

Philosophy - love of wisdom



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Introduction:

The Greek word “ philosophy” (philosophia) is a compound word, composed of two parts: ‘ Philos’ (love) and ‘ Sophia’ (wisdom). It literally means love of wisdom. The first part of the term philosophy philos is easy to understand which denotes a “ fondness for” or “ attraction to.” To love something is to place it at the height of likeness, so that the one who loves wisdom will consider it valuable to look for. The problem arises at defining the term Sophia (wisdom). The term is not so easily explained. The ancient Greeks believed that wisdom is beyond the reach of human; it did not come naturally to the human beings. Ancient Greeks assumed that wisdom was unapproachable to the common people but the highly intellectual people were capable of it which was rare, so that highly prized. According to the ancient Greek philosophers like Socrates, philosophy was knowledge of things the way it really were as the things appears to be. Thus, this eagerness to question everything and determination to accept nothing less than the truth led to the controversy against the Athenian jury and for that, at the age of 70, Socrates was sentenced to death.

SOCRATES

Socrates, the standard for all consequent Western philosophers, was born in fifth century, 469-399 B. C. E. Since he believes knowledge is a living, interacting thing that’s why left no literary work of his own and for his work in the field of philosophy we are dependent upon modern writers like Xenophon, Plato and Aristophanes about his life and work. When he was the pupil of Archelaus, he was interested in the scientific theories, but later he

shifted his interest from the quest of the physical world to the development of moral character.

“ The unexamined life is not the worth living.”

Socrates was the young boy when Pericles, a liberal politician, came to power. To promote democracy, he created public courts. Growing in this culture of liberalism and democracy, Socrates set of values and beliefs were opposite and very different from his fellow citizen. Socrates was against democratic society. He often looked arrogant and didn't seem to be bothered by the effect of alcohol or cold weather- this made him suspicious among his fellow men. Though, contrary to his appearance, he was immensely intelligent. He made clear that human being is more than his appearance. He believed in the essence not in the external outlook of man. He was considered as an abnormal Athenian because he never attended state's assemblies like other citizens. Instead he would wander in the whole city and engaged himself in a critical discussion with aristocratic young man of Athens and persistently questioning the young Athens about the popular truth. Many would find Socrates teachings to be too radical for youth aristocrats. Socrates declined to accept any fees for his teaching from students and because of his denial for material success; many pupils were greatly influenced by his teachings. Among those were: Aristophanes, Plato and Xenophon.

He believes that reflective life is worth living and the intellectual life was greater than bureaucratic political life or the life base on sense experience. He gave credit to higher consciousness and higher values rather than

conventional culture and consciousness as the rest of the Athenian did. One would suggest that conventional consciousness is evil or can say least good. Even when the good is taught to the society, conventional authority tends to promote the least denominator in society and therefore, the Good is not able to accomplish. The Good society based upon rationality not on the convention which is opposite of the Good. Such society would neglect individuality and individual reflection and reasoning.

For Socrates, ignorance is a disease of soul. It restricts the soul from functioning properly. The people of Athens were ignorant but most of all, they didn't believe themselves as ignorant. He said that accepting ignorance and knocking down the deception that we already know the world perfectly as it is, then we find a truer knowledge. Socrates believed that virtue is untouchable because we are habitual of doing what we believe to be truth. Unacceptable behaviors are the result of ignorance rather than the symptoms of weakness of the will.

In The Apology by Aristotle, Socrates never says he “ follows” God. Instead, he considered himself as a gift of God to Athens. He was not like someone who follows God as he deemed himself as the extension of him or messenger of God. In “ the apology” there is evidence which support to understand Socrates as not compelled to follow God, but drawn to follow him. Socrates says that through “ oracles and dreams” his God commands him to wake up his fellow Athenians, when he says he was posted by the God as a philosopher, we sense that he feels strongly compelled but not forced to follow his God's plans for him. Socrates keeps constant company with God,

who commands him to live a life of materially poor but also with the feeling that he is important to both the God and the people of Athens.

In 399 BC, he was put to death by the Athenian democracy on the charge of corrupting young minds and worship to new deities other than the city's god. He believed that every citizen owed his state obedience in all matters which did not contradict his conscience. He refused offers to escape from the prison or exile from the city on the reason that he strongly follows the laws of the states; to break any of the state's law will result in dangerous undermining of the authority of law. He contends that the unmanly and pathetic practices of pleading for elementary disgrace the justice system of Athens. Instead Socrates provocatively tells his jury that he is a hero. And he would be rather put to death than to give up his soul-saying:

“ Men of Athens, I honor and love you; but I shall obey God rather than you, and while I have life and strength I shall never cease from the practice and teaching of philosophy.”

Socrates drank hemlock and died in the company of his friends and pupils. He showed the world the meaning of integrity and moral commitment by accepting the death sentence rather than recanting his principles.

In conclusion, Socrates was a remarkable man of rational. He brought the revolution in ideas of the common people. His moral philosophy still has its significance in the modern world. Even though he never sits down to write any of his philosophy, never ask for any favor from his peers, Socrates still remember as an eminent philosopher of ancient Greece.

PLATO

The death of Plato's mentor Socrates has been the turning point in Plato's life. He was not more than thirty years old when his teacher was imprisoned. At Socrates trial, Plato and other three pupils were ready to pay the fine to the court as he belonged to the affluent family in Athens. But to his disappointment, court denied to change their mind. After the death, many questions haunted Plato's mind about the society, freedom and the system he was living in. subsequently, he spent the rest of his life answering these question.

He never planned his career as a philosopher however, after Socrates death; he dedicated his whole life to the philosophy. He travelled as far as to Egypt then Italy, where he studied and spent several years teaching the ruling family of Syracuse. On returning to Athens, he founded a school, the first university in the western world. He named it academy which was located outside the city walls. Throughout his life, Plato remains in the Academy, teaching and working on his philosophical writing. Among the most famous was his book named " Republic". In this book, he tried to give the answers of his own questions like; he argued that " society would never be just unless people with philosophical vision became rulers". He tries to implement this goal but he failed and barely escaped his life. Plato returned to the Academy and continued teaching until he died peacefully around 348 or 347 B. C.

Ethics was Plato's passion. He learnt from Socrates' fate that good people will not survive until the society itself transform. Therefore, politics was of major concern in Plato's philosophy. He believes that all the answers of our

ethical and political questions could be found in reality itself. Plato was the first to attack the problems of epistemology.

Plato theory of knowledge was different from the other philosophers. He didn't believe knowledge as relative as sophist believed. He believed that our lives and society should be base on universal knowledge. He denies knowledge base on sensory experience because he argues that knowledge should be eternal and unchangeable and should be grounded on rationality. He further says that if all the opinion are correct than what will be the difference between the opinion of expert that is based on research and reasoning and the layman. Plato's point is that not all opinion has equal value.

He rejects the knowledge that is derived from sensory experience. He argues that what we believe is true today might not true after sometimes. And these sensory knowledge is again relative for the perceiver which is different from others opinion.

Plato believed that justice should be fixed, if not, then sophists were right about the justice being mere sound and air of puffs. Justice is something real, objective and nonphysical. If not, then there would be no real difference between Hitler and Saint. He also enlighten with the difference between knowledge and belief. Belief can either be true or false but knowledge must be true. But we can't say that true belief is knowledge. Because it doesn't have a ground, it might be an arbitrary guess or coincidence. Knowledge must be grounded in some sort of rational insight.

Plato uses the word “idea” in subjective sense which is also called Plato’s “theory of idea”. Platonic ideas are realities that exist independently of the minds that know them. He uses another term for ideas, which is “form”. This form doesn’t necessarily refer to the shape of objects.

Plato believed that before the soul entered in our body, we have innate knowledge of what is ultimate truth but when we enter in the material world we forgot this knowledge. That’s why we feel incomplete without ultimate knowledge. This knowledge of the form is still there waiting to be recovered by the process of recollection.

Plato tried to solve the problem of change by compromising between the Heraclitus and Parmenides. He believes that there are two different kind of reality. There is a world in constant flux and at the same time there is an eternal and unchanging world. The world in flux is the physical world that we encounter through sense experience. And the other is the non physical reality or can say the intelligible world which is base on rationality.

One of his beliefs was that individual human beings are not self-sufficient, and they need someone to survive with. To ease in life, we get together into communities which form societies for common goals and interest. This succeeds because we can work more efficiently. The sole idea was the ideal of universality and no individualism.

Plato conceived a comprehensive philosophy that answered the questions of ideas, politics, knowledge, nature, cosmology and ethics. He was one of the most penetrating, wide ranging and influential philosopher of history. He has

beautifully displayed the political events and movement of his period in his works.

Despite some problems that Plato never able to solve, his theory of Form turned out to be one of the far reaching idea in the history of thought. This is still true that western philosophy is unintelligible without understanding Plato.

ARISTOTLE

Aristotle, the father of the literary criticism was born in fourth century B. C. he was one of the intelligent student of Plato's Academy where he spend twenty years of his life in studying. After the death of Plato, Aristotle returned to his native land Macedonia, gave teaching to the future king, Alexander (the Great). He returned to Athens in 335 and built his own school at the Lyceum, where he dedicated rest of his life in teaching, research and writing.

He wrote a short treatise on poetry which is commonly known as Aristotle's poetics. This poem was the attempt in the quest of truth, rather than mere assertion of pre-conceived notions. He is also known as " the author of ethics" and the founder of " logic". He creates comprehensive system of western philosophy which includes morality, politics, logic, aesthetic, physics, meteorology, biology and metaphysics.

" Man is a composite nature of body and soul, mind and matter, sense and intellect, passion and reason."

He says that man is different from animal and other creature because of the reasoning. Man can think but animal can't. For this reason, man is above all other creatures. It is the reason that leads all things to their proper ends. The man is the Whole Man when he has realization and actualization of his power and potentials and it develop through the philosophy.

His theory of contemplation says that it is down to earth' it begins with the sense experience of the things around us, combines observation within reflection and meditation. It is said that man constantly living a life of contemplation and habitually uniting himself with the external realities will never " die or age".

Man's perfection can not only be gained for knowledge sake but also to be used for the betterment of oneself. Perfection was only be gained by the wisdom which means knowing and doing, what is best for you for the attainment of your own happiness.

" It is the rationally organized activity of the whole man."

His believes were same as of his teacher Plato on the political philosophy that the ruler of the state to run government's affair should be philosopher.

He classified knowledge and perceptions according to what we see tangible such as an object. Perhaps the most important thinking was his classification of objects. In physics he thought that the five examples are really important. That the fire is very hot and it could be dry. The classical main element could be earth which could be hot and cold. He further put his views regarding the air could be hot and wet and water. His concepts on the essence and

substance relates to combination of both the matter and the form. He further put his views that the matter is only one component.

In Metaphysics, he tries to justify his belief by giving it the base in the abstract study of being. He completely rejected the Platonic theory of forms and defended his own vision of ultimate reality.

On the subject of morality, he believes that we are morally responsible for only those actions for which, our moral character is the cause. He divided soul in two parts; one is the rational and other is the irrational faculties. And these are distinguished by their governing principles. Rational includes pure reason (theoretical) and calculative reason (practical) whereas; in irrational faculties pleasure and satiety are found, which includes appetite soul (desire and will) and nutritive soul.

He believes in the state as the whole and argues that those who fully participate in their government should be considered as citizens. He excludes workers since they don't fully participate in the state activity because of lack of time. He gave the idea of mixed system, which is the combination of democracy and aristocracy. This system believes that those who work harder should get more.

He believes that a tragic hero or ruler should not be evil or virtuous. He must possess some kind of tragic that leads to his ultimate and his downfall cannot be the result of fate. He should be highly respected and looked up to. He should be rise to power or inherit the power. He should be of good character and must have the properties of manly valor. He should be consistently inconsistent. He should be rational.

In conclusion, one would suggest that Aristotle was more methodical, both theories and philosophy provide us with great insights in the world. He helped to shape our present, though by no means directive our practices.

Reference:**Introduction**

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Plato

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Aristotle

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