness

Existentialism and Humanism

The Age of Reason

La Nausee

- Sartre holds that the very notion of God is self-contradictory and refers religious beliefs and theological dogmas to a condition of pure mythology.
- He claims that existence is prior to essence – from which existentialism derives its name. Essence is rejected entirely in favour of existence.
- Theistic existentialism is replaced by his atheistic existentialism.
- Essence, which is the realm of all rational and intellectual inquiry, is displaced by existence.
- Atheistic existentialism of Sartre states that if God does not exist then there is at least one being in whom existence precedes essence, a being who exists before he can be defined by any concept, and this is “man”.
- Sartre distinguishes between the mode of being of objects and that of human beings by claiming that the essence of objects precedes their existence, whereas for man the reverse is true.
- He also distinguishes between things and human beings by saying that things exist in an en-soi (in itself) state and human existence is always pour-soi (for itself).
- By en-soi he means that the objects are dense and integrated, packed and whole; they are complete in themselves and lack nothing.
- By pour-soi, he means that men always have gaps in their beings and are less than they could be.
- Man always exists for himself in that he is perpetually striving to become complete.
- Sartre believes that we have an obligation to assume responsibility for our actions because they have been freely chosen by us.
- To Sartre, we are nothing but the totality of our actions, so to deny any act means denying part of ourselves.
- Freedom of action or free choice is the most important characteristic of Sartre’s existentialism.
- He says that man’s capacity for freely chosen action must be engaged for maximization of his own being, and in acting, we should not interfere with other people’s freedom or evade the full responsibility for our actions.

AROJ ALI MATUBBAR: THE QUEST FOR TRUTH

- Aroj Ali Matubbar (1900-1985) is the most renowned Bangali philosopher of the 20th century.
- His contribution to philosophy is beyond any hesitation.
- He was born in Barisal district of Bangladesh, came from a community where education was almost unreachable.
- All his writings are in Bengali language.
- His main approach was to seek truth in different areas of human life.
- To explore religion is his first choice as it has been found that a small group of people interpret religion wrongly in order to dominate the lives of a community.
- The methods he followed in order to reach his conclusion are induction and the well-known Socratic method.
- Aroj Ali Matubbar's main purpose is to interpret religion free of prejudices.
- In his article "The Quest for Truth", he attempted to show the differences between true religion and the superstition based religion.
- A true religion needs to be logically founded so that people are well-disciplined and dutiful.
- His main propaganda was against prejudices, which covered the minds of people of his society.
- Religion is a matter of faith, which is required to be justified.
- Justification comes from reason and experience.
- The criteria for knowledge can be reason, experience or intuition and he gives priority to reason and experience.
- Aroj Ali Matubbar points out differences between opinion and truth.
- Opinion may be foundationless, illogical and biased by emotion.
- Opinion about a certain matter differs from person to person.
- Opinion is subjective.
- Truth is objective which is unaffected by emotion or subjectivity.
- Religious truth, he claims, should be objective in the sense that the source of such truth is well-ordered knowledge.
- Religious knowledge should not be delivered by uneducated clergymen but it must come from a certain well founded authority.
- Religion is based on beliefs but such beliefs should not be blindfolded rather reason based.
- Knowledge means truth which is not a matter of mere belief but a belief which is provable.
- Belief, Aroj Ali Matubbar says, is based on imagination, feeling and emotion.
- He says that such a belief which is based on imagination or feeling or emotion is nothing but opinion.
- He argues that a true belief based on reasonable conjecture is a matter of knowledge.
- Aroj Ali Matubbar's view conforms to the modern definition of knowledge.
- Epistemologically knowledge is justified true belief.
- He was self-taught man but he was a man of wisdom indeed.
- According to him, science is based on observation, and as such scientific truths are beyond doubt.
- Religion is, on the other hand, a matter of belief, which is based on blind faith.
- Blind faith leads to absurdity, which we should avoid.
- For Aroj Ali Matubbar the prerequisite of knowledge is true belief.
- He was aware of the fact that religious creeds among other factors have certain norms and

prohibitions, rituals and ceremonies.

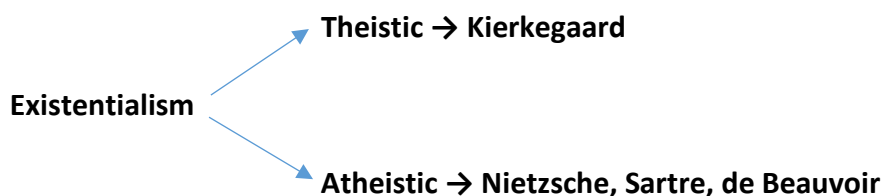
- He was critical of certain rituals and ceremonies because these do not have logical ground.
- Common people are much misguided by these rituals and ceremonies.
- He argues that since religious beliefs lack justifiability and objectivity so there is laxity in obeying duties and norms.
- Aroj Ali Matubbar believes in religion but unfounded religious views are not acceptable to him.
- He is not a skeptic as to the matters of religion but he raises questions as to the common man's understanding of religious teachings.
- His positive approach towards religion and its truth is that such truth must not be blind faith but logically justifiable.
- He is nonetheless a humanist.
- He believes in humanism which is unaffected by religious superstitions.
- Philosophy originates from wonder and inquisitiveness; these factors in turn drive a person to the exploration of truth.
- We observe that Aroj Ali Matubbar possesses the essential criteria of philosophical thought and thereby is involved in the search of truth.
- We know that a philosopher's philosophy is an outcome of his circumstance and we do not hesitate to acknowledge that Aroj Ali Matubbar's essay on "The Quest for Truth" in particular is the resultant of the predominantly prejudiced community.
- Philosophical thoughts require to be methodologically and epistemologically founded; and in our discussion, we have observed that he followed induction as a method to reach at true belief and reason as well in his approach to establish truth.
- We have also seen how he has applied his definition of knowledge to discover truth in the field of religion.
- We may conclude that since his thoughts fulfill what we understand by philosophy and philosopher, he is to be called the well-known Bangali philosopher.

Existentialism

Kierkegaard (1813-55)

Sartre (1905-80)

Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1985)



Characteristics of existentialism:

1. Existentialism is a movement of protest

- Protest against the mechanization of life
- subordination of human being to the machine
- Against scientism and positivism which interpret human being as part of nature and natural process
- Science and positivism ignore the qualitative aspects (thinking, acting, value) of human beings

2. A diagnosis of man's predicament

- Existentialism emphasizes individual person's situation or condition in relation to existence or vice versa
- An individual passes through different conflicting situations
- Existentialism explains the psychological states of human being
- Emphasizes anxiety, despair and anguish

3. A belief in the primacy of existence

- According to Kierkegaard 'to exist' implies a certain kind of individual, an individual who strives, who considers, chooses, decides and above all who commits himself
- Existence is not abstract rather than revealing or manifesting
- Existence does not properly belong to inert or inactive things rather it refers to a quality in the individual, namely, his/her conscious participation in an act
- For Sartre 'Existence precedes essence'
- Essence presupposes existence
- Essence is fixed or set but individual self cannot be said to be such because the self is conscious and in constant mutable stage
- Denies general/universal notion of human being
- Differences between object and individual being are marked by existentialism
- Sartre cites example of a paper knife to show the difference. A paper knife is made by someone who had in his mind a conception of it, its use/purpose and how it would be made.
- The *essence* of the paper knife can be said to precede its existence.
- Object is en-soi (in itself) but human being is pour-soi (for itself)

- Unlike the paper knife (the object), human nature cannot be defined in advance because it is not completely thought out in advance
- Human being as such merely exists and only later becomes his/her essential self
- Sartre argues that a person is simply that which he/she makes of himself/herself

4. An emphasis on man's subjective experience

- Existentialism insists on subjective perceptions of the situation
- What matters about the situation/state does not depend on externality rather on the internality of the person involved in the situation
- Existentialism upholds subjectivity rather than objectivity
- Subjective characteristics of the individual are those, which belong intimately with one individual himself/herself
- Objective characteristics of the individual are those, which all human beings have in common
- Objectivism denies/suppresses the uniqueness of subjective experience
- Existentialism rejects universal principles or universality, i.e. conceptual understanding of human being

5. Recognition of freedom and responsibility

- Existentialism believes in the freedom of choice
- An individual can choose any action from the alternatives and is not bounded to behave in a particular way which is imposed from outside
- Freedom is the expression of inner stages of the individual
- Freedom is a matter of experience
- An individual who is free is also a responsible being
- Exercising freedom is bearing responsibility
- Appreciation as well as reprehension of actions depend on freedom of choice

6. Emphasis on human weakness and insecurity

- Existentialism emphasizes the limitations of individual human being
- It points out certain situations, which an individual faces, e.g. anguish, anxiety, guilt, loneliness, death, etc.
- Anguish, anxiety, guilt, etc. determine human being's sense of existence.
- These are psychological inner states perplexing individual being.
- Human being experiences insecurity knowing the facts of finitude and death.
- Finitude and death are the facts about which human beings are conscious but objects have no such consciousness.
- The states of anguish, anxiety, guilt, etc., lead individual to the sense of meaninglessness of his/her life.