
UNIT 1 DEFINITION, SCOPE AND IMPORTANCE OF PHILOSOPHY

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this Unit—the first one with which philosophy-course is begun—is to give a pre-taste of philosophy without going to its intricacies. Although the details of the ‘how’ of philosophizing are not considered in this unit, it is a very important Unit as it is the basis for all that will follow during this course. In this unit we shall try to give a definition of philosophy, both etymological and real; and then we shall show as to how philosophy is to be differentiated from or related to ‘philosophizing’. But the notion of *wisdom* will be clarified in greater depth and width in relation to ‘philosophy’ and in contrast to ‘knowledge’. Philosophy is not just one of the disciplines of knowledge, as any other one. Hence clarification of its all-comprehensive character by referring to its scope is yet another objective of this unit of study. Finally the importance of philosophy is also to be paid attention to.

Thus by the end of this Unit you should be able:

- to have a basic understanding of philosophy;
- to differentiate it from philosophizing;
- to relate it with wisdom;
- to understand the all-comprehensive character of philosophy;
- to know the importance of philosophy both at the theoretical and practical levels.

1.1 DEFINITION OF PHILOSOPHY

Western philosophy was born in Greece; the term ‘philosophy’ too has its roots in Greece and in Greek language. It is quite commonly known that *philosophia*

etymologically means ‘love of wisdom’ (*Philia* + *Sophia*). But *sophia* had a much wider range of application than the modern English “wisdom.” Wherever intelligence can be exercised—in practical affairs, in the mechanical arts, in business—there is room for *Sophia*. Herodotus used the verb *philosophhein* in a con-text in which it means nothing more than the desire to find out. We can find a gradual growth in the meaning of philosophy, as we go through the history of thought.

According to a tradition, Pythagoras was the first to de-scribe himself as a philosopher. He speaks of three classes of people, attending the festal games: those who seek fame by taking part in them; those who seek gain by plying their trade; and those who are content to be spectators. Philosophers resemble the third class: spurning both fame and profit, they seek to arrive at the truth by contemplation. Pythagoras distin-guished the *sophia* sought by the philosopher (knowledge based on contemplation) from the practical shrewdness of the businessman and the trained skills of the athlete. Plato points to Socrates as *the* philosopher. Plato gives a few characteristics of philosophical wisdom, such as ability to enter into critical discussion, having direct access to “true reality,” knowledge of the purpose of life, etc. As evident from above, although philosophy is etymologically defined as ‘love of wisdom’, the meaning of wisdom is taken in a wider sense. We will be dealing exclusively with the notion of wisdom in this Unit itself.

Oxford Dictionary defines philosophy as “that department of knowledge which deals with ultimate real-ity, or with the most general causes and principles of things.” It is presumed here that science, inheriting the cosmological tradition, does not offer us the knowledge of ultimate reality; only philosophy can do this. Science can only tell us *how*, whereas philosophy can tell us *why*, things happen as they do. Although science too speaks about the *why* or the causes, the “gen-eral causes and principles” of the philosopher are “higher” and “more ultimate” than the causes and principles that science reveals to us. There are two very different forms of activity now go under the name of “philosophy”: one is essentially rational and critical, with logical analysis (in a broad sense) at its heart; the other (represented by Heidegger, for example) is openly hostile to rational analysis and professes to arrive at general conclusions by a phenomenological intui-tion or hermeneutical interpretation. The various schools of thought, belonging to these two branches, make use of different procedures or methods, which will be taken up in another Unit.

Aristotle considers philosophy as “the first and last science”—the first science because it is logically presup-posed by every other science, the last because deals with reality in its ultimate principles and causes. He defines it as follows: “There is a science which investigates being as being, and the attri-butes which belong to this in virtue of its own nature. Now this is not the same as any of the so-called special sciences, for none of these treats universally of being as being. They cut off a part of being and investigate the attribute of this part” (*Metaphysics* 1003a18-25).

Descartes’ dis-tinction between mind and matter made it appear that there could be an inquiry into “the inner world” which would be wholly distinct from inquiries into “the outer world.” Philosophy came to be thought of as running par-allel to physics—the science of man as contrasted with the science of nature. Some of the later philosophers consider that the task of philosophy is to ‘coordinate the most important general notions and fundamental principles of the various sciences.’

This unifying and coordinating activity is differently considered in different periods and places: in the medieval period it was done making philosophy theo-centric (God

becomes the principle of coordination), in the modern period it was carried out by an anthropo-centric philosophy (a human activity by which the human spirit comes to an awareness of its own potentialities), in the English-speaking countries the coordination is done through the analysis of language. Thus there is no unanimity in the way task of philosophy is considered. But it is generally accepted that the task of philosophy cannot be reduced to that of a mere science, and that philosophy has a priority and primordality in comparison to other sciences.

1.2 PHILOSOPHY AND PHILOSOPHIZING

After having seen the definition of philosophy, and received some understanding about ‘philosophy’, it is necessary that we introduce another notion, which is apparently similar to it, but very much different from it. That notion is nothing other than ‘philosophizing’. Though the term ‘philosophizing’ is not of any recent origin, it has become in recent times more widespread in its being used in philosophical circles, in comparison to the more popular term ‘philosophy’. This change is not a terminological change of one term (philosophizing) replacing another term (philosophy). But even in philosophical circles these terms are mistakenly used as synonymous. There is a basic difference between ‘philosophy’ and ‘philosophizing’ in their meaning and content. The term ‘philosophy’ is nominal in its structure, static and dead in its meaning, and refers to the finished product of thought, while the term ‘philosophizing’ is verbal in its structure, dynamic and alive in its meaning, and refers to the process of thinking.

What is summed up in the above sentence needs to be clarified a little more. The term ‘philosophy’ is a noun, and just as any other noun it serves as the subject or predicate of a sentence. A noun in the strict sense has the positive point of having a very precise meaning within a clear-cut boundary; but there is a negative-point in this positive, namely that the precision that it has, is a dead precision. For instance, the term ‘table’ has the same meaning irrespective of time and space—last year and this year, in this place and in another place. ‘Sameness’ of meaning without any dynamism characterizes all terms and notions in the traditional sense. Such an understanding is slowly disappearing. This change from a static to a dynamic meaning cannot be easily maintained in the term ‘philosophy’, as it is laden with an established traditional meaning. The term ‘philosophy’ presupposes a truth—at least it has been so—characterized by perenniality and universality, untouched by time and space. Contemporary thought pattern has destroyed such a myth, and has opted for a more dynamic and humble attitude: *dynamic*, because every reality is philosophically seen as becoming; *humble*, because there is no dogmatism of absolute certainty about what is philosophically seen. The term ‘philosophizing’ reflects such a philosophical *dynamism* and *humility* of being constantly in search, taking serious consideration of the elements of time and space. Thus *philosophizing* is and has to be different according to the different places, times and perspectives. From what is explained above, we are not proposing that the term ‘philosophy’ be replaced with ‘philosophizing’; rather we want to bring to the attention of the students that there is a difference in the meaning of these terms, and that in the contemporary understanding ‘philosophy’ should have a meaning with a philosophical dynamism and humility, which is better reflected in the term, *philosophizing*.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

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

1) What is your general understanding of philosophy?

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2) How is philosophy different from philosophizing?

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1.3 PHILOSOPHY AND WISDOM

We clarified the meaning of philosophy by referring to ‘wisdom’. Thus there is a close relation between philosophy and wisdom. But how close is this closeness? To understand this, we need first to clarify what is meant by wisdom, and by clarifying wisdom we are clarifying what philosophy is.

All of us think, and rightly so, that we know what wisdom is. But when we are asked to think it aloud and to thematize it, we are at a loss... we do not quite know the way to express in clear and precise terms what wisdom is and thus to remove the ‘vagueness’ surrounding this notion. Hence ‘wisdom’ is an elusive and enigmatic notion. Because of this vagueness of the notion of ‘wisdom’, it is enveloped and blanketed with what is other than ‘wisdom’. Just as today *philosophy* is lost among philosophies, wisdom is lost among ‘knowledges’. Western philosophy has been basically an epistemology, a theory of knowledge. Hence the various ‘philosophies’ have been nothing but the various theories of knowledge. Thus in the area of knowledge great progress has been achieved by the West; not only has man made an intellectual conquest of the various realities, he has theorized this conquest, making it an epistemology. But in this process ‘wisdom’ became the victim, insofar as it has been side-stepped and forgotten. What shines forth is the ‘peripheral’ at the neglect of the ‘fundamental’, the ‘ontic’ at the neglect of the ‘ontological’. Wisdom as the ‘ground’ is hidden, whereas what the ‘ground’ enables to grow i.e., knowledge, shows forth and thrives.

WISDOM VS. KNOWLEDGE

Now that we have referred to both wisdom and knowledge, we need to shed more light onto the relation between them. Wisdom has an ontological priority over knowledge insofar as the former enables the latter to emerge. I am *able* to know because I *enabled* to know by wisdom. Wisdom is the condition of possibility for knowledge. The relation between wisdom and knowledge is not that between possibility and actuality. Possibility does not enable the actuality; possibility refers

to the situation prior to something becoming actual. Before I actually knew the distance between the earth and the sun, it was an un-actualized or possible knowledge for me. But this possible knowledge does not enable it to become actual knowledge. Wisdom is not the un-actualized knowledge, but the 'ground' that enables, the 'source' that engenders knowledge.

Is wisdom merely the 'source' of knowledge? No, it is its 'goal' as well. Knowledge is linked and limited to what is known; it is a limited enterprise. In knowledge one is almost exclusively concerned about the truth of the knowledge achieved. Once something is known, it is added to the fund of one's knowledge. One is complacent about what one has intellectually grasped. Wisdom, on the other hand, looks beyond the boundary of knowledge. A 'knowing' person would say: "I know that I know." His knowledge is limited to what he knows, and he is stuck up with it. But the 'wise' would rather say: "I know that I do not know." He is more concerned and anxious about what he does not know. Wisdom is, if we may use the expression, the *knowledge* of the non-knowledge. This genuine knowledge is wisdom. Thus there is a difference between 'wisdom' as the genuine knowledge and 'knowledge' as ordinarily understood. Hence rightly can we say: "The more one knows, the more one knows how little one knows!" Genuine knowledge thus takes one to the vast realm beyond the boundary of knowledge—the realm of wisdom. The end of all knowledge is to reach this realm of 'wisdom', which consists in one's ability to go beyond the boundary of knowledge.

Wisdom consists in the *wonder* not only at the 'beyond' of one's knowledge but also at the ordinary reality, evoking thought. Reality as dynamic coming-to-be evokes 'wonder' in a thinker. "The greatest of all wonder, that something is!" The 'wonder' that is referred to here does not necessarily mean 'to be startled' by something unusual, sudden and strange. The 'usual' and 'ordinary' engenders philosophical wonder. It is wisdom that enables the human to 'see' the wonder of reality. Thus a wise man is a 'seer' (*der Seher*). The 'seer' is the wise man who stands open to reality in its dynamic process.

Although Philosophy is etymologically defined as 'love of wisdom', Raimon Panikkar in his book, *Der Weisheit eine Wohnung bereiten*, introduces a new term 'eco-sophy'. The term 'eco-sophy' has to be differentiated from 'philo-sophy' and 'eco-logy'. We are not concerned here with the intricate analysis of the interrelation between these terms, but rather we want to make some reflections on this term. '*Eco-sophy*' (*oikos* + *sophia*) means 'house of wisdom' or 'wisdom as the house'. We have to clarify what is meant by 'house' here. It is not to be taken in its objective and static meaning of a 'building', but in the phenomenologico-intentional meaning of 'enabling to dwell'. "The house becomes a house only through dwelling." 'Wisdom as the house' is the process of dwelling so as to make the whole universe one's house; a wise person is one who, by his 'dwelling' in the sense of 'being at peace', is able to 'widen' the house so as to embrace the whole cosmos, i.e., to make a *cosmic house*, and thus to become a *cosmic person*. Such a person is different from a fragmented person of narrow perspectives of various types, but a person who is able to go beyond the boundaries of region and religion, culture and language, class and caste.

WISDOM AS THE HORIZON

What has been referred to as the process of dwelling or becoming a cosmic person can be explained in terms of a philosophically pregnant term 'horizon' so as to give

a philosophical depth to our reflections. The term 'horizon' has been used in various contexts both philosophical and non-philosophical. But in the contemporary Western philosophy of Husserl and Heidegger it carries a deeper meaning. Heidegger employs the term 'horizon' primarily in the context of his development of hermeneutical phenomenology. According to his hermeneutics, "to interpret is to expose the 'as-structure' (*Als-Struktur*), which is grounded in the 'fore-structure' (*Vor-Struktur*)... The fore-structure of (pre) understanding is the *horizon* or the hermeneutical situation, out of which something is 'let be seen' as such a thing. The fore-structure or horizon is not to be understood in the quantitative sense of the *whole* as different from the *part* (the thing interpreted); it is rather to be taken in the sense of the *implicit* (fore-structure or horizon) as the basis or ground for the *explicit* (as-structure). It is *from* and by the horizon of the implicit that something is made to stand out or interpreted as this something. Thus for Heidegger horizon as the implicit (pre)understanding enables all interpretation. It is *wisdom* that enables man to embrace the presupposed horizon, and thus to be in the constant process of moving to the *deeper* and *wider*.

Husserl uses 'horizon' in the context of his theory of intentionality and experience of consciousness. An object is actually experienced or apprehended only within a setting or horizon, which is the context of possible apprehensions. According to Husserl we are able to arrive at the essence of something only when we can move from the 'determinacy' of the actual apprehension to the 'indeterminacy' of the possible apprehension or horizon. A knowledgeable person is *struck up* with the actually known; he may try to know more and thus to increase his knowledge about the thing known by making the possible knowledge into actual knowledge. But a *wise* person is able to link his *actual* knowledge about something, however little and limited it may be, to the indefinite *possible* ways in which it can be known and he can know. Thus the Husserlian call to the phenomenological intuition is a *call to wisdom*—a call to the indefinitely wide *horizon of wisdom* by transcending the limitation of knowledge.

The world of *horizon* for Husserl, as explained above, is the world of *possibilities*. But the 'size' of this world of possibilities is in proportion to one's wisdom. This needs to be clarified. The less wise a person is, the less extensive is one's world of possibilities. It is our contention that a genuinely wise person will have an indefinitely extensive world of possibilities. On the other hand the un-wise limit their *possibility* to their *actuality*. To think of a possibility that is other than what they have actually experienced or perceived is an impossibility for them. For instance, if I am unable to accept even the very possibility of a person living on a strictly vegetarian diet just because I have not experienced or heard about it, then I am limiting the possibility, by placing a boundary around it, to my actuality. It is wisdom that enables one to go beyond one's actual experience or knowledge. We can bring in here the traditional notion of 'intellectual humility' in relation to wisdom. A wise person is one who is characterized by intellectual humility. He sees the limit of his knowledge; in other words, he accepts the possibility of his inability of knowledge. He does not exclude the possibility of his own ignorance from his world of possibilities. Such a person is gifted with *intellectual honesty*; a clear pointer to his wisdom.

Our reflections on wisdom could be extended to the phenomenon of time as thought by Husserl and Heidegger. Husserl expresses the phenomenological constitution of time as "a streaming present surrounded by a horizon of immediate 'retention' of the past (to be distinguished from active recollection) and of immediate 'protention' of the future (to be distinguished from active expectation)." Heidegger has developed

a more profound notion of time, in comparison to Husserl. In their attempt to do away with the notion of time as an objective phenomenon Heidegger has been more successful. He takes time, in the earlier phase of his thought, as human being's process of temporalizing. Human being stands out into the three *ecstases* of time by which the future and the past are brought to the situation of the present, whereby the future is *already* present and the past is *still* present. What is to be specially noted in the conception of time according to both Husserl and Heidegger is that man extends himself to the future and to the past by way of 'protention' and 'retention' [Husserl], or by way of 'coming towards' (Zu-kommen) and 'coming back' (Zurück-kommen) [Heidegger]. Is it not 'wisdom' that enables man to extend himself to the future and to the past, and to bring them to the present? 'Going to the past' is not to be taken in the ordinary meaning of the power of recollection or memory, but in the sense of 'gathering, appropriating, thinking back,' etc. It is in proportion to one's ability to dig into the past to gather the repeatable possibilities that one can go far into the future in the sense of fore-seeing, seeing ahead and thus planning for the future. The more a person can extend himself to the past, the more will he be able to extend himself to the future. We consider 'wisdom' as the vision that embraces the already (past) and the ahead (future)—the *vision* that looks back and looks ahead. Both these aspects go together. The wider the ambit of this thinking or *vision*, the more profound is the *wisdom*. When a person can hardly go beyond the boundary of the present, i.e., when he hardly carries anything of the past and can scarcely see anything of the future, as the past remains 'no more' and the future 'not yet', then there is present in him hardly any wisdom.

The capacity to go farther into the future speaks for man's power of imagination. In many a philosopher the notion of 'imagination' occupies an important place. For our purpose here, we shall refer only to artistic imagination, which is generally held as the power to visualize scenes or events that have not occurred yet. In other words, it is the capacity to 'see' the *presence* in the *absence*. In proportion to one's fertility of imagination one is able to move from 'what does not exist' to 'what could exist' and 'what ought to exist.' It is the peak of artistic creativity and power of imagination. Thus imagination points to man's capacity to look into the future, into what is not yet. It is our contention that this capacity of imagination amounts to one's *wisdom*. It needs little wisdom to make an assessment of something that is actually present; it needs only knowledge. We often come across persons statements of assessment on a building that is constructed, on a picture that is already painted, on a cultural item that is already performed, ... But to make a plan for a building, painting or cultural item, we need the power of imagination or the ability to 'see' in advance as to how it would be or should be. One creates a plan based on such 'seeing'. But for the wisdom that enables man to creatively see the presence in the absence, he would be condemned to *stagnation* by the mere repetition of the same. The world has grown, culture has developed and mankind has progressed, because *wisdom* has been present in the form of creative thinking at least in some persons. Thus 'wisdom' refers to one's *vision* of the future, of the not-yet, of the possibilities; in other words, *wisdom* implies and involves the power of imagination and creativity.

All that we have clarified with regard to wisdom is a clarification of philosophy. A philosopher is not merely a knowledgeable person but a wise person. S/he is not a person with a quantitatively unlimited knowledge, but a person with a qualitatively open horizon that enables one to open out to various realms of knowledge. Philosophy is wisdom that enables a person to open out to knowledge, going beyond

the limiting boundaries of fragmentation. A philosopher is a wise person, who is in constant search; *he is always a seeker, and always on the way*. Our reflections are intended to serve as a *call* to move away from the narrowness of our actual knowledge, and thus to enter into the wide horizon of wisdom.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

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

1) Differentiate between wisdom and knowledge.

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2) How can wisdom be explained in terms of horizon?

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1.4 SCOPE OF PHILOSOPHY

By relating philosophy to wisdom, we have already implied that the scope of philosophy cannot be put within precise boundary, but within the widening horizon of wisdom. Thus the scope of philosophy embraces the whole of reality. Although philosophy claims to consider everything in general and nothing in particular, we can still point out some of the areas that are generally accepted as typically philosophical. By taking a quick glance at them, we will have clarified the scope of philosophy.

We start with the most fundamental realm of philosophy: metaphysics. It is the inquiry into the first *whence* and the last *whither*, an inquiry into the ‘beyond’ of physics, that seeks to ask and answer the most ultimate and fundamental questions about the whole of reality—the Divine, the human, and the cosmos. Metaphysical questions embrace everything as a whole. This does not mean that such questions are merely general questions; they are the most fundamental (the first *whence*) and ultimate (the last *whither*) questions. However advanced the physicist’s world may have grown, still the ‘world’ and concern of metaphysician is totally different from that of his counterpart. Thus metaphysics occupies the foundational realm in philosophy.

Another set of problems that philosophy has to consider are those connected with our thinking. There is, first of all, the study of valid thinking or argument, which is called ‘logic’. A related area is the ‘latent structure of our actual thinking’, traditionally called epistemology or theory of knowledge. It is the study, not so much on what we know or how we know, but what it is to know. The study of good and evil too is a baffling question for the philosophers. It is the realm of morality. It does not enumerate the good and bad actions, but it makes a fundamental analysis as to what it is to be

right or wrong. It enables the human mind to distinguish between what is good and what is bad; thus it is a fundamental search.

Although cosmos is subjected to a thorough analysis in the wake of the growth of science, philosophy has not left it only to science. Complementing the scientific knowledge of the cosmos, philosophy too looks at it in its radicality. Even though what has been traditionally developed as cosmology by Aristotle is differently looked at in today's scientific period, it continues to be a philosophical discipline. Reality includes not only cosmos, but the realms of the human and of the Divine as well. These realms too are philosophically considered in philosophical anthropology (traditionally known as rational psychology) and in the philosophy of God (traditionally known as theodicy). Besides these traditionally accepted fields, philosophy brings to its embrace almost every other question. Everything is looked at in their ultimate causes and principles.

1.5 IMPORTANCE OF PHILOSOPHY

The importance of philosophy will show itself as one traverses through philosophy. As one gradually enters into the width of philosophy—grow in one's acquaintance with philosophy—one will experience its depth and importance as well. Just as philosophy cannot be confined within precise boundary, so also is its importance. At the same time, we can refer to a few points that will add to the importance of philosophy.

Every human being has a philosophy of life; it gives shape to his/her life. Even those who do not find any importance for philosophy and question its relevance are in fact shouting aloud its importance by their use of it. Since one's philosophy of life moulds one's attitudes and convictions, it has to be developed, which is possible only by coming into contact with way in which philosophers have thought. Study of philosophy is not for intellectual consumption, out of intellectual curiosity to know how others have philosophized; it is primarily for oneself to develop a philosophy of life.

The greatest advantage of philosophy consists in its ability to make the human mind sharp and disciplined. What one learns in philosophy may not be found as useful as other pieces of information from scientific and social fields. But what it does to human mind cannot be compared to the study of any other science. Study of philosophy gives a depth in one's thinking and acting—in one's being. Besides giving depth, philosophy disciplines the mind in such a way that it is able to understand every other disciplines of knowledge. Philosophy enables a person to have the clarity of concepts and precision of expressions. Such a precision and clarity will be seen in thinking, speaking and acting. Thus philosophy enters the practical life as well.

It has been generally considered that philosophy is a purely abstract enterprise without any practical relevance. But as Marcel says, "philosophy has no weight and no interest whatever unless it sounds an echo in our life." Today philosophy is brought down to philosophizing on questions with which the humans are constantly gripped. Thus it vibrates as a constant 'echo' in our life. Philosophy does not put people to slumber, but disturbs and awakens them from their life of mediocrity and stagnation, and spurs them to dynamic action and moral living. This is what was done Socrates of old, and Kierkegaard of last century. In short, philosophy enables people to live a life of existential depth, moral integrity and religious conviction.

Check Your Progress III

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

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

1) What is the scope of philosophy?

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2) Reflect on the importance of the study of philosophy.

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1.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have tried to give a rough idea about philosophy, by giving a definition, which becomes clarified in the process of the course. In keeping with the thinking of today we have shown the difference of meaning of the terms philosophy and philosophizing. We have rather elaborately considered the notion of 'wisdom' as related to philosophy, as well as in itself. It is our conviction that philosophy is more related to wisdom than to knowledge. Although the reflections on wisdom presuppose some understanding of contemporary philosophy, still it is more appropriate to introduce it as we begin the philosophical course than at a later stage. Finally we conclude the unit with a short consideration of the scope and importance of philosophy.

1.7 KEY WORDS

Principle	: Principle is that from which something proceeds in any way whatsoever.
Determinacy and indeterminacy	: Determinacy is the state of actuality and indeterminacy is the capacity to be determined.
Ontic and ontological	: Ontic means beings (things) that appear and ontological means the being which is the ground of beings that appear.

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1.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check your progress I

- 1) Philosophy is born of humans’ natural curiosity manifested in the form of human search. Western philosophy was born in Greece; the term ‘philosophy’ too has its roots in Greece and in Greek language. It is quite commonly known that *philosophia* etymologically means ‘love of wisdom’ (*Philia* + *Sophia*). But *sophia* had a much wider range of application than the modern English “wisdom.” Wherever intelligence can be exercised—in practical affairs, in the mechanical arts, in business—there is room for *Sophia*. Oxford Dictionary defines philosophy as “that department of knowledge which deals with ultimate real-ity, or with the most general causes and principles of things.” It is presumed here that science, inheriting the cosmological tradition, does not offer us the knowledge of ultimate reality; only philosophy can do this. Science can only tell us *how*, whereas philosophy can tell us *why*, things happen as they do. Although science too speaks about the *why* or the causes, the “gen-eral causes and principles” of the philosopher are “higher” and “more ultimate” than the causes and principles that science reveals to us.
- 2) The term ‘philosophizing’ has become in recent times more widespread in its being used in philosophical circles, in comparison to the more popular term ‘philosophy’. This change is not a terminological change of one term (philosophizing) replacing another term (philosophy). There is a basic difference between ‘philosophy’ and ‘philosophizing’ in their meaning and content. The term ‘philosophy’ is nominal in its structure, static and dead in its meaning, and refers to the finished product of thought, while the term ‘philosophizing’ is verbal in its structure, dynamic and alive in its meaning, and refers to the process of thinking.

Check your progress II

- 1) Wisdom has an ontological priority over knowledge insofar as the former enables the latter to emerge. I am *able* to know because I *enabled* to know by wisdom. Wisdom is the condition of possibility for knowledge. The relation between wisdom and knowledge is not that between possibility and actuality. Possibility does not enable the actuality; possibility refers to the situation prior to something becoming actual. Wisdom is not the un-actualized knowledge, but the ‘ground’ that enables, the ‘source’ that engenders knowledge. Wisdom is the ‘goal’ of knowledge as well. Knowledge is linked and limited to what is known; it is a limited enterprise.
- 2) The term ‘horizon’ has been used in various contexts both philosophical and non-philosophical. For Heidegger horizon stands for the implicit (pre)understanding that enables all interpretation. For Husserl ‘horizon’ stands for the ‘indeterminacy’ of the possible apprehensions. A knowledgeable person is *stuck up* with the actually known; but a *wise* person is able to link his *actual* knowledge to the indefinite *possible* ways in which it can be known and he can know. Thus Husserlian call to the phenomenological intuition is a *call to wisdom*—a call to the indefinitely wide *horizon of wisdom* by transcending the limitation of knowledge. The world of *horizon* as explained here is the world of *possibilities*. But the ‘size’ of this world of possibilities is in proportion to one’s wisdom. A genuinely wise person will have an indefinitely extensive world of possibilities. On the other hand the un-wise limit their *possibility* to their *actuality*. It is wisdom that enables one to go beyond one’s actual experience or knowledge.

Check your progress III

- 1) By relating philosophy to wisdom, it is implied that the scope of philosophy cannot be put within precise boundary, but within the widening horizon of wisdom. The most fundamental realm that philosophy deals with is that of metaphysics. It is the inquiry into the first *whence* and the last *whither*, an inquiry into the ‘beyond’ of physics, that seeks to ask and answer the most ultimate and fundamental questions about the whole of reality—the Divine, the human, and the cosmos. Besides these traditionally accepted realms, philosophy brings to its embrace almost every other question, looked at in their ultimate causes and principles. Thus the scope of philosophy embraces the whole of reality.
- 2) The greatest advantage of philosophy consists in its ability to make the human mind sharp and disciplined. Philosophy gives a depth in one’s thinking and acting. Besides giving depth, it disciplines the mind in such a way that a person can have the clarity of concepts and precision of expressions. Such a precision and clarity will be seen in thinking, speaking and acting. Thus philosophy enters the practical life as well. Philosophy does not put people to slumber, but disturbs and awakens them from their life of mediocrity and stagnation, and spurs them to dynamic action and moral living. In short, philosophy enables people to live a life of existential depth, moral integrity and religious conviction.