
UNIT 1 RATIONALISM

Contents

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Intuition and Deduction
- 1.3 Innate Ideas, Factitious Ideas, Adventitious Ideas
- 1.4 Doubt: Methodological scepticism
- 1.5 Attributes and Modes: Mind/Body dualism
- 1.6 After Descartes
- 1.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.8 Key Words
- 1.9 Further Readings and References

1.0 OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this unit is to introduce rationalism especially Descartes' rationalistic thinking. It helps the students to know the method of abstraction as well. In this unit we shall try to understand how Descartes thinking deviate from classical philosophy. Finally we see how Spinoza and Leibnitz developed rationalism which was developed by Descartes in Modern Western Philosophy. Thus by the end of this Unit one should be able:

- to have a basic understanding of rationalism;
- to differentiate it from empiricism;
- to relate it with method of abstraction;
- to understand the influence of Descartes dualistic thinking;
- to know the limitation of rationalistic thinking.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In the history of Western Philosophy, it is Rene Descartes (1596-1650) who ushers in such new lines of thought as would clearly mark the beginning of the modern era and earn him the title 'Father of Modern Western Philosophy'. He emphasise the role of the individual and his reasoning power against the background of church domination. He pronounces that it is within the power of every individual to know the truth. He highly influence on mathematics and scientific method. Francis Bacon (1561-1626) in England looked at scientific method and claimed it for empiricism-a triumph of the method of observation and experimentation over reason, theories, and systems. Descartes, however, looked at scientific method and claimed it for rationalism-a triumph of mathematics, of geometry, and of reasoning by axioms and deduction; it is these which make science into knowledge into certain. His vision was of a plan for a single, unified science in which philosophy and all the sciences would be interconnected in one systematic totality. All qualitative differences of things would be treated as quantitative differences, and mathematics would be the key to all problems of the universe. By contrast with Plato, who saw the unity of all sciences in the mystical Idea of the Good, for Descartes the unity

of science was a rationalistic and mathematical unity based upon mathematical axioms. By contrast with medieval Aristotelianism, explaining change teleologically as the movement of matter toward the actualization of forms, for Descartes all change is explained mechanically, as the movement of bodies according to the laws of physics. According to Bertrand Russell Descartes was a philosopher, a mathematician, and a man of science. He used the analytic method, which supposes a problem solved, and examines the consequences of the supposition. Modern western philosophy has very largely accepted the formulation of its problems from Descartes, while not accepting his solutions.

1.2 INTUITION AND DEDUCTION

According to Descartes, knowledge must be certain and indubitable. In his Rules for the Direction of the Mind (*Regulae*), he states, “All knowledge is certain and evident cognition” which is “incapable of being doubted”. Such indubitable knowledge, he holds, can be had only through intellect or reason. He specifies two actions of the intellect through which we arrive at certain knowledge, viz. Intuition and deduction. Intuition, according to him, is “the indubitable conception of a clear and attentive mind, which proceeds solely from the light of reason”. Hence by intuition; he means the rational power of the mind to perceive clearly and distinctly. Such knowledge, according to him, is self evident, standing in no need of proof. Intuition is undoubted, immediate apprehension of a self-evident truth by reason. God imprints certain innate ideas on the mind at the time of birth. The ideas of causality, infinity, eternity, perfect Being of God and the like are innate ideas. In his view, we can also acquire certainty when the facts are “inferred from true and known principles through a continuous and uninterrupted movement of thought in which each individual proposition is clearly intuited”. This is what he calls Deduction, which attains it is certainty from the intuitive certainty of the first principles and the intermediate steps. Thus Descartes applies the mathematical method to philosophy. His mathematical method consists in intuition and deduction. First principles are given by intuition. The remote conclusions are deduced from them. Intuition is prior to deduction. Deduction is necessary inference from truths known with certainty. Intuition is necessary in deduction. Though he subordinates deduction to intuition, he speaks of these as two mental operations.

According to Descartes, it is through intuition i.e. the natural light of reason, that we come to know the existence of the self or mental substance and then we gradually deduce the existence of God and the external material world. Descartes accepts the existence of all these three substances-mind, matter and God. In accordance with his definition of substance as “a thing which so exists that it needs no other thing in order to exist,” he declares God as the absolute substance. However, in the restricted sense of the term ‘substance’, he claims that both mind and matter come under it because they do not depend on anything else but “concurrence of God in order to exist.” Descartes recognises Mind and Matter as relative substances, dependent upon the absolute substance, i.e., God. Mind and Matter have been created by God. But the term substance is not applicable to Mind and Matter in the same sense in which it is applicable to God. In this context, Spinoza points out that if substance stands for complete independence, then it is contradictory to regard matter and mind as substances because they depend on God for their being.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) Descartes felt that the most important question for philosophy at the outset was the basis for certainty. Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer.

.....

.....

.....

.....

2) Do you think that philosophy can and should be modelled after the methods of mathematics? Why, or why not?

.....

.....

.....

.....

1.3 INNATE IDEAS, FACTITIOUS IDEAS, ADVENTITIOUS IDEAS

In his *Meditations on First Philosophy*, we find Descartes accepting three kinds of ‘ideas’ based three different sources, viz. ‘innate’, ‘adventitious’ and ‘factitious’. While he considers ‘innate ideas’ as implanted in our understanding and ‘factitious ideas’ as creations of our imagination, he views the ‘adventitious ideas’ as productions of sensations. The ideas imposed on the mind from without or sensations are adventitious; they are not clear and distinct. The ideas created by the mind by the conjunction of ideas are factitious; they are the ideas created by the imagination; they are also are not clear and distinct. Both are doubtful. But the innate ideas, which are neither adventitious nor factitious, are clear and distinct and implanted in the mind by God at the time of birth; they are self-evident. He distinguishes sense perception from reason on the ground that the former is liable to illusion, and hence needs to be judged by reason before being accepted as true. His only point of warning is that we should not accept reports of sense perception “without having (carefully and maturely) mentally examined them beforehand.” With the help of his mathematical method we must reject the vague and obscure light of the senses and imagination, and select the simple, clear, self-evident, and innate ideas of reason, and deduce other truths from them.

Descartes starts with the certainty of the self which is known intuitively. He deduces the existence of God from the innate idea of God. The idea of God is the idea of an infinite Being. It cannot be produced by myself, because I am a finite being. The finite things cannot produce the idea of an infinite Being. The cause must contain at least as much reality as is contained in the effect. So God or the infinite Being is the cause of the innate idea of God. Therefore, God exists. He is perfect and truthful. We have a conviction that external things exist; so they must exist. Thus Descartes deduces the existence of God and the world from the innate ideas in the self, which are distinct, clear and self-evident.

1.4 DOUBT: METHODOLOGICAL SCEPTICISM

The object of Cartesian methodology was to apply mathematical method of philosophy with a view to obtaining certitude in knowledge. Descartes believes that the single certain truth can be systematically sought by deliberate doubt. When doubt is pushed to its farthest limit then it will reveal something which is indubitable, which is clearly perceived. Now in order to discover the indubitable intuition, let us doubt all that can be doubted. (1) Sense-testimony can be doubted. (2) Even the truths of science can be doubted. That I doubt cannot be doubted: When the doubt has done its worst it finds a fact of completely unassailable certainty. I may doubt anything but I cannot doubt that I am doubting. Whether it is a dream or a real consciousness, I must exist as a doubting or thinking being. Let there be a demon to deceive me, but then I must exist as a thinking being to be deceived. Descartes starts with universal doubt. To doubt is to think. To think is to exist. "*Cogito ergo sum.*" "I think, therefore I exist." is the one certain truth which may be taken as the foundation of philosophy. If I ceased to think, there would be no evidence of my existence. I am a thing that thinks, a substance of which the whole nature or essence consists in thinking and which needs no place or material thing for its existence.

The doubt of Descartes should not be confused with psychological doubt. Descartes' doubt is not a thing of direct feeling and experience but is a deliberate and dispassionate attitude towards human experience in general. It is not directly determined by the nature of objects. The doubt of Descartes should not be confused with scepticism. Descartes is not asserting that whatever can be doubted is false, but he is only supposing it to be false. Again, the scepticism is the finished conclusion about knowledge which professes the denial of any certain knowledge whatsoever. However, the Cartesian doubt is only a starting point to find out that which cannot be further doubted.

In Descartes' theory of knowledge, the one truth that is unshakable, safe and secure from any doubt, is that of my own existence as a conscious subject. Thus the Cartesian Cogito introduces subjectivism into modern western philosophy. Subjectivism is the view that I can know certainty only myself as conscious subject and my thoughts. It is the view that I can know with certainty only my own mind and its content. Subjectivism carries the implication that the knowledge of other minds and of material objects can be proved, if at all, only by inference from what I know with certainty, the existence of my own subjective consciousness and my thoughts or ideas. Therefore for subjectivism the knowledge of the existence of everything other than my own mind becomes questionable, problematic.

The existence of the self, according to Descartes, is a self evident truth, because the very attempt to doubt its existence implies its existence. "For it is a contradiction to suppose that what thinks does not at the very time when it is thinking, exists." Hence Descartes discovers that "I think, therefore I exist" (*Cogito ergo sum*) is an indubitable truth. Further, he also realises that it is nothing but the clearness and distinctness of the fact 'I think' which makes it an indubitable truth. So, he establishes the criterion of truth as 'all things which I perceive very clearly and very distinctly are true.' From this criterion of truth, Descartes deduces our knowledge of the existence of God. According to him, we have within us the idea of God who is a supremely perfect being and we clearly and distinctly perceive that such an idea can be implanted in us "only by something which possesses the sum of all perfections, that is, by a God who really exists." As an all-perfect Being cannot be lacking in existence, he claims, God must exist. In his '*Meditations*' and '*Principles*', he goes to the length of arguing that the existence of material things follows from the existence of God, who being an All-Perfect Being, cannot be a deceiver.

Consequently, in his view, there must be things existing in the external world corresponding to our clear and distinct ideas of them.

According to Descartes knowledge of external things must be by the mind, not by the senses. He takes an example a piece of wax from the honeycomb. If we put the wax near the fire, all qualities (taste, smell, colour, size, shape etc-) change, although the wax persists; therefore what appeared to the senses was not the wax itself. The wax itself is constituted by extension, flexibility, and motion, which are understood by the mind, not by the imagination. The thing that is the wax cannot itself be sensible, since it is equally involved in all the appearances of the wax to the various senses. Knowledge by the senses is confused. The perception of the wax is not a vision or touch or imagination, but an inspection of the mind. From my sensibility seeing the wax, my own existence follows with certainty, but not that of the wax. Knowledge of external things must be by the mind, not by senses.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) Explain the meaning of *cogito ergo sum* in the context of Descartes' philosophy?

.....

2) In your own words, state what you find to be the philosophical problem raised by Descartes' example of the piece of wax?

.....

1.5 ATTRIBUTES AND MODES: MIND/BODY DUALISM.

Descartes suggests matter as corporeal substance and mind as spiritual substance. These two are independent of each other. The fundamental property which expresses the very essence or nature of the thing is attribute. The attribute of Mind is consciousness or thought and the attribute of Matter is extension. Matter is divisible, figurable, movable quantity. The secondary properties of substance are known as modes or accidents and these modes are variable modifications of created substances. The modifications of Matter are position, figure, motion etc and the modifications of mind are feeling, volition, desire, judgement etc. Consciousness and extension, mind and body (two independent substances), are independent of one another and do not involve each other's existence. There is no real relation between body and soul for they are diametrically opposed. This is known as Cartesian dualism.

If the two substances are opposite to each other, how can there be interaction between them? My arm moves when I will that it shall move, but my will is a mental phenomenon and the motion of my arm a physical phenomenon. Why then, if mind and matter cannot interact, does my body

behave as if my mind controlled it? To solve this problem Descartes introduces the Psycho-physical Interactionism. According to this theory, body and mind act upon each other in the 'Pineal gland' of the brain which is the seat of the mind. The body acts upon the mind in sensations and the mind causes movements to take place in the body through the will. So the body at sometimes affects the mind, at other times the mind directs the body. Having separated mind from matter, and assigning them two distinct domains, Descartes prepares the ground for advocating mechanical explanation of the material world. All occurrences, in his view, are due to the transference of motion from one part to another. He holds that even the functions of the human body follow from the mechanical arrangements of its various organs. Even in the absence of mind, he contends, "it would still perform all the same movements as it now does in those cases where movement is not under the control of the will, or, consequently, of the mind." The relation of the soul to the body is of the nature of the pilot to his machine.

The Cartesian dualism appeared to have two features. The first was that it made the soul wholly independent of the body, since it was never acted on by the body. The second was that it allowed the general principle: "one substance cannot act on another." There were two substances, mind and matter and they were so dissimilar that an interaction seemed inconceivable. It explained the appearance of interaction while denying its reality.

1.6 AFTER DESCARTES

The rationalists maintain that there are certain fundamental principles of reality, which are innate and recognized as true by reason or intuition. Intuition is immediate apprehension by reason. All other truths are deduced from them. With the help of mathematical method we must reject the vague and obscure light of the senses and imagination, and select the simple, clear, self-evident, and innate ideas of reason, and deduce other truths from them. Followed by Descartes mathematical method Benedict De Spinoza (1532-1677) starts with the innate idea of God or substance which is self-existent and conceived by itself, and deduces the finite minds and the finite physical objects from it. Spinoza had the vision of the unity of all things. Descartes 'dependent substance' is contradiction in terms. A substance cannot depend on anything else. As such there can be only one substance. If there were more than one substance then they would limit each other and thus would take away their self-sufficiency. This one substance, he also calls God whom he defines as a "Being absolutely infinite; that is, substance consisting in infinite attributes each of which expresses eternal and infinite essence". He calls it *causa sui* or self-creative. By describing substance as *causa sui*, Spinoza means that the reality is a self-explanatory, all-inclusive, inter-related whole, outside which nothing can lie. Therefore there is one substance which is infinite. He calls the single substances as God. Nature conceived as a whole is identical with God. Nature is known as *Natura Naturata*, i.e., sum-total of all that exist. Nature is governed by eternal laws. God and Nature are one. "All determination is negation". There can be only one Being who is wholly positive, and He must be absolutely infinite. This is known as pantheism, according to which the reality of a single impersonal God permeates and in dwells all things.

Spinoza rejected Cartesian dualism and rejected the substantiality of mind and body. The attribute of Mind and Matter, i.e., thought and extension cannot interact are two parallel

attributes of the same absolute substance God. God has also an infinite number of other attributes, since He must be in every respect infinite number of other attributes, since He must be in every respect infinite; but these others are unknown to us. Spinoza believes that Mind is the expression of the infinite consciousness of God and Matter is the appearance of God's unlimited extension. God is extended as well as thinking. Substance thinking and substance extended are one and the same substance. To every mode of extension corresponds a mode of thought, in the same order or series. This parallelism excludes materialism as well as idealism, for matter cannot explain mind, nor can mind explain matter. By admitting only one substance God, Spinoza fails to explain the plurality, diversity, motion and change of the objects of the world.

Like Descartes and Spinoza, Leibniz (1646-1716) based his philosophy on the notion of substance, but he differed radically from them as regards the relation of mind and matter, and as regards the number of substances. Descartes allowed three substances, God, mind and matter; Spinoza admitted God alone. For Descartes, extension is the essence of matter; for Spinoza, both extension and thought are attributes of God. Leibniz held that extension cannot be an attribute of a substance. His reason was that extension involves plurality, and can therefore only belong to an aggregate of substances; each single substance must be unextended. He believed, consequently, in an infinite number of substances, which he called "monads". Each of these would have some of the properties of a physical point, but only when viewed abstractly; in fact, each monad is a soul. This follows naturally from the rejection of extension as an attribute of substance; the only remaining possible essential attribute seemed to be thought. Thus Leibniz was led to deny the reality of matter, and to substitute an infinite family of souls.

Every monad is a mirror of the universe, but a living mirror which generates the images of things by its own activity or develops them from inner germs, without experiencing influences from without. The monad has no windows through which anything could pass in or out, but in its action is dependent only on God and on itself. All monads represent the same universe, but each one represents it differently, their difference consists only in the energy or degree of clearness. The clearer the representations of a monad the more active it is. Leibniz suggests that to have clear and distinct perceptions only is the prerogative of God. He alone is pure activity; all finite beings are passive as well, that is, so far as their perceptions are not clear and distinct. No two monads can ever have any causal relation to each other; when it seems as if they had, appearances are deceptive. Leibniz held that every monad mirrors the universe, not because the universe affects it, but because God has given it a nature which spontaneously produces this result. There is a "pre-established harmony" between the changes in one monad and those in another, which produces the semblance of interaction. This is an extension of the two clocks, which strike at the same moment because each keeps perfect time.

What are the major limitations of rationalistic thinking? Rationalism rejects all knowledge derived from the senses of experience (*posteriori*), and condemns it as illusory. But we actually perceive the things around us clearly and distinctly, and so they cannot be treated as unreal. Our life presupposes the existence of external things which produce clear and distinct ideas, and to which we react successfully. We cannot spin out philosophy by mere reason without experience. Philosophical knowledge is not like mathematical knowledge. Mathematical knowledge is abstract; it deals with abstractions and deduction from them. The knowledge that is deduced from them is not concrete. But philosophy does not deal with abstractions or imaginary entities:

it ideals with real entities. It seeks to give a rational concept of the realities as whole by rational reflection of the facts of experience. So it cannot condemn experience as illusory. The facts are given by experience, organized by sciences and finally harmonized with one another, and reduced to a system by philosophy by rational reflection. Philosophy cannot do without reason; nor can it do without experience. It is criticism of life and experience. The doctrine of innate ideas advocated by Descartes is not tenable. Locke severely criticized Descartes' doctrine of innate ideas. Hume opposed Descartes' rationalism with a more powerful empiricism. Hume rejected the Descartes' Cogito proof, proofs of God and metaphysical dualism.

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) Whether Descartes had succeeded in explaining the interaction between Mind and Body? Discuss.

.....

2) What was Spinoza's concept of substance? Compare it with that of Descartes and Spinoza?

.....

1.7 LET US SUM UP

Rene Descartes (1596-1650), who is the father of modern western philosophy and rationalist philosopher, follows a method of abstraction which is evident from his fundamental contention that 'reason' is the source of clear and distinct knowledge, and 'sensibility' is a faculty of confused knowledge. Descartes rationalism goes from concrete things to something highly abstract and he rejects the objects given by means of senses. Descartes sees that one firm and immovable truth, *cogito ergo sum*, 'I think, therefore, I am' that even the most extravagant skepticism cannot touch. This is the highest possible abstraction. Following the method of abstraction, Descartes proceeds to analyze the nature of material substance by separating it from mental substance. So there is no meeting ground between mind and matter, both are diametrically opposed to each other. This is generally known as Cartesian dualism which constitutes the basis for the development of European philosophical thought in terms of two opposed trends-idealism and materialism. Descartes himself could not furnish any satisfactory solution to this problem. We have to go beyond dualism and search for its solution. Spinoza's (1532-1677) attempt to solve Cartesian dualism by admitting only one substance God by abstraction fails to explain the plurality, diversity, motion and change of the objects of the world. Leibnitz (1646-1716) was a pluralist, for according to him, each monad meets the requirement of

substance. But once it has been established that there are numerous substances- windowless monads- in the universe, it becomes impossible to establish, the unity of the world.

1.8. KEY WORDS

Metaphysics: the philosophical inquiry into the nature of ultimate reality. In contemporary usage, the term includes the analysis of fundamental philosophical principles.

Epistemology: (theory of knowledge): The branch of philosophy which studies the sources, validity, and limits of knowledge, it inquires into perception, meaning, and truth.

Deduction: Orderly, logical reasoning from one or more statements (premises) which are assumed, to a conclusion which follows necessarily.

Intuition: Direct and immediate knowledge, as in the case of our comprehension of self-evident truths, such as the axioms of geometry.

Idealism: Any metaphysical theory which holds that reality is mental, spiritual, or has the nature of mind, thought, or consciousness.

Materialism: Any monistic metaphysical theory which holds that ultimate reality is matter and that all seemingly nonmaterial things such as minds and thoughts are reducible to the motions of particles of matter.

Rationalism: the view that appeals to reason, not the senses, as the source of knowledge. In its most extreme form, rationalism insists that all knowledge is derived from reason.

Empiricism: the view that all human knowledge derived from the sense.

Dualism: Any view which holds that two equal but opposed ultimate, irreducible principles are required for the explanation of reality. Good and evil, mind and matter are dualism.

Abstract: defined as a part of whole, one-sided, simple or undeveloped. Abstract is the product of the mind alone. In abstraction, things, events and phenomena are conceived separately, independently and mutually isolated. At the level of conceptualization, in abstraction, things, events and phenomena are conceived separately, independently and mutually isolated.

Concrete: It is many-sided, complex or a developed whole. Concrete is understood as the sensuously perceived multiformity of individual objects, events and processes are seen as mutually interrelated, interdependent and in appropriate circumstances pass into one another.

1.9 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCE

Cottingham, J., Stoothoff, R., and Murdoch, D., (Tr. And Ed.), *The Philosophical Writings of*

- Descartes*, Volumes I and II. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- , *Descartes: Selected Philosophical Writings*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- Haldane, E.S. and Ross, G.R. (Tr and Ed.) *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, Volume-I, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967.
- Lavine, T.Z. *From Socrates to Sartre: The Philosophic Quest*. London: Bantam Books, 1989.
- Betrand Russell. *A History of Western Philosophy*. USA: Paperback, 1964.
- Frank Thilly. *A History of Philosophy*. Allahabad: Central Publishing House, 1997.
- Frederick Mayer, *A History of Modern Philosophy*, Eurasia Publishing House, New Delhi, 1987.

UNIT 2 EMPIRICISM

Contents

- 2.0 Objectives
 - 2.1 Introduction
 - 2.2 Attacks upon Descartes Theory of Innate Ideas
 - 2.3 Sense Perception: Impressions and Ideas
 - 2.4 The Psychological Laws of Association of Ideas
 - 2.5 Matters of Fact and Relations of Ideas
 - 2.6 The Limits of Knowledge
 - 2.7 Let Us Sum Up
 - 2.8 Key Words
 - 2.9 Further Readings and References
-

2.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit we shall try to understand empiricism of John Locke, Berkeley and particularly David Hume. By the end of this unit one should be able:

- to have thorough understanding of rationalism and empiricism.
 - to know the limits of *a priori* knowledge
 - to understand the influence of Locke and Berkeley in Hume's thinking
 - to analyse the limitation of knowledge
-

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The fundamental principle of empiricism is that sense perception (including direct observation by the senses, indirect observation by use of instrumentation, and experimentation) is the only reliable method for gaining knowledge and for testing all claims to knowledge. Empiricism is basing knowledge upon the senses, upon the flux of the sensible world, which the rationalist Descartes rejected as an inferior way of knowing. Nowhere is this challenge taken up with more devastating result than in the work of David Hume (1711-1776), the eighteenth century empiricist and sceptic, who elegantly, and relentlessly, pursues Cartesian insights and premises to what he sees as their inevitable logical outcome. In this unit, we shall present an exposition and critical examination of Hume's thinking with the influence of Locke and Berkeley in his thinking. He was the most mercilessly destructive of all the British empiricists and he took delight in demolishing the claims of philosophy, shocking the defenders of religion and undermining the validity of scientific laws and the Enlightenment belief in progress.

2.2 ATTACKS UPON DESCARTES THEORY OF INNATE IDEAS.

John Locke (1632-1704) in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) criticizes Descartes' doctrine of innate ideas, and expounds the doctrine of empiricism. The theory of innate ideas asserts that clear and distinct, self-evident ideas are innate in the sense that they are "born with us," as Descartes said, they are imprinted upon the soul. Examples of innate ideas are the ideas of substance, cause, God, and the principles of logic. If there are innate ideas, says Lock, they must be equally present in all minds. But Locke contends that there are no such ideas, which are universally present in all minds. Children, savages, idiots and illiterate persons are quite unconscious of the so-called innate ideas such as causality, infinity, eternity, God and the like. If there are innate ideas in the mind, they must be the same in all minds. But the so-called innate ideas of God, morality and the like differ in different societies, in different countries, and in different ages. They differ in different persons even at the same time in the same society. Even if there were the same idea in all minds, it would not prove their innateness. All persons have the same idea of fire. But it is not an innate idea; it is derived by all from experience. Universality of an idea does not prove its innateness. The so-called innate principles are general truths, which are induction from particular facts of experience. They are not the primary facts of knowledge, but generalisations from particular facts, which are acquired from perception. Perception is experience. The so-called innate principles are derived from experience; they are empirical truths, and not innate and intuitive. They are not *a priori* or prior to all experience. Thus Locke disproves Descartes' doctrine of innate ideas.

Locke maintains that the mind is a *tabula rasa* in the beginning. It is like a clean slate, blank white paper, on which experience writes, and this writing by experience is all the mind can know. Mind has no innate ideas. It receives ideas from experience. Experience is twofold; sensation and reflection. Sensation is external perception. Reflection is internal perception. Sensation is the source of our knowledge of external objects. Reflection is the source of our knowledge of the internal states of mind. There is not a single idea in the mind, which is not derived from sensation or reflection. The child gets his first ideas from sensation; then at an advanced age he reflects upon them. He cannot think before his mind is stocked with sensations. Descartes maintains that the mind always thinks even before it is furnished with sensations and that it can think independently of sensations. But Locke maintains that the mind cannot think before it has sensations. Sensations are the materials on which the mind thinks. The mind is passive in receiving sensations. But it is active in comparing them with one another, combining them into complex ideas, and forming general ideas out of particular ideas. It can form complex ideas out of simple ideas. "There is nothing in the intellect which was not previously in the sense." This is the dictum of Locke. All knowledge is derived from experience; it is posterior to or after experience. Knowledge is inductive in procedure and not deductive as Descartes and Spinoza think. Knowledge starts with particular facts of experience, and makes generalizations from them. It does not start with some self-evident innate ideas or principles, and deduce other truths from them. This theory is called *a posteriori* theory of knowledge. It is called empiricism because experience is the only reliable source of knowledge and testing all claims to knowledge. Empiricism is thus basing knowledge upon the senses, upon the flux of the sensible world, which rationalism rejected as an inferior way of knowing.

According to Locke, we have sensitive certainty of the existence of matter; we have intuitive certainty of the existence of our own minds; and we have demonstrative certainty of the existence of God. We are compelled to assume the existence of matter as the unknown and

unknowable substratum, of primary qualities-extension, solidity, figure, rest and motion-which are real and known through sensation or external perception. The mind is the substratum of the powers of perceiving, thinking, feeling and willing. We infer the existence of God from the external world as its maker. We form the idea of the infinite by negation of the finite. Thus, Locke, an empiricist, believes in the existence of matter, mind and God and reaches the same metaphysical conclusion of rationalist Descartes.

Locke also takes over the subjectivism of Descartes, the view that what I know best is my own mind and its ideas. Thus there enters into empiricism the problem inherent in subjectivism which we found in Descartes: the chasm or gap between my own mind with its ideas and the physical objects and human beings to which my ideas refer, and which are external to me, in the physical and social world. How can I know them since I am confined to knowing with certainty only my own ideas? So George Berkeley (1685-1753) pushes ahead with the argument of empiricism and demolishes Locke's acceptance of the belief held by Descartes that physical substances exist. We can never have sensory experiences of material substances, says Berkeley. We can experience only sensory qualities. What is my actual experience of substance? It is only the experience of qualities. I perceive a tree as a certain size and shape, I perceive the diameter of its trunk, the length of its branches, the brown colour of its trunk and branches, and the green colour of its leaves; I touch its rough textures and smell its woody aroma- but I can never perceive its substance itself. All that I have perceived of the tree are its qualities. I have no perception of a substance. The existence of physical substances, Berkeley concludes, is only in their being perceived. Physical substances cannot be known to have any other existence than in the qualities we perceive. For Berkeleian empiricism matter -physical substance, the physical universe- do not exist. But he believed that mental substances exist, in the form of finite minds and also in the form of God as infinite mind. The laws of nature for Berkeley are only the regularities of our own perceptions or ideas. Berkeley assured us that with the help of God our perceptions are reliable and orderly and that we can therefore trust in the uniformity of experience and in the dependability of scientific laws. But Hume gleefully asks how does Berkeley know that mental substance exists? Under this attack we will see collapse the idea that there are mental substances.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) "It seems a near contradiction to say that there are truths imprinted on the soul....." Examine Locke's reaction to such 'truths'.

.....

2) How does Berkeley refute the existence of material substance in his philosophy?

.....

2.3 SENSE PERCEPTION: IMPRESSIONS AND IDEAS.

David Hume's (1711-1776) exciting new philosophic outlook combined the empiricism of Locke and Berkeley, who argued that knowledge comes only from sense perception, with the moral philosophy of Francis Hutcheson, who argued that morality comes only from sentiment or feeling. Putting these two conceptions together, Hume began to move toward the shocking thought that our best knowledge, our scientific laws, are nothing but sense perceptions which our feelings lead us to believe. Therefore it is doubtful that we have any knowledge, we have only sense perceptions and feelings. Here in these thoughts of the young Hume was a radical, extreme scepticism, an extreme form of doubting the possibility that certainty in knowledge is attainable.

At the very outset of his book *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Hume holds, "All the perceptions of the human mind divide themselves into two different kinds, which I shall call Impressions and Ideas." It follows from the above citation that Hume accepts two basic premises of Locke. First, sense-perception is the only source of knowledge. Secondly, what we apprehend through sense-perception are impressions and ideas. Here, we may point out that what Hume calls 'impressions' are nothing other than the 'simple ideas' of Locke and 'ideas' of Berkeley. 'Ideas', for Hume, refer to the copies of impressions. It shows that all three of them-Locke, Berkeley and Hume, accept the Cartesian assumption, namely, the mind knows only its own ideas. Even with ideas as the immediate data of sense-perception, Locke attempts to establish materialism. Though Hume agrees with Locke that what the mind directly knows through sense-experience are ideas, yet as to Locke's materialism, he takes the side of Berkeley. Following Berkeley, Hume rejects Locke's abstract general ideas signifying material substances. On the ground that we cannot assert the existence of anything which is not 'given' through our sense-perception, Hume rejects not only the material substance of Locke, but also Berkeley's spirit or mental substance. He advocates the reality of impressions and ideas, alone. To quote him, "Now since nothing is ever present to the mind but perceptions, it follows that it is impossible for us to so much as conceive or form an idea of anything specifically different from ideas and impressions." His implication is that as our concepts of matter and mind as enduring substances are specifically different from impressions and ideas, we cannot assert their existence.

Hume defines impressions and ideas in the following term, "Those perceptions, which enter with the most force and violence, we may call impressions, and under this name I comprehend all our sensations, passions and emotions as they make their first appearance in the soul. By Ideas I mean the faint images of these in thinking and reasoning." In this definition, Hume makes it clear that both 'impressions' and 'ideas' are 'perceptions' of our mind, and the difference between them lies not in kind but only in the 'degrees of force and liveliness, with which they strike upon the mind'. 'Impressions', in his view, are the lively perceptions. When we reflect on these lively perceptions, we receive 'ideas', which are less lively copies of these 'impressions'. In order to emphasise the mental character of 'impressions' and 'ideas', Hume maintains that the difference between them is a difference of feeling and 'thinking'. Thereby, he means that impressions are directly felt, strong and vivid perceptions, whereas 'ideas' are comparatively feeble perceptions acquired through recollection or imagination. Thus, putting all the stress on the degree of vivacity with which 'impressions and ideas' are received by the mind, he says, "Everyone of himself will readily perceive the difference betwixt feeling and thinking." Here we notice the difference between Locke

and Hume. According to Locke, the strength and vivacity of the simple ideas of sensation assure us of the presence of external material objects as the causes of these ideas. It is this fact of being caused by extra-mental reality which, in Locke's view, distinguishes the ideas of sensation from the ideas of memory and imagination. Hume however does not refer to any substantial reality, material or mental as the cause of our 'impressions'. By 'impressions', he simply means those mental awarenesses or 'perceptions' which are distinguished from 'ideas' in respect of the degrees of 'force and liveliness' with which they are felt. He does not distinguish between impressions and ideas by the manner of their production. To quote him "By the term impression I would not be understood to express the manner, in which our lively perceptions are produced in the soul, but merely the perceptions themselves".

Hume attempts to exhibit the priority of impressions through different examples. For instance, he argues that if we lack any one of our sense-organs, then in the absence of specific impressions, we cannot have the corresponding ideas also. "A blind man can form no notions of colours, a deaf man of sounds." To mention another example cited by Hume where he says, "We cannot form to ourselves a just idea of the taste of a pineapple, without having actually tasted it." He means that we cannot form the accurate idea of anything without the previous impressions of it. In these examples, we observe Hume's attempt to give a realistic interpretation of his epistemology and ontology. However, all these examples, in the process of showing the temporal priority of impressions, prove the existence of material objects also. Hence, it follows from Hume's own examples that the distinguishing feature of impressions is not vivacity or temporal priority but the fact that they are caused by objective reality which is lacking in the case of ideas. Whereas Locke emphasises the objective ground of the simple ideas of sensation, Hume puts all the stress on the subjective characteristics of 'impressions'.

Just like Locke's division of simple ideas into those of sensation and reflection, Hume draws a similar distinction within impressions: namely, impressions of sensations and impressions of reflection. An impression of sensation, in Hume's view, "arises in the soul originally from unknown causes". This view implies that there are existents other than impressions and ideas but because they are not given in our sense-perception, they are 'unknown' to us. This statement contradicts his view that "we never....can conceive any kinds of existence, but those perceptions..." Hence, it seems to us that two different interpretations of Hume's ontological position are possible. On the one hand, we cannot conceive any other existences than 'perceptions' i.e., impressions and ideas; on the other hand, his view implies that there are existences other than 'perceptions' but they are 'unknown' to us. Herein lays agnosticism in Hume. As according to Hume, we do not know either external material substances or identical mental substance, the origin of the impressions of sensation is unknown for us. Impression of reflection, in Hume's view, "is derived in a great measure from our ideas..." An impression leaves its copy i.e., idea in the mind, and reflecting on this idea, the mind may again receive a new impression like desire or aversion. Hume calls it the impression of reflection. As this kind of impression is directly derived from an idea, we observe that neither of Hume's two criteria, namely 'liveliness' or 'priority' is properly applicable to it.

2.4 THE PSYCHOLOGICAL LAWS OF ASSOCIATION OF IDEAS

Impressions and ideas, which constitute the matter of knowledge, are disconnected from one another. They are connected with one another by the laws of association. The laws of association are purely subjective. Discrete impressions and ideas are automatically combined with one another according to these laws. They do not require any innate ideas or a priori forms of reason to connect them with one another. Hume advocates through-going empiricism. Impressions or sensations are the first units of knowledge; ideas or images are their faint copies. They are combined with one another according to the laws of association to form complex ideas. Knowledge is composed of sensations and ideas combined by the laws of association.

Hume has said that our atomic (distinct and separable) ideas, which correspond to our impressions, are connected or associated by three laws of association, which are a gentle force or impulse leading us to associate one idea with another. The association of our ideas is based upon three qualities of our ideas, which tend to lead the mind from one idea to another, to connect or associate one idea with another. The first law is that ideas are associated or connected by the resemblance between ideas. The second law by which we associate or connect one idea with another is by contiguity, one idea being close to, or adjacent to, another in space or time. The third law of the association of ideas is by cause and effect. These three laws pertain to all our thinking, thus also to our scientific thinking. All our reasoning about matters of fact, says Hume, is causal reasoning. And our most important reasoning about matters of fact is scientific reasoning, with its causal laws of nature.

Hume claims that the relation of cause and effect is the crucial concept in all our thinking about factual matters. By necessary connection is meant the relation between cause and effect in which the cause necessarily produces the effect. Hume now asks the powerful question: From what impression, if any, does the idea of cause arise? The principle, that everything must have a cause that nothing is uncaused, that something cannot come from nothing was regarded by Descartes and by the scholastic philosophers before him and the rationalistic philosophers after him, as a self-evident truth that proves itself directly to reason. Hume concludes that there is no rational proof whatsoever of the causal principle. He says flatly: "Every demonstration which has been produced for the necessity of a cause is fallacious." If we believe in the causal principle, he says, it is only through habit or custom that we do so, there is no rational basis for it. Here in this astonishing conclusion we see the outcome of Hume's early breakthrough: his notion of combining empiricism with Hutcheson's view of morality as coming only from sentiment or feeling. This had led Hume to the startling thought that what is true of morality is also true of science: that our scientific laws have their source only in feelings.

Why do we think that a particular cause must necessarily have a particular effect? We cannot know this by reason. Hume comes up with the answer. We have the idea of a necessary connection between a particular cause and effect after we experience their conjunction repeatedly. He calls this *constant conjunction*. If repeatedly we have sensory impressions of fire as spatially contiguous to my fingers and temporally prior to my fingers' having a sensation of burning, "without any further ceremony," says Hume, "we call the one cause and the other effect." Impressions of the constant conjunction, spatially and temporally, of the flaming match and the burning sensation in the fingers still do not provide an impression of necessary connection. If the idea of necessary connection has no corresponding impression, then on Hume's empiricist principle: no impression, no idea- the idea of a necessary connection between

cause and effects is worthless as knowledge and is meaningless, a fraud, nonsense. Thus Hume's empiricist rule is not only a test of the worth of our ideas as knowledge (where there is no impression, the idea is worthless) but is also a test of the meaning of our ideas (where there is no impression, the idea is meaningless).

Since necessary causal relation does not come from sensory impressions, it must be subjective; it must come from the mind, and specifically from the psychological laws of association of ideas. The idea of necessary connection between causes and effects is not in the objects we observe, but only in the mind, he concludes. Thus the idea of necessary connection between particular causes and effects is derived not from rational self-evidence and not from any empirical sense impression, but only from the psychological association of our ideas. Hume has shown that causal necessity is not an objective relationship between things which scientists can observe, but is only a subjective compulsion to relate things by the psychological laws of association. There is no necessary connection between objects. There is only the psychological necessity of our associating ideas with one another. Hume says: "Objects have no discoverable connection together, nor is it from any other principle but custom...that we draw any inference from one...to the other." Hume's point is that the idea of necessary connection between cause and effect is something that experience can never give us. Each impression is a separate experience. Experience cannot guarantee that this effect is necessary. Thus Hume redefines the idea of the cause-effect relation. A cause is an object in constant spatial and temporal conjunction with another such that the experience of the one compels the mind to expect the other. This is all that we can mean by the cause-effect relationship.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) Explain Hume's distinction between impressions and ideas and clarify its sceptical implications?

.....

.....

.....

.....

2) What are the arguments given by Hume to deny the necessary connection between cause and effect? Discuss?

.....

.....

.....

.....

2.5 MATTERS OF FACT AND RELATIONS OF IDEAS

For Hume all the objects of human reason or enquiry may naturally be divided into two kinds of propositions, to wit, Matters of Fact and Relations of Ideas and they are mutually exclusive.

1) Matters of Facts: Here Hume attacks upon the validity of scientific knowledge. Propositions of matters of facts consist only in our impressions and ideas. There is no necessity that any particular impression will follow any other impression. The contrary of what usually occurs in observed constant conjunction is possible. How do you know, Hume asks, that the sun will rise tomorrow? No necessary causal law guarantees it. It is just as intelligible and without any logical contradiction to say "The sun will not rise tomorrow." There is no more logical necessity for the one than for the other. We can never know that a fact must be so, that a fact is necessary.

2) Relations of ideas: Logic and mathematics, specifically arithmetic, geometry, and algebra, give us knowledge of the relations of ideas. This is the domain of certainty. The propositions of mathematics are either self-evidently or intuitively certain, or they can be demonstrated by deductive reasoning to have complete certainty. The truths of mathematics assert relationships between ideas, between abstract symbols. They are formal abstract truths. They tell us nothing about matters of fact, and on the other hand, matters of fact cannot refute them. It is true independent of any experience we might have. Mathematical propositions must pay a price for yielding absolute truth. Mathematics is not truth about anything which exists, about any matters of fact. Mathematics is only empty, abstract, formal truth, which tells you nothing about existence. No proposition which states a relation between ideas can establish any truth about existence.

Relations of ideas have certainty but no factual content, and matters of fact which have empirical content but no certainty. Even though Hume has conceded that logical certainty can be attained through demonstrative reasoning in the field of the relations of ideas, he has implied in the *Enquiries*, that such knowledge is only verbal, or tautologous. As the 'relations' are already contained in the ideas, they do not provide any new information. In the *Treatise*, he has brought the faculty of reason into question. As human beings are not infallible, he argues that there is a possibility of error even with regard to rational knowledge. Hume has thus resolved both empirical and rational knowledge into mere probability.

2.6 THE LIMITS OF KNOWLEDGE

With regard to the idea of substance, when we ask, from what impressions does it arise, the answer cannot claim to be from an impression of substance, but only from impressions of qualities we experience, such qualities as size, shape, colour. Then the idea of substance is nothing but these qualities which we experience. We cannot, therefore, say that substances exist. We can know that something exists only if we have an impression of it, only if we have sensory experience of it. And so Hume destroys the claim that substance exist by showing that we have no impressions of physical substances. As far as our knowledge of the world of facts is concerned, we are limited to our atomistic impressions and their corresponding ideas. These impressions and ideas appear repeatedly in our experience. We have no way of knowing what causes them. We have no knowledge that an external world exists, that physical substances exist, that a God exists. There is no God. There is no valid proof for the existence of God. We have no impression of God. We do not perceive Him, nor can we infer His existence. We wish to believe

in God to fulfil our aspirations. So we believe in God. The idea of God is man-made. This is also the case for the idea of mental substance, and specifically for Descartes' claim that I am a thinking substance. There is no sensory impression to which the idea of thinking substance corresponds. On empiricist principles we cannot claim to have any knowledge of the self as a unity, as permanent and continuous, but only as a series of perceptions. Hume says "the rest of mankind.... are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement." This is Hume's famous "bundle of perceptions" theory of the self. Hume cannot claim that the flux of our perceptions have even the unity of a bundle. Hume is here getting close to the view of self as a stream of consciousness. Hume himself says, "The mind is a kind of theatre, where perceptions successively make their appearance, pass and re-pass, glide away and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations." There is no continuity, no permanence, and no identity, in these appearances in the theatre of the mind. But suddenly Hume catches himself and says that, strictly speaking, there is not even a theatre that we can know anything about through a sense impression. And thus the outcome of Hume's driving, consistent empiricism, which requires that the basis for our knowledge be solely in sensory impressions, leads to the conclusion that we have no knowledge. Not only is metaphysics impossible, science is also impossible. The causal laws of science have been reduced by Hume to the psychological laws of association of ideas. Through animal instinct we have animal faith in the world of the senses, and thus we are able to function in the world, says Hume. Animal faith, not philosophy, governs our lives.

In the *Treatise*, Hume not only brings the certainty of geometry to question, but also expresses doubt with regard to the very capacity of reason. Hume argues that it is never possible to claim certainty about a chain of reasoning as a rational proof. First of all, our judgement about the proof is probable and not completely certain. Then, our assessment of this judgment about the proof is also probable. Further, the evaluation of our ability to judge our judgment is also probable. Thus, the process leads to an infinite regress. There is no guarantee of certainty even in the field of 'Relations of Ideas' and in the realm of 'Matters of Fact.' Thus for Hume, "all knowledge degenerates into probability" In Hume's view, probability is all that we can aspire for in our life.

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

- 1) Explain in your own words the distinction Hume makes between "matters of fact" and "relations of ideas". Do you agree that these are different objects of knowledge?

.....

- 2) State and examine Hume's refutation of the notion of self as a substance?

.....

2.7 LET US SUM UP

David Hume's (1711-1776) exciting new philosophic outlook combined the empiricism of John Locke (1632-1704) and George Berkeley (1685-1753), who argued that knowledge comes only from sense perception, with the moral philosophy of Francis Hutcheson, who argued that morality comes only from sentiment or feeling. Putting these together Hume states that our knowledge is nothing but sense perceptions which our feeling lead us to believe. Hume's philosophy is an example of the method of abstraction in its extreme form. In the sphere of ontology, Hume is neither an idealist nor a materialist. He is generally known as a neutral monist. He rejects the existence of the self as well as of God. He also rejects the existence of the material substance. So what we are left with is the plurality of perceptions and impressions. Following the method of abstraction, Hume divides all knowledge into two kinds: (i) relations of ideas and (ii) matters of fact. These are two completely separate kinds of knowledge with no mediating transitions. One is analytic and the other synthetic. Knowledge of mathematics, physics, and geometry, according to Hume, are analytic because these are universal and necessary. In the *Treatise*, Hume not only brings the certainty of Geometry to question, but also expresses doubt in regard to the very capacity of reason. Hume has resolved both empirical and rational knowledge into mere probability.

2.8 KEY WORDS

Scepticism: A philosophical conception questioning the possibility of knowledge of objective reality. Consistent scepticism is close to agnosticism and nihilism.

Ontology: Ontology is the metaphysical inquiry into the nature of being in general.

Enlightenment: A movement in Europe from about 1650 until 1800 that advocated the use of reason and individualism instead tradition and established doctrines.

Causal Laws: Descriptive laws asserting a necessary connection between events of two kinds, of which one is the cause and the other the effect.

Causal Reasoning: Inductive reasoning in which some effect is inferred from what is assumed to be its cause, or some cause is inferred from what is assumed to be its effect.

Cause: Either the necessary condition for the occurrence of an effect or the sufficient condition for the occurrence of an effect, understood as the conjunction of its necessary conditions. The latter meaning is more common, and is the sense of cause used when we wish to produce something or event.

Necessary conditions: Necessary conditions for something are those factors without which that thing cannot exist, as breathing is a necessary condition for human life.

Substance: (1) An individual thing, a unity of matter and form; (2) by contrast with properties, qualities, attributes, a substance is that which possesses or has properties, qualities; (3) by contrast with properties, qualities, a substance is that which requires no other thing in order to exist.

Monism: Any view which holds that one principle is sufficient to explain reality.

Scholasticism: The philosophy of the medieval cathedral schools which attempted to support Christian beliefs with elements of Greek philosophy and with the use of syllogistic reasoning.

2.9 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCE

Hume. *A Treatise of Human Nature*. L.A. Selby-Bigge. Ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965.

--- *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1955.

Locke, J. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Nidditch, P.H. Ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975.

Ayer, M.R. *George Berkeley: Philosophical Works*. London: Everyman, 1975.

Ayer, A.J. *Hume*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1980.

Taylor, A.E. *David Hume and the Miraculous*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927.

Jagunath, Singha. *Introduction to Philosophy*. Calcutta: New Central Book Agency, 1995.

T.Z. Lavine. *From Socrates to Sartre: The Philosophic Quest*. New York: Bantam Books, 1989.

UNIT 3 IMMANUEL KANT

Contents

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Method of Kant
- 3.3 Kant's Philosophy of Knowledge
- 3.4 Kant's Philosophy of God
- 3.5 Moral Philosophy of Kant
- 3.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.7 Key Words
- 3.8 Further Readings and References

3.0 OBJECTIVES

The main objective of unit is to expose Kant's contribution to Western philosophy. His epistemological and metaphysical positions along with his moral thought by categorical imperatives are dealt here. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), a philosopher of enlightenment, is famous for his epistemology and metaphysics. His outstanding contribution to Western philosophy is laudable, especially in his notion of phenomenon and *noumenon*, categorical imperatives in moral philosophy. His transcendental idealism is seen as an attempt to resolve the issues of rationalism and empiricism in approaching reality.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Immanuel Kant has been regarded as the most important modern philosopher and the paradigmatic philosopher of the European Enlightenment. He is also one of the most influential German Idealist philosophers and the founder of Transcendental or Critical Idealism.

Kant proposes a "change in point of view" to reform metaphysics from the shackles of dogmatism and scepticism. While dogmatism, according to Kant, trusts in the principles of metaphysics "without a previous critique of the faculty of reason itself, merely with a view to their success," scepticism holds a "general mistrust in pure reason," again, "without a previous critique, merely with a view to the failure of its assertions." Metaphysics has hitherto been a merely random groping ..., a groping among mere concepts."

In spite of his strictures on the traditional metaphysics, he is ready to admit that "the idea of is as old as speculative human reason," and is "what rational being does not speculate either in scholastic or in popular fashion?" Interestingly, Kant opens the first *Critique* with a statement of

the inevitability of metaphysics, indicating that it is “prescribed by the very nature of reason itself.” Dogmatic metaphysics attempts to have *a priori* knowledge of reality independent of sensibility and experience.

The new metaphysics, which, for Kant, is only worthy of the name, is metaphysics as a science, “a system of *a priori* knowledge from mere concepts” and “the inventory of all our possessions through pure reason, systematically arranged.” Assuming that the quest of human reason for metaphysics is inherent to human nature (“natural disposition”), he looks for a justification of its ideas in the practical realm. Metaphysics of morals is indirectly a concession Kant gives to fulfil the natural quest of human reason for the realization of its ultimate ideals, which he rejects as untenable on the basis of the principles enshrined in the *Critique* itself. Kant tailors human natural disposition for metaphysics into the new metaphysics.

Reflecting on the development of his philosophy, Kant distinguished three periods: The ‘dogmatic period,’ The ‘sceptic period,’ and The ‘transcendentalist period.’ Kant’s philosophy can be characterised as an attempt to answer three fundamental questions: a) What can I know? b) What ought I to do? c) What may I hope for? He addresses these questions in his important works namely the three Critiques. a) In 1781 *Critique of Pure Reason* was published. ‘Pure reason’ means a critical enquiry into the faculty of reason with reference to all the cognitions to which it may strive to attain independently of all experience. b) It is true that his original conception of his critical philosophy anticipated the preparation of a critique of moral philosophy. *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), the result of this intention, is the standard source book for his ethical doctrines. *The Critique of Judgement* (1790), one of the most original and instructive of all of Kant’s writings - was not foreseen in his original conception of the critical philosophy. Thus it is perhaps best regarded as a series of appendixes to the other two Critiques. The work falls into two main parts, namely “Critique of Aesthetic Judgment” and “Critique of Teleological Judgment.”

3.2 METHOD OF KANT

Kant uniquely synthesizes Rationalism and Empiricism into Critical Philosophy of his own, by inspiration of both, eliminating the faults of both thoughts and critically unifying the strengths of these opposing philosophical insights. He rejected rationalism for being so dogmatic in metaphysics and the second for too sceptical in epistemology. His main objective was to save religion from reason and yet at the same time to save science from scepticism. For Kant, knowledge proper must have universal and necessary factors along with factuality. Such knowledge is found in mathematics and physics. Empiricism cannot give such knowledge as on the basis of experience, strict universality and necessity cannot be obtained. So empiricism cannot explain knowledge as it is found in mathematics and physics. According to Rationalism, there is a universal faculty of reason by virtue of which each individual has certain innate ideas. This theory explains universality and necessity according to Kant. All men have the same innate ideas because of their possessing a common faculty of reason. But the difficulty of rationalism lies in another direction. Innate ideas are subjective, being in the mind of human knowers. There is no guarantee that they will be true of facts. The upshot of the review is that reason, unaided by

experience, can build castle in the air only, and by no stretch of imagination can it lay claim to actuality. Therefore, Kant discarded rationalism on the ground that it dealt with airy structures without correspondence with facts.

Kant did not reject empiricism and rationalism outright. He tried to give solution based on the Critical, Transcendental and Agnostic philosophy.

Kant states that both empiricism and rationalism are right in what they affirm but wrong in what they deny. Empiricism affirms that knowledge is constituted by experience and rationalism affirms that knowledge is constituted by innate or *a priori* ideas. Empiricism is right in as much as it points out that propositions of facts can be derived from experience. But rationalism is also right in as much as it points out that knowledge is constituted of *a priori* elements also. Again, empiricism is wrong in as much as it denies the presence of *a priori* elements involved in knowledge. In the same way, rationalism wrongly denies that sense-experience also constitutes knowledge. The proper view, according to Kant, is "Knowledge begins with experience and does not necessarily originate from it." Therefore, knowledge proper is a joint venture of sense and understanding. Nevertheless, we shall also find in due course that the mind does not remain satisfied with scientific knowledge of the phenomenon only. It also tries to know *noumena* (thing-in-itself - *das Ding an sich*) as well but becomes impossible. Apart from sense and understanding there is reason which tries to constitute knowledge. Hence, according to Kant, knowledge begins with sense, proceeds to understanding and ends in reason.

According to Kant, any epistemology should have occupied itself with the enquiry of *a priori* elements involved in knowledge. These elements are independent of any experience whatsoever. Indeed, they are the pre-conditions of any cognitive experience whatsoever. Unless, these *a priori* elements be operative, no experience of any object would arise at all. So Kant is not so much concerned with any specific objects of knowledge as with the universal or *a priori* ways of knowing any object. Hence, Kant has called his epistemological enquiry Transcendental. It means something like going beyond ordinary level of experience. The term transcendental signifies the *a priori* condition of all possible knowledge. In Kant's philosophy '*a priori*' is the mark of necessity. Such necessity can never be explained in terms of experience. E.g. Unity, good, truth. Thus Kant's method is called transcendental method.

Agnosticism is that branch of philosophy according to which it is claimed that human beings have no faculty for knowing certain ultimate realities. It also holds that any attempt to prove or disapprove the existence of God becomes impossible. Agnosticism, in other words, completely or partially denies the possibility of knowing the nature of Universe. Following this philosophy, Kant maintains that there are things in themselves which are unknown and unknowable. Therefore, he concludes that we can know objects only as they appear to us, coloured and transformed by our ways of knowing. What these objects are in themselves apart from our ways of knowing, of course, can never be ascertained by us. Hence, according to Kant, knowledge of the *phenomena* alone is possible and *noumena* remain unknown and unknowable. Later on, Kant has maintained that although they are not objects of knowledge, they are yet proper objects of faith. After all, he was a deeply religious man and so he demolished knowledge in order to make room for faith.

3.3 KANT'S PHILOSOPHY OF KNOWLEDGE

Kant observed the sorry and confused state of philosophy which has been reduced to mere groping among concepts. Metaphysics has not been established on sure foundation. Instead man is a metaphysical animal that constantly asks questions about being. Metaphysics is a natural disposition of man. He is driven on by an inward need to ask questions which cannot be answered by empirical employment of reason. The Metaphysics of Kant's time was tinged with dogmatism and illogic and was not worthy of the name 'science' because science sought after precision and perfection. There is still a way for Metaphysics to enter upon the secure path of science. If in the past Metaphysics was not able to enter upon the secure path of science it was because it has been following a wrong path. Therefore Kant felt the need for a kind of radical re-ordering of presuppositions. Hitherto it has been assumed that all our knowledge must conform to objects outside us. Instead Kant proposed that we should suppose that the external world must conform to our knowledge, to the forms and categories of objects in our mind. This came to be known as "Kantian Copernican Revolution".

Synthetic *a priori* Judgements

From a logical point of view, the propositions that express human knowledge can be divided according to two distinctions. 1) Distinction between propositions that are *a priori*, in the sense that they are knowable prior to experience. Necessity and Universality are the two criteria of *a priori* propositions and both of these criteria are inseparable. By 'strict universality' means 'true in all possible world.' *A posteriori* propositions are those that they are knowable only after experience. 2) Distinction between propositions that are analytic, that is, those in which the predicate is included in the subject. For example, "All bodies are extended." If we understand the meaning of the term 'material body' whose connotation was taken by Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz to be extension, then certainly the predicate 'extended' is already contained in the subject. And a synthetic proposition is one in which the predicate is not included in the subject. E.g. Material bodies are heavy. Whether a body is heavy or not is known through experience.

The distinction between the analytic and the synthetic is based on the content of propositions. Here the question is: "Does the proposition add or does not add to cognition or knowledge?" If it does, it is called synthetic, if it does not, it is called analytic. However, the distinction of *a priori* and *a posteriori* propositions has reference to the sources of cognition. *A priori* propositions stem from pure reason or pure understanding. As such they are valid independently of any experience whatsoever. *A posteriori* propositions, on the other hand, are derived from experience. They, therefore, require experience for their validation.

For the most of the empiricists, *a priori* and the analytic propositions, and, *a posteriori* and the synthetic propositions are identical. But, for Kant, synthetic propositions instead of being *a posteriori* may be *a priori*. For the empiricists and rationalists, who are unanimous in claiming that the analytical propositions are *a priori* in their nature, they are absurd and self-contradictory and consequently nonsense. For Kant, however, synthetic propositions *a priori* are most significant in scientific cognition and are found in mathematics and in physics. For example: $5+7$ are together equal to 12. It is universal, necessary and *a priori* in mathematics. Every event has a cause. Although it is not part of the concept of an event that it be a cause, it is universally true and necessary that every event has a cause. These judgements or propositions are synthetic as

they explain the progress of science and they are *a priori* as they explain the universal aspect of scientific knowledge.

The Process of Knowledge

Kant was meditative and methodical. A desire for thoroughness has made him highly analytic. As such Kant divides and sub-divides his subject into indefinite details. It was Kant who has introduced the tripartite division of mental processes into cognition, cognition and affection. Corresponding to these three divisions, the three Critiques are developed. In the history of philosophy, Critique of Pure Reason has played more important part than the other critiques. For Kant, knowledge requires both sensation (empiricists) and understanding (rationalists). Sensation supplies the data for knowledge to the understanding. Kant said, "Objects are 'given' to us by means of sensation and it alone yields us 'intuitions'; they are 'thought' through the understanding, and from the understanding arise 'concepts'." Therefore, it is only from the united action of sensation and understanding we can obtain knowledge. The only valid use of the understanding consists of its 'thinking of the data' supplied to it by sensation. Using the understanding to go beyond the data of sensation is an illegitimate use of the understanding. The contribution of sensation: The data of sensation come to us through various sense organs and present themselves to us in a confused and unconnected way. This is known as 'matter' of sensation. These must be ordered properly. In sensation there are two 'a priori' forms which provide this ordering namely, 'space' and 'time'.

Space is nothing but the form of all appearances of outer sense. It is the subjective condition of sensibility under which alone outer intuition is possible for us. Time is the determinate form in which alone the intuition of inner states is possible. Neither space nor time is derived from experience nor do they represent any property of things in themselves. They are a priori forms according to which we organise and perceive sense data. The objects of our sense experience are represented as being spatio-temporal. The contribution of understanding: The confused sense data are supplied to reason which organises them in spatio-temporal forms and passes on the result to understanding to be 'thought' by it through concepts.

The Twelve Categories of Kant

There are 12 basic categories (concepts) according to which these sense-data are thought. Each category is linked to a type of judgement. These judgements can be brought under four groups: quantity, quality, relation, and modality. Each of these heads has 'three moments'; the last moment is the synthesis of the first two moments.

Table of Judgements	Illustrations	Derived Concepts
Quantity: Universal Particular Singular	All politicians are corrupt Some are honest Vijayakanth is corrupt	Unity Plurality Totality
Quality: Affirmative Negative	Man is mortal The soul is not mortal	Reality Negation

Infinite	The soul is immortal	Limitation
Relation: Categorical Hypothetical Disjunctive	God is just If God is just, he will punish sinners God is either just or unjust	Substance – Attribute Cause – Effect Reciprocity of agent – Patient
Modality: Problematical Assertoric Apodictic (Beyond Dispute)	This may be poison This is poison Every effect must have a cause	Possibility – Impossibility Existence – Non-Existence Necessity – Contingency

Hence, according to Kant, knowledge is the application of pure concepts of the understanding or categories to objects furnished us by the senses and perceived as spatial and temporal. Categories serve to make experience possible.

Noumena and Phenomena

Kant made a famous distinction between *phenomena* and *noumena*. The *noumenon* (plural *Noumena*) is the thing-in-itself (*das Ding an sich*) as opposed to the phenomenon—the thing as it appears to an observer. Though the *noumena* holds the contents of the intelligible world, Kant claimed that man's speculative reason can only know phenomena and can never penetrate to the *noumenon*. 'Phenomena' refers to 'things perceived', that is, the things as-we-know-it. 'Noumena' refers to 'things thought', that is, the things in themselves. By this distinction Kant wanted to show that what we know is the appearance of reality, clothed under the a priori forms of space and time and invested in a category. In other words, we can never know anything in its pure state, divested of forms and categories. Therefore, knowledge consists in getting objects to conform to the forms and categories of the mind. The universality and necessity of cause-and-effect relationship, weakened by David Hume, is now restored in strictness.

3.4 KANT'S PHILOSOPHY OF GOD

Morality and freedom give us the right to believe in the reality of two other Ideas of reason, namely those of God and immortality. He argues that we must postulate the reality of these Ideas in order to be able to act as moral beings in this world. Without immortality and God we would be condemned to moral despair. Moral action makes us deserving of happiness but frequently does not lead to happiness in this world. If we want to establish a connection between the two, we must assume that they will be made to coincide by God in the long run. In this way, the notions of God and immortality, as prerequisites for the realisation of the *summum bonum* or the highest good, make possible the moral enterprise for Kant, and therefore we must believe in their reality.

To elaborate on this: Reason's search for the unconditioned, the dialectical inference from contingent existence to the existence of a necessary being is an effective drive to advance beyond

experience to the transcendental ideal. It is also the *ens entium*, the being of all beings, or the ground of all beings, which in the transcendental sense is God, and the ideal of pure reason. Here it must be borne in mind that what is being considered by Kant is the objective reality of the concept of God, and not the objective reality of God, as it is beyond the critical philosophy to consider it, as God cannot be given in intuition. Kant insists that the transcendental ideal, or the concept of God can have the valid employment only as a regulative principle of reason; any attempt to employ the same to be constitutive of the existence of God would be dialectical and detrimental to the nature of human reason itself. The only possible proof for the existence of God, for Kant, must use moral premises; his insistence to rule out speculative theology gives way to the possibility of moral theology, and an initial attempt is made in this regard in the “Canon of Pure Reason” which is elaborated in his later ethical works. The schema of God is only a human way of conceiving the ground of nature, for the purpose of employing our cognitive faculties, in order to arrive at the unified understanding of the world of sensibility and understanding. Therefore, theoretical philosophy, in fact, does not address the question of the belief in the existence of God (it being set apart for moral theology), but deals only about thinking of the world *as if* it were created by God, with a view to purposive unity of nature.

Belief in these three concepts is central in Kant’s so-called moral faith. Though Kant himself was not religious and was indifferent to forms of external religious worship, he did believe that morality inevitably leads us to the acceptance of certain tenets of traditional theism. In his essays on religious matters and especially in his *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, he attempts to develop the parallels between revealed religion and philosophical theology. He claims that all that is essential in religion can be reduced to morality. Accordingly, he criticises established religion severely as engaging in mere idolatry in its insistence on merely formal requirements. According to Kant, then, what we may hope is that our moral actions ultimately do make a difference. Kant held the view that the three possible approaches to the existence of God established through reason are illusory.

a) Ontological Proof:

It is based on the notion of the most perfect being (St. Anselm). For Kant existence cannot be considered an attribute of a being, though a necessary being necessarily includes all its attributes. To grant ‘existence’ to the necessary being, we must go out of the concept, to experience. The concept expresses only what is possible.

b) Cosmological Proof:

It begins with the cosmos and proceeds to the existence of a Creator of the orderly universe. For Kant, it is not a rational argument because it also goes outside experience to suppose the properties of the necessary being, from the ‘concept’ of the ‘most real being’. It is another form of the ontological proof.

c) Physical-theological proof:

It is a proof based on ‘design’ in the world or proof from order or finality (5th way of St. Thomas). For Kant, this argument proves only the ‘architect’ of the world and not its creator. That is, one who planned and ordered this world and not one who brought it into being. Secondly, this ‘finite world’, with its ‘finite order’ is insufficient ground to demand an infinite

being to account for it. We may argue to the existence of a cause 'proportionate' to it but not of an 'infinite being'.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) What does Kant mean by *noumena*?

.....

.....

.....

2) What do you understand by Kant's proof for God?

.....

.....

.....

3.5 MORAL PHILOSOPHY OF KANT

Kant's moral philosophy presented in his Critique of Practical Reason may be regarded as an attempt to discover the meaning of goodness, right and wrong, duty and the implications of our moral knowledge. In his practical philosophy, Kant argues that human reason is an autonomous source of principles of conduct, immune from the blandishments of sensual inclination in both its determinations of value and its decisions to act, and indeed that human autonomy is the highest value and the limiting condition of all other values.

Traditionally, Kant has been seen as an ethical formalist, according to whom all judgments on the values of ends must be subordinated to the obligatory universality of a moral law derived from the very concept of rationality itself. Kant exposes ethics as 'the inherent value of the world, the *summum bonum*, is freedom in accordance with a will which is not necessitated to action' and even more clearly in lectures on natural right he says that 'If only rational beings can be ends in themselves, that is not because they have reason, but because they have freedom. Reason is merely a means'. Kant holds that the incomparable dignity of human beings derives from the fact that they are 'free with regard to all laws of nature, obeying only those laws which' they make themselves.

Kant furnishes further formulations of the categorical imperative, especially the Formula of Humanity as an End in Itself - 'Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end'. It requires the possibility of rational consent to your action from any agent affected by it. It is the formula of the kingdom of ends, the requirement that any proposed course

of action be compatible with 'a whole of all ends in systematic conjunction. The formulations are supposed to follow from the Formula of Universal Law. Humanity is an end in itself because of its potential for freedom, that the real 'ground of a possible categorical imperative' is discovered. If so, then this is Kant's theory: the ultimate source of value is human freedom as an end in itself, manifested in interpersonal contexts in the possibility of freely given consent to the actions of others.

Postulates of Categorical Imperatives: From the categorical imperatives Kant derives three important postulates or necessary implications (arising out of practical reason).

- a) That man is free: An imperative (obligation) means that there is a possibility of disobeying, that is saying 'no' to it.
- b) That man has an immortal soul: It implies an absolute conformity with the law, which is 'holiness'. It is a perfection of which no rational being of the sensible world is capable at any moment of its existence. Since such a holiness is necessary, we have to postulate an everlasting tending to it as a remote goal. This requires an everlasting duration of existence and personality of the same rational being which is called the immortality of the soul.
- c) That God exists: God must exist to justify the moral order. The practical reason demands it.

Concept of Moral Law

From infancy Kant was always been struck by 'the starry heavens above and the moral law within', the two orders, the physical and the moral. In the history of philosophy we ascribe the term 'categorical imperative' in moral philosophy to Kant. For, reason demands that the moral law for every empirical rational agent be categorical and imperative. Moral law for Kant is a synthetic *a priori* proposition. Kant believes that a moral law for all empirical rational beings can be derived only when it is rooted in the autonomous freedom of the agent. Any conjunction with the empirical nature of the agent for the determination of the moral law affects its purity. The moral law must be foundationally rational, i.e., *a priori* and should have the form of universality. Kant's *a priori* moral law has universal application. He calls a rational moral being universal law-giver as well. The deliberations of a moral agent have to be based on pure practical reason. The moral law asserts the universal nature of rational beings and the consequent rational obligation of a will that expresses itself as free yet morally obliged. Kant does not admit any empirical factor to be the determining basis of moral duty. Only pure practical reason has the capacity to provide universal, objective and absolute morals for rational beings. The moral principles should have the pure practical reason as their determining basis. The moral law as categorical imperative must be the duty-bound *a priori* general principle of action and therefore the law of action for all situations. Any inalienable dependence on empirical factors brings forth only heteronomous and conditional laws of action. To a perfect rational being, the moral law is not an imperative but 'the law of holiness', because they possess unlimited reason. The moral law, thus, is categorical imperative for those rational beings that are affected by sensual impulses.

Moral Duties

Kant's principle of morality gives rise to a fourfold classification of duties, resulting from the intersection of two divisions: between duties to oneself and to others, and between perfect and imperfect duties. Perfect duties are proscriptions of specific kinds of actions, and violating them is morally blameworthy; imperfect duties are prescriptions of general ends, and fulfilling them is

praiseworthy. The four classes of duty are thus: perfect duties to oneself, such as the prohibition of suicide; perfect duties to others, such as the prohibition of deceitful promises; imperfect duties to oneself, such as the prescription to cultivate one's talents; and imperfect duties to others, such as the prescription of benevolence.

Ethical duties to oneself include the prohibition of injury to the physical and mental bases of one's free agency, as by suicide or drunkenness, and the prescription of efforts to improve both the physical and mental conditions for the exercise of one's freedom. And ethical duties to others include both the prohibition of injuries to the dignity of others as free agents, for example by insulting or ridiculing them ('duties of respect'), and the prescription of efforts to improve the conditions for others' exercise of their own freedom, as by beneficence and sympathy ('duties of love'). "Morality is not properly the doctrine of how we may make ourselves happy, but how we may make ourselves worthy of happiness." "Let us seek the happiness in others; but for ourselves, perfection – whether it brings us happiness or pain."

3.6 LET US SUM UP

Kant is one of the most influential philosophers in the history of Western philosophy. We can distinguish four levels of perception in Kant's theory of knowledge: the phenomenal, the ideal, the existential and the etiological (of values). *Phenomena* are known through sensibility, ideal objects through understanding, existence through volitional perception and values through feelings or emotions. The positivist line, which goes from Comte to analytical philosophy, drew from Kant his distrust of metaphysics. Even the irrational trend, so common in many philosophical tendencies, has a forerunner in Kant's voluntaristic and emotional intuitions. For Kant, while the reality of God cannot be demonstrated (by theoretical) it has to be believed (by practical reason) as the foundation of moral life. One should not say (God Is) but God must be, otherwise moral obligation is meaningless. In his dealing with the problem of God, Kant replaced reason by Faith. Kant has been accused of fideism. E.g. St. Augustine holds that faith and reason are contradictory but reason helps us in deciding what must be accepted by faith.

He eradicated the last traces of the medieval worldview from modern philosophy and joined the key ideas of earlier rationalism and empiricism into a powerful model of the subjective origins of the fundamental principles of both science and morality. Above all, Kant was the philosopher of human autonomy, the view that by the use of our own reason in its broadest sense human beings can discover and live up to the basic principles of knowledge and action without outside assistance, above all without divine support or intervention.

Kant is truly the Father of contemporary thought. His critical philosophy is important element influencing his successors. He proposed a system that was fundamentally *a priori* but upholding the value of the phenomenal reality. For him, the reality that human beings know is basically the reality constituted or constructed by human beings themselves. The autonomous individual, through the proper exercise of the will, constructs the moral world. For Kant, we can have *a priori* knowledge, which is necessary and universal. He holds that all our knowledge is

ultimately rooted in sense intuitions as well as in concepts. Kant believes that the human reason has the responsibility of determining the source, extent and bounds of its own principles.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) Explain the Categorical Imperatives.

.....

.....

.....

.....

2) Explain the difference between synthetic and analytic propositions.

.....

.....

.....

.....

3.7 KEY WORDS

Categorical Imperative: A categorical imperative declares an action to be of itself objectively necessary without any reference to any purpose, i.e., without any end.

Synthetic A priori: That which is not contained in the very concept of subject but at the same time is known independently of experience.

Postulates: Postulates are the presuppositions of reason from a pure practical point of view. In Kant's practical philosophy, they are freedom, God and immortality.

3.8 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

Beck, Lewis White. *A Commentary on Kant's Critique of Practical Reason*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966.

Buchdahl, Gerd. *Kant and the Dynamics of Reason: Essays on the Structure of Kant's Philosophy*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1992.

Cassierer, H. W. *Kant's First Critique: An Appraisal of the Permanent Significance of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, 2nd ed. London: Allen and Unwin, 1968.

Copleston, Frederick. *A History of Philosophy*. Vol. VI. New York: Image Books, 1994.

Grayling, A.C., ed. *Philosophy 2: Further through the Subject*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Guyer, Paul, ed. *Kant and Modern Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

- Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Judgement* [*Kritik der Urtheilskraft* 1790], trans. J. H. Bernard. 2nd ed., London: Macmillan, 1914; New York: Hafner Press, 1951.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Practical Reason*. Tr. Pluhar Werner S. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., , 2002.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason* [*Kritik der reinen Vernunft* 1781 and 1787], trans. Norman Kemp Smith, as *Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*. London: Macmillan, 1929.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*. Tr. Ellington James W. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* [*Prolegomena zu einer jeden Künftigen Metaphysik, die als Wissenschaft wird auftreten können* 1783], ed. Lewis White Beck. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merril Company Inc., 1950.
- Kant, Immanuel. *The Metaphysics of Morals*. Tr. Gregor Mary. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Paton, Herbert J. *Kant's Metaphysics of Experience: A Commentary on the First Half of the Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. London: Allen and Unwin, 1970.
- Smith, Norman Kemp. *A Commentary to Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason"*. 2nd rev. and enlarged ed., New York: Humanities Press, 1923; reprint 1962.
- Sullivan, Roger J. *Immanuel Kant's Moral Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

UNIT 4 HEGEL

Contents

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Hegel's Metaphysical Foundations
- 4.3 'The Phenomenology of Spirit' and Concept of Absolute
- 4.4 'The Philosophy of Nature' and Organic System
- 4.5 'Philosophy of Spirit' and Dialectic Method
- 4.6 Hegel's Contribution to Philosophy
- 4.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.8 Key Words
- 4.9 Further Readings and References

4.0 OBJECTIVES

Hegel was the last of the main representatives of a philosophical movement known as German Idealism. Hegel's thoughts on the history of philosophy made that topic a philosophical discipline in its own right. The unit elaborates on the philosophical contribution of Hegel through his three major works such as *phenomenology of Spirit*, *Philosophy of Nature* and *Philosophy of Spirit*, from where his idea of the dynamic Absolute, organic physics and Dialectic method concretely emerged.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Hegel was born on 27 August 1770 in Stuttgart, son of a Württemberg official. In autumn 1793, after successfully completing this period of study, Hegel became a private tutor in Berne, Switzerland, and remained there until 1796. Thanks to a legacy, Hegel was able to abandon his position as a tutor and pursue his academic ambitions. With Schelling's energetic support Hegel qualified as a Privatdozent in the autumn of 1801 with a thesis on natural philosophy. Initially, Schelling and Hegel worked closely together, a fact which is documented by a philosophical periodical which they published jointly from 1802 (although it ceased publication following Schelling's departure from Jena in 1803). In 1805 Hegel was appointed Extraordinary Professor, but financial difficulties forced him to abandon his activities at the University of Jena in the autumn of 1806. In November 1808 the same friend then ensured that Hegel was nominated rector and professor at a grammar school in Nuremberg. After a few years in this capacity, Hegel was able to return to university life. Hegel died in Berlin during a cholera epidemic on 14 November 1831, at the height of his fame.

Hegel devoted his life wholly to academic purists. Hegel's works can be divided into three groups: (1) texts written by Hegel and published during his lifetime; (2) texts written by him, but not published during his lifetime; and (3) texts neither written by him nor published during his lifetime. His science of logic, dialectical reasoning, encyclopaedia of philosophical sciences, philosophy of Right – all provide an intellectual foundation for modern nationalism. Hegel was an idealist who methodically constructed a comprehensive system of thought about the world. Compared to other philosophers, it is rather very difficult and harder to understand Hegel. He differs from Parmenides and Spinoza in conceiving the whole, not as a simple substance, but as complex system like an organism. In Hegel's view, world is not an illusion. The apparently separate things of the world have a greater or a lesser degree of reality and their reality exists in the aspect of the whole. Hegel calls, 'The Whole', in all its complexity as 'The Absolute'.

4.2 HEGEL'S METAPHYSICAL FOUNDATIONS

Hegel's systematic philosophy attempts to comprehend reality in all its manifestations as a self-representation of reason (*Vernunft*). His conception of what he calls 'reason' combines various specifically Hegelian connotations, both ontological and epistemological. Reason is reality, and that alone is truly real which is reasonable. At least three different convictions make up this basic precept of the ontological dignity of reason. Hegel calls this primary structure 'the absolute' or 'reason'. For Hegel, therefore, this conviction does not require detailed philosophical justification. Hegel's second important conviction relates to the internal constitution of the structure which he characterizes as reason. He understands this structure to be a complex unity of thinking and being. The third conviction which enters into Hegel's basic assumption of reason as the primary structure constituting reality and thus being ultimately and only real is that this structure constitutes reality and thus its own objectivity in a teleological process which must be understood as a process of knowledge. It is this conviction which leads to the characteristically Hegelian dogma that there can be no adequate theory of reality without a dynamic or process-oriented ontology. This process is described as 'self-knowledge of reason' (*Selbsterkenntnis der Vernunft*). Hegel tries to integrate within this formula various aspects of his conception of reason. The first aspect is that it is necessary to take reason, understood as the primary structure, as something which is essentially dynamic. The second aspect Hegel has in mind when he speaks of 'self-knowledge of reason', describing a process which must indeed be understood as that of the self-realization of reason, is that this process represents a process of recognition for reason. The project of exhibiting reason not only as the basis for all reality, but also as the whole of reality itself, was Hegel's sole, lifelong philosophical goal.

4.3 'THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF SPIRIT' AND CONCEPT OF ABSOLUTE

The *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) is Hegel's most influential work. It serves as an introduction to his philosophical system by means of a history of the experience of consciousness. A discipline which Hegel calls 'logic' is intended to fulfil its introductory function by raising our 'normal' thinking, which is characterized by its confinement to

irreconcilable oppositions, to the level of 'speculation,' Hegel's term for philosophical thinking. For him, 'reflection' is that thinking which by its insistence on oppositions simultaneously maintains their basic irresolvability. According to Hegel, it is now the task of logic to carry out the destruction of the finiteness of reflection or of the thinking of the understanding, thereby simultaneously leading to the standpoint of speculation or of the thinking of reason.

In '*Phenomenology of Spirit*,' Hegel pursues this dual goal in a complex and ambitious thought-process, which attempts to combine and position within a comprehensive context a wide range of themes. This whole thought-process is based on two convictions which govern Hegel's entire construction: (1) It is possible to conceive of all epistemic attitudes of a consciousness towards a material world as relations between a subject termed 'cognition' (*Wissen*) and an object termed 'truth' (*Wahrheit*). For the Hegel of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, and of the writings which were to follow, knowledge in the strict sense is thus really self-knowledge. In characterizing the various epistemic attitudes of a consciousness to the world in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel takes as his starting point something which he calls 'sense certainty'. Hegel demonstrates the untenability of this attitude by attempting to prove that in such an immediate reference to objects nothing true can be claimed of them. According to Hegel, however, even this attitude is not tenable. Although, according to Hegel, this interpretation of the objective world through the cognizing subject also produces neither a truthful concept of the cognizing consciousness nor of the object in question, it none the less leads to the enforcement of an attitude according to which consciousness, when referring to an object, is referring to something which it is itself. The realization of this insight - that consciousness, when referring to objects, in reality relates to itself - converts consciousness into self-consciousness.

The various ways in which consciousness deals with itself and the objective manifestations corresponding with these ways as reason and spirit are comprehensively discussed by Hegel in the remainder of his *Phenomenology of Spirit*. The conclusion of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* forms what Hegel calls 'absolute knowledge'. Hegel characterizes this knowledge also as 'comprehending knowledge' (*begreifendes Wissen*), aiming thereby to highlight two ideas: (1) that this knowledge is only present when the subject of the knowledge knows itself to be identical under every description with the object of that knowledge. From another point of view, Hegel describes the phenomenological process as 'self-fulfilling scepticism'. For Hegel, the modern age is characterized by the fact that unity has disappeared from people's lives. The *Phenomenology of Spirit* describes this process of destruction and foundation-laying. While the phenomenological process thus concedes a philosophical value to scepticism, in Hegel's understanding it simultaneously overcomes this scepticism by claiming a truth-revealing function for it. It is also Hegel's intention that the *Phenomenology of Spirit* should in this respect be understood as a treatise on the cathartic effect of philosophical scepticism.

Concept of Absolute

Absolute is not a Being separate from the world, nature or even individual persons, thus not making a sharp distinction between appearance and reality as in Plato's philosophy. In Hegel's view, nothing is unrelated and whatever we experience as separate things, will upon careful reflection, lead us to the other things to which they are related, until at last, the process of dialectical thought will end in the knowledge of the Absolute. Still, the Absolute is not a unity of separate things. Hegel describes the Absolute as a dynamic process, as an organism having parts

but nevertheless, unified into a complex system. Therefore, the Absolute is not an entity which is separate from the world as Kant's Noumena, but it is in the world in a special way.

4.4 'THE PHILOSOPHY OF NATURE' AND ORGANIC SYSTEM

Hegel's philosophy of nature is an attempt to explain how it is possible that we can recognize nature as a complex whole standing under a set of laws. Hegel's philosophy of nature is of interest mainly in three respects. The first concerns the way in which he transforms his logical theory into an interpretation of natural phenomena. The second relates to the question of how far Hegel's conceptions in the field of the philosophy of nature take into account the scientific theories current at the time. The third leads to the question of what we should make of Hegel's approach to a philosophy of nature within the framework of present-day philosophy of science. This way of looking at nature makes it the object of what Hegel calls 'mechanics'. Hegel's philosophy of nature consists of the so-called 'organic physics' or 'organics'. Hegel interprets subjectivity as an essential characteristic of organic life and nature as a hierarchy of organisms or as an 'organic system'. Hegel links the last part of his *philosophy of nature* to his *philosophy of spirit* by means of an analysis of the phenomenon of the death of an individual natural being.

The relation of the Absolute, the Whole to its parts like an organism – is the basic conception of Hegel's philosophy. The conception of the relation between the parts and the whole in an organism is extended by Hegel to all truth and reality. Hegel explains this organic theory of Truth and Reality with an example of a work of art. This reality is Absolute, Divine and Abstract, but it is Concretized through different types of expressions in nature and humans. It is 'thought - thinking' itself, 'a unity of the subjective and objective Idea'. According to Hegel, there is no truth except the whole truth. So, Absolute is the synthesis of Subjective Spirit and Objective Spirit because, Reality is Rationality. Man's knowledge of the Absolute is actually the Absolute, knowing itself through the finite spirit of man.

Hegel believes that this Absolute is the ultimate reality, which passes through the different stages of development in time and becomes conscious of itself in human reason. Yet, this absolute is timeless, eternal, all embracing, self completed whole. The sense of fragmentation and discreteness is alien to the spirit of Hegel's philosophy. The self positing and self negating spirit of wholeness is the very nature of Hegelian reality. Man's unity with nature and Man's unity with his own self and other selves. According to Hegel world is intelligible, reason being at the heart of things. Man can understand this truth through its faculty of reason. Pure reason, as opposed to practical reason has formal existence, as opposed to material existence. Pure reason though is beyond space and time, it exists in the abstract sense with as much reality as the existence as the other concrete things. The reason for the world has a logical temporal priority to the world, just as a mathematical problem has a logical non-temporal priority for its solution. Hegel calls this Absolute – 'The Idea', 'The Spirit', 'The Mind' etc. In other respects, Hegel differs from Plato. 'The Idea' is not static and self subsistent. Hegel laid great stress upon logic believing that knowing and being coincide.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for the answers.

1) How does Hegel equate reason and reality?

.....

.....

.....

2) Explain Hegel's organic theory.

.....

.....

.....

4.5 'PHILOSOPHY OF SPIRIT' AND DIALECTIC METHOD

Hegel's *philosophy of spirit* is divided into a theory of subjective, objective and absolute spirit. The philosophy of subjective spirit contains Hegel's philosophical psychology; his philosophy of objective spirit is devoted to his theory of law and politics and his conception of world history; and his philosophy of absolute spirit presents his theory of art, religion and philosophy. Hegel presented his philosophy of subjective spirit and in particular his philosophy of absolute spirit to a wider public only in outline in a few paragraphs of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences. The philosophy of subjective spirit contains an anthropology, a phenomenology of spirit and a psychology. In these sections Hegel describes and analyses all the phenomena that influence the somatic, psychophysical and mental characteristics, conditions, processes and activities of the individual. While the philosophy of subjective spirit really only attracted attention up to the middle of the nineteenth century, Hegel's philosophy of objective spirit, in other words his theory of law and politics, received a great deal of attention during the nineteenth and especially the twentieth century. Finally, the third conviction consists in an application of the principle which shapes Hegel's whole philosophical enterprise, namely, that political philosophy must play its part in the confirmation of the thesis that only reason is real.

Hegel fulfils his self-imposed demand for the integration of freedom by making the conception of free will the fundamental concept of his philosophy of the objective spirit; this is where his characteristic conception of freedom comes into play. For Hegel, self-determination means to refer willingly to oneself, that is, to will oneself. In his theory of law, Hegel makes his contribution to the discussion of the philosophical foundations of civil and criminal law. According to Hegel, however, legal relationships and moral standards are founded in social institutions. In Hegel's language, ethical life as the basis for the possibility of law and morality is the truth of free will, that which free will really is. For Hegel, ethical life appears in three institutional forms: family, bourgeois society and the state. This diagnosis is grounded in Hegel's analyses of a society founded solely on economic relationships. Hegel thinks of the state as a constitutional monarchy with division of power. For Hegel, the constitution of a state is in no sense the product of some constitution-creating institution or the work of individual persons. Hegel's theory of the powers of the state (*Staatsgewalten*) recognizes, in addition to the princely power (*fürstliche Gewalt*) which represents the instance of ultimate decision-making within the constitutional framework, the governmental power (*Regierungsgewalt*) and the legislative power (*gesetzgebende Gewalt*). Hegel forges the link to his theory of the spirit, which contains his political philosophy, by interpreting what he calls 'ethical life' as the 'spirit of a people'. Now,

Hegel believes that this development has taken place during the course of a historical process which he calls 'world history'. Hegel now interprets this reconciliation as the conclusion of the process of the self-recognition of reason.

Hegel's philosophy of absolute spirit contains his philosophy of art, his philosophy of religion and his theory of philosophy. Although from the very first all these subjects had a fixed place in Hegel's attempts at a system, and although his philosophies of art and religion were to become very influential (the one in the history of art and the theory of aesthetics and the other in theology), none the less these sections of Hegel's philosophy are relatively little elaborated in the works published by Hegel himself. In philosophy, the self-reference of reason is accounted for in the mode of cognition. By way of example Hegel takes the lion, which symbolizes strength. Hegel interprets the various individual arts as realizations of styles of art in various materials. Although each individual art can present itself in each style of art, there is for each individual art an ideal style, which he calls its basic type. The first individual art which Hegel discusses is architecture.

The remaining individual arts are painting, music and poetry, whose basic type is represented by the romantic style of art. Music is the romantic style of art par excellence. Hegel could not resist the temptation to use his theory of individual arts and styles of art as a model for the interpretation of the history of the development of art. In the philosophy of religion Hegel holds that only in Christianity are the conditions fulfilled which are characteristic of the representational self-knowledge of reason. Philosophy of religion has as its subject not only God, but also religion itself, and for Hegel that means the way in which God is present in the religious consciousness. The second part of the philosophy of religion discusses what Hegel calls 'determinate religion'. This exposition starts with so-called natural religion, which according to Hegel assumes three forms: the religion of magic, the religion of substantiality and the religion of abstract subjectivity. Natural religion finds its historical concept in the Oriental religions. Hegel regards the 'religions of spiritual individuality' as a second stage; these assume the forms of the religion of sublimity, the religion of beauty and the religion of teleology. Hegel puts the Jewish, Greek and Roman religions in this category. According to Hegel, this idea of religion was first realized adequately in Christianity. Hegel's philosophy of religion greatly influenced theological discussions and points of view. Philosophy is the representation of this process in its necessity. This philosophical process also has its appearance in time in the form of the history of philosophy. Only in societies in which free constitutions exist can philosophical thought develop. Hegel divides Western philosophy into two main periods: Greek and Germanic philosophy. Hegel regards it as a great merit of his philosophy that it adequately explains this, and thus reconciles reason with reality in thought.

Dialectic Method

Every thesis for an argument has its anti thesis as life and death, love and hate, day and night, youth and old age. Whole nature is a reconciliation of opposites and Hegel's dialectic shows that any thesis implies its anti thesis and that the two are united in a higher synthesis in which the opposition between the two is reconciled and overcome in a larger unity. The Absolute Idea passes through a dialectic of many triads – each of which has its own Thesis, Anti Thesis and Synthesis. In the thesis, a certain aspect of reality is revealed and in the anti thesis, a contrasting aspect appears and the two are synthesised in a higher synthesis. Hegel uses the term *Abstract* or

Immediate to thesis and *Negative* or *Mediate* to anti thesis and *Concrete* to synthesis. Hegel's concept begins with the concept of *being* and this is the thesis. Hegel believed that the inner essence of the absolute could be reached by human reason because the Absolute is disclosed in nature as well as in the working of the human mind. What connects these three – the Absolute, nature and man's mind is thought itself. Nature is the *objective self*, as opposed to the *conscious self*. The second basic triad of nature is matter, life and mind. In matter, the thesis we do find that parts are related mechanically and in life, the anti thesis, they are united organically. The higher concept, mind is a union of matter and life. Mind or the subjective spirit is the synthesis of the evolution of matter and life. This mind in man is capable of controlling both the material body and the principle of life in man. In fact, the mind is the union of both matter and life in man who can reason with self-consciousness. Hegel calls this self consciousness – mind or spirit. The basic triad of this part are subjective spirit (thesis), which refer to the inner working of the human mind and the objective spirit which represents the mind in its external embodiment in the social and political institutions become the anti-thesis and at the apex of knowledge stands the absolute as its synthesis.

The objective spirit is explained by Hegel with reference to the social consciousness or the society in general. This concept of right has three implications – Right to property (Thesis), Right to contract (Anti-Thesis) and Right to punish (Synthesis) respectively. To unite the above thesis and anti-thesis, a higher level of concept called, right to punish arrives as a synthesis. If, claiming certain rights from the society called the concept of right becomes the thesis, then discharging certain duties to the society with duty consciousness called the *concept of morality* becomes the anti-thesis. The unity of reality finds richest expression at the man-society level. Our consciousness of the absolute, says Hegel is achieved progressively as the mind moves from art to philosophy through religion. In the object of art, mind apprehends the absolute as beauty. Since no sensuous form can convey adequately the profound spiritual truth, the dialectic passes from art to its anti-thesis in religion. Religion occupies an intermediate position between art and philosophy. Ultimately, in philosophy, according to Hegel – the thinker is the Absolute, the subject matter of thinking is the Absolute and the medium through which the absolute thinks is also the absolute. Thus Hegel places philosophy as the highest point of development of human knowledge. The history of philosophy is for him, the development of the absolute self consciousness in the mind of man. The philosophical mind discovers the absolute in all stages of the dialectic and in so doing man becomes rational.

4.6 HEGEL'S CONTRIBUTION TO PHILOSOPHY

Hegel was convinced that the philosophy of Kant did not represent the final word in philosophical matters, because it was not possible to conceive a unified theory of reality by means of Kantian principles alone. For Hegel a unified theory of reality is one which can systematically explain all forms of reality, starting from a single principle or a single subject. For Hegel, these forms of reality included not only solar systems, physical bodies and the various guises assumed by organic life, for example, plants, animals and human beings, but also psychic phenomena, social and political forms of organization as well as artistic creations and cultural achievements such as religion and philosophy.

For Hegel, the fundamental principle which explains all reality is reason. Reason is not some quality which is attributed to some human subject; it is, by contrast, the sum of all reality. In accordance with this belief, Hegel claims that reason and reality are strictly identical: only reason is real and only reality is reasonable. Since reason is the whole of reality, this goal will be achieved when reason recognizes itself as total reality. It is the task of philosophy to give a coherent account of this process which leads to self-knowledge of reason. Hegel conceived this process by analogy with the model of organic development which takes place on various levels. Hegel thought of a living organism as an entity which represents the successful realization of a plan in which all individual characteristics of this entity are contained. In accordance with these assumptions, Hegel distinguished the concept of reason from the process of the realization of this concept. He undertook the exposition of the concept of reason in that section of his philosophical system which he calls the *Wissenschaft der Logik* (Science of Logic). In this first part of his system, the various elements of the concept of reason are discussed and placed into a systematic context. He presented the process of the realization of this concept in the other two parts of his system, the *Philosophie der Natur* (Philosophy of Nature) and the *Philosophie des Geistes* (Philosophy of Spirit). In the Philosophy of Nature, Hegel aims to describe comprehensively all aspects of natural phenomena as a system of increasingly complex facts. The Philosophy of Spirit treats of various psychological, social and cultural forms of reality. For Hegel, examples of such facts are the state, art, religion and history.

Hegel gave the world a more plausible and comprehensive system of idealism. His sole concern was to understand the world as it is and to explain everything logically. He explains adequately, the rational constitution of the universe. Even God as has been remarked, does not seem to be permitted any secrets which Hegel's reason is unable to disclose. Like Berkeley, though Hegel is an idealist, his idealism differs very much from Berkeley. Berkeley being an empirical theistic idealist believes that, God created this world and has His own existence, independent of His creation. While, Hegel being a rationalistic pantheistic idealist opines that Absolute is the world in its organic unity and not the creator of it. For Hegel, world is real although its various parts are dependent upon the unity of the whole. The whole is not a blank, unknowable unity, but it is rational and knowable in its organic interrelatedness.

4.7 LET US SUM UP

Hegel points out that the Absolute first manifests itself in the categories of logic and then externalised in the physical nature, subjective mind and objective mind. Final culmination is reached in the absolute mind in which the whole reality is apprehended in its organic unity and completeness. In art, this is done through the medium of sensuous form, in religion through worship and in philosophy the absolute is disclosed in the conception of pure thought. Hegel criticises the traditional epistemological distinction of the objective from the subjective and offers his own dialectical account of the development of consciousness from individual sensation through social concern with ethics and politics to the pure consciousness, the spirit. The result is a comprehensive worldview that encompasses the historical development of civilization in all its sources.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for the answers.

1) Give an account of Hegel's dialectic method.

.....

2) How do you estimate Hegel's contribution to philosophy?

.....

4.8 KEY WORDS

Absolute: free from imperfection free or relatively free from mixture; being, governed by, or characteristic of a ruler or authority completely free from constitutional or other restraint (absolute power).

Absolute Mind: Absolute mind is the state in which mind rises above all the limitations of nature and institutions, and is subjected to itself alone in art, religion, and philosophy. For the essence of mind is freedom, and its development must consist in breaking away from the restrictions imposed on it by nature and human institutions.

4.9 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

Beiser, F.C. Ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Dickey, L. *Hegel: Religion, Economics and Politics of the Spirit - 1770-1807*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

Hegel, G.W.F. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Trans. A.V. Miller. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970.

Hegel, G.W.F. *Philosophy of Nature*. 3 vols. Trans. and Ed. M.J. Petry. London: Allen & Unwin, 1970.

Hegel, G.W.F. *Science of Logic*. Trans. A.V. Miller. London: Allen & Unwin, 1969.

Runes, D.D. *Living Schools of Philosophy*. Iowa: Little Field Adams and Company, 1958.

Russell, Bertrand. *History of Western Philosophy*. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1957.

S. E, Stumpf. *Socrates to Sartre*. New York: McHill Book Company, 1966.

Wright, W.K. *A History of Modern Philosophy*. New York: The Mac Millan Company, 1966.