**MID EXAM HUM103**

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**Section: 16**

**Section 1 Ans 1**

Socrates was a prominent Greek philosopher who was born in 470 BCE in Athens. He was the first moral philosopher and one of the most important ones to shape the western philosophy. He is widely considered as one of the first philosophers to pursue a systematic philosophical study into the nature and pursuit of knowledge and his works can be found in Plato’s literary works.

We can see from Plato’s writings that Socrates used the elenctic method to break down the nature and ethical concepts of different virtues. The Socrates method or the method of *elenchus* is considered to be one of his greatest works which is still widely used to this day in teaching or counseling . It is one kind of questioning and answering process which Socrates used to examine key moral concepts by trying to come to a conclusion. It is a constant argumentative conversation between individuals which helps to define something by constantly augmenting and countering the views given on the topic. Like two individuals were to define something they would be constantly questioning the views one gives until the modified view satisfies all the object in all circumstances. In this method any view is accepted or refuted based on the refutations that emerge in the process and repeated as long as it doesn’t reach a conclusion. Using false positive and false negative, this elenchus method refutes certain definitions. False positive refers to a situation in which the object does not fit the provided definition but is defined, whereas false negative refers to a situation in which the definition is false but the object is not defined. (Khan, 2021)

When Elize Marcus and Malaysias asked Nesius and Laches to train their son in military virtue, they convinced Socrates to also be a part of it. Socrates used the method of elenclus when he was helping Nicias and Laches to define courage. In this process he asked both of them to come up with different definitions of courage and he tried to come up with a more suitable interpretation by contradicting their views to reach a definition that will include everything that defines courage and exclude everything that doesn’t define courage.

When Laches gives the definition of courage as someone who does not run away, but remains at his post and fights his enemy (Laches) Socretes interjects this with two different categories of reasons which are false positive and false negative. Hence, he argues with false positives that there are other ways to be courageous. For instance one can be courageous by attacking a stronger opponent to their post or even raising voice against something wrong which doesn’t necessarily require staying at a post on the battlefield. Again engaging in a new experience could also be courageous. Furthermore, Socrates contradicts this definition with a false negative where he mentions situations that even though fall under the provided view but do not define the object as standing and fighting isn’t always courageous. For example one can stand at his post while the opponent attacks and be prepared to die as he is scared and not courageous. Again if a weaker army attacks an even stronger army and they decide to stand and fight that is not courageous as they already know the outcome. Since this can be interjected by both false positive and false negative in the Socretes method (method of *elenchus*), Socrates disagreed with Laches’s first definition of courage. (Taken from my worksheet)

Laches then comes up with another definition of courage which goes as courage is the endurance of the soul. ((Khan, 2021) As Socretes points out that enduring after something that is bad for oneself can lead to a bad outcome so there’s no point of being courageous, Laches modifies his view and states that it is the wise endurance of the soul which is courage. For instance if someone pursues robbery and works really hard to rob a bank, it will not be considered courageous as it brings no good to anyone rather that person would spend his life in jail if he gets caught. Then Socretes takes this modified definition and starts refuting it. There can be a variety of wise objectives that people can pursue which will bring good to them but they are not necessarily courageous. For example, if someone decides to save up money by adapting self control and enduring a long time to build a habit of it, it can be considered to be an important life skill but not courageous. Again making a habit of waking up early or studying to get good marks in the exam can also take lots of hard work but it is certainly not considered as courageous. These are cases that fit the definition yet do not define courage, resulting in a false negative. Again he refutes it with false positives. There are many examples of courage that do not include wise endurance. For instance, if someone sees an old man getting hit by a car and acts immediately to save him from that accident it doesn’t require any hard work or persevering for a long time as he takes immediate action. Again if someone takes a high risk at the stock market or in a betting deal with a lot of his money without knowing the outcome and only believing in the guts then it can be considered courageous even though it doesn’t fall under the definition of Laches. As two of Laches’s definitions had false positives and false negatives at this point Laches gave up and let Nachies give his views.

Nicias gives his definition of courage as it is knowing what to fear and what not to fear (Khan, 2021). However, Socrates disagrees with this definition by stating that there could be courageous acts that don't necessarily involve having knowledge about it. To illustrate this, if someone has to cross a dark forest where he doesn’t know what he has to go through and he still makes it, that act will be considered courageous even though it doesn’t fall under this definition. Likewise people have to sometimes sign up for challenges that life throws at them and deal with that such as a person in a vacation suddenly facing a different wild creature and facing it to save his life which can be considered courageous and a contradictory false positive example to this definition. Additionally Socretes argues with this by a false negative by reasoning that there can be cases where people don’t do certain things because of a weak determination even after knowing what is the right thing to do. For example people sometimes fear to say no even though they know what the right thing to do is, such as a girl getting harassed in the street and not raising her voice against it or even someone watching from outside not doing something about it. Again some might not accept their mistakes even after knowing that they are wrong due to their pride and ego. These examples contradict Nicias’s definition of courage yet Socretes decided to stick to this definition because it links with definitions of some other virtues.

Nicias’s opinion of courage leads Socrates to link knowledge with courage as knowing what is good and evil can be courageous. Moreover we tend to fear things that are not good for us and feel confident about what’s good for us. However this definition doesn’t particularly define courage as it defines other virtues as well. Hence not being able to define courage specifically they fall in an aporia which means the inability to properly define something. Although they haven’t been able to define courage, they have come to know all the things that are not courage for which they have acquired knowledge. Again by using this socratic method they could distinguish between courage and other virtues. Moreover the aporia led them to later on find a common definition that would define many other virtues.

Finally after failing to define courage by saying that it is knowledge of what is good and evil, they arrived at a conclusion that helped to define the unity of virtues. Since their not being able to define courage has something to do with what they have arrived at, the failure to define courage pointed them to a definition that applies to a lot of virtues such as self control, justice, wisdom, friendship and so on that requires knowledge of good and evil. Likewise self control is about knowing what is the right thing to do or avoiding the wrong thing to do. Again being fair and honest to something can be called justice. Hence, they reach a definition which not only defines courage but also applies to many other virtues for which it is mentioned as the whole of virtues. Accordingly they reached this definition of whole of virtues because they failed to define courage in the first place or they wouldn’t have been able to define all these virtues by one definition. Thus, their failure of not being able to define courage and coming up with an improper definition of it became Socrates’ notion of unity of virtues.

It is the method of *elenchus* that is used to find definitions of different objects by refuting different views and it helped Socretes to come to define the unity of virtues. In conclusion, *elenchus* is a very useful method for the pursuit of knowledge and analyzing human virtues.

**Section 2 Ans 2**

Aristotle was one of the ancient Greek philosophers who helped to shape the western virtue ethics being a student of Plato. He lived in the era of 384 BCE to 322 BCE and spread his philosophical works all around the world.

Aristotle describes goals and purposes that we pursue in his discussions of ethics as he believes every action aims for a purpose. Furthermore, he introduces two types of purposes which are called instrumental and intrinsic goods which we often tend to pursue . Intrinsic goods are the ones that we pursue for the sake of its own which increases focus on that objective making it a valuable thing to do. On the contrary, instrumental goods are the objectives that we pursue for the sake of something else which makes it less important the sake of pursuing it being something different. For example, while washing our clothes we don’t do it for the value of the process of washing the clothes but we do it for our own need for clean clothes which makes it an instrumental goal since it has nothing to do with the sake of the process of washing clothes. Likewise, cleaning the house, using the telephone, transportation and saving up money are various examples of instrumental goods. On the other hand, pursuing sports for the fun of it, learning a new language out of passion, making music, spending time with someone special are all different activities that we tend to pursue for the sake of it’s own and not prioritizing the sake of something else which make these be intrinsic goods. However, many goals that we pursue may be both instrumental and intrinsic. To illustrate, when someone seeks education not only to get wealth and establish themselves but also because they enjoy the process of learning. Likewise going to the gym, eating delicious food, justice and friendship are examples of this middle shaded area where it can be both instrumental and intrinsic good. Additionally, almost all activities are instrumental in a sense that they all strive for the intention of pleasure that everyone looks for which makes it a sake of something else. Furthermore, as Aristotle makes the distinction between these two type of goods, he comes to find something that is not instrumental and is done only for the sake of itself and everything else is done for the sake of it which he describes as highest good which lays with the meaning of living well by unfolding and flourishing overtime rather than being a matter of pleasure for a small amount of time.

Eudaimonia is a Greek word which means to be living well by the favor of God’s achieving a stable form of happiness. It is different from pleasure as it is a matter of ultimate happiness whereas pleasure is a temporary state of joyfulness which fades away with time. Additionally, pleasure is an intrinsic good that is desired for almost every persuasion of goal. For instance one might find pleasure after graduating from a university or after making a lot of money since every achievement comes with pleasure. However, pleasure is often a matter of short time because after that it dissolves as new challenges of life come forward. On the other hand, eudaimonia is a concept of being happy and leading a happy life which is a process of cultivating oneself to thrive for the better. Unlike pleasure Eudaimonia is about trying to get that favorable life by God putting through constant trying and evolving. By achieving eudaimonia one can reach the ultimate goal of life which gives them a blessed life that only gets better as it is a constant process of flourishing which is why Aristotle considers it to be the highest good.

Aristotle defines virtue as acting according to rational planning and critical thinking by doing it in an excellent manner. It is about functioning well according to reasons and achieving goals with excellence. The ability of functioning well can apply to anything or anyone such as a police man who would be considered to be an honest one if he does his job with excellence. Again, a camera is considered to be a good camera if it takes good pictures which is it’s main function to serve. However, human beings are set apart from everything by the ability of acting according to rationality and proper thinking which makes them capable of being morally virtuous. Since Aristotle thinks achieving eudaimonia is the ultimate purpose of life, he defines virtue as excellence because one can achieve eudaimonia with critical thinking and proper reasoning since the outcome of different activities take place according to one’s own benefits. Accordingly, the ultimate goal of life being achieving eudaimonia Aristotle defines virtue as excellence so that it can help in reaching that destiny.

Aristotle defines intellectual virtues as supremacy in our rational thinking which involves planning with proper reasoning to solve a moral issue which can be taught to people through spreading knowledge about what to do in certain situations. To illustrate, a person who is honest has an intellectual virtue of honesty as he knows how to stay honest throughout his life. Again, having confidence, an ability to tackle social altercation, being a leader in certain situations are all examples of intellectual virtues. Aristotle distinguishes this with moral virtue which on the other hand has more with practically doing the activity than only reasoning and thinking. Moral virtues are those rational activities of human beings that they only achieve by doing it rather than just knowing. However, there is a bridge between these two virtues as moral virtue is the outcome of intellectual virtue since one applies to his doing after thinking rationally. Hence, if knowing what to do in a certain situation is intellectual virtue, doing if accordingly is moral virtue.

The difference between intellectual and moral virtue leads Aristotle to find a way of planting these virtues in human beings to live well which he believes can be done by constant practice of rational activities that act according to these virtues. Again, constant practice of cultivation of these virtues help in becoming a person of moral virtues since a person who takes rational decisions in each step in his life and acts in that manner will always do good in a habitual nature. Additionally, Aristotle believes that human beings are born with a capability of understanding good things yet they just need the practice and habit formation throughout their lives to reach the point where they become morally ethical.. Again, we tend to do virtuous acts from our childhood as we imitate our parents in respecting elders, telling the truth without knowing the rationality behind it and then when we grow up we become aware intellectually why we do the things we do and cultivate those virtues even more strongly.

Every virtue for Aristotle is a golden mean between two extreme states of being which stays in a balance between the excess of something and deficiency of something. (Aristotle). According to Aristotle a morally virtuous person in many circumstances even having options to do too little or too much does what is in between these two and keeps a balance. For example, honesty is the virtue that lies halfway between the behaviors of ego and exaggeration where a morally ethical person has to find a balance between these two and act accordingly. Again the right ambition is the moral property between the state of want of desires when one only thinks about being ambitious and never decides on something and over ambition when there is exaggeration of dreams that are too much to strive for at a certain level of being. Now, the application of intellectual and moral virtue are directed to activities that include rational thinking and actions which fall under the doctrine of mean as rational thinking would always be the mean of something too much and too little to keep the outcome positive. For example, when defining courage a morally virtuous person would apply the doctrine of the mean between being reckless and being a coward using his rational thinking and act according to it which shows that the intellectual and moral virtues are guided by the doctrine of the mean.

Mahatma Gandhi is known as the father of nation since he led India to independence with no violence following his morality and virtues. Even being a spoiled kid from childhood he grew up to be a morally virtuous person and one of the greatest people as he grew up and faced the harsh realities of the world and started using his rationality to act in a virtuous manner which later on led him to be an idol. Moreover, he believed in peace and love and always wanted to help people with no violence following his principles that he followed until the end of his life. He followed many habitual virtuous acts such as nonviolence, fearlessness, truthfulness and many more to do both intrinsic and instrumental goods by thinking rationally and acting according to it which later results in being a morally virtuous person who’s light of inspiration is reflected upon others.

**References**

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