

## **Preface to the Second Session**

Dear Philosopher/Scholar/Researcher

It's a matter of pleasure to welcome you to the Second Online Session of SPPIS Haryana. Philosophy as an intellectual activity can be variously defined, depending on whether the emphasis is placed on its method, its subject-matter or its purpose. Philosophy is the study of general and fundamental problems, such as those connected with existence, knowledge, values, reason, mind, and language. It is a basic problem of defining philosophy, its methods and the problems etc. Many interpretations we can find in Indian and Western tradition regarding the nature of philosophy. If we try to trace the literal meaning of philosophy, we shall see that this word involves two Greek words, one 'philo' meaning love and the other 'sophia' meaning knowledge. Literal meaning therefore, philosophy means love of wisdom. Going by this literal meaning a philosopher most of the time and most of the place is preoccupied with the search for truths and wisdom. He pays little attention to the conclusions he searches in course of his search. He searches is endless because the truth is infinite. He wants to keep himself always engaged in the pursuit of truths rather than its possession, what philosophy is, this question, has baffled the philosophers and thinkers.

### **Definitions of Philosophy-**

There are several definitions of philosophy given by different thinkers like Plato, Comte, Sankracharya, Herbert Spencer, Seller, William James, John Dewey, Brightman according to their own tradition. Here are some definitions of philosophy given by famous philosophers:

"Philosophy is t]hat which grasps its own era in thought." — [ Hegel], *Elements of the of Rights; 1821* "

"Philosophy is a]n interpretation of the world in order to change it." — [ Karl Marx], *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (quoted by Jonathan Wolff)*

"... [Philosophy] is the acquisition of knowledge." — [Plato, *Euthydemus*, 288d.]

**Compositional Definition of Philosophy:** Here is a definition of philosophy which covers its main objectives: "मानव-जीवन के विविध पक्षों का बौद्धिक -अवधारणात्मक चिन्तन या ऐसे चिन्तन का आलोचनात्मक मूल्यांकन दर्शन है।" (Pure rational-conceptual thought regarding different aspects of human life or a critical thought over such kind of thoughts may be called as philosophy.)

### **Five Approaches to Philosophy:**

There are some various approaches to philosophy:

- Philosophy is a set of views or beliefs about life and the universe, which are often held uncritically.

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- Philosophy is a process of reflecting and criticizes our most deeply held conception and beliefs.
- Philosophy is a rational attempt to look at the world as a whole.
- Philosophy is the logical analysis of language and the classification of the meaning of words and concepts.
- Philosophy is a group of perennial problems that interest people and for which philosophes always have sought answers.

These approaches raised several traditions like idealism, realism pragmatism, analytic philosophy, existentialism, phenomenology and process philosophy etc. philosophy also means the various theories or systems of thought developed by the great philosophers like Socrates, Aristotle, Descartes, James etc. Even though we may be unconscious of the fact, we are constantly influenced by the ideas that have come down to us in the traditions of society.

### **Problems of Philosophy**

According to Richard E. Creel, "Philosophy is an open-ended, pioneering discipline, forever opening up new areas of study and new methods of inquiry". Here are three basic problems of philosophy:

- **The Problem of Knowledge:** It is mainly discusses within Epistemology.
- **The Problem of Value:** It is discusses within the Ethics and Axiology. Jointly this called as Value Theory.
- **The Problem of Reality:** This is the area of Metaphysics.

With the above said problems, we can classify the main braches of philosophy as:

**Metaphysics:** In this area of philosophy it discuss about the nature of reality. There are basically three views about the nature of reality:

- *Theism:* Mind and matter are both real.
- *Materialism:* No, only Matter is real.
- *Idealism:* Matter is not real, only Mind is. It is basically views of the Eastern philosophies.

**Epistemology:** The area of philosophy that investigates the nature sources, authority and limits of human knowledge is called "Epistemology".

**Axiology:** It is the study of the nature and achievement of happiness. Here we can include:

- **Ethics** or "moral philosophy", is concerned primarily with the question of the best way to live, and secondarily, concerning the question of whether this question can be answered.
- **Aesthetics** deals with beauty, art, enjoyment, sensory-emotional values, perception, and matters of taste and sentiment.

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**Logic** is the study of valid argument forms. Logic was established as a discipline by Aristotle, who gave it a fundamental place in philosophy. Beginning in the late 19th century, mathematicians such as Gottlob Frege focused on a mathematical treatment of logic, and today the subject of logic has two broad divisions: mathematical logic (formal symbolic logic) and what is now called philosophical logic.

**Political Philosophy** is the study of government and the relationship of individuals (or families and clans) to communities including the state . It includes questions about justice, law, property, and the rights and obligations of the citizen. Politics and ethics are traditionally inter-linked subjects, as both discuss the question of what is good and how people should live.

**Social Philosophy** attempts to understand the patterns and nuances, changes and tendencies of societies. It is a wide field with many sub disciplines.

**Philosophy of Mind** deals with the nature of the mind and its relationship to the body, and is typified by disputes between dualism and materialism. In recent years there has been increasing similarity between this branch of philosophy and cognitive science.

**Philosophy of Language** is inquiry into the nature, origins, and usage of language.

**Philosophy of Religion** is a branch of philosophy that asks questions about religion.

#### **Uses of Philosophy:**

To ask what the use of philosophy is like asking what the use of understanding is. One answer is that understanding is something that we very often seek for its own sake. There are some uses of philosophy:

- Philosophy inculcates in us the habit of thinking.
- Philosophy yields new ideas.
- Philosophy makes us more decisive.
- Philosophy gives true freedom to man.
- Philosophy can guide the scientific civilization along the right path.
- Philosophy is an essential part of higher education and associated with Religion, Morality, Art & Aesthetics and Politics etc.

#### **Philosophy in India:**

The term Indian philosophy (Sanskrit: *Darshanas*), may refer to any of several traditions of philosophical thought that originated in the Indian subcontinent, including Hindu philosophy, Buddhist philosophy, and Jain philosophy. Having the same or rather intertwined origins, all of these philosophies have a common underlying theme of Dharma, and similarly attempt to explain the attainment of emancipation. *Darśana* ( Sanskrit: दर्शन) is a term meaning "sight" (in the sense of an instance of seeing or beholding; from a root *drś* "to see"), vision, apparition, or glimpse. It is most commonly used for "visions of the divine," e.g., of a god or

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a very holy person or artifact. Indian Philosophy have been formalized and promulgated chiefly between 1000 BC to a few centuries AD, with residual commentaries and reformations continuing up to as late as the 20th century by Aurobindo and other philosophers.

Indian philosophy is the name given to different philosophical thoughts that grew and developed on Indian soil. Philosophy in India has a very ancient origin. In fact, philosophical speculation started in India in the vedic age itself. Freethinking sages of ancient India speculated independently about various fundamental questions relating to human life and its destiny. It also includes philosophical speculations of all thinkers of India, whether ancient or modern. In this session our intention is to see the development of philosophy in India, all periods in general and 21st Century in particular. It may include the development of all schools of Indian philosophy as well as recent trends.

In this session we find some good papers on Indian as well as on Western tradition. I am thankful to all the contributors of this session and organising committee for their valuable support. Hope it will be beneficial for us. Like our first session we will publish the selected papers in a print book having ISBN. Here we are seeking for your valuable comments and discussion.

**Dr. Desh Raj Sirswal**

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