

Unit - 2

Answer the following questions:-

- ① Explain Logical Positivists Verifiability Theory of Knowledge.

OR

What is Principle of verification according to Logical Positivists? Explain 'or' critically discuss logical positivists verifiability theory of knowledge.

Ans: The verifiability theory of meaning was initially put forward by the members of "Vienna Circle", ~~was~~ a group of Philosophers, Mathematicians, and Scientists that gathered around Moritz Schlick in Vienna in the 1920s. They are called Logical Positivists. At Oxford, Logical Positivism found an able advocate in A.J. Ayer.

The principle of Verification is fundamental to Logical Positivism. With the principle of verification, we can determine whether a statement is true, false or meaningless. According to Moritz Schlick, "the meaning of a proposition is the method of its verification." According to A.J. Ayer, "a statement is literally meaningful if it is either analytic or empirically verifiable". Analytical Statements are verified simply by appeal to the definitions of the signs used in them. If Analytical Statement turn out to be tautologies they are true, and if they turn out to be contradictions, they are false. Logical and Mathematical statements are of this kind. All

other meaningful statements are capable of being verified by empirical observations i.e; by the evidence of sense-experience.

Ayer, on the basis of the principle of verification, has classified propositions into 3 categories :

- (i) There are some propositions which are empirically verifiable. For example; We can verify that the bite of Anopheles causes Malaria.
- (ii) Some sentences cannot be verified empirically with sense-perception, but they can, be verified with suitable apparatus. For example; The existence of atom can be verified with the help of sophisticated Microscopes.
- (iii) Some sentences are impossible to verify. For example; We may say "All Crows are Black", Here we may see this or that crow to be black, but we cannot see "All Crows".

Ayer has also drawn a distinction between 'Strong Verifiability' and 'Weak Verifiability'. According to Ayer, 'a proposition is said to be verifiable, in the strong sense if the term, if and only if, its truth could be conclusively established in experience. That means those statements which are empirically

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verifiable have 'strong Verifiability' and those statement which cannot be verified with observation or sense perceptions, but they can be verified only with sophisticated Apparatus have weak Verifiability. Only Analytic or A priori Propositions are Verifiable in the Strong sense. But no empirical proposition can be conclusively verified in experience. It is verifiable only in the weak sense. For example; We can say that, "That is a mango". It can be visually known to exist and can be ascertained by its taste and smell. But the statement that 'There is life in Mars' is not directly verifiable till today.

②. What are the Criticism or Defects in Verifiability according to Logical Positivist's?

Ans: The Logical Positivist's Theory of meaning even in the modified form has many defects :-

- (a) We can understand the meaning of a sentence without thinking at all of its verifiability.
- (b) The principle of meaning as verifiability is neither rational nor self evident.
- (c) It is pointed out by Critics that the principle of verification is self-eliminating because there is no way of verifying it. Carnap describes this principle as a 'proposal or Requirement' and Ayer describes it as a 'Methodological Principle'.

- (d) We cannot choose to describe a given statement as meaningless any more than we can choose to describe 'Grass as Green'. It is a crucial mistake of Logical Positivist to think that a single hypothesis is Verifiable by Observation.
- (e) Logical Positivist do not take into consideration the fact that all our claims about the world are not meant to state verifiable facts about it. There are countless different kinds of use of sentences. We can promise, warn, encourage, ask questions, give orders etc; but these speech-acts are not meaningless.

3. Critically discuss the elimination of Metaphysics by Logical Positivism.

OR

What is Logical Positivist rejection of Metaphysics?

Ans: Metaphysics is the Science of being reality as such. Pure being or reality as such is what only is or exists apart from any becoming any changes, qualities, sub-divisions or movements. It makes distinction between appearance and reality. So reality must be something different from appearances and we have no way of knowing the reality as it is in itself.

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But in recent time, logical development of Stumian and Kantian phenomen~~ism~~ has given rise to a new group of thinkers called Logical Positivists of whom Schlick, Husserl, Carnap and A.J. Ayer are most prominent. For them all metaphysical statements if any, are literally meaningless and non-sensical, where the question of truth and falsity does not arise. A proposition to be factually meaningful must point to fact or facts that will verify it.

(The Logical Positivists have condemned and rejected metaphysics for a variety of reasons. Whereas Wittgenstein rejects and condemns metaphysics because of the unverifiability or lack of objective reference of metaphysical statements and assertions.) Rudolf Carnap rejects it because the linguistic analysis of metaphysical statements shows them to be devoid of any meaning or sense. (According to Carnap the metaphysical statements are sterile. They may have literal meaning and may follow the rules of syntax but on closer analysis they are quite obviously and meaninglessly and senseless.)

(A.J. Ayer makes distinction between metaphysics and philosophy. According to him Philosophy and Science are closely linked. Philosophy has no relation with metaphysics. Metaphysics is said to be about a region which has no connection with the observable facts and none of the metaphysical statements are verifiable scientifically. Thus, metaphysics and philosophy are not only distinct

but mutually exclusive.)

However, the position of the logical positivists does not appear satisfactory and the rejection of metaphysics is not convincing. A clear formulation of the criteria of verifiability has not been possible. There are difficulties in the verifiability principle then many of the universal laws of science become meaningless.

4. Evaluate Logical Positivists contribution to philosophy.

Ans: The most important contribution of Logical Positivists is that it help people to break the limit of mind by God and the church. People turn to the study of hard facts and data from part and experiment to get knowledge rather than only from the teaching of church.

The Logical Positivists were originally scientists who has rebelled against the over wearing and lordly attitude of Philosophers of that time who little understood science but pretend to know its basic and fundamental principles. These scientists in reaction so overvalued science that they tried to apply wholesale the method, techniques and Criterion of Science to philosophy. Thus, they postulated that only Scientific analysis and

physical demonstration were the criteria of this application of Science to philosophy, the philosophy appeared to be will of the wisp and beating about the bush. Thus, metaphysics was rejected.

However, in their zeal the positivists failed to realize that they were cutting under their own ground. Truly Philosophy is a Science of Sciences. The attempt to extend the scope of principle of empirical verification to entire realm of knowledge is grossly exaggerated. There are many beliefs like God, Soul etc are not empirical entities but one presuppositions of all experience, they are so fundamental that without them life is meaningless but they are unverifiable. This is because all experience possible can obviously not be proved in experience. The idea of identity or equality is not abstracted from any experience through it is presupposed when we say two lines were equal or that these twins are identical.

The Logical Positivists Conception of Knowledge is too mechanical to be true. They are mistaken in rejecting the value and importance of imagination and Creativity. When logical positivists maintain that values are unrelated to and undervied from facts, they forget that without postulating the idea of value we can hardly know a fact. Therefore, value is prior to and presupposed by a fact which we know unless we value knowledge. Why should we take any interest in facts. As a matter of fact Logical Positivists have denigrated Philosophy.

Short Questions :

1. What is Logical Positivism?

Ans: Logical Positivism ~~are~~ also called Logical Empiricism, a philosophical movement that arose in Vienna in the 1920's and was characterized by the view that Scientific Knowledge is the only kind of factual knowledge and that all traditional metaphysical doctrines are to be rejected as meaningless.

2. What is fundamental principles of Logical Positivism?

Ans: The fundamental principles of Logical Positivism is the principle of verification or verifiability theory of knowledge.

3. What is Metaphysics?

Ans: Metaphysics literally means what comes after Physics. Metaphysics is synonymous with Ontology or Metaphysics is the theory of being or reality.

4. Which group of logicians rejected Metaphysics?

Ans: Logical Positivists.

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5. Name two logical positivists.

Ans: (a) A.J. Ayer
(b) Moritz Schlick

6. What is the criteria by which the meaning of a sentence is determined, according to A.J. Ayer?

Ans: According to A.J. Ayer, the Principle Verification is the criteria by which the meaning of a sentence is determined.

7. In what sense, Ayer accepts Verifiability?

Ans: Ayer accepts verifiability in the "Weak Sense".

8. Which group of Philosophers considers Metaphysics as Non-Sensual?

Ans: The logical positivists.

9. Who wrote "Language, Truth and Logic"?

Ans: A.J. Ayer.

10. Who is the father of logical Positivism?

Ans: Moritz Schlick.

11. Is Positivism Inductive or Deductive?

Ans: Crowther and Lancaster argue that as a general rule Positivist studies usually adopt deductive approach is usually associated with a phenomenology philosophy.

12. What is the Verification principle philosophy?

Ans: Verifiability principle, a philosophical doctrine fundamental to the school of Logical Positivism holding that a statement is meaningful only if it is either empirically verifiable or else tautological.

13. What is Knowledge according to A.J. Ayer?

Ans: In the problem of knowledge according to A.J. Ayer, the first requirement is that what is known should be true, but this is not sufficient, not even if we add to it the further condition that one must be completely sure of what one knows.

14. What was the main argument of Logical Positivism in the 20th Century?

Ans: Logical Positivism's main tenet is that only beliefs that can be empirically proven are valid.

15. What does

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15. What does Verifiable mean?

Ans: In saying that a meaningful sentence must be verifiable means it should be verifiable in principle, i.e; the logical possibility of verification.

16. When a proposition is verifiable in the strong sense?

Ans: A proposition is said to be verifiable in the strong sense, if and only if its truth is conclusively established in experience but it is verifiable in the weak sense, if it is possible for experience to render it probable.

17. What two sense of the term Verifiability does A.J. Ayer distinguish?

Ans: A.J. Ayer distinguish between a "Strong and Weak" sense of the term Verifiable.

18. When a proposition is verifiable in the weak sense?

Ans: A proposition is verifiable in the weak sense of the term if it is possible for experience to render it probable or improbable.

19. Why does Logical Positivism fail?

Ans: Logical Positivism did not fail because

it denied human emotion logical positivism failed because it tried to reduce the concept of meaning to the process of verification, and it became increasingly clear that this was an impossible task.

20. What is the Verification Theory of Meaning?

Ans: Verification, also known as the verification principle or the verifiability criterion of meaning, is the philosophical doctrine which maintains that only statements that are empirically verifiable are cognitively meaningful or they are truth of logic.

21. Is Logical Positivism dead?

Ans: Positivism is dead largely because a sort of consensus argued among analytic philosophers that it had been refuted with the development of the *Pragel Russell* classical logic as a foundation for mathematics, some philosophers thought they would develop a tool and a conception of Philosophy.

22. Is Logic an empirical Science?

Ans: Logic as a structure of reasoning is not empirical. But reasoning can be based on observation and empirical can be based on observation and

empirical data balance approach and pure empirical must be approach

23. What is Stream

Ans: The 'Vienna Circle' philosophers came to be known as the Verificationists. The Verificationist statement can be analytic or empirical.

empirical data such as reasoning is a balance approach between pure rationalism and pure empiricism. This approach must be apart of Scientific Method.

23. What is Strong Verification?

Ans: The 'Vienna Circle' were a group of philosophers who developed what has come to be known as the Strong Verification principle or Logical Positivism. The Verification principle states that statement can only be meaningful if they are analytic statement or if they can be empirically verified.