

PHPDSC352
Greek Philosophy

Unit I

Pre-Socratic Philosophy : A General survey of Pre-Socratic Philosophy

Thales

Pythagoras

Democritus

1. What is the basic stuff and cause of the universe according to Thales?

Ans: According to Thales, water was the original stuff. He would have been led by myth 'gods of ocean'. Water has the potency to become solid, liquid and vaporous forms. Water evaporates in the heat of the sun, and according to Thales it is the transformation of water into fire. Water comes down again in the form of rain and it is transformed into earth. Water is essential to life. The reason is that nourishment, seed, and heat which are essential to life, contain moisture or wet. Hence water is the primordial principle, and all things (physis) were water (arche) and are water (physis). The earth is a flat disc floating on water. Water is the material cause of all things. He clearly perceived that nature was alive.

2. What are the three vital assumptions of Thales?

Ans: Thales' claim involves three vital assumptions. He wanted to assert his belief that the universe is made up of One thing, i.e., water. Indeed, he brought the question of One:

- He believed that the fundamental explanation of the universe must be one in number. There can not be two realities behind the mysteries of the universe. The controlling element of the Nature should be one.
- This one reality must be a 'thing'. It ought to be a definite thing and this thing is water which has the capacity to be present in everything.
- And this one 'thing' must have within itself the ability to move and change.

3. What is the ethical principle of Pythagoras?

Ans: Pythagorean, Archytas of Tarentum, first enunciated the principle of "right reasoning" as the key to good behaviour: It is quite possible that Aristotelian and the medieval theories of right reason (recta ratio) as the norm of ethical judgement are directly indebted to Pythagorean intellectualism. The life of reason (logos) in the classical Greek is respected very much. Aristotle's ethics is constructed on the importance of the rationality of the human soul. With the appearance of the Pythagorean concept of good, the Homeric good was rationalised with all the qualities that this had, and it has been elevated to the degree of philosophy.

4. Explain "all things are numbers"

Ans: Aristotle tells us in the Metaphysics that Pythagoreans are devoted to mathematics. They were the first who initiated this study. The most important teachings of Pythagoras

are that all things are numbers. Number is the basis of everything and the principle of universe. He was explaining the universe with the concept of numbers. All things are countable and we can express many things numerically. So the relation between two related things may be projected in accordance with countable proportion. Just as musical harmony is dependent on number, so also harmony of universe is dependent on number. The world is not only order, beauty and system but a relation of intelligible and multiple proportions or numbers. Pythagoras regarded numbers as spatially. One is the point; two is the line; three is surface; and four is the solid. To say that all things are numbers, it would mean that all bodies are of points or units in space, which when taken together form a number. Points, lines, and surface are therefore the real units which form all material bodies in nature, and in this sense all material bodies must be considered as numbers. He believed that the things were the copies or imitations of number. The whole phenomena of the universe can be expressed under the concept of number.

5. What is Theology of Democritus?

Ans: According to Democritus God exists. God is composed of atoms. The Gods are mortal like men, but they live longer. They are more powerful than human being and they possess reason of high order. Gods are known to men in dreams. They do not interfere in the affairs of men and therefore men need not fear them. Like all other things, God is subjected to the motion of atoms. One must achieve mental power to reach the goal reflecting and contemplating on beautiful acts.

6. What is the ethical principle of Democritus?

Ans: Democritus stressed the soul as the locus of human well-being. His concept of eudaimonia includes both the notion of 'good existence' (eu-esto) and of 'good feeling' (euthymie). Pace Gosling and Taylor think that Democritus was the first Greek philosopher to produce a systematic ethical theory. The most important step towards systematisation was, the transition from the vague ethical thinking that everybody wants to be happy or cheerful, or free from troubles. On the list of Democritus' writings on ethics there appears a treatise *Peri euthymias* of which only a sentence or two has remained. Later doxographers, assuming the framework of eudaimonistic theories, tell us that Democritus declared euthymia to be the goal of life (telos). The superiority of reason is taken into consideration in the ethical life. The end of all conduct of men is well-being of society and ultimately of man. Well-being means not only the intellectual satisfaction but also the pleasure of senses. True happiness in the end of men's life. It is the inner state of satisfaction or pleasure, depending on the tranquillity, harmony and fearlessness of the soul. This happiness is not coming from wealth or material good, nor from the pleasure of the body. It needs a little pain, and requires repetition and moderation of pleasure. The less you desire, the less you are disappointed. All virtues are valuable only if they help to cultivate happiness. Envy, jealousy and bitterness of mind bring friction and they will destroy everybody. The sense of duty must be the basis of doing the right thing; it should not be from the fear of punishment. We have to serve the state too, because if the state is in peace, all realm of state

will grow; if the governance of the state is corrupted, then there will not be any order or law but only chaos.

7. Explain Democritus' atom theory.

Ans: For him the most important thing was that the substantial element of the nature, out of which the nature was built up, could not be indefinitely divided into smaller particles. If this were possible the permanent character of the nature would be in danger. There would not be then any permanency to the nature. He also agreed in the teaching of Parmenides that 'nothing comes from nothing'. So, the substantial particle of nature should be eternal, and then only the nature can come out of it. These eternal particles which are atoms, are firm and solid, but they are not identical. Otherwise, the multiplicity and the unity of the nature would be impossible. Because, we see mountains, oceans, sky, ameba, birds, fish, flowers, animals and human beings. He confirmed that the universe is composed with unlimited number and variety of atoms. Out of them, some are round and smooth, some are irregular and jagged. And precisely due to their multiplicity in eternity, they could combine each other to unlimited bodies. When a body dissolved or disintegrated, the atoms become free and ready for other new combinations of bodies. Atoms moved around in space, but they are hooked and are free to join together for a new creation.

According to him, the only things that existed were atoms and the void. Soul and force have no much role in his teaching on the universe. Soul is connected with brain. Once brain disintegrated, we lose consciousness, and then the special round smooth shaped soul atoms spread in all directions. He believed that nothing could influence the universe except atom. It could be possessed by some other new bodies. That means, human beings have no immortal soul. Therefore, he is known as a materialist, since he believed in material things. In nature, everything happens quite mechanically, it does not mean that it happens randomly. Because, he said, there were the inevitable laws of necessity. A natural cause, which is inherent in everything, guides the happenings in the nature. All the processes in the universe are quite natural, though, it is mechanical.

8. What do you know about re-Socratic Philosophers?

Ans: The pre-socratic philosophers looked in amazement the world around them and attempted to describe it in their own way. Through their observations they brought to light the perennial problems of philosophy such as, the fundamental principle of all things and its nature and the problem of the One and the many. Their answers may appear unsatisfactory or, at times unintelligent to our complex mind but they laid foundation for a true philosophy. After studying pre-socratic philosophy, one might wonder and echo the words of Blaise Pascal: "These whom we call ancient were really new in all things." Or, the words of Francis Bacon: "The antiquity of history is the youth of the world. It is we who are the ancients."

9. Give a general survey of Pre-Socratic Philosophy.

Ans: The thinkers who are called 'pre-Socrates' is not just for reasons of convenient chronology. On the whole, their views ran in another direction than that of Socrates. They

were mainly concerned with outer, external world and the problems and issues raised from such an interest except the sophists who focused their attention to the internal world. Aristotle called the presocratics the “physicists” because they reflected so very much on nature. The major issues that drew their attention was: (a) the search for the archē –the primordial substance out of which the universe was fashioned; (b) The ever fascinating controversy: being versus becoming or, to use a more precise philosophical vocabulary, the question of the One and the Many. Since they viewed the universe as an organic whole, and as a living whole, they are also called hylozoists. We begin our study with the Ionian School who offered ‘sensual’ response to the universe. The Eleatic School attempted to give a rational response to the existence of the universe. The Atomic School is an effort to synthesize both the Ionians and Eleatics, though it might not be a perfect synthesis. We shall also briefly note the philosophical ideas of Pythagorean brotherhood and Sophists who, generally speaking, turn our attention to the ‘internal world.’ This study unveils different philosophical ideas of different pre-socratic schools and their attempt to understand themselves and the world.

Unit II

Heraclitus: Doctrine of Flux and Logos

Parmenides: Nature of being

Zeno

1. Who was Parmenides?

Ans: Parmenides was born in Elea, probably in the second half of the 6th century BCE. He devoted himself not only to philosophy but also to politics. He wrote a poem in hexameter verse entitled On Nature, extensive fragments of which have been still preserved. Parmenides seems to have been a Pythagorean, but later he abandoned that philosophy in favour of his own.

2. Explain Parmenides Nature of Being. Or Briefly explain the understanding of Parmenides on Being.

Ans: First, the Being, the One, is and that Becoming or change is illusion. Two questions need to be answered to understand the mind of Parmenides: What does he mean by being? Why did he see being as the unifying principle of everything else? Parmenides’ concept of being is univocal. It does not refer to any concrete perceptible reality but only to being as such, to the being which everything possesses since all of them exist. This is the being which encompasses everything –the whole reality. Being is apprehended by the intellect alone. The senses grasp the multiplicity of the sensible; but the intelligence sees beyond appearances, and knows what lies behind them, only one reality: being. In other words, for Parmenides, being and thought are correlative terms since being only reveals itself to thought and it is this revelation that constitutes the truth. He also describes the characteristics of being in his poem: unbegotten and incorruptible; it cannot come from non-being, because non-being is nothing, and from nothing nothing comes; it cannot come

from being because being exists, and what already exists need not be brought into existence. This means that the being has no beginning and no end; it is immutable, perfect, complete, with no need for anything. Things may come to pass but being itself remains one and the same. One can easily notice an obvious difference between Parmenides and other preceding philosophers. The being of Parmenides cannot be the ultimate principle as nothing can proceed from it. Parmenides makes a radical distinction between the way of truth and the way of opinion. In other words, Parmenides places the opinions of human beings, who allow themselves to be guided by their sense and not by their intelligence. While the intelligence (or reason) apprehends the reality as unified reality, the senses perceive them as fleeting and changeable. To be fair to Parmenides, what he says that one reality actually exists, but it can be viewed from different perspectives; of these only one lead to true knowledge and others, give opinion. Therefore, for Parmenides, the perceptible reality is not a product of fantasy; it is something real. What happens is that human being only grasp the external side of reality and take that to be true. This is not absolutely false but can be misleading. This interpretation really does not solve the problem of one and many but it brings the problem to the centre of philosophical inquiry. From now on, the big challenge to philosophy is to vindicate the reality of the many and the reality of change which the 'being' of Parmenides undermined.

3. Who was Heraclitus?

Ans: Heraclitus was born in the middle of 6th Century BCE and died around 480 BCE. He came from Ephesus and belonged to an aristocratic family. He was known as a conceited, proud person who looked down upon the rest of humanity because of its blindness to the truth of his teachings. His philosophy is found in a book entitled *On Nature*, quite a few fragments of which have been preserved. Since it was not easy to determine the exact nature of his thought on account of the cryptic and occult nature of his writings, he was also known as "the obscure one" even during his lifetime.

4. Explain Heraclitus' Doctrine of Flux and Logos.

Ans: Heraclitus affirmed that everything is in constant flux, or, "everything changes." For Heraclitus, movement is the central theme and point of departure of his philosophy. All the Milesian philosophers attempted to account for the multiplicity of things and explained that multiplicity by affirming different solutions to the question of the archē. Whereas, Heraclitus singled out change as the very essence of what is real. Heraclitus explains the universal process of becoming as a neverending alternation of contraries. The opposites not only account for the transformation of one substance to another but they constitute the very essence of all things. The permanent opposition of contraries lies at the root of reality and its stability. In other words, for Heraclitus, the only real world is the world of opposites, opposites which are in mutual need of one another. According to Heraclitus, fire, more than any other archē, reflects the constant change and harmony that lies at the root of reality. Most interpreters of Heraclitus understand fire in the metaphorical sense rather as a material cause. Taking fire metaphorically might cause many difficulties as Heraclitus himself uses the term logos to refer to the first principle. Understood as such, it means the principle that

governs every transformation; it is the law that is inherent in everything. And for Heraclitus, to know the logos means to know the truth. Heraclitus identifies the nature of the soul with that of the first principle and the soul is infinite part of human being. He also believed in the immortality of the soul. Heraclitus probably is the most accomplished thinker of this school. He has a defining influence on Stoics, especially as regards his doctrine of the logos.

5. Who was Zeno?

Ans: Zeno of Elea was probably born at the beginning of 5th century BCE. He was an ardent disciple of Parmenides and wrote a book in defense of his master's teachings but surprisingly in a new manner. Zeno adopted a method, which Aristotle would later call it a dialectical method, which consisted in demonstrating a thesis by showing the absurdity of the contradictory propositions.

6. Write a note on Zeno's Philosophy.

Ans: Zeno used many ingenious arguments to prove the impossibility of motion such as the riddle of Achilles and the tortoise, which Aristotle would offer a critique of these arguments in his book Physics. Zeno also sought to defend the unicity of being by demonstrating (albeit wrongly) that multiplicity ended up in as many absurdities as the contradicting thesis. Moreover, the philosophical ideas of Zeno transferred the centre of Eleatic speculation from the problem of being and non-being to the problem of one and the many. This approach deflected the ontological character that philosophy had taken with Parmenides. To prove his master right, Zeno had to push Parmenides' thought to its last consequences: he had to summarily deny the reality of the phenomena which Parmenides had tried to explain it through the way of opinion. With Parmenides and Zeno, the Eleatic philosophy was brought to its ultimate conclusion: only being existed, and multiplicity was an illusion.

Unit III

Sophists and Socrates

Man is the Measure of All Things (Protagoras)

Virtue is Knowledge (Socrates)

1. What did Socrates say about Sophists?

Ans: Socrates opposed the Sophists, viewing them as paid "prostitutes of wisdom" who taught persuasive rhetoric over absolute truth. While Sophists, like Protagoras, argued that truth was relative and morality subjective, Socrates believed in universal, objective truths reachable through questioning. He prioritized virtuous inquiry over winning arguments.

2. Who are the most famous Sophists?

Ans: The most famous representatives of the sophistic movement are Protagoras, Gorgias, Antiphon, Hippias, Prodicus and Thrasymachus.

3. Who are Sophists?

Ans: The sophists were itinerant professional teachers and intellectuals who frequented Athens and other Greek cities in the second half of the fifth century B.C.E. In return for a fee, the sophists offered young wealthy Greek men an education in *aretē* (virtue or excellence), thereby attaining wealth and fame while also arousing significant antipathy. Prior to the fifth century B.C.E., *aretē* was predominately associated with aristocratic warrior virtues such as courage and physical strength. In democratic Athens of the latter fifth century B.C.E., however, *aretē* was increasingly understood in terms of the ability to influence one's fellow citizens in political gatherings through rhetorical persuasion; the sophistic education both grew out of and exploited this shift.

4. Why was Socrates not a sophist?

An: As represented by Plato, the sophist teaches others how to win arguments, unconcerned with whether the argument is correct or not. (See, for example, Gorgias.) Whatever the point is to be argued, the sophist will be able to prove its truth. But Socrates' goal is not to win an argument.

5. What is the basic difference between the Sophists and Socrates?

Ans: The Sophists were those teachers in ancient Greece. They travelled from city to city, teaching young people education. The Sophists thought that knowledge was based on personal experience. They taught skills like public speaking and debating to help people succeed in life. According to the Sophists, truth and morality could be different for each person. They believed that what was true for one person might not be true for another. This idea is called relativism. The Sophists focused on teaching practical skills, not searching for universal truths.

Socrates was the most famous Greek philosopher and is known for his questioning method. Unlike the Sophists, he believed in universal truths that apply to everyone. He used deep questioning to help people think more clearly and discover these truths. Socrates thought that knowledge is gained through understanding and not just winning arguments. He didn't charge people for his teachings, and he never wrote anything down. Socrates was interested in ethics and how people should be living. His thoughts spread to most philosophers who come after him, including the famous Plato and Aristotle. Socrates' method of philosophy was very different from that of the Sophists.

6. Explain Protagoras' saying "Man is the Measure of All Things".

Ans: **Protagoras** of Abdera (l.c. 485-415 BCE) is most famous for his claim that "Of all things the measure is Man, of the things that are, that they are, and of the things that are not, that they are not" (DK 80B1) usually rendered simply as "Man is the Measure of All Things". Along these same lines, he also maintained that, if there were gods - as the Greeks, of course, believed - there was no way of knowing what they were like or what they might want from humanity by way of service and worship.

In maintaining this stance he pre-figures the existential relativism of writers like the 20th century CE Italian playwright, author, and philosopher Luigi Pirandello (l. 1867-1936 CE) best known for his works *Henry IV*, *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, and *It is so, If*

you think so, by some two thousand plus years as well as every other relativist author between his time and Pirandello's.

At the same time, however, and in spite of how highly the Athenians valued his services, the cultural values of the Greeks during this time was informed by their **religion** and criticism of the gods was not welcome nor encouraged, much less denying their existence or claiming that, if they existed, one could not know what they were like. It is curious to consider, then, how a man who claimed that what was true to each individual was, in fact, true - regardless of any cultural values to the contrary - could come to be the most highly paid sophist in ancient **Greece**.

7. Who was Protagoras?

Ans: Protagoras lived and worked in ancient **Athens** as a sophist, a highly paid teacher of the upper class youth of the **city**, who instructed his pupils in how to speak well and, especially, how to win court cases. Athens was particularly litigious and **law** suits were common; knowing how to turn a jury to side with one's claims was a highly prized skill and, it seems, Protagoras was very good at this.

8. What does Socrates say about virtue is knowledge?

Ans: Socrates' statement "virtue is knowledge" means that moral excellence (virtue) stems directly from intellectual understanding of what is truly good, suggesting that nobody knowingly does wrong. If one truly understands justice, courage, and goodness, they will inevitably act in a virtuous way, making virtue a teachable form of wisdom.

9. Who was Socrates?

Ans: Socrates is one of the few individuals whom one could say has so-shaped the cultural and intellectual development of the world that, without him, history would be profoundly different. He is best known for his association with the Socratic method of question and answer, his claim that he was ignorant (or aware of his own absence of knowledge), and his claim that the unexamined life is not worth living, for human beings.

10. Explain ethics of Socrates.

Ans: Socrates ethics is principally concerned with man. Although this concern was not new in the early Greek philosophical traditions, Socrates considered man from a different point of view. The core of Socrates' ethics is the concept of virtue. Virtue, according to Socrates, is the deepest and most basic propensity of man. This virtue is knowledge.

If virtue is knowledge it can be known and consequently taught. This is the meaning of the imperative "know yourself." Know yourself means bring your inner self to light. Through knowledge man gains possession of himself whereby he becomes his own master.

According to Socrates virtue is the highest aim and greatest good one has to seek in the life. He also insisted that if it is to be highest aim and the greatest good it must have universal consistence and be the same for all. Now, what is universally consistent and the same for all is knowledge which is obtained through concept by the use of reason which is common in all. The relation between virtue and knowledge is inseparable. For Socrates thinks that

health, wealth, beauty, courage, temperance etc., which are customarily considered to be various forms of good, are good only if they are guided by wisdom; if guided by folly they could be considered forms of evil. As has been already seen, concepts are given by reason and not by perception of particular facts. Since concepts are already in human mind, they need to be enkindled by questioning. If morality is the knowledge of the idea of good through concepts, then who can obtain this? Socrates held that the Sophists did not obtain it, because they depended on perception rather than reason. He believed that the seeker who follows the dictates of reason rather than perception attains it. One who follows the dictates of the reason recollects the concepts of good already present in the mind. For, as in his epistemology, the real concept of good is always a matter of recollection by means of reflection on the idea of good.

Ethics, according to Socrates, has yet another dimension. It does not stop at mere acquisition of the knowledge of the ideas of good. The knowledge of the idea of the good aims at controlling all other ideas and ultimately guides the whole man, including his will and feeling, and necessarily leads him to good actions. Hence ethical knowledge tends to culture the soul which ultimately leads the soul towards regaining its pure, pristine glory.

Unit IV

Plato : Justice in State and Individual, Ideal Society

1. What is Justice for Plato?

Ans: Plato starts his discussion on justice in a state by saying that the state is natural as no one is self-sufficient and human beings require each other for survival. Plato says that self-sufficiency consists in maintaining division of labour in a state. A successful political community has to perform three functions – production, protection (defence) and statesmanship (ruling). Hence, justice would consist in fulfilling these three activities based on functional specialisation.

2. What are the three classes of Justice according to Plato?

Ans: Rulers: Every state would need rulers to rule with a function of making policy decisions. Auxiliaries: This is the class of warriors with a military function and they are part of the guardians. Artisans: This class has to perform economic function and includes all those who produce goods and perform socially necessary services, for ex. traders, farmers etc.

3. Explain Plato's theory of justice at Individual && State level.

Ans: Plato argued that in a just individual, the philosophic element (wisdom) rules his soul. An individual's soul should be in harmony and his reason, spirit and appetite should be in right relationship with each other so that he does not cross his boundaries. A just individual does his own job and does not interfere in matters of others. He would take only his share and would not claim that of the other. Socrates said that justice consists in minding your own business and not interfering with other people. In an unjust person, the division of labour in the soul or psyche has broken down and his passions and desires begin to rule his

soul than reason. At the state level, justice would exist when each class maintains its appropriate position in society and ensures harmony between different virtues in a state. Plato, however, left one aspect unsolved. He insisted that the artisans would willingly subordinate themselves to the ruling class, but he was uncertain as to how long this subordination would last. He has even recommended the use of force and rhetorical persuasion leading to control and monitoring. This raised concerns whether the ideal state would be a happy one as well. Towards the end of the Republic, Plato has highlighted the contrast between misery of an unjust life and happiness of just life. He has discussed the decline of the ideal state arguing that the state would disintegrate as it is a human institution which is an imperfect representation of an ultimate reality. Change is in the nature of this sensory world and the ideal state is no exception. The downfall of the state begins with the ruling class which gets corrupted by attraction of property and desire starts to rule wisdom and reason. They would enslave the citizens and the new virtue would be courage. Honour would be held above knowledge and this new type of regime would be called Timocracy, a state ruled by the auxiliaries. Timocracy would give way to oligarchy or the rule of a few rich and oligarchy would make way for democracy, rule by many. Plato emphasised that human beings are a product of their social environment and they will be corrupted if the social order is corrupted.

There is a major inconsistency in Plato's proposal to maintain division of labour in the state. Despite having elaborate arrangements for classifying people in different classes and extensive education for the rulers, Plato is still concerned that the rulers may be corrupted and could rule unwisely. That is why, Plato instituted the system of communism for rulers to purge their desires. But the critical problem is this – if virtue is knowledge, how can the rulers be tempted to act unjustly? Socrates had insisted it cannot happen, but Plato has doubted the very Socratic premise he set out to prove.

4. Who is a Philosopher King?

Ans: Throughout the Republic, Plato emphasises the importance of having rulers who know the form of good. Plato holds that a philosopher by his grasp of the idea of good was best qualified to rule, implying that knowledge could be obtained only by a select few who had the leisure and the material comforts. Plato shared the general Greek perception that leisure was essential for the pursuit of wisdom. A philosopher would be able to administer justice and act for the good of the community. He would have a good character, a calm disposition and a sound mind. He would have the qualities of a ruler namely truthfulness, highmindedness, discipline and courage. Plato in The Republic insisted that politics and philosophy ought to be safe from one another. A philosopher ruler would make wise legislator and frame laws in accordance with the Idea of Good, thereby linking statecraft with soulcraft. For Plato, Ideal State ruled by philosopher king was a divine institution perfectly worthy of emulation and imitation. He defined ideal state as one based on timeless and unchanging principles, suggesting that an ideal pattern existed which could be discerned and employed to reform a diseased polity, and transform into a thing of beauty. He implied that political order was highly malleable and could be moulded in order to receive the right imprint.

5. Explain the concept of Ideal State according to Plato.

Ans: As the philosopher has undergone the programme of studies as defined in *The Republic*, Plato has left the task of structuring the society in the hands of the philosopher. Many aspects of the state are therefore left incomplete, sketched broadly leaving the details for the rulers to fill in. For instance, they must determine the extent to which the state can safely expand beyond its original borders, and the number of marriages needed to keep the male population stable. They must formulate the program of trials and tests through which the perfect guardians are selected from their fellows. Regarding early education, Plato presents only broad outlines, while the specific details are the responsibility of the guardian. Thus, the rulers are empowered to fill in what the original founders have left out. Because they possess exalted knowledge, Plato believes it is possible for them to evaluate and criticise the state. They can alter features that do not work.

6. What is the role of a Philosopher king in a Ideal State?

Ans: Philosophers are to play the role of an active critical intelligence in governing the state. As in the analogy presented in the *Statesman*, the philosophers have the knowledge of the doctor who writes the prescriptions and not just of the pharmacist who carries them out. They are not merely to shape their surroundings according to a blueprint that is given. They must take appropriate measures where the blueprint is found incomplete or faulty as well as when the circumstances change. The problem that arises with this view of the philosopher as active critical intelligence is that it seems difficult to understand how the philosophers can maintain open critical attitude when Plato has described them in mystical terms as doing their work with an eye on the idea of forms when knowledge comes to them in a sudden burst of life. The task of the philosopher king is to embody these moral qualities in men's souls while the means to this end must be fabricated. How to shape the political institution for the desired outcome is a problem to the solution of which they are not given metaphysical guidance. Thus, the philosopher king bears responsibility for devising the institutional structure of the state. Even if they are given a divinely grounded aim, they are not given divine guidance concerning the means. Hence, philosopher bears a critical, open minded attitude towards the laws and institutions of the ideal state. Another reason for this quality in philosopher king is because of their unwillingness to rule. They love contemplation of the eternal forms more than political power. Therefore, they would not be afflicted by the common rulers' fear of making changes. They are willing to criticise and reform the state in order to improve it. Thus, the central motif of the political theory of the *Republic* is putting the philosophic intelligence in control of the state. Although, Plato fails to explain how the philosophic wisdom is beneficial to the state, his insistence that they possess this appears to express the ideal that the state be governed by the highest of the truths. Thus, the political theory of the *Republic* centres on the rule of the state by supreme intelligence. For Plato, philosophers must be kings because only they can discover what must be done. The rulers maintain some measure of moral autonomy, and they do not merely accept the structure and institutions of the state as metaphysically grounded. They

are to understand the state's rational basis and alter and improve things whenever and wherever necessary.

Unit V

Aristotle : Nature and Change, Metaphysics

1. Explain Aristotle's Metaphysics.

Ans: Aristotle expresses two views about "first philosophy" (the name "metaphysics" was given by an editor to the treatise on first philosophy because it came after - meta - the Physics in his edition). One view, already mentioned, is that it is the study of changeless, separable substance, that is, theology. The other is that it is not a departmental science dealing with a particular kind of being, but that it studies being as such, together with concepts (for example, unity, identity) and principles (for example, the law of contradiction) which are common to all departmental sciences. Aristotle is not very successful in reconciling these two views. Form and Matter A table is wood and glue put together in a certain way. Aristotle distinguishes as separate aspects of the table its matter (the wood and glue) and its form (how it is put together, its structure). Many of his central ideas - and of his puzzles - are connected with this distinction. (a) Form is immanent: the form of table exists only as the form of this table or that table, that is, as the form of certain matter. (b) Form or structure is normally determined by function. It is because of what it has to do that a table has a flat top and four legs. (c) Matter is "for the sake of" form, not vice versa. If you want an axe - something for cutting down trees - you must of course use iron to make it; but there can be iron without there being an axe. So to state the form or function of something explains it far more than stating what it is made of; the form implies the appropriate matter in a way in which the matter does not imply the form. (d) Wood and glue, the matter of a table, are not matter in an absolute sense. In a piece of wood we can again draw a distinction between form and matter, since wood, like everything else, is made of earth, air, fire and water (or of some of these) combined in a certain way. Nor are these four elements pure matter. They can change into one another. This implies a persistent underlying stuff capable of receiving the form of earth, air, etc. but in itself without any form or definite character. This is what Aristotle calls first (or "prime") matter, a characterless substrate which never actually exists on its own but only in the form of earth, air etc. (e) Besides pressing the distinction of matter and form to the extreme concept of prime matter, Aristotle also uses it by analogy in quite different problems. Thus in the definition of a species he treats the genus as the matter and the differentia as the form: the genus is relatively indeterminate, the differentia gives its definite character to the species. This is typical of Aristotle's way of extending the application of key concepts, - which adds a certain unity to his thought at the cost of some obscurity. (f) So far form has been the correlative of matter, the form of some matter. Aristotle raises the question whether there can be form without matter and says that there can. But his form without-matter is very different from a Platonic Form. God is form without matter.

2. What are four causes?

Ans: The Four 'Causes' Aristotle proposed in Physics II, 3 that we employ four very different kinds of explanatory principle to the question of why a thing is, the four causes: • The material cause is the basic stuff out of which the thing is made. The material cause of a house, for example, would include the wood, metal, glass, and other building materials used in its construction. All of these things belong in an explanation of the house because it could not exist unless they were present in its composition. • The formal cause is the pattern or essence in conformity with which these materials are assembled. Thus, the formal cause of our exemplary house would be the sort of thing that is represented on a blueprint of its design. This, too, is part of the explanation of the house, since its materials would be only a pile of rubble (or a different house) if they were not put together in this way. • The efficient cause is the agent or force immediately responsible for bringing this matter and that form together in the production of the thing. Thus, the efficient cause of the house would include the carpenters, masons, plumbers, and other workers who used these materials to build the house in accordance with the blueprint for its construction. Clearly the house would not be what it is without their contribution. • Lastly, the final cause is the end or purpose for which a thing exists, so the final cause of our house would be to provide shelter for human beings. This is part of the explanation of the house's existence because it would never have been built unless someone needed it as a place to live.

3. How does Aristotle define nature and change?

Ans: Aristotle defines nature (*physis*) as an internal principle of change and rest, inherent in natural substances (plants, animals, elements) rather than artificial ones. Natural entities possess an innate drive to move, grow, or change toward a specific, inherent end (*telos*), with the "nature" residing in their form.

4. Explain Aristotle's theory of nature and change

Ans: Aristotle's concept of nature dominated Western culture – including the Islamic world – from late antiquity to the Middle Ages, and was then permanently displaced by the concept of modern science introduced by Galilei and Descartes in the seventeenth century. However, despite its long rule, the true meaning of Aristotle's concept was not always understood. In particular, its application to living beings was interpreted as an "essentialist" and "fixist" model, as opposed to the "evolutionistic" model introduced by Darwin. In this paper I would like to explain briefly why this interpretation, which has become the traditional one, is largely the result of a misunderstanding due to a Platonic or Neoplatonic reading of Aristotle's concept of nature as "form" or "essence".

In the famous chapter on the meanings of the term "nature" (*phusis*), contained in Book V of the *Metaphysics*, which is considered Aristotle's dictionary of philosophical terms, he distinguishes among the various meanings of this term, present in common parlance or in the theories of the philosophers preceding him: "generation" (*genesis*), "growth" (*phusis* with a long *u*), "matter" (*hule*) from where things come from, and the "form" (*eidos*) or "essence" (*ousia*) of natural entities, that is, the things that have in themselves and as such the source of their own movement. While the first two meanings belong to

common parlance, the third belongs to the philosophies of the Presocratics and the last one is the correct meaning which, according to Aristotle, must be given to the term “nature”, allowing us to make a distinction between “natural” entities, which have nature as their source, and “artificial” entities, which have “art” (*techne*), that is, man, as their source.

According to the traditional interpretation, the “form” mentioned by Aristotle is precisely a universal, immutable form, like the Ideas accepted by Plato. This is due to the fact that Aristotle calls form *eidos*, which is the same term Plato uses to refer to Ideas. In Greek this term also means what we call “species”, that is, not an individual, but a class of individuals, a kind. According to the traditional interpretation, the only difference between the Idea accepted by Plato and the form accepted by Aristotle is the fact that the Idea is a transcendent entity, one that exists in another world, different from the sensitive one, the so-called intelligible world, whereas the form is an entity immanent in matter, that is, existing in the sensitive world. According to this interpretation, Aristotle did nothing but transfer Plato’s Ideas from the intelligible world to the sensitive world, that is, to nature.
