

# The Mind of *Philosophy*

Fourth Edition

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John Nwanegbo-Ben

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## **DEDICATION**

To those searching for intellectual liberation and a step towards the health of their souls.

John Nwanegbo-Ben

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## **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

“LET NO ONE WHEN YOUNG DELAY TO STUDY PHILOSOPHY, or WHEN HE IS OLD GROW WEARY OF HIS STUDY. FOR NO ONE CAN COME TOO EARLY OR TOO LATE TO SECURE THE HEALTH OF HIS SOUL”

**-EPICURUS 343 BC.**

John Nwanegbo-BBA

## **FORWARD**

**The text, *Mind of Philosophy* by John Nwanegbo-Ben**, is a bold and commendable effort by the author to present the nature and rudiments of philosophy to beginners and the general readers of philosophy. Nwanegbo-Ben is a product of the University of Port Harcourt School of Philosophy and his work is a reflection of the extent to which philosophy is becoming a subject of common interest in Nigeria.

The author takes time in the text, to examine the various approaches to the study of Philosophy. The effort to explain certain logical terms and elements of clear and logical thinking is praise worthy.

By and large, as an introductory text, it is very valuable to all beginners in philosophy. It is recommended to all those who are interested in knowing about philosophy.

**Rev. Fr. Professor S. I Udoidem**

Dean, Faculty of Humanities,  
University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

## **PREFACE TO THE FORTH EDITION**

This edition of **THE MIND OF PHILOSOPHY** came into being after a careful perusal and sterilization of the first, second and third edition published in 1999, 2005 and 2009 respectively. The edition like the third is enlarged to accommodate extra topics that will challenge every rational and analytic individual. It is divided into two sections: section A and section B. Topics included in Section A are: The Nature of the Soul, Immorality and Reincarnation. What is Truth? Essence and Existence, Prayer Why? Freewill and Predestination, Jesus: In the light of Esoteric Philosophical understanding, Abortion and Euthanasia.

Section B is an entirely new development, which emphasize **man and the Search for an Absolute Being**, which is simply an insight into philosophy of religion. In addition is an explanation of various philosophical systems and schools of thought.

I have profited a lot from constructive criticism and believe that this text which was solely written to demystify philosophy among neophytes of academic philosophy will be seen as an invaluable material for introductory philosophy.

In addition, the book was published, bearing in mind the course content approved for those taking General Studies course in "Philosophy and Logic" in Nigeria Universities.

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## **INTRODUCTION (FIRST EDITION)**

The introduction of philosophy and logic, history, and philosophy of science into the curricular of Universities marks an important development in the history of higher education. The reason for recommending this course is to expose our students to philosophical knowledge that will enhance their thinking and the development of the sense of right judgment.

An understanding of The Mind of Philosophy will expose the science, management, social science and law students to the meanings of right and wrong, human value, justice etc. it will go further to introduce the student to distinguish between sound and unsound, valid and invalid argument, and correct and incorrect reasoning. It will expose and deepen their understanding of man and his society, and the relevance of philosophy in national development.

With an orientation in philosophy, the illusion as regards the belief in the absolute certainty of the method of scientific proceedings, and the dogmatic acceptance of the superiority of any given paradigm, and education, will be dispelled in favour of an undogmatic approach to knowledge.

It is pertinent to note that education that arrogates to itself the status of absolute knowledge will remain in the cave of its limited knowledge or ignorance. According to Socrates, "knowing that you know not is wisdom." With the knowledge and idea of the limitation of one's knowledge, there is a tendency for continuous search into the unknown.

Apart from the fact that the knowledge of philosophy can open our awareness into the life of man, society and the nature of the universe, it leads to the renewal of our personality. It is on this account that Socrates shunned ignorance in favour of knowledge

through philosophy and stated that the “unexamined life is not worth living.”

The text **MIND OF PHILOSOPHY** is written for those beginning philosophy as undergraduates, and for all neophytes of academic philosophy. It is written for those who could not distinguish between philosophy studied in the university and esoteric philosophies of some religious and mystical schools of thought. It is written for those who want to know the mystery surrounding the word, philosophy.” To all these I say welcome to the world of wonder-the beginning of philosophy.,

### **WHAT IS THE MIND OF PHILOSOPHY?**

The title, **THE MIND OF PHILOSOPHY** evokes wonder to both the professional philosopher and the neophyte in philosophy. The following questions come to mind when ones sees the title; what does the author mean by the mind of philosophy? Can the whole gamut of philosophy be mirrored in a single book? Has philosophy a mind? What is it like? These and other questions will be asked, and the expected answers would tend to be remote, abstract and abstruse.

The Philosophy of mind as against The Mind of Philosophy examines and analyzes concepts that involve the mind, including the very concept of mind itself; concepts like matter and energy, the human body and particularly the central nervous systems are viewed). But in the mind of philosophy, the mind of man or man himself examines the nature of philosophy, what constitutes philosophy, and what actually is philosophy or philosophical thinking.

The Mind of philosophy exposes the cradle of philosophical thought and that philosophizing is an activity of the deep yearning and wonders embedded in the mind. Hence one cannot separate philosophizing

from men, because philosophy is an integral part of man. If to philosophize is an integral part of man, then the mind of philosophy is the mind of man as he perceives philosophy.

We shall in the following chapters see the mind of philosophy as viewed by ourselves and practiced by others who had spent their precious time developing ideas (philosophizing) that have improved our lives materially, morally, intellectually, socially, scientifically, and technologically

John Nwanegbo-Best

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1.0 ON THE NATURE AND DEFINITION OF PHILOSOPHY**

Philosophy is perhaps one of the most abstruse and abstract courses known to the unprofessional in philosophy. Many view the course as something to do with the supernatural, such as magic, mysticism or occultism. Some, on hearing that someone is studying philosophy, would begin to view the student as one studying things beyond ordinary human comprehension. He (student) is sometimes seen as one who grew up to either to be an atheist, cynic or an iconoclast.

A female geologist after trying fruitlessly to define the direction of philosophy, and also not being able to comprehend the inherent nexus between philosophy and the Christian faith, got confused and defined philosophy as the devil's religion. However, philosophy is not a religion, neither is it a dogma nor does it have a specific esoteric teaching of its own. The awe and aura surrounding philosophy stem from its multi-dimensional approach to the knowledge of man and the universe. We tend to regard philosophy as a complex intellectual activity entirely for special minds. Hence philosophers are seen as people who ponder on questions of the ultimate significance of human life.

The contention that philosophy is a complex intellectual activity for special minds is not true. According to Aristotle, "man is a rational animal." Being a rational animal, he can reflect and ponder, and the tendency to reflect on fundamental questions is an integral part of man's nature. Hence every man philosophizes to an extent. It is on this ground that Karl Jasper stated that "man cannot avoid philosophizing."

A notable scholar; A.R. Lacey, stressed the issue of philosophy having an aura of weirdness. A.R. Lacey



characterized the layman's perception of philosophy in his book **Modern Philosophy: An Introduction**, by stating that "philosophy is a strange subject and can even be a slightly embarrassing one for its practitioners..."<sup>1</sup>

Professor C.B. Okolo in his book, **Philosophy of Education and Education of Philosophy**, summarized some of the layman's ideas about philosophy:

*Philosophy connotes something mystical, Mysterious, difficult, esoteric reserved for Massive intellects only: Others think of philosophy as a subject which deals with matters out of the world in a spiritual realm.*

<sup>2</sup>

The above layman's ideas of what philosophy looks like sum the perception of the ordinary man. With all these perceptions about philosophy, an inevitable question is WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY?

The question "What is Philosophy?" is a philosophical question itself. An attempt to answer the question is to philosophize. Hence, whoever is trying to reflect on the nature of philosophy and its definition is (engaging himself or herself in) philosophizing. Thus, to raise the question "What is philosophy?" is invariably an answer to the question raised.

The complexity surrounding the definition of philosophy has led some philosophers to define philosophy as not definable. However, this is a definition because what characterizes philosophy is its un-definability.

The second positive way to define philosophy is through the etymology of the word philosophy. Etymologically, the word philosophy is derived from two Greek words *philein* (love) and *Sophia* (wisdom). Hence, philosophy means the love of wisdom.

Sometimes one is compelled to ask: What is love? When such a question is asked, the mind begins to wonder at what love really means. The first impression that comes to

mind is emotional feeling of either a father or mother for their children or vice versa, or the feeling a man and woman may have for each other. The Greek refer to this type of emotional love as “*eros*” – a burning desire for another. Hence the English word erotic – sexual love or desire. However, Socrates used his to imply the irresistible desire for the knowledge of all things.

The second sense, in which *philein* is generally used, is in the appreciation of Arts, literature, music, beauty and most of all the desire for intellectual knowledge.

The third and the last sense in which *philein* is generally used, is *Agape* which means divine love or universal love. This transcends all other forms in which *philein* is used.

Wisdom on the other hand can be defined as reflective and speculative knowledge. It can be viewed from two perspectives when Socrates said, “man know thyself and ways.” By this he implied wisdom in both the acquisition of knowledge from facts of our experience and more especially knowledge of the universal principles of things.

He went further to describe wisdom as “knowing that you know not” with the foregoing we can summarily define wisdom again as the awareness and the knowledge of the universal principles and causes of things.

The above is just an explanation of the etymological definition of philosophy, but in current popular usage many different ideas are involved in the ways we employ the term. Different philosophers have different definitions of what philosophy is. These definitions are due to their different orientation and perception of the world and reality. On this account they would interpret philosophy according to their personal attitude towards life.

An Ontologist, Cosmologist, Rationalist, Empiricist, Logical positivist or Logical Atomist etc. have different definitions of philosophy according to their schools of thought. For example, the logical atomism of Wittgenstein defined philosophy as “the logical clarification of thought”<sup>3</sup>, while that

of Bertrand Russell saw philosophy as “the attempt to answer... ultimate questions... critically”<sup>4</sup>. Thus, philosophy for the logical atomist is an activity, which gives us knowledge of the world; not the same kind of knowledge which science gives us but knowledge nonetheless.

An Ontologist may define it as the study of being as being, while a cosmologist would define it as the study of the universe, its origin, laws, and composition.

Socrates saw philosophy as the critical self-examination of the principles of the good, happy and just life, while Epicurus defined it as “an activity, which secures the happy life by means of discussion and argument.”

Joseph Omoregbe defined it as “a rational search for answers to the questions that arise in the mind when we reflect on human experience.” He went further to define it as “a rational search for answers to the basic questions about the ultimate meaning of reality as a whole and of human life in particular.”<sup>5</sup>

## 1.1 Philosophical Thinking

An unprofessional in philosophy may ask what does philosophizing entail?. This question is already an engagement in the philosophical enterprise.

In the introductory remark, I quoted Socrates as saying “the unexamined life is not worth living. Why is the unexamined, life not worth living? It is not worth living because there are complexities in existence both corporeally and incorporeally that brings about wonder characterized by curiosity and bewilderment, hence need explanation. It is on this ground that Aristotle wrote that philosophy began with “**wonder.**”

Philosophy can better be explained by doing it than by trying to describe it. Sometimes when we come out in an open field or lawn in moonlit night and look up to a clear sky adorned with stars, the first impression is wonder at the vastness of the universe and the order or energy controlling

the cosmos. Then questions that come to mind are: How did the universe come into being? What are the stars, moon, and the sun made or composed of.

If the world and the universe at large are created by God as claimed by myths and religious beliefs, who and what is God? How mighty is He to create such a vast cosmos. What part has he to play in the affairs of men? After this wonder, which is the beginning of philosophy, the next thing that comes to mind is an attempt by the mind to explain or answer the puzzle in the mind. This process of imagination at the possible solution to the wonder impressed in the mind is called speculation. Hence **speculation** is man's attempt to explain the universe in which he lives.

After the process of speculation, we begin to **analyse** the object of our wonder being speculated. In this process, we ask ourselves questions and try to refute or buttress what we think could be possible explanation.

In the pre-scientific stage<sup>6</sup>, phenomena are explained through religious beliefs and myths. But from the recognition of philosophical enterprise, it has become necessary to scrutinize the views that we accept about our world and ourselves to see if they are rationally defensible. When we are satisfied with out analysis of the phenomena through the process, which began, by "wonder," then we can develop a **theory** to explain the observation.

Thus, philosophical thinking follows specific process. These processes are **Wonder, Speculation, Analysis, Theory formulation** and **Inference**. An inference is the endpoint or result of reasoning made from the known to the unknown. This inference could either be an inductive or deductive inference.

The philosopher has been engage in considering problems that are of importance to all of us, either directly or indirectly. Through careful critical examination, he has tried to evaluate the information and beliefs we have about the universe and the world of human affairs. In spite of the lack of

common agreement as to the definition of philosophy, it is something much more serious, organized and guided by some laws of thought. Philosophy questions everything including itself.

The verb ***philosphein*** in Greek means to find out, to dig out or investigate. And the object of investigation or inquiry is wisdom or truth about the things of man's daily experience and the universe at large. It should be noted that in those days, even up to the Middle Ages, there was no clear-cut distinction between philosophy, and the sciences; the early philosophers were also the early scientists.

Philosophy addresses itself to all sorts of problems. At times, the particular problem it addresses could be the nature of the universe, law and the ideal human life, human consciousness, matter and mind, social organization and ideal government etc. these and many others are dealt with by different branches of philosophy.

Through philosophical investigation, we can see our roles and activities and determine if they have any significance. With this, we may all be able to assess our ideals and aspirations and then also be able to understand better why we accept them or possibly whether we ought to accept them.

We all have some general outlook about the world we live in, and the type of things we accept as more important to pursue as goals in our lives. At the same time, many have never bothered to critically examine their views about life, nor try to discover the foundations of their accepted views, whether they have adequate or acceptable reasons for believing or accepting what they think and do. These set of individuals have a kind of "philosophy" that rules their lives but have not been philosophizing to justify their kind of philosophy.

The philosopher, or one who engage in philosophical thinking, insists upon bringing to light what our implicit beliefs

are, what assumptions we make about our world, our values, and ourselves.

### 1.1.1 What Does a Philosopher Do?

A general question that has been observed among some students studying philosophy has been where will a philosophy student work after graduation? Where will he/she fit in the workforce of a nation? These questions expose the inquirers ignorance of the nature of philosophy. It should be noted that philosophy is the mother of all disciplines. All the disciplines broke away to emphasize a specific area of research. This departmentalization was necessary for knowledge about the world, man, and the universe to increase. For example, the present subject physics was studied under philosophy of nature. Psychology was the last discipline that left philosophy and it emphasized the mind and its processes. Etymologically psychology is derived from two Greek words psyche (mind or soul) and logos (study). (Note that the Greek refer to the mind or soul as **Nous** and **Logos** as either God or the active principle of reason). In the past there was no course like psychology, all relating to it were studied under metaphysics in the area of what we now refer to as the science of soul or rational psychology. Political science in the past was studied under practical philosophy.- Ethics, etc.

It is on the grounds of the immanent nature of philosophy in all fields of endeavour that whatever field or discipline an individual excels, he would be awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). Hence, we come across Doctor of Philosophy in mathematics, physics, psychology, sociology, law, etc. By implication, the academic circles are saying that these individuals are experts in these areas, hence they can philosophize or investigate; theorize in all aspects of the discipline.

A student well-grounded in philosophy coupled with his innate abilities would fit into any aspect of life endeavour.

After being groomed into understanding the nature of man and society, the universe and the rudiments involved in critical thinking, the student should be sure of facing challenges successfully.

However, to be more exact to the immediate needs of the inquiring mind of a young student, a philosopher fits mostly in the administrative circles of any parastatal, whether governmental or private. In this, he is expected to utilize his broad based knowledge devoid of dogmatism in all of its ramifications to improve his employer's objectives. They are employed in the military, security services of the nation, customs and immigration departments of the country, some as secretaries to government and special advisers etc.

Although Aristotle had said that "man is a rational animal," he seems also to state in his metaphysics that philosophy is for those (upper class) who are financially and socially comfortable hence it is not for the "*suffer man*" or the financially poor fellow. He states "it was when almost all the necessities of life and things that make for comfort and recreation had been secured, that such knowledge began to be sought"<sup>7</sup>

This, however, could explain the divergent occupations of philosophers as against the erroneous thought that the discipline channels towards a specific occupation.

Those who are philosophers or are engaged seriously in philosophizing have various reasons for doing so. Some philosophers have been mathematicians, scientists, religious leaders, politicians, lawyers, etc. Rene Descartes was a philosopher, mathematician, and scientist, who had attempted to interpret various scientific theories and discoveries.

John Locke was a philosopher and a medical doctor who advanced for a democratic government for the western world. Francis Bacon was a philosopher and lawyer; Jean Jacque Rousseau, Fredrick Engels and Karl Marx have philosophized and affected certain changes in the political organization of societies. Saint Augustine and Thomas

*Aquinas* tried to reconcile faith with reason through critical examination of some religious claims, hence bringing to light the justification of certain religious views.

Some philosophers have been lecturers, often university professors giving courses in philosophy. Saint Thomas Aquinas in the middle Ages taught at the University of Paris. John Dewey taught at Columbia University. Frederick Copleston etc. St Augustine was the Bishop of Hippo at the decline of the Roman Empire. In present day Africa, we have Leopold Senghor, Julius Nyerere, Kwame Nkrumah, Kwesi Weridu, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, etc.

However, regardless of the aims and occupations of philosophers, they all have a common conviction; that thoughtful or critical examination and analysis of our views and our evidence are important. The philosopher thinks about matters in certain ways. He tries to find out what various ideas or concepts mean what we base our knowledge on, what standards should be employed in arriving at sound or "good" judgments and the type of beliefs we ought to accept. By reflecting on these questions he feels that he can significantly comprehend man, the natural world, and the universe.



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## CHAPTER TWO

### VARIOUS BRANCHES OF PHILOSOPHY

Traditionally, Philosophy is divided into five branches, namely: Metaphysics, Ethics, Epistemology, Aesthetics, and Logic.

**Metaphysics** is taken from two Greek words “Meta” and *Phusis*, which means “after or beyond physics or nature (*Phusis* in Greek means nature). It deals primarily with things beyond the physical world of sensory experience. This word (metaphysics) entered into the philosophical lexicon when some untitled works of Aristotle were discovered by Andronicus after all things “concerning nature” has been treated. Since the work dealt on things beyond or after nature, it derived its title on that ground.

The problems that metaphysics studies specifically include among others Mind and Body, Reality and Appearance (change and Changelessness), Freewill and determinism. Prior to the modern history of science, scientific questions were addressed as a part of metaphysics known as natural Philosophy. The term science itself meant “knowledge” of, originating from epistemology. The scientific method, however, transformed natural Philosophy into an empirical activity deriving from experiment unlike the rest of Philosophy. By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it had began to be called “science” to distinguish it from Philosophy. Thereafter, metaphysics denoted Philosophical ensuing of a non-empirical character into the nature of existence.<sup>1</sup>

Metaphysics can be sub-divided into **Ontology** and **Cosmology**.

**Ontology** is the study of being Ontological questions include: What is the nature of ultimate reality? Is reality of any kind? Theories under ontology are **materialism**, which holds that matter is the ultimate reality: **idealism** which holds that

both mind and spiritual beings are the ultimate reality, and **Dualism**, which holds both mind and matter as ultimate reality, and **Cosmology** studies the nature and composition of the universe. Cosmological questions include: What is the primary or original stuff in the universe? Are there motion, time and space? Other divisions in metaphysics are Rational Psychology or The Science of Soul. Questions in this area of study include among others: What is the nature of the soul? What is life? Etc. Rational Theology or Natural Theology – Questions in this area of study are on the nature of God and His existence.

Despite the interesting questions bordering metaphysics, some schools have suggested that metaphysics as a whole should be rejected. David Hume with his empiricist ideology that knowledge involves either relation of ideas or matters of fact states. “If we take in our hand any volume; of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance; let us ask does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number. No. Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence? No. Commit it to the flames! For it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion”.<sup>2</sup>

Rudolf Carnap, in his book **Philosophy and logical syntax** used the concept of verifiability to reject metaphysics. He states “Metaphysicians cannot avoid their statements non verifiable, because if they made them verifiable, the decision about the truth or falsehood of their doctrines would depend upon experience and therefore belong to the region of empirical science. This consequence they wish to avoid, because they pretend to teach knowledge which is of a higher level than that of empirical science. Thus, they are compelled to cut all connection between their statements and experience, and precisely by this procedure they deprive them of any sense.

**Ethics** is derived from the Greek word ‘ethos’ which means ‘character’ habit or custom. It is the branch of philosophy

which deals with the code, or set of principles by which men live. It deals with the morality of human conduct or actions. It is known as moral philosophy.

Ethics is not interested in what is, but what ought to be. It is not interested in what a man does, but what a man ought to do.

Ethics or moral philosophy is divided into two areas, namely: **Normative and Non-normative**.

1. **Normative** ethics is prescriptive in nature. It prescribes the rules and regulations regarding the rightness and wrongness of human action. It deals with moral judgment, norms and standards, judgment of moral obligation, goodness and badness of actions and moral values. The basic questions asked in normative ethics are what actions are right? What are wrong actions? Normative ethics is divided into (i) teleological and (ii) Deontological normative ethics.

(a) **Teleological (consequentialist theory)** “*Teleos*” implies goal, thus an action is regarded as moral if it yields results. The goal or end result of an action should be that it yields good consequences. One of the major Teleological ethical theory is **Hedonism** which holds that pleasure is the sole good. Others are **Egoism, Utilitarianism, Psychological and Ethical Egoism**, Psychological and Ethical hedonism. **Consequentialism** refers to moral theories that hold that the consequences of a particular action form the basis for any valid moral judgment about that action. Thus, from a *consequentialist* standpoint, a morally right action is one that produces a good outcome, or consequence. The defining features of *consequentialist* moral theories is the weight given to the consequences in evaluating the rightness and wrongness of actions.<sup>3</sup> In *consequentialist* theories the consequences of an action generally outweigh other considerations. One way to divide various consequentialism is by the type of consequences that are taken to matter most, that is, which consequences count as good states of affairs.

According to hedonistic utilitarianism, a good action is one that results in an increase in pleasure, and the best action is one that results in the most pleasure for the greatest number.

**(b) Deontological (Non-Consequentialist):** This theory holds that morality does not depend on the result or consequence of an action. If an action is right, it is right; if it is wrong, it is wrong. Theories under Deontology include Divine Command Theory, Categorical Imperative (will that your act becomes a universal law) etc.

Deontological ethics or deontology (from the Greek word 'Deon' –obligation, duty) is an approach to ethics that determines goodness or rightness from examining acts, rather than third-party consequences of the act as in Consequentialism. It looks at rules and duties. For example, the act may be considered the right thing to do even if it produces a bad consequences <sup>4</sup> if it follows the rules that "one should do unto others as they would have done unto them" and even if the person who does the act lack virtue and had a bad intention in doing the act. According to deontology, we have a duty to act in a way that does those things that are inherently good as acts.

**2. Non-Normative Ethics** is not concerned with norms and standards, but deals with the description of ethical concepts, human actions, definitions and clarification of them. Non-Normative ethics is divided into Descriptive ethics and Meta-ethics.

(a) Descriptive ethics involves a specific procedure, which we term as scientific. It describes the human action. It does not make value judgment nor prescribe value judgment. It does not describe what ought or ought not to be done.

(b) Meta-ethics deals primarily with the definition and analysis of ethical terms.

## Epistemology

Epistemology is taken from the Greek work “Episteme” meaning knowledge and “Logos” meaning study, theory or reason. Thus Epistemology means the study or theory of knowledge. Epistemology studies the origin, nature and scope of knowledge.

Philosophers have been concerned to find out if we can really know anything in the sense of possessing information that is not open to questions. Questions asked in Epistemology include among others the following: What is knowledge? What criteria or conditions are necessary to acquire true knowledge? How do we know that we know? What are the limits of our knowledge? What is truth?

Schools of thought or philosophical systems in epistemology are Rationalism, Empiricism, and idealism. **Rationalism** postulates that reason alone is the source of true knowledge. **Empiricism** holds that knowledge can be available only through sense experience. **Idealism** emphasizes mind, spirit, soul or ideas as ultimate source of knowledge.

## Knowledge and Belief

Sometimes we use the words “to know” loosely. When we say that we “know” something, we usually mean that we are sure that something is true. One can argue “I know that the Golden Eaglets of Nigeria will win the World cup this year.” This simply expresses the personal conviction and belief of the speaker.

People sometimes use “to know” as equivalent to belief. When a layman says that *Kenalog* injection is effective in the treatment of *Keloid*, he is in fact saying that he thinks so, having perhaps heard that this is the view of some authoritative persons. If one is asked if *Efuru* is going to be at the party, and the answer is “yes, I know that she is,” this may merely be a convenient way of saying “I believe she is, at least she said so.”

It should be noted also that there is a difference between knowledge and belief. Knowledge is based on conclusive evidence derived from any of the sources of knowledge we shall treat below. Belief on the other hand is not based on conclusive evidence, but on assumption. Knowledge however, involves belief, but belief does not always involve knowledge.

### **What are the sources of our knowledge?**

When someone says that he knows this or knows that, his source of knowledge would fall under one of the following sources identified by philosophers and scientists. These sources include, sense experience, reason, revelation, intuition, and authority. Authority, however, has sub-sections like faith, traditions, experts and books.

#### **Sense Experience**

This source of knowledge can be acquired through the five external senses of smell, touch, sight, taste and hearing.

These five external senses make impressions in the mind, resulting in internal experiences such as illusions, hallucinations and dreams. These internal experiences influenced by the five external senses culminate to forms of thought, imagination, and feelings of various kinds like excitement, happiness or even sadness. It should be noted that knowledge from sense experience is not reliable due to its deceptive nature.

#### **Reason (Intellect)**

This is a source of knowledge and is an integral part of human activity. To justify an idea in the mind, we can either use the inductive or deductive method of reasoning. However, whether this reasoning is correct or not depends on if it is in accord with the laws of logic.

## **Revelation**

This is believed to be one of the sources of knowledge. Man claims knowledge of something by vision or that it was revealed to him in the dream. We are told how God revealed himself to Moses by revelation.

We are also told how Mohammed claimed he got his inspiration and revelation from God. However, the philosopher is not interested in revelation as a source of knowledge because the truth and falsity of the content of this knowledge cannot be justified.

## **Intuition**

Intuition is seen as a direct and immediate apprehension of knowledge which happens with feelings, or awareness one gets instantly. Some see this type of knowledge as being a product of mystical experience, while others see it as natural as the love of arts, morality, etc. Intuition is a form of knowledge or of cognition independent of experience or reason. The intuitive faculty and intuitive knowledge are generally regarded as inherent qualities of the mind.

## **Authority**

Most times we make unfounded claims that a proposition or statement is true just because Professor X or Y said so, or that book Q or book R said so. These claims are made because it is believed that Professor or the book is an authority.

Authority as a source of knowledge can be identified in religious faith. In faith, adherents accept all claims without rational justification from their religious leaders.

Tradition is a source of knowledge under authority. People accept certain claims as true or false because it has been an age-long tradition from generation to generation. The authority that surrounds traditions prevents rational justifiability or verifiability of claims.



Experts and books in given fields of endeavour have been sources of knowledge. These experts and books are seen by many as indisputable authorities. But with growth in knowledge, they are found to be either wrong or their claims outmoded.

## **Aesthetics**

Aesthetics is taken from the Greek word “aisthetickos” or “aesthesia” which means “perceptive” perception or sensation respectively. It deals with how a man perceives things around him. This is a branch of philosophy that emphasizes the science of beauty. It primarily deals with the appreciation of art and the nature of beauty. Question asked in aesthetics include the following: what is the purposes of art? How can we recognize a great work of art? And what is the nature of beauty?

## **Logic**

This is one of the most important branches of philosophy. It is derived from the Greek word Logos, which means reason (The Principles of reason etc). Logic has been generally defined as the science of reasoning and the art of argumentation. Irving M. Copi defined Logic as “the study of the methods and principles used in distinguishing correct (good) from incorrect (bad) argument.”

Logic is divided into two main areas:

### **Deductive and Inductive Logic.**

Deductive Logic deals with reasoning which attempts to establish conclusive inference. When we say that an inference is conclusive, it means that if the reasons given are true, then it will be impossible for the inference based upon these reasons to be false.

E.g. All Ladies are females  
Idu is a lady  
Therefore Idu is a female

This type of reasoning is called valid reasoning. Deductive logic is concerned with rules of determining validity of an argument. It is also concerned with inferences from general instances to particular.

Inductive logic does not deal with rules for correct reasoning in the sense of validity or conclusive reasoning, but emphasizes the soundness of those arguments for which the evidence is not conclusive. Inductive logic deals with inferences from particular instances to generalization.

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## CHAPTER THREE

### 3.0 THE EVOLUTION OF PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT

The history of philosophy reflects the dimensions philosophical thought took in each epoch. Each epoch or period that follows has a dialectics that propels a shift to a new mode of reasoning. This dialectics in the history of philosophy is responsible for the identification of these periods. We shall in this section identify each of these periods and the major philosophers and philosophical thought that span through them. However, our emphasis in this part of the book shall be limited to the “Ancient and classical period. This is because in it lays the foundation and development of other philosophies.

The period regarded as ancient and classical span through when man began to apply critical thinking in the Egyptian Schools of Philosophy to the time of our Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth. This period is divided into pre-Socratic, Socratic and Classical philosophy.

#### 3.1 Pre-Socratic Philosophy:

##### **The Problem of Permanence and Change**

Our emphasis in this section is to give the western account of philosophy as we recorded from ancient Greek cities. All philosophies recognized by scholars before Socrates were cosmological and metaphysical. They questioned the origin of the universe and the primary source of all things. However, most of their claims proffered as answers were derived from ancient mystical philosophical schools in Egypt. Philosophy before the time identified as Greek philosophy was a curious mixture of religion, mysticism and superstition.

Reality was viewed and interpreted in reference to the gods and transmitted through mythologies etc. However, with time man began to search for a rational explanation of things

around him. He was struck by two factors as he observed the universe. Firstly, he saw that there were changes everywhere, that things change from one to another, but in the midst of the changes is a continuity of something that was permanent and changeless. Secondly, he also observed that there was a fundamental or basic unity in the midst of the plurality or diversity in things. On this ground, he (man) concluded that there must be an original or primary stuff (the *urstuff*) of which all things were made.

### 3.2 Thales

Thales was born around 600 BC in the Island of Miletus in Ionia. He was seen as the first who offered a rational explanation concerning the nature of the universe. After a careful observation of the universe, he postulated that the original stuff or element of which all things are made was water.

To explain the solid, liquid and gaseous composition of the universe, he stated that if water is cooled to a certain degree it becomes solid. Thus, all solid must be condensed forms of water and in its natural state is liquid and all things which flow must be made of it. When water is heated, it becomes steam (vapour). Thus, all gaseous entities such as the atmosphere or air can be described as rarefied water. With this hypothesis, he tried to explain the solid, liquid and gaseous composition of the universe. Thales was noted to have predicted the eclipse of the sun in May 585 BC by careful observation of the heavenly bodies.

He observed the method of the land measurement (geometry) by the Egyptians and concluded that this intricate system of triangles, rectangles and spheres could serve some purpose other than measuring or calculating the size of pyramids. Thus he discovered some fundamental principles about geometry by stating the following: (a) if two sides of a triangle are equal, the angle opposite these sides are also

equal. (b) That when two straight lines intersect, the vertical opposite angles are equal. (c) That the diameters cuts a circle into two equal parts. (d) The sum of angles of a triangle equals two right angles. (e) That the sides of similar triangle are prepositional. He was also noted to have invented an instrument to measure the distance of a ship out in the sea and had through his knowledge constructed a canal for their ships against the Persian army. Being a philosopher, he was one of the earliest scientists.

### 3.3 Anaximander

Anaximander, born in 610 BC, was a pupil of Thales. He did not see water as the primary stuff as Thales his teacher proffered. To him the primary stuff cannot be identified since all things were always in conflict. Hence, to him the primary element was a neutral element different from all known elements. That stuff or element to him must be infinite and boundless. It is eternal and indeterminate. The word he used to describe it is "*aperion*" which if translated from Greek means "without boundaries." He held that all living things emanated or evolved from the sea, and with time developed into various forms by adaptation to their environments. To him man evolved from specie of fish. He is regarded as one of the earliest evolutionists.

He also propounded that the earth was cylindrical like a drum as against the permeating popular belief that the earth was flat.

### 3.4 Anaximenes (585 – 528 BC)

Anaximenes was the third Ionian philosopher from Miletus who tried to explain the original or primary stuff of all things in the universe. For him air was the original or primary stuff. To prove this, he used the theory of condensation and rarefaction. When air condenses it turns into mist and water and also into solid substances like the Earth and stones when it rarefies, it becomes hotter and turns into fire.

Anaximenes identified the soul of man as air and described it as the soul-stuff. To him all things come from air and will also dissolve into air. The air is what keeps the earth in place and to him the earth is flat. He was the last Ionian philosopher before the Persian invasion of Miletus in 484 BC.

### **3.5 The Pythagorean Philosophy**

Pythagoras was a Ionian, a native of the Island of Samos who migrated to Croton. He founded a brotherhood of philosophic – religious movement dedicated to the study of philosophy and mathematics.

Pythagorean mystical philosophy revolved around transmigration and immortality of the soul. Orphism, a religion known in Croton before his arrival, influenced much of this mystical philosophy. Orphism, has the believe on the divine and human nature of man. To the orphic religion, man is a combination of body and soul.

#### **(a) Reincarnation, Transmigration and Immortality of the Soul**

The Pythagorean philosophy postulates that the human soul is immortal and lives in a world far better than the present one we live in. The soul descends into this world for purification from sins committed; hence, its presence here is a punishment for offence committed. The body is the prison of the soul. At death, the soul transmigrates into another body, thus leaving one prison for another. It can move from a human body to an animals' body depending on the gravity of the offence committed. It is as a result of this that the Pythagoreans forbid the killing or eating of animals. They believe that even to maltreat an animal is wrong because one could be maltreating a reincarnated soul of a friend or a member of one's family. The process of reincarnation and transmigration of soul continues until the soul achieves freedom or liberation.

The Pythagoreans believe that through philosophy and abstinence from eating any animal flesh, the soul will be able to achieve salvation and return to the world of the divine and reunite with the universal spirit or soul. Philosophy for them is a way of purifying the soul. By contemplating the eternal truth, the soul is gradually purified.

### **(b) Mathematics (Theory of Numbers) and Cosmology**

The universe according to Pythagoras is composed of opposites such as unity and diversity, male and female, motion and rest, good and evil, light and darkness etc. In all these, it is a universe of harmony.

The cosmos is believed to be surrounded with a boundless quantity of air breath, which gives life to all there is in it. Thus, the breath of life of man and that of the divine universe were the same. Man owes his immortality to the fact that his soul is a spark or fragment of the divine soul only imprisoned in a mortal body. Just as the universe is a cosmos, or ordered, so are each of us (micro cosmos) exists in the whole macrocosm.

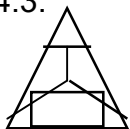
The Pythagoreans were the earliest mathematicians and recognized to have dedicated their time to its study. They tried to interpret the universe from the point of view of mathematics. To them reality is number and number constitutes the nature of all things.

All things for Pythagoras consist of points and units and all distance or lines consist of infinite number of points. To the Pythagoreans the number ten (10) is the most important and perfect number that contains all numbers. One is the point (.) two is the line (..) three is the surface (...) and four is the solid (....). When 1, 2, 3 and 4 are added you get the perfect number (10).

They believe that there are ten (10) planets in the universe; nine are (visible to the eyes) while the tenth one is called "Counter Earth.

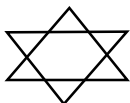


The harmony and perfection of the number ten (10) in 1, 2, 3 and 4 can be shown in the example, summed in ratio 2:1, 3:2 and 4:3.





**Fig. 1**

A view and on reflection, one can identify that these numbers form the triangle which corresponds with the structure of the Egyptian pyramids. A careful reflection again on this could explain the star of David that forms the symbol of Israeli national flag.



**Fig 2.**

It probably displays the perfection of the number ten (10) and signifies the perfection of the Almighty. The angle  could mean as perfect above and  as perfect below implying the all perfectness of God. Would the above also explain why the commandments given by Moses were ten (10)? Probably the significance and perfection of the number ten reflects on why the commandments numbered ten. Since the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, Pythagoras has commonly been given credit for discovering the Pythagorean theorem, a theorem in geometry that states that in a rightangled triangle the square of the hypotenuse (the side opposite the rightangle),  $c$ , is equal to the sum of the squares of the other two sides,  $b$  and  $a$ . That is,  $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$

The Earth for the Pythagoreans was not at the center of the universe as against the popular claim; it was not flat, but spherical. The sun, Earth and other planets revolved around a central fire that is at the center of the universe. This central fire is the number one the source of all.

The Pythagoreans divided the activities in human life into three types. The first being those who compete and struggle for prizes and popularity. Secondly, those who are

like spectators watching and analyzing. The last type of people they identified as the philosophers, they contemplate and search for the truth.

Pythagorean philosophy had great influence on Plato and many others who came after him.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE PROBLEM OF PERMANENCE AND CHANGE CONTINUED

#### 4.1 Heraclitus (500 BC)

Heraclitus, an Ionian of the city of Ephesus is known for his dictum "All things in are a state of flux" According to him Reality is **change** and nothing is permanent, constant or stable in this world. He saw the world as the world of conflict of opposites. Things come and go. "You cannot step twice into the same river." The conflict of opposites can be identified in light and darkness, good and evil, hot and cold, male and female etc.

The claim that the world or universe is embedded in strife and in clash of opposites is backed by an assumption that these opposites are governed by a universal law, an immanent law in the universe. The principle of reason and order he called the logos. The logos brings order and harmony, it is the principle of intelligibility. He went further to say that reality is basically One. Things are various aspects of one reality, and the One he identified as fire. "The world" said Heraclitus "is an ever-living **fire**, kindled in measures and in measures going out.

Heraclitus identified the fire with the one and with the Logos (universal reason) and also with God. Hence, to him God is one, fire, logos, universal principle of reason or universal law. Listen not to me he says "but to the Logos ... we draw in the divine Logos by breathing" that is the divine mind that steers the universe is identical to the mind in us and is still something material. In this, he tried to reconcile the issue of material and immaterial.

#### 4.2 Parmenides (600 BC)

Parmenides, born in the city of Elea in Southern Italy started the Greeks on the path of abstract thought, set the

mind working without reference to external facts and exalted its results above those of sense – perception. He identified reality as **changless** and that change is an illusion of the sense perception. Being is one and unchanging. Being is, and non-being cannot be. Nothing comes into being and nothing goes out of being. Whatever is, is and cannot become anything different from what it is.

The argument he presented was that for any thing to come into being, it would come from either being or non-being. If it comes from being then it is already being hence cannot come into being again. If it comes from non-being, then it is nothing. Being is eternal, unchanging and infinite. By denying the existence of change he invariably denied the existence of motion.

Parmenides epistemology can be summed in his idea of the “way of truth” and “way of opinion.” The “way of truth” to him is the way of reason, thus reason gives truth. While the “way of opinion” is the way of the sense and sense knowledge can give us opinion instead of truth. He tends to rely more on the use of reason. His philosophy, just like that of the Pythagoreans etc had much influence on Plato.

### 4.3 Empedocles (440 BC)

Empedocles was born in a city south of Sicily called Acragas. He was a philosopher, evolutionist and a religious mystic. He is noted to have claimed to have the knowledge and power over the forces of nature, by which men can control the wind, make rain, and even bring back the dead from Hades. He firmly believes in the doctrine of transmigration of the soul.

He identified four eternal elements that constitute the universe. These elements are **air, earth, water and fire**. They are indestructible and do not change, but form the basis for everything in the world. The unification and separation of these elements explain the being and non-being or the coming and going of all things. On this ground, with the four

elements, we can say that nothing changes or nothing new comes into being. However, change can be identified only at their unification and disintegration. When they unite something comes into existence and when they disintegrate it goes out.

Empedocles further identified two forces responsible for both unification and division (separation) of the four elements. These forces are that of **love** and **strife (hate)**. Love unites the four elements and brings things into existence, while strife (hate) separates them, thereby removes it from existence. Love brings the sexes together, it causes men to think kind thoughts and do good deeds. Strife or hate on the other hand brings hurt and sin into the world.

All living things for Empedocles come by the chance combination of the four elements. There is no creative god or mind responsible. Limbs, ears, eyes, digestive organs were adapted for the functions which they have to perform. He believed that originally there must have been men with head of cattle, animals with branches like trees instead of limbs. But during the struggle for existence, those not fitted for survival perished.

#### **4.4 Anaxagoras (500 BC)**

Anaxagoras was born in Claxomenae, Asia Minor and migrated to Athens. His philosophy went beyond the postulating elements like that of Empedocles. His claim was that each of these elements identified has several particles that constitute them. There are infinite particples whose combination culminates to the existence of anything. To identify a thing, the particle that predominates will be used as its identity.

An example to explain it is this: Gold contains the particles of all things, but the particle of gold predominates in it, thus it is called gold. When a wood is burnt, it turns to charcoal or ash. What happens is that the particle of wood dominates at first, but when it is burnt, the particle of charcoal

and ash dominates. It is because the particles of charred coal and ash exist in the wood that is why it can be seen as such.

When a man dies and is buried, he turns into dust. For Anaxagoras dust is one of the constituent elements of the body, otherwise it will not be turned into dust. This implies that there is nothing new, nothing new comes into being and nothing new goes out of being. Hence in a sense we could say that there is no change but change in the other sense can be identified when the predominant particles cease to be predominant due to some circumstances.

He identified the **Nous** as the primary source behind the universe. **Nous** is a Greek word, which implies mind or spirit. It is sometimes identified as intelligence or consciousness. The **Nous** or the principles behind the arrangement of particles and order in the universe. The mind is the only reality that is not part of anything else, and it has all the knowledge and is omnipresent, omnipotent. The mind or **Nous** to Anaxagoras is an infinite spiritual and divine being which by interpretation we could call God. By his philosophy, he was first to make a direct distinction between mind and matter. For something to move according to him, there must be a cause moving it apart from the matter, which is moved, but that whatever was not matter must be mind.

In the time of Anaxagoras, the sun was revered as a god and worshiped. The sun to them was a divinity but he described it as a white-hot stone and not a divinity. He also referred to the moon as a stone. For this "heresy" he was indicted and exiled in Athens.

#### 4.5 Democritus (460 BC)

Democritus was born around 460 BC, a native of Abdera in Thrace. The **Atomic Theory** or philosophy of Atomism is attributed to him and Leucippus. (Though, scholars doubt if Leucippus ever lived or existed).

The theory of Atomism was like a further development of the theories postulated by both Empedocles and

Anaxagoras. The theory of Democritus claims that there are infinite and indivisible units of particles called atoms. These particles the ultimate constituent elements of all things are both indivisible and imperceptible.

Matter to the atomists is composed of smallest particles called atoms and they move about in the void clashing with each other, uniting and separating. All material things exist due to the agglomeration of these atoms and the disintegration of these atoms is the destruction of the material.

Hard things are as a result of many atoms being closely packed together while soft things are as a result of atoms being loosely packed together. Soft things contain more empty space and offer less resistance to touch. Sweet things are made of smooth atoms, while bitter things are caused by hooked or sharp pointed atoms, which tear their way into the tongue (This was later discovered in the 17th century by a French Chemist). The finest, most perfect, mobile and volatile of all atoms form the souls of animals and men, he claimed.

To the Atomists every thing that exists is composed of atoms; there are no immaterial or spiritual beings. Thus all substances are reduced to material substances. The theory of Democritus as regards atom as the smallest indivisible particle of every existence remained essentially unchanged until the 19th century.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5.0 REACTION TOWARDS HUMANISM: SOCRATIC PHILOSOPHY

The early philosophers from **Thales** to **Democritus** have tried to answer questions relating to the physical world. They were interested in cosmological speculations, trying to explain the underlying unity in the midst of diversity, stability in the midst of change, and primary or original stuff of which things are made.

The approaches of these philosophers we are about to discuss have shifted attention from the cosmos to human life and instead of using the deductive method, they turned to the inductive method whereby they began their investigation from particular instances which they had observed and made general conclusion. The shift from cosmology to human life was precipitated by the yearning to take part in practical politics. They had become impatient with the natural philosophers that emphasised the cosmos. They had become **skeptical** about the validity of traditional religious teaching and anthropomorphic pictures of the gods.

#### 5.1 The Sophists: Skepticism

The word *sophistes* in Greek means “practitioner of wisdom”. The sophists are professors or teachers of rhetoric. They were itinerant teachers who thought the Athenian youths the art of rhetoric and grammar in order to be well fitted in the political climate of their time. They taught philosophy, grammar and rhetoric for a living (this they did by charging fees.)

The sophists questioned the foundations of traditional institutions, customs, belief, and religion and even questioned the existence of gods. To them, religion and morality were creations of men. They doubted the possibility of knowing anything with certainty and taught their followers how to get



along in the world without certain knowledge. They taught them how to win disputes, how to speak well and convincingly and generally how to succeed.

The greatest among the sophists include among others **Protagoras of Abdera** (481 BC), **Gorgias of Leontini** in Sicily (483-276BC) who migrated to Athens, **Thrasymachus**, **Pyrroh** and **Zeno**.

**Protagoras** is noted with the saying "man is the measure of all things, of those that are that they are, of those that are not that they are not". By this Protagoras is saying that knowledge is relative to what man perceives of it. Man decides for himself what truth is or what is not truth in existence. What he thinks exists, exists for him and what he thinks does not exist for him does not exist for him.

As regards the existence of gods, he said, "Concerning the gods, I have no means of knowing whether they exist or not, nor of what form they are; for there are many obstacles to such knowledge including the obscurity of the subject and the shortness of human life.<sup>1</sup> Man, he said, should determine (measures) matters according to his nature and needs, since he is the measure of all things.

**Gorgias** radical skepticism can be identified in his book titled "On Nature, or the non-existence." In this book, he tried to prove that:

- (a) Nothing exists.
- (b) That even if anything did exist it would be impossible to know it.
- (c) That if we could know it we cannot communicate it to others. His argument was that if anything were to exist it would have to come into being from nothing. But nothing can come from nothing. Whatever comes from nothing is itself nothing. And since nothing can come from nothing, therefore nothing exists, nothing comes into being, and therefore nothing exists.

**Thrasymachus** analysis of individuals in the society sounds strange in that he claimed that to act justly does not give any reward. He saw the unjust individual as one that has might and strength in character. To him, it is only the weak that practice justice. If you ask him, "What is justice?" His answer will be "Justice is the interest of the stronger." When the stronger establishes himself in power, his interest becomes justice. Hence they make laws to perfect their interest, this interest becomes what is just and what is right in the state. Thus to him justice in any state is the interest of the stronger (Rulers)

### **Pyrroh (360BC 270BC)**

Pyrroh was a notable skeptic who derived objective certain knowledge. His proposition is that we cannot know the true nature of things. All we know is the way things appear to us and not the way they are in reality. There is no certainty or objectivity in knowledge because things appear differently to different people. To him nobody knows and nobody can know, neither can anybody say the way things really are.

Pyrroh's skepticism was applied both in ethics and aesthetics. He states that there are no objective moral standards; nothing is objectively good or bad. What is good to one person may be bad to another. One of his disciples called Timon denied the categorical claim of the sweetness of honey because to him we can only say the way it tastes to us and not how it tastes to another. Thus he states, "Honey is sweet I refuse to assert, but that it appears sweet I fully grant." To him, there is no objective criterion of beauty, thus nothing is beautiful or ugly in itself, it all depends on individual's perception of beauty.

### **Zeno (490BC)**

Zeno, born in the city of Elea was a disciple of Parmenides. He postulated that the concept of change was impossible. He produced several arguments directed against

the Pythagoreans in defense of Parmenides that only the permanent and unchanging was real. The rest he dismissed as illusion that we can ignore totally.

One of the greatest paradoxes he gave concerning motion was that of the Tortoise and Achilles (the fastest runner in Greece). If Achilles can run twenty times faster than the tortoise and the tortoise is placed some hundreds of meters away before the race, when Achilles has run the hundred meters to catch up with it, the tortoise has moved some centimeters. Achilles, Zeno says, cannot meet or overtake the tortoise, no matter how fast he runs. This is because by the time Achilles reaches the point where the tortoise was when Achilles started, the tortoise has moved to another point.

The above is an argument against the Pythagoreans who postulated that a distance is made up of infinite number of points, and then the point itself is infinite and would need infinite time. How then can Achilles traverse infinite time?

Another of Zeno's paradox goes thus, for an arrow to move, it is either it moves where it is, or where it is not. If it moves where it is not, it cannot be there. Therefore, no object can move or nothing can be in motion.

Zeno's argument also was that death was impossible. This is because, a man could die when he is alive or when he is dead. If he dies when he is dead, then he must be both dead and alive.

One of the disciples of Zeno was trying to prove the impossibility of motion with some gestures. During these gestures he dislocated his shoulder. A doctor who was present, after examining it told him that it was impossible for his shoulder to be dislocated, because he either dislocated his shoulder where it is or where it is not. If he dislocated it where it is, then it was still in the same place, and if it was dislocated where it is not, then it could not be there to be dislocated. We learnt that the *Zenoist* gave up his views for his shoulders to be treated.

## 5.2 Socrates (469 BC)

Socrates was born in 469 BC. His father was a sculptor while his mother was a mid-wife. He found that all his contemporaries spent their lives pursuing various goals, such as riches, pleasures, fame etc. Without reflecting whether these are important. Not having the time to examine these made them not to know if they were doing the right thing or not. Hence he said, "Man know thyself and ways", Man should draw attention to himself, not to seek private selfish interest but by way of introspection and self-examination. Without examining, how would they know if their pursuit was dangerous and useless? It is on this ground he said. "The unexamined life is not worth living". To the Athenians, his objective was to persuade everyone among them to look into themselves, and seek virtue and wisdom before he looks into his private interests"

Socrates insists upon bringing to light what our beliefs are, what assumptions we make about the world, values and ourselves. To bring all this to light, we must have the knowledge of showing what knowledge was available, how we could obtain it, and why it was true.

Knowledge according to Socrates is remembrance. We do not learn anything. We remember what we already know. All the knowledge of forms or universals is already in our minds. What happens is that our minds through sense experience recollect in our memory and brings to our conscious attention knowledge that is within us, but of which we have not yet become aware. In one of Socrates dialogues called **Phaedo** he said, "we acquired our knowledge before our birth, and lost it at the moment of birth, afterwards by the exercise of our senses upon sensible objects recovered the knowledge, which we had once before I suppose that what we call learning will be the recovery of knowledge and surely we should be right in calling this recollection."<sup>2</sup>

In the dialogue “**Memo**” Socrates asked, “Could we learn that which we do not know? If we do not know it, then we would not be able to recognize this knowledge when we learn it.” He uses the **dialectic method**, a method of conversation and debate, a way of seeking knowledge by questions and answers. He acts as an intellectual midwife, helping those pregnant with knowledge that is within them.

One of the dictums of Socrates is “knowledge is virtue.” He believes that we act wrongly because of lack of knowledge. Any one who has the knowledge of the good will not act wrongly. Virtue and good actions follow from knowledge, while wrong acts are due to ignorance.

If you asked Socrates, what is the goal of life? His answer would be happiness. But to him, this cannot be achieved in ignorance but in virtue and good conduct.

Socrates paid the price of being ahead of his time and was charged for corrupting the Athenian youths with his Philosophy and for not also believing in the gods in the city. While in prison he declined an offer of money to stop teaching if released. And when his friends came with a plan for his escape out of Athens, he replied that he had all his life enjoyed the benefits, which the laws of Athens conferred on her citizens and now that these same laws saw that he should die, it would be both unjust and ungrateful for him to go contrary to its laws.

Socrates believed in the immortality of the soul and that at death he would go to a better world where he would continue his search for knowledge. In 399 BC at the age of seventy a month after his arrest, he was sentenced to death by taking hemlock (poison) offered to him. Before he drank it, he said, “The hour of departure has arrived, and we go our ways...I to die and you to live, which is better only God knows. “Plato writes of him saying, “That was the end of our comrade, who was, we may formally say of all those whom we know in our time, the bravest and also the wisest and most upright man.”<sup>3</sup>” (To know more about the great Socrates, read

any of his dialogues of Plato. *Phaedo*, *Apology*, *Euthyphrod*, *Crito*, *Memo* etc).

### 5.3 Plato (427 BC – 348/47 BC)

Plato was born in Athens to a wealthy aristocratic family in 427 BC. He was one of the students of Socrates. Almost all of his philosophy revolved around the legend Socrates. The death of Socrates was a great blow to many philosophers who now fled out of Athens. His execution made Plato feel that the Athenian politicians were ignorant; hence he decided to develop a political philosophy that should suit Athens.

#### (a) Political Philosophy & Psychology

In 387 BC Plato founded his first school called Academy. If you asked him who should rule? His answer would be that a specially trained group of individuals should rule. Thus those to rule should be the Aristocrats. "Aristocrats" is taken from two Greek words "Ariston" and "Kratos" meaning "the rule by the best."

How can we get the best, perfect or ideal individual to rule? This answer can be derived from Plato's Psychology and Biology. An ideal man should be both psychologically and physically perfect in emotions and health respectively.

The human soul is divided into the *rational element*, *spirited element* and the appetitive element. The rational element is the part of man's soul, which enables him to reason. The spirited element makes him courageous or cowardly, while the appetitive consists of desires, passion for food, drink, sex etc. A man is psychologically healthy if these elements work in harmony: None should supersede the other in control of the soul.

The state is the individual "writ large" hence an ideal state should be composed of three classes. The rulers (kings), the warriors (soldiers), and the artisans (citizens). The citizens are to provide food and essentials of life; the soldiers are to defend the territory of the state, while the kings are to

administer the state. When these three work in harmony, then there will be an ideal state.

The rulers according to Plato should be specially trained both physically and psychologically. And this will be possible through intellectual upbringing by the state. The intellectual development should be in the abstract sciences like Arithmetic, Geometry, and Astronomy etc. which prepares them for the study of philosophy. Once they have acquired this knowledge, their actions will be good and they will make decisions, which will be in the best interest of the state. They will in fact be “philosopher kings”. Anyone who cannot meet up during this training will be dismissed as a potential ruler.

Thus Plato’s perception is that “until philosophers are kings or the kings and princes of this world have the spirit and power of Philosophy, and political greatness and wisdom meet in one and those commoner natures who pursue either to the exclusion of the other are compelled to stand aside, cities will never have rest from their evils.”<sup>4</sup>

Plato’s political philosophy ascribes absolute power to the rulers on the grounds that ruling is a skill just like medicine, engineering etc., hence for special individuals. Communism as a political philosophy can be traced to him. In trying to select who should rule all individuals have to be trained by the state. Everybody will have things in common, “none shall have a wife of his own” and all children belong to the state. He saw the democratic government of his time as an irrational government where everybody wants to direct.

### **(b) Epistemology and Metaphysics**

Plato just like Socrates believes that there is a universal knowledge that is infallible and unchangeable. His epistemology states that there are two forms of knowledge: knowledge from sense perception and knowledge from reason. These two he divided into (a) opinion and (b) knowledge. The knowledge derived from opinion is changeable, unstable and unreal, while that of knowledge

(reason) is stable and unchangeable. The object of opinion and that of sense perception are particular individual things that can be seen in this world. While the object of true knowledge are the essences of things, the ideal or perfect nature of things.

The following diagram may explain the Platonic theory or world of forms.

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### **The world of forms or Ideas**



(The good, the real and essence of things, the ideal and unchangeable world. The Universal eternal and Immutable world)

(Known through dialectic reasoning e.g Abstract Sciences – Mathematics, Astronomy etc.)

(The philosopher rises through dialectic reasoning to the level of knowledge where he acquires the knowledge of the ideal world of forms where the Good is dominant.

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### **Images**



### **Opinion (DOXA)**

(Particular or individual things, the seat of change and instability) representation of the real world).

(known through sense perception. They are Shadows or imitations of the real or essences of things.

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All human soul according to both Pythagoras and Plato pre-existed before birth into the world, and they existed in the world of forms or ideas. While there, they had the knowledge of the universe, the knowledge of the essences of things. But when they (souls) came into the world and got imprisoned in the body, they forgot or lost the knowledge they had. However, while here, when they perceive the shadows or images of the real world through sense perception, they remember or regain the knowledge that they already knew. Hence, to Plato knowledge is remembrance. What our teachers do is to aid our faculties to recollect what we already



know in the world of forms. Thus, learning is simply a process of reminiscence.

## 5.6 Aristotle (384 BC – 322BC)

Aristotle was born in 384 BC in the small northern town of Stagira, far from the intellectual city of Greece. In 367 BC (when he was seventeen years old) he went to Athens to enroll in Plato's Academy. Here he spent the next twenty years as a pupil and a member of the academic circle, a brilliant band of philosophers, scientists, mathematicians and politicians. He was reputed to be the "reader" and the "mind" of the school."

### (a) Metaphysics/Epistemology

Aristotle's metaphysical system was primarily to explain the natural world as the real world. There are two ways, according to him, to know reality. We can know individual things as they appear to us without knowing their underlying principles or ultimate causes. The former, we acquire through sense perception, while the latter through intellectual reflection.

Sense perception is the first step in the process of acquiring knowledge. When imagination produces images of the objects of sensation, the intellect now begins to work on these images. Aristotle divides the intellect into **active** and **passive** intellect. The active intellect illuminates the images and extracts from them traits, particular traits such as size, colour, shape or height. After this, the active intellect sends these impressions to the passive intellect, which is a receiving intellect. On receiving them into the passive intellect, they form abstract ideas or concepts. The process of transferring these images and forming abstract ideas is abstraction.

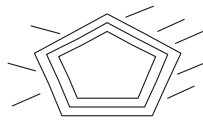
Aristotle identified four causes or principles of things. They are the **material** cause, **formal** cause, **efficient** cause and **final** cause. The material causes of a thing are the material or stuff with which a thing is made. The *material*

cause of the table could be a wood or fiberglass. The *formal* cause of a thing is the form, the pattern that makes a thing the particular kind, the shape of the thing. The *efficient* cause is the agent or source responsible for bringing it into being. While the *final* cause represent the purpose or end for which the thing is brought into being. For Aristotle, all our experiences consist of matter moving or changing in pattern that is usually teleological or purposeful.

### (b) Matter and Form

The Aristotelian contention is that every object in the universe is composed of an underlying stuff called matter. The matter of each kind of object has the potentiality for acquiring a form. Hence, every material being is made up of matter and form.

Matter is the stuff of which a thing is made, while form is that which makes a thing what it is. Matter is not determinate, but a determined by form. When matter receives any form it becomes that thing the form of which it has received. It is therefore the form, which determines a thing this or that particular kind of thing. Matter is not any particular thing, but simply the possibility to receive form and hence to become anything, depending on the form it receives. This illustration using this diagram may clarify the explanation.



The material cause of this diamond crystal is pure carbon. The formal cause of it is its shape as identified. The efficient cause is the agent, animate or inanimate that necessitated its production, while the final cause is the purpose – jewelry.

Wood is not matter, but matter in the form of wood. Fiberglass is not matter, but matter in the form of fiberglass. Diamond crystal is not matter, but matter in the form of diamond crystal. Matter never exists without form.

**(c) Act and Potency**

Potency is the capacity or power to become something else. Act is the goal towards which potency is directed. The process from the state of potency to the state of act is that of change and development.

All imperfect beings are in the state of potency. Imperfection involves the deficiency or lack of something and the potentiality to receive it. All undergraduates are potential graduates. The process of being an undergraduate has the natural capacity, the potentiality to become a graduate (act).

According to Aristotle, only God has no potency in his being. This is because he is an absolute perfect being, lacking nothing and subject to no development or change. He is pure act without potency.

**(d) Motion**

Any change or motion implies a shift from the state of potency to the state of the act. Thus for anything to change or move, it has to move from one state to another. (From the state of potency to the state of act).

For anything to move, it has to be moved by another. A being in potency would require a being in act to move it from potency to act. The motion or change in the universe presupposes a mover that undergoes no change or motion. The first mover, which is itself unmoved and is pure act was necessary for the process of change and motion in the universe. That prime mover, Aristotle calls the "unmoved mover." The unmoved mover undergoes no change, contains no matter, hence has no potentiality, it is pure act. He identified this unmoved mover as God. But this God to him does nothing and plays no part in the activities of the world but serves it by being its goal, the cause of the motion of the universe.

**(e) Psychology**

The soul to Aristotle is the source and principle of life in all organisms. It is the animating principle of all living things. The body is matter while the soul is form. The soul is the act of which the body potentially is. A man is a man only when he has a soul and an animal is an animal only when there is a soul.

To Aristotle, man, animals and plants have souls. The difference is that the power of the souls differs in each of them. The soul of plant has the power of nutrition and growth. That of animals has the power of nutrition, growth, locomotion and sensation, while that of man transcends all these having nutrition, growth, and movement (locomotion) sensation, rational and intellectual abilities. A man without a soul is not a man just as an eye without sight is not an eye. Just as the power of the eye is the sight so is the power of the body the soul.

#### **(f). Ethics**

Aristotle considers ethics to be practical rather than theoretical. He taught that virtue has to do with the proper function of a thing. An eye is only a good eye in so much as it can see, because the proper function of an eye is sight. He reasoned that humans must have a function specific to human, and that this function must be an activity of the soul in accordance with reason. He identified such activity of the soul as the aim of all human deliberate action and that action is to achieve happiness. To have the potential of ever being happy in this way necessarily requires a good character often translated as moral virtue<sup>5</sup> To achieve a virtuous and potentially happy character requires being fortunate to possess the habit through teachers and experience which would lead to a later stage in which one consciously chooses to do the best things.

**(g). Politics**

In his work titled politics, he considered the city to be natural community. He considered the city to be prior in importance to the family which in turn is prior to the individual “for the whole must of necessity be prior to the part”<sup>6</sup> He also famously stated that “man is by nature a political animal” Aristotle conceived of politics as being like an organism rather than like a machine and as a collection of parts none of which can exist without the other.

As regards the best state, he established that the best polity is that characterized by moderation, It comes between the first and the second and it is the best class since those who belong here are more likely to follow rational principle and rule, and not be over ambitious. The best state should be composed of the middle class of equals, the most secure in the state and not covetous as others. The state in which the middle class is large is likely to be well-administered. In the best state government, one has to promote the middle class to out number one or both of the other class.

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## CHAPTER SIX

### 6.0 SOME CLASSICAL ETHICAL THEORIES

The fall of Alexandra of the Greek city states especially during the wars between Athens and Sparta, Rome and Carthage etc. Life became intolerable due to the incredible loss of lives and destruction of properties. Man because of this situation, started to seek personal salvation in a crumbling world. This search culminated in ethical philosophies of Epicureanism, Cynicism, Asceticism, stoicism and the Christian ethics.

We shall in this section introduce some of these philosophies.

#### 6.1 Epicureanism

Epicureanism is an ethical philosophy developed by Epicurus (343 BC). His philosophy is sometimes called Hedonism – the doctrine that pleasure is the sole good. The Epicurean philosophy consists mainly of advice for people to live moderately but pleasurably. If one pursues pleasure excessively pain and sorrow will follow. Hence the advice is to live pleasurably and avoid suffering from any of the negative results that may arise from it.

If anyone engages in life of pleasure that leads to sorrow or pain, he or she would be regarded as bad. Epicurus distinguished between two types of pleasure: Dynamic pleasure and passive pleasure. The dynamic pleasure gives sorrow and pain and they include drinking, sex, fame, gluttony, marriage etc. These bring fatigue and depression, hence should be avoided. The passive pleasure includes friendship and “sober contemplation which examines the reason for all choice and vain opinion from which the greater part of the confusion arises which troubles the soul. “Epicureanism is an ethical theory of consolation. With the catastrophic wars of the Greek city-states, men went for pleasure to provide comfort and security, hence its view is

that men only had to seek for pleasure, and that they ought to do so since pleasure is good.

The modern day understanding of an Epicurean is one who delights in enjoyment of exotic food and wine. However, that of Epicurus consists of living moderately.

## **6.2 Cynicism**

The cynic moral philosophy is also a product of the social conditions of the time. The cynics believed that the world was fundamentally evil, and in order to live properly, a man must withdraw from participating in it. They were extreme ascetics who went about barefooted and lived on alms while discussing philosophy.

Cynicism holds that all results of civilizations are worthless, ranging from ownership of private property, governmental machineries, religion, marriage, luxury, and slavery in the Greek social system including pleasures of the senses. To attain salvation one has to reject the society and remain living a simple life of asceticism. Salvation can only be found within oneself by rejecting the goods of the world and living frugally.

Diogenes and Antisthenes were notable cynics who lived moral and upright lives. However, their philosophy will be regarded as anti-social in that it did not provide men way to achieve happiness in this world rather ways for achieving individual salvation through ascetic living.

## **6.3 Stoicism**

Stoic philosophy was the most influential ethical philosophy which developed from cynicism before Christianity. The founder of Stoicism was Zeno (not Zeno of Elea, the Sophist). Its basic tenets can be summed in one sentence – “Learn to be indifferent to external influences.” It postulates that man should live according to reason and conform to the laws of nature in his behaviours if he wants to be happy. He is not free to subject himself or not to the laws of nature because everything in the universe is ruled by these laws.



Good or evil depends upon oneself. Suffering, punishment, pain, imprisonment etc. depends on your perception of it. If man can be indifferent to them, others will not have power over him. To subject oneself to the laws of nature is virtue. Virtue to the stoics includes prudence, temperance and justice.

Virtue to the Stoics resides in the will. If a man has a good will, his character cannot be influenced by external events. A man who is indifferent to external problems is a free man, because he becomes independent of the world. This ethical theory is a product of the belief in predestination. Predestination is the belief that all happenings in the world are ordered by God according to specific plan. Hence a man is virtuous if he learns to accept whatever happens to him and understands that all events are part of divine will, which he is powerless to alter.

The Stoics do not believe in renouncing material pleasures of the world, but should be careful not to become trapped by them, so that when they lose them, it will make no difference in their lives.

#### **6.4 Christian Ethics**

Christianity is a religious doctrine propagated by the followers of Jesus of Nazareth – the Christ. There is in fact no particular philosophy that could be named as Christian ethics. However, this religion emerged as a consolatory doctrine in the time of sorrow, when many states (including Israel) were under the Roman Empire.

The birth of Jesus the Christ of Nazareth in Bethlehem of Judea was greeted with joy, happiness, fear, joy and happiness for the common man and the ruled, hoping for a political messiah that will liberate them from the Roman political power. This joy and fear were buttressed by documented facts on predictions by prophets and holy men on a coming messiah. Jesus like Socrates never wrote down his teachings neither was he a Christian except his followers.

His moral and mystical teachings transcended known philosophies; hence both the rulers and the ruled could not comprehend the source of his knowledge and authority. His divinely inspired guidance for living can be summed in this saying, 'As ye sow so shall ye reap' and "love they neighbour as thyself". His teachings were coupled with miracles and wonders that have never been recorded in the history of mankind.

Like Socrates, he was also accused for miss-educating the people with his teachings and for blasphemy. Before his crucifixion, Pilate asked him a question to which he answered saying, "To this end was I born...that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth *heareth my voice.*"

Pilate wondering at the meaning of the statement asked, "what is truth?"

During his crucifixion, he prayed saying, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Jesus was meek, merciful and born to a humble parentage, and lived a short life that brought hope, blessings and peace to millions all over the world. He is referred to as Emmanuel meaning God with us, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the rose of Sharon, the Bright and Morning Star, the Son of God, the Wonderful, the Counselor, the Prince of Peace, the Lord of Lords, king of Kings, etc.

The Christian ethics can be divided into two – The **Pastoral Christian ethics** and the **Church ethics**.<sup>2</sup> The pastoral Christian ethics developed out of Judaism and Persian mystical religion. The emphasis of this ethics is on the Decalogue (Ten Commandments) and ritual practices of baptism and moral teachings of Jesus Christ. Metaphysics is restricted to the belief in a supernatural order, personal relationship with God and immortality of the soul. The second being church ethics, developed out of the papal authority of the Catholic Church. The Church here was used not only as a religious institution but as a social and political institution. The church ethics was influenced by the works of Plato and

Aristotle. This could be found in the works of Saint Augustine and Thomas Aquinas who tried to reconcile faith with reason.

Change and modifications became identified in the church ethics with the emergence of monasteries, nunneries where monks and nuns lived ascetic lives. They hoped that with this ascetic living, they will be able to purify their souls from worldly affairs. The church ethics through the papal authority was a powerful political and social institution that promulgated laws to suit their doctrine. Opposing the doctrine of the church was tantamount to opposing the state.

The church ethics however was rejected and opposed by the rise of Protestantism. The Protestant church advocated personal relationship with God as a source of salvation as against the papal doctrine. In Practice, the Christian sects are not in agreement about which rules make up Christian conduct. For example, the Practice of birth control is regarded as immoral by Catholics but is not so regarded by some Protestant sects. According to St. Thomas Aquinas, there are certain general ways in which men should behave- for instance, they should love God and their neighbours. There are also specific ways in which they should not behave. For example, the moral code disapproves of adultery. It also forbids sexual relations between husband and wife save for the purpose of procreation- that is why birth control is prohibited. Divorce is not allowed because the father is essential in the education of the children.

The Christian sects are divided over how one is to discover God's will. Catholics hold that the Church is the 'Vicar' of God, and that His will is expressed through the edicts of the Church. Protestants refused to accept this doctrine, but maintained that men should have personal relationship with God and not through an intermediary.

Christian ethics could be summarized as the view that there exists a divine being who has laid down rules and moral behaviour, which if followed accordingly, will be classified as having acted correctly.

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## CHAPTER SEVEN

### OTHER PERIODS IN THE EVOLUTIONARY TRENDS IN PHILOSOPHY

As earlier stated in our previous chapter, each period of philosophy has a dialectics that propels it towards a mode of thought that identifies the period. The ancient philosophers were dissatisfied with the mythologies and god-centered nature of their time. They felt bored with anthropomorphic pictures of the gods that has no rational explanation. Hence their attention shifted to cosmology. They wanted a rational explanation of the origin of the universe and the primary or original stuff that constitutes the universe.

After a period of extensive philosophical speculation, their attention shifted again from cosmology and physical things to man. They began to ask questions that were ethical in nature, questions that had direct implication to man. The ancient and classical philosophies from analysis were the foundation of which many philosophers adopted in different dimensions.

#### **Medieval**

The period regarded as medieval philosophy was a product of the collapse of the ancient Greek city states and the fall of the great Roman Empire. This period between the ends of the classical philosophy was characterized by destructive wars. The period could not provide an atmosphere for intellectual work and social development. Life became unbearable for mankind as great centers of learning were destroyed along with their books. The period witnessed long years of social disorder that became identified as the 'Dark Ages' in the history of mankind. Man started with the above situation to search for hope in a collapsed world. He started to look for means of social reconstruction. Simple ethical philosophies could not provide a solution to the deep yearning

in man's heart. Hence he had to turn directly to God. The birth and ministry of Jesus Christ and the spread of Christianity played a great role in the pattern of thought in this period.

The medieval emphasized theology which had attracted little interest for the ancients. As religion provided solace for the broken hearted through belief and faith, the medieval philosophies reconstructed and founded faith with reason.

It should be noted that before the emergence of medieval philosophers, man has started being dissatisfied with the content of religious beliefs. They wanted a rational explanation to prove the existence of God and buttress the content of their faith in God. The two notable Christian philosophers who played important roles by harmonizing religious faith with reason are Saint Augustine and Saint Thomas Aquinas. Saint Augustine took his stance from the great philosopher Plato, while Saint Thomas Aquinas was Aristotelian in approach.

The medieval philosophers include among others Saint Augustine, Boethius, Pseudo-Dionysius, John Scotus Erugena, Saint Amselem, Saint Bournaventure, Moses Maimanides, Roger Bacon, Thomas Aquinas and William Ockham.

Medieval philosophy could be said to have begun with the works of Saint Augustine from the period often referred to as the "Dark Ages" to William Ockham in the 14th century. The main concern was God's existence, divine attributes and the problem of universals.

## **Modern**

Modern Philosophy began with a reaction against the medieval scholasticism. Man once again became dissatisfied with knowledge that cannot be empirically, rationally or scientifically proved. This period was known as a period of Renaissance or enlightenment because of the philosophical and scientific movement. It was characterized by scientific

breakthrough, and bears the mark of the beginning of opposition between the church and free thinkers. The authority of the church as regards truth was replaced with that of science. Emphasis shifted from theology to science and from God to man.

The modern period witnessed the shaking of the foundation and authority of knowledge with the publication of a Polish clergyman, physician and astronomer called Nicolas Copernicus. The Copernican turn opposed the Aristotelian Geocentrism in favour of Heliocentrism.

The Aristotelian geocentrism states that the Earth was at the center of the universe while other planets revolve around it. This claim has been accepted without opposition for hundreds of years until the publication of Nicolas Copernicus. With the publication, which negated the Aristotelian worldview, the senses were no longer to be trusted, nothing known was taken as reliable. This new outlook to knowledge led to the publication of the *Novum organon* by Francis Bacon a book of great importance in the development of modern science and the scientific method.

Rene' Descartes fascinated by the possibility of knowledge that could be regarded as certain and undoubtable, started to investigate and search for a clear and distinct idea that would be the basis of all knowledge. This he found in his famous "*Cogito Ergo Sum*" (I think therefore I am).

Notable philosophers and scientists in this period include Nicolas Copernicus, Galileo Galelie, Isaac Newton, Francis Bacon, Blaise Pascal, Nicolas Malebranche, Benedict Spinoza, Gotfried W. Leibnitz, Thomas Hobbes, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, John Locke, Bishop George Berkeley, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, Johann G. Fiechle, Friedrich Wilhelm, Joseph Von Schelling, Friedrich Hegel, Author Schopenhauer, Karl Marx, Soren Kierkegaard Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill and Friedrich Nietzsche.

All these have various schools of thought ranging from rationalism, empiricism, idealism, utilitarianism etc.

**Rationalism** is a school of thought which believes that if we employ certain procedures of reason alone, we will discover true knowledge. Rationalism is opposed to absolute knowledge through sense experience but only through the realm of the mind and reason. Notable rationalists are Plato and Descartes who claimed that true knowledge is already within us in the form of innate ideas. Others include, Benedict de Spinoza, G. W. Leibnitz and Immanuel Kant. These prominent rationalists have the view that reason is the fundamental means of knowing reality.

**Empiricism** is a school of thought, which tries to explain knowledge in terms of sense experience. Thus, to the Empiricists, sense experience is the source and basis of all our knowledge. To them, there is no such thing as innate ideas that have not come from experience. Notable advocates of empiricism are Francis Bacon, John Locke, David Hume and George Berkeley. John Locke and Hume remained faithful to empiricism. To Locke the mind is like a tabula rasa (A blank or white sheet of paper) on which experience is implanted. Berkeley later went further to an idealistic philosophy, which we may call immaterialism.

**Idealism** is a theory or school of thought, which emphasizes mind, spirit, soul or ideas as the ultimate source of knowledge. One of the earliest idealists noted in the history of philosophy is Plato (see chapter five). There are two notable types of idealism, the Subjective Idealism of Berkeley (Immaterialism) which denies the existence of the physical world or objects. To him nothing exists outside our perceptions or experiences. The second notable one is the Objective or Absolute Idealism of Hegel. This Hegelian idealism states that mind is real and only mental actions and effects can form a basis for accounting for the world of our experiences.



**Utilitarianism** is a moral theory, which is based on the principle of the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people. It emphasizes utility, the greatest good. Thus, its tenet is that an action is good if it produces the greatest amount of happiness for the greatest number of people.

The most famous exponents of this school of thought are Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill.

## **Contemporary**

Contemporary philosophy shifted attention totally from theorizing to analysis. They emphasize meaning and methodology. This philosophy was a product of major movements in the late 19th century and early twentieth century. These movements are pragmatism, philosophical analysis and existentialism.

**1. Pragmatism** emphasizes experience, experimental enquiry and theory that could be of tremendous utility in solving intellectual problems. The meaning of any theory is determined by its workability and its practical, social or scientific consequences.

The philosophy of pragmatism developed as a reaction against metaphysics. Their postulation is that a theory is true only if it works. If a theory has been verified and found to deal successfully with experience, then it is true.

The major exponents of pragmatism include among others Charles Sanders Pierce (1839-1914), William James (1842-1910) and John Dewey (1859-1952).

This philosophy developed because they were dissatisfied with the sterile philosophical tradition observed in American Universities. The philosophy looked abstruse and remote from the immediate concern of man in a fast growing civilization like theirs.

**2. Philosophical Analysis** emphasizes the study of meaning of the principles, use and functions of language.

Philosophical problems to them are linguistic problems and can be solved through the clarification of language.

This philosophical method has three movements that developed, out of it, each with its answer to the problem of knowledge. They include Logical Atomism, Logical Positivism (or logical Empiricism) and Ordinary Language philosophy.

**(a) Logical Atomism** could be described as the philosophy of Mathematical logic or principle of mathematics, the great work of mathematical logic by Bertrand Russell and Alfred North Whitehead. Their logic was wider in scope than Aristotelian or traditional logic. Aristotelian logic was a logic of classes while that of Russell was of propositions.

The work of Russell and Whitehead proved that mathematics is a part of logic and that everyday language or natural language (e.g. English) has a structure like that of "*Principia mathematica*." They believe that Mathematical logic will provide philosophy with an instrument to clarify the meaning of English sentences. To logical Atomism, Philosophy is an activity, which gives us knowledge of the world, not necessarily scientific knowledge, but knowledge as a whole. Its exponents are Bertrand Russell (1872 – 1970), Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947) and Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951).

**(b) Logical Positivism** is a philosophy, which was a further development of mathematical logic. It held that philosophy does not produce propositions as assertions which are true or false. It merely clarifies the meaning of statements. In clarifying statements, it shows some to be scientific, some to be mathematical and others to be nonsensical.

Logical positivism or logical empiricism employs the analytic and synthetic distinction and the verification principle to prove statements of formal logic, statements of science, and nonsensical statements. Among its exponents are Moritz Schilick, Hans Hahn, Friedrich Waisman, Herbert Feigl, Otto Neurath, Rudolf Carnap and Alfred Jules Ayer.

(c) **Ordinary Language Philosophy** was a philosophy developed later by Wittgenstein and Gilbert Ryle, through a method Wittgenstein called “the method of language game”. To them, instead of trying to discover the meaning of certain terms through analysis, it should indicate the significance of these terms by showing how they are used. Hence the ordinary language philosophers will say “Don’t ask for the meaning, ask for the use.

**3. Existentialism** This philosophical movement sees philosophy as having a more positive role to play as against analysis. It emphasizes concrete human existence and stresses the human predicament of feelings distinctive to individuals rather than ‘man’ as an abstract concept.

To exist to the existentialist means to be personally committed to a free chosen way of life. it also implies being conscious of the problems of human life with all the choices open to man and also Martin Heidegger. “The being that exists is man. Man alone exists. Trees are, but they do not exist. Angels are, but they do not exist. God is, but he does not exist.”

Existentialism emanated as a reaction against the abstraction of Hegelian idealism, which left out man and his existential problems. Among other existentialists are Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) Karl Jasper (1883-1969) Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961) Gabriel Marcel (1889-1974), Ibert Camus (1913-1960) and Jean-paul Sarte (1905-1980).

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## CHAPTER EIGHT

### SOME PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS

#### 8.1 The problem of Reality and Appearance

Sometimes we find ourselves philosophizing over what we should regard as reality and what we see as physical appearances. When people are fed up with life and situations, you might hear them make religious statements such as. "Worldly things are useless." (This means that what we see and perceive with our senses are not real, reliable or important). "What we should sort after should be heavenly or spiritual things." (Which also means that heavenly or spiritual things are real, important and reliable)?

We sometimes hear people say: "All that glitters is not gold" (which invariably means that appearances are deceptive). When we see pictures of our president in offices what we see is his image or appearance and not the real president. On some occasions we see pools of water while driving along the road. This water disappears as we get close. On disappearance we discover that it was a mirage an illusion of reality. With all these and many others, we begin to wonder and ask ourselves. "What actually is the real world?"

In trying to explain this problem, Plato informed us that sense information is considered illusory. What we see physically are mere "shadows" or images of the Real world, which exists in the world of "forms" or ideas. This to him can only be discovered when we have real knowledge. For Plato we can only have opinions about the world of appearance but our souls can have true knowledge about the real world, the world of ideas.

In our earlier chapter, we can see how Permenides handled the problem of change and permanence. He stated that although in appearance everything seemed to be changing but in reality there is no change. Hence to him, the real world is the world of changelessness; change for him is

an illusion. He went further in his epistemology to distinguish between two ways. "The way of Truth" and "the way of Opinion." The way of truth to him is the way of reason, while that of opinion is the senses. Thus, reality to him can be found in the way of reason.

Democritus epistemology does not accept the perception of the senses because it is unreliable. He upheld the perception of understanding because it depends on the object perceived. He does not see secondary qualities such as taste, colour etc. as qualities inherent in objects, but are due to our senses that deceive us. To him qualities such as weight, hardness are not due to our senses.

John Locke and George Berkeley on their assessment of this issue postulated further that these qualities are in the minds of those who think they perceive them in things.

Rene' Descartes like Parmenides and Plato do not believe the senses as sources of knowledge of the true world. The Real world can only be known from the realm of the mind. It is on this ground that he laid the foundation of knowledge that is indubitable by stating the famous dictum "*Cogito ergo Sum*" "I think therefore I am."

Peripherally, we can say that appearance means the way a thing appears or looks or the impression received from an object or thing as against the essence. Reality may mean, the object or thing, as it is, the unchanging nature, the substance or immutable nature of the thing. For Immanuel Kant, the Real world is the *Noumenal* world and cannot be known. What we can know to him is the phenomenal world, which is the world of appearance. Hegel held the absolute spirit or idea as the real, while the physical are its manifestations. Benedict Spinoza on the other hand held that there is only one substance that is real, and it is God or Nature while other things are expressions and manifestation of it.

Gottfried W. Leibnitz summed his epistemology by stating that physical or corporeal objects are in reality spiritual

entities which he called "*Monads*." He thus developed an idealist doctrine that denies the existence of matter.

We can see that the problem of reality and appearance depends on the perception of reality of each philosopher. While the idealist held the spirit, mind or the world of ideas as the real world (Plato, Hegel etc.), the materialist held the whole of reality to consist of matter (composed of atoms mass, electrons and energy) (Democritus). In addition, the realist sees the physical world as real and that our perceptions of them are accurate (Aristotle).

As an apprentice to critical thinking, what do you think is the Real world? Can you substantiate your idea of the Real world and that of Appearance with a reasonable and sound argument? Can you use the concept of Reality and Appearance to analyse yourself as a combination of body and mind? Between the Body and mind which is Reality and Appearance? Where is your mind situated in your body? How does the mind interact with our body in thinking and physical action?

## 8.2 Analytic/Synthetic Distinction and *a Priori* / *a Posteriori* Knowledge

Any statement or proposition says something about a subject, and the statement is intended to put across specific information, which we regard as knowledge. However, what type of knowledge do we possess? Is our knowledge purely analytic or synthetic, or is *a priori* or *a posteriori*? What actually are these types of knowledge?

Philosophers, depending on their epistemological orientation, emphasize each of these types. Some believe that our knowledge begins with experience while others emphasize reason.

**Analytic Statements** or propositions can be determined without reference to any experience. It is not possible to deny the affirmation of an analytic statement without contradicting oneself. Analytic statements are

tautological; they do not contribute to new knowledge. An example of an analytic statement is “A is A” the predicate says nothing new about the subject. A statement such as “A black man is black” adds nothing new to the subject “black man.”

**A synthetic Statement** or proposition is not necessarily true, it can either be found true or false. The predicate of the statement must contain some information not contained in the subject. In denying a synthetic proposition, there is no contradiction involved. The reason is that there is a synthesis of two quite separate notions, one being the subject about whom the predicate is asserted. For example a statement such as ‘John is a doctor of the mind’ says something new about the subject John. This proposition can be confirmed or disproved by experience.

**A priori** knowledge is a knowledge acquired by reason alone, independent of experience. The rationalist accepts this as against sense experience. They accept knowledge that is universal and independent of experience.

**A Posterior** knowledge on the other hand is derived from experience. By experience the empiricists mean sense experience.

Emmanuel Kant, in his **Critique of Pure Reason** tended to accept both the empiricists and rationalists view of knowledge. He believed that our contact with the experiential world gives us knowledge, but our faculties supply the form in which we know it. He wrote “although all our knowledge begins with experience, it does not follow that it arises from experience.” He was concerned not with what knowledge we derive from experience, but with what a priori knowledge we possess. He maintained that there are certain truths which are synthetic and a priori.

### **8.3 The Mind and Body Problem**

The problem of the interrelationship between the body and mind has been a major concern of metaphysicians since



the 17th century. The major questions asked are “What is the fundamental nature of the mind and body? How is the mind and body related? Different philosophers have conceived the mind differently; for example, Anaxagoras, Plato, Augustine, Aquinas and Rene Descartes. These philosophers conceived the mind as separate substances which exist independent of the body. On the other hand, Spinoza, Hume and Russell hold different views. While Spinoza saw the mind and body as two aspects of the same thing, Hume and Russell see the mind as series of perceptions.

Our scientific knowledge suggests that the physical, corporeal or extramental world is inanimate, purposeless and is determined in order of events. On the other hand the mental world involves desiring, wishes, thinking consciousness etc.

When we reflect on how the physical world influences the mental or on how the mental influences the physical, we will begin to wonder about the interrelationship or interconnectedness between them. Questions that might arise when we view the mind and body are, if the body is physical, hence extra mental or corporeal, how does it influence or act on the mind that is mental, hence involves in consciousness, desires etc.

How can we explain for example, a man who after few minutes imagined that he would wish to break another man's head with a stick and suddenly he stands up and fulfill his desires? We might ask how the mind (mental, thinking, wishes) influenced the body for him to execute his desires. Though we are compelled to believe the absolute difference between these two, but how did they interact. The attempt to reconcile these two opposites led to various philosophical Schools of thought like Dualism, Materialism (Behaviourist psychologists) or Materialistic metaphysics, idealism, double aspect theory, occasionalism, parallelism, pre established harmony and Epiphenomenalism (modified materialistic view).

### i. **Dualism**

In order to reconcile the problem of mind and body, Rene Descartes, a French philosopher and mathematician asserted that mind and body are two different types of entity or substances. According to him, the essential property of the mind is that it thinks (*res cogitans*) while the essential property of the Body is that it is extended (*res extantia*).

Descartes asserted that there are spiritual substances and there are corporeal substances. Each of these kinds of substances has one primary attribute which constitute its essence and they are thought and extension. Man, to Descartes is essentially a thinking being or is essentially mind. But how can an idea to break a man's head with a stick move him to do it physically. Or how can a slap on a man's face (physical contact) are followed by a thought of anger or pain in the unextended mind (non physical).

Descartes, after much examination of this issue, concluded that there must be some kind of contact between the mental and the physical world, and that contact point must be the pineal gland, situated at the base of the brain.

However, the theory of the pineal gland was not able to solve the problem of mind and body, because the pineal gland is a physical thing. How did the mental (mind) interact with the physical (body). At last he was compelled to drop the attempt to reconcile these opposites and concluded that the only solution to (solve) this problem was by not thinking about it, since it was one of those mysteries that should be accepted unquestioned.

### ii. **Materialism**

The materialist theory held that both mental and physical events could be accounted for in terms of physical concepts. Thus what we regard as mental events are simply physical events, which occur in various combinations of

matter in motion. To the materialist or behaviourist psychologists, all the movements that take place in the brain are called thoughts, and are produced by events in the material world, either outside our bodies, or inside.

Thomas Hobbes is one of the materialistic metaphysicians that uphold this theory. He contends that the incorporeal and spiritual cannot be the subject matter of philosophy. Philosophy deals with bodies and all substances are material substance.

### **iii. Idealism**

This theory insists that everything is basically mental rather than physical. Thus, the issue of the physical or body does not exist since the mind is the basic. However, we are aware that there are physical things that influence our behaviour and thought and consequently our actions.

### **iv. Double Aspect Theory: Parallelism**

This theory was propounded by Benedict Spinoza. Spinoza's theory states that mind and body are both attributes of one and the same entity. There is in fact no influence between one and the other, but a parallelism, so that for anything that happens in one, a corresponding event is seen in the other. But body and mind are two different ways of looking at the same thing.

Spinoza claimed that it is either God or Nature that is Nature (the Naturing nature) while other creations are Natural Naturata (the Natured nature). Hence the body and mind problem can be resolved in thought and extension or spirit and matter. For every thought there is a corresponding physical event.

### **v. Pre-Established Harmony**

This is a philosophical theory developed by Leibnitz. Leibnitz theory states that events occurring in one are harmonious with the others. Leibnitz philosophy revolves in

the concepts of “Monads,” which he regards as substances that are either physical or spiritual.

In human beings, the dominant “Monad” is mind. Events in the mind are automatically harmonious with that of the body. The harmonious mechanism of the universe can be compared to the effect produced by clocks such that at specific times each of the clocks ring. These clocks do not interact nor are they connected rather they work independently in harmony with one another. On this, he claimed that there is no interaction between the mind and body.

## **vi. Occasionalism**

Occasionalism is a philosophy which states that mind cannot even know body, all that mind can know are ideas. The event in the mind or body is not the causes of events in the other, but only the occasions of God’s actions.

The major proponent of this philosophy is Nicholas Malabranche. He, like Descartes maintains that there are two kinds of substances namely spiritual and material substances, but he denies any interaction between them. The mind does not move the body. As spiritual or mental substances, it cannot move even the smallest material body. For example, I can kick a ball when I wan to, but it is not I who kicks, it is not my mind that moves my leg. It is God who moves my leg on the occasion of my mind willing to kick the ball. I am not the true cause, but the occasional cause. God is the true and only cause of all movements and everything in the world.

## **vii. Epiphenomenalism**

This philosophy maintains that the mind is simply the function of the brain and not a substance different from the brain. Thus, mental acts are products of the brain. One of its exponents is Gilbert Ryle. In his book “The concept of mind” he presented a materialistic metaphysics.

The theory as regards the nature of the mind and body exposes the difficulty the metaphysicians have faced in order to find the connection between body and the mind. The problem remains one of the major mysteries of mankind which science probably will prove in future.

#### **8.4 The Energy Theory to the Problem of Mind and Body**

The author holds a materialistic metaphysical and mechanistic view on this issue. The mind, to the author, is a form of energy in different degrees and dimensions. The issue of matter (body) and all relating to the mind are reduced to changes in energy in different degrees and dimensions.

Man (body and mind) is an embodiment of energy that can neither be created nor destroyed. The body and mind as energy can only be converted from one form of energy to the other. At death, all about man (mind and body) dissolves in the earth and is converted as an organic matter into heat energy and chemical energy in the process of chemical change. At this level, the mind ceases to function, while the body decomposes and transform into another form of energy.

The body and mind interact at their energy levels through the process of conversion. The way the mind interacts with the body is like the way electrical energy through chemical energy in a motor battery is converted to mechanical energy to move a car. Just as we cannot touch energy, so we cannot touch the mind. The body is a condition-sine-quo-non for the existence of the mind and for mental acts such as desire, contemplation's reasoning etc. As sound heat, chemical, electrical and nuclear energy cannot be without a source, so the mind and mental acts and processes cannot be expressed without a body. Is the mind energy? The Mind is Energy because it has the capacity to do work. Energy, according to M. Nelkon in his **PRINCIPLES OF PHYSICS**, is the capacity for doing work.<sup>1</sup> Mind energy or psychic energy (psyche is a Latin word meaning the mind) through the

activities of the central nervous system generates mechanical movement of the body. We are aware that energy is always released when we get involved in deep intellectual research or contemplation. We feel weak or worn out after deep meditation or after great anger, fear or anxiety. We feel weak because the energy has been dissipated and power has been used during the mental work done. Power is work done over time.  $P = \frac{W}{T}$

or the rate of energy transferred. We all know that one who spends a long time brooding, hating or angry is seen as psychologically imbalanced and are most times found losing weight due to the release of heat and chemical energy during the overworking of the heart and nervous system. This leads to the destabilization of the fluid in the body chemistry.

The mind as an energy can be seen in our day-to-day activities. For example, if a man wants to carry a can full of water, his mind through concentration would release energy proportionate to the can of water. Assuming the can happens to be empty, he would carry the can with unbelievable force. This in other words means that the amount of energy channeled by the mind transcends the capacity required for the empty can. The reverse is the case if the man thought that the can was empty when it is actually full. The energy channeled by the mind will be inadequate to carry the can.

A clear understanding of thought processes as medium of conversion of energy from one form to another, especially to mechanical, differ from one individual to another. These differences are determined by the Will. The will as a mental act is determined by the desire, and is furnished into man by his orientation and social environment. A man can decide to break another man's head, and he does it. It is a mere transfer of mind's desire (energy) to mechanical act.

If mind is not energy, the issue of psychokinetic experiences and telepathic acts would not have been possible. Psychokinesis is the ability of the mind to affect

matter directly outside the individual. Telepathy on the other hand is transference of thought or ideas from one mind to another at a distance without normal uses of the experiential senses.

Though experimental researches into these areas have shown a complete mental act, yet scholars shy away tagging it supernatural, magic etc. the incomprehensibility of this phenomena relating to mind and body has led philosophers to avoid and leave the issue as one of those mysteries which should not be discussed.

The author however, does not deny the existence of the Almighty God and spiritual beings from his energy theory of body and mind. God is perceived as the all pervading Supreme Creative Energy from which other dimensions of energy levels emanate. The spirit of man as against mind and body is a direct emanation of a purer conscious energy from the all pervading Supreme Creative Energy. The universe as a whole, including man is the expression of the all pervading Supreme Creative Energy.

## **8.5 Essence and Existence**

Existentialism according to Jean-Paul Sarte postulates that existence precedes essence, as against the popular western philosophical contention that essence precedes existence. Sarte is stating that man first of all exists then by his freewill decides his essence and what he wants to be.

Aristotle identified the essence of a thing as the very nature of that thing. The essence of a thing is that which makes it that particular kind of thing and which gives it its distinguishing features from other things. The essence of a being can be conceptualized without considering the actual existence of that being. Edmund Husserl's phenomenology (the science of essence) is conceived with the essence of things and not with their actual existence. His "eidetic science" (as he calls it) does not bother about actual existence but accepts it as long as its essence can be imagined. Is the

essence of a thing of primary importance or its existence? Those in the Thomistic tradition of Aquinas postulate that an imaginary essence is not a reality. Hence to Aquinas it is existence that actualized essence. Thus, it is only when a thing exists that its essence becomes real; and things exist within the confines of their essence. For example, a man or woman cannot exist as an angel or a lion. He can only exist as a man or woman, because he has the essence of a human being and his or her essence is confined to this human essence. Existence limits essence while essence is actualized by it. Immanuel Kant argued that we cannot think of a being without its existence. To think of a being is automatically to think of it as existing. Thus, the essence and the existence of any being are inseparable. Existence to him is not an attribute or a predicate of a being. If we imagine that God exists (even if we cannot prove Him empirically) we are implicitly imagining Him as existing, so the idea of His existence is there in the very act of thinking about Him.

In addition, the distinction between essence and existence when analysed, applies only to contingent being, and not to Necessary Being. Contingent beings do not have existence as part of their nature. They owe their existence to Necessary Being (God), Necessary Being has existence as part of its essence. In the necessary being, essence and existence are identical; existence is part of its essence. This is the view of scholastic philosophers like St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Anselm, etc.

### **8.6 Freewill and Predestination**

In our normal day to day activities when we meet misfortune or good fortune and have no rational explanation to it, we may find ourselves saying "That's how God wants it" or you might hear people say, "It is the will of God" Some make these statements just because they don't have the power to reverse the situation, if they can reverse it, it will no longer be God's will. Hence what God has determined is that which is irreversible.



The problem of freewill and determinism primarily falls on man. Is man a free agent? In most of our judgments about people we assume that, in some sense, they choose freely to do what they did or to believe what they do.

We sometimes condemn, punish, or blame individuals for making certain choices and decisions, and insist that they ought to have done otherwise. If today I find myself a Christian and also with my perception of "being in Christ" regard myself as "born again", I would inevitably tell my fellow man that my decision to be a Christian was borne out of freewill, out of freewill because I accepted Christ by my own volition. On the other hand, we may discover that in many cases what we believe at a time to be a free decision may have been influenced by various personal and social factors, so that we did not actually decide the question "freely".

The more we learn about human nature, we discover that what we think or do are influenced by our upbringing, education, environment and biological nature, if we rely on these factors, would we now hold anybody morally responsible for acting below our expectation since they might have been influenced by external factors.

There are various Schools of thought as regards the issue of freedom and predestination. In fact, the area in which the greatest arguments were presented was that of theological determinism. In **theological determinism**, a form of divine determinism has been advocated, claiming that God himself is the sole causal agent in the universe, and determines all actions both human and natural. He is able to control everything that takes place and to know before hand (predetermine) everything that occurs. Philosophers and theologians in line with Augustinian tradition states that God knows in advance what man will freely do, but his knowledge of this is not the cause of the action. This means that the omniscience has no influence on man's freewill. On the other hand it also means that God cannot influence man's decision. By analysis this limits his power or omnipotence. In addition, if

God simply knows all that we can think or do without influencing it, of what importance is his knowledge in the affairs of men.

Jonathan Edwards an American Calvinist argued that this type of freedom is spurious. According to him, we may think that we are choosing freely, but our choices in fact have been determined in advance so that we cannot actually make an original decision. Major Protestant reformers like Martin Luther and John Calvin have the doctrine of predestination, which states that God has predestined some individuals for salvation. These individuals are the chosen or elected ones, hence have been given the grace to live good lives. Man according to them is corrupt and incapable of personal effort to salvage himself because of the "original sin". But this grace is given only to the chosen that are destined for salvation. Those who are not chosen are not free to live good lives because they do not have the grace to live Godly lives.

This doctrine in other words postulates that there is no freewill and that all acts and choices have been predestined by God. If this is accepted, firstly, God will be seen as a selfish being that has decided to choose certain people and left others. Secondly, to blame or punish people for failing to do certain things will be erroneous, since the act was not done out of freewill. To blame any who does wrong would be to blame God, since he was acting in accordance with God's determined order.

What actually determines the actions of men? Ancient philosophers like Socrates and Plato have a theory that man's actions are determined by what they see as good. Thus, a man acts only when he perceives that something is good, that no man chooses what he knows is evil.

If he chooses evil, it is because he thinks that something good is in it. Hence such an act is due to ignorance that is ignorance of the fact that evil is harmful to the doers. This theory is called **Ethical determinism**. Ethical determinism is legally unfounded in that ignorance is no

excuse for us to contravene established rules or norms. Another interesting school of thought relating to the problem of freewill and determinism is that of the materialist called **physical determinism**. This theory holds that man has no freewill whatsoever because, he is a part of the physical universe determined by the physical laws of nature. Some of the major exponents of this theory are Democritus, Epicurus, Thomas Hobbes, Baron Paul Von Holbach La Mettrie. This theory states that everything in the universe including man is composed of atoms. The human soul is made up of atoms and subject to the laws of nature. The swerving of the atoms (according to Epicurus) gives rise to unpredictability hence creating a situation of freewill.

According to Holbach, man is purely matter and part of nature. As part of nature, he is subject to the natural laws. To him there is no freewill because whatever action or thought a man has are influenced and determined by impulses coming from objects that acts on the senses. When a man thinks that he is free, it is because he is not aware of the external influences on his actions.<sup>2</sup> Physical determinism is based on a materialistic conception of man, which implies a rejection of spiritual or immaterial substance in man. This theory, if viewed can be assessed with a grain of salt, in that how can we assess thought processes, mind or what we may refer to as the soul? Is man actually matter or simply a composition of atoms? Hasn't man a spiritual part of him? This issue remains a mystery for science, religion, psychology and philosophy to resolve.

Another interesting postulation on the issue of freewill was by notable psychologists and philosophers like Sigmund Freud, B.F. Skinner, Thomas Hobbes and David Hume. They postulated a theory we regard as **psychological determinism**. This view states that man is not free because his actions are determined by his instinct, environment and motives respectively. They argue that no action is taken without a psychological "conditioning" Psychology seems to

indicate that our attitudes, standards of judging, and even our choices are determined by a host of conditioning processes. Our social group, teachers, parents, employers, all influence us such that when we act, we seem to act voluntarily. Thus “voluntary” behaviour can be a product of various influences. In a man’s decision, the stronger motive (instinct) prevails and that is what determines the action.

Those who argue for freewill point out that features in our moral and legal judgment make sense only if human beings are in some sense free agents. They argue that most religious views of the world are trivial if man cannot make free choices. In the example given earlier, if I have been a Christian due to my own free volition, there could be other environmental factors or motives responsible for that decision. If for example, today is Sunday and I ought to go to church and suddenly I decided to stay back at home to write this essay, I have acted freely, but probably influenced by the strong desire for educational excellence, precipitated by a search for honour in my social milieu.

On this ground, I would say that my decision was influenced by either instinct for religion or social factors and my decision to accept social as against religion was out of freewill. Thus I had the free choice between church and writing this essay.

George Graham in his book **Philosophy of Mind: An Introduction** states, “We decide to act in the manner that we do because our decisions and actions follow the heels of conditions which rest entirely outside those decisions and actions.”<sup>3</sup> This assumption he calls *externalist explanation assumption*. Man, according to Hegel, is a part of history and history is determined. Historical events (**Historical Determinism**) such as wars and revolutions are fated to happen, hence unavoidable. Historical events are part of the dialectical process of the absolute to attain self-realisation. The absolute uses people to fulfill its objectives and later throw them away and continues. Karl Marx was Hegelian, he

simply submerged man in the process of history under the influence of economic and productive forces. This thus denies human freedom and postulates that man's actions are determined not by free choice but by the above forces.

In trying to work out a general account or explanation of our experience we discover overwhelming evidence showing that human beings are completely determined, on the other hand, some of the presuppositions that we employ in our moral life seem to require that we accept some degree of freedom on the human level.

A view of the problem of freewill and determinism exposes the mystery surrounding man and the vastness of the human being as a micro cosmos with extensive areas beyond imagination to probe. A probe which continues till the demise of man, a probe which shows that man is a mystery to himself.

## **8.7 The Nature of the Soul, Immortality and Reincarnation**

The issue of the nature of the soul, immortality and reincarnation has been of great controversy for centuries. The ideas postulated by earlier philosophers concerning this issue have permeated the thought and doctrines of many religions of the world today.

In the history of philosophy there are two major ancient philosophical traditions which continued even after medieval philosophies of the Christian fathers. These philosophical traditions are Platonism (of Plato) and Aristotelianism (of Aristotle). Plato was the founding father of idealism. Idealism is a theory, which asserts that reality consists of ideas, thought, mind or spirit rather than matter. Aristotle was the founding father of Realism. Realism contends that there exists a physical world that is real and our perception of it is accurate. What we perceive is the physical world. The object of our senses exists independent of their being known or

perceived. The two philosophers have different perception as regards the nature of the soul.

### **The Nature of the Soul**

The soul according to Plato is divine; it is immortal, immaterial or spiritual. Its union with the body is purely accidental; it formally existed without a body and will continue to exist after its separation from the body at death. In conformity with the Orphic – Pythagorean influence on Plato he (Plato) stated that the soul will continue to exist after series of reincarnation until it is able to achieve final liberation. When this occurs, it will now return to the world of forms (The immutable and unchangeable world) from which it comes. Thus, the soul is immortal. It has three distinct parts, the rational, spirited and the appetitive element. The rational element is that part of man's soul which enables him to reason. The spirited elements makes him courageous or cowardly, while the appetitive consists of desire, passion for food, sex etc. A man is healthy only when these three elements work in harmony.

The soul according to Aristotle is the source and principle of life in all organisms. It is the animating principle of life in all organisms. It is the animating principle of all living things. The body is matter while the soul is form. A man is a man only when he has a soul and an animal is an animal only when there is a soul. To Aristotle, man, animals and plants have souls. The only differences are that the powers of these souls differ in each of them. The soul of plants has the power of nutrition and growth, that of animals, the power of nutrition, growth, locomotion and sensation, while that of man transcends all these by having nutrition, growth, movement (locomotion), sensation, rational and intellectual abilities. A man without a soul is not a man just as an eye without sight is not an eye. Just as the power of the eye is the sight so is the power of the body is the soul. The soul and the body constitute one substance, thus if a man dies, physically, all

about him goes. There is no room for the immortality of the soul in the Aristotelian philosophical tradition.

The Judeo-Christian tradition believes that the soul is separate from the body. It is immaterial and regarded as the essence of man. At death the soul continues to live though its existence at this stage depends on the activities of man before physical death. If he lived a bad life, his soul was sure to be damned or condemned in Hell or Heaven where it is expected to burn throughout eternity. On the other hand, if he lived a virtuous life, his soul will be expected to live a blissful life in Heaven. Thus the Judeo-Christian tradition believes in the immortality of the soul.

### **Immortality of the Soul and Reincarnation**

The issue of the possibility of reincarnation has been a puzzle taking cognizance of some findings and observation in human life. This issue has been viewed by various religious groups from different perspectives. Some attest to the claim that the soul of man can after physical death move on to inhabit another body to be reborn, while others do not believe that such mystery is possible. They presented arguments to buttress their opposition to this claim, others on the other hand simply stood on their religious belief that it is not possible because there is no emphasis on reincarnation in their doctrine. However, before visiting the issue of the possibility of reincarnation, we must first of all assess the problem of immortality of the soul. This is because for reincarnation to take place, the soul has to exist after physical death. The problem of immortality, like that of the existence of God etc has engaged the attention of philosophers. Arguments presented for and against the immortality of the soul shall be discussed historically. This is to enlighten our readers that metaphysical discourse of this nature has been the primary concern of man even before our immediate ancestors speculated about them.

Plato's philosophy was a by product of the philosophies of his teacher, Socrates. Socrates did not write or document his philosophies; all we could get from Socrates were in form of dialogues written by Plato.

The soul according to Platonism is an immaterial substance. It is the essence of man. It can comprehend eternal truth. It is immortal and indestructible. It only used the body as a contact with the physical world. When man dies the soul returns to eternal reality.

One of the arguments presented by Plato is the argument from contraries in reality. In *Phaedo* (one of Plato's books) he argued that just as strength is followed by weakness and then weakness followed by strength, so light is followed by darkness while darkness is in turn followed by light. Life and death are contraries like light and darkness and since life is followed by death it is expected also that death will be followed by life. thus, on this grounds there is life after death.<sup>4</sup>

This by implication is stating that death in this physical world is birth in the spiritual world, since the soul (the immaterial) uses the body to exist in the physical.

Another argument to prove the immortality of the soul can be seen in the Socratic dialogue to establish that knowledge is remembrance. When we say that one thing is better than another, what we are actually saying is that it is nearer or closer to the absolute standard of goodness than the other. This standard that we are using is absolute goodness, which we do not perceive with the senses yet we know it. In the dialogues, Socrates states that "...we acquired our knowledge before our birth and lost it at the moment of birth, afterwards by the exercise of our senses upon sensible objects recover the knowledge which one had once before, I suppose that what we call learning will be the recovery of our knowledge"<sup>5</sup> This thus implies that the soul brought this knowledge with itself from the other world. The soul knew absolute goodness in the other life before it came to this



world, hence it did not begin its life here in this world. This explains why we tend to remember when things which we have not seen or experienced are being thought or explained to us. We nod our heads thoughtfully and approvingly confirming that which we thought was a new knowledge.

In the Platonic theory of knowledge, we saw how Plato divided Reality into the world of forms (ideas) and that of opinion (or images), the world of forms are eternal, immutable and unchangeable, while that of opinion is the changing world. According to him, "all human souls pre-existed before birth into this world and they existed in the world of forms or ideas. While there, they had the knowledge of the universals, the knowledge of the essence of things. But when they (souls) came into this world and got imprisoned in the body, they forgot or lost the knowledge they had. The soul being a part and existing in the world of forms is immaterial, eternal, immutable and indestructible. Therefore, it is immortal. It is the principle of life and as such it cannot have death as part of it. By saying that the soul is the principle of life, Plato seems to say that the soul is god or does not derive its life from any other being.

Saint Augustine was platonic, but has a different view as regards the perception of the soul. To him, God is the principle and source of life. The soul derives its essence and being from God, since it derives its nature from God, it cannot have death as part of its being, therefore it is immortal.

The soul according to Augustine can perceive eternal truth and since it can apprehend eternal truth, it means that it has the quality that pertains to eternal which is immaterial, indestructible and immortal. In addition, he stated that man has the natural desire for perfect happiness. But perfect happiness is not obtainable because no man is ever perfectly happy on earth. It then follows that its possibility is only after physical death.

Saint Thomas Aquinas was Aristotelian in tradition. He agrees with Aristotle that the body and the soul constitute one

substance, (that is) the human person and that the soul is the **form** while the body is the **matter** of the substance. He however does not agree that the soul is dependent on the body. Instead it is independent and cannot be affected by death of the body. It is immaterial and capable of abstract thought and reflecting on itself. He went further to state that the soul desire immortality naturally"...man has a natural appetite for perpetual persistence in being. This is clear from the fact that existence is desired by all beings, but man has an intellectual apprehension of existence here and now as the brutes have. Man therefore attains immortality as regards his soul"<sup>6</sup>. This desire for immortality was planted by God in the minds of men, thus immortality is real.

Aristotle as against Plato postulated a concept, which gave no room for personal immortality of the soul. Man is a combination of body and soul. This combination is substantial and not accidental as Plato proposed. he maintained that the soul is the **form** while the body is **matter**. The two are mutually dependent and inseparable because there can be no matter without form nor can there be form without matter. With this idea at death, both body and soul disintegrates.

Epicurean (from Epicurus) materialistic philosophy teaches that there is no life after death; hence there is no immortality of the soul. This materialistic metaphysics stems from his contention that reality is composed of atoms including the human soul and even the gods. He however stated that the human soul is made up of fine atoms. He objects to the claim that the soul is an immaterial substance existing independently. He states "The soul is a body of fine particles distributed throughout the whole structure, and most resembling wind with a certain admixture of heat....Those who say that the soul is incorporeal are talking idly...it is impossible to conceive the incorporeal as a separate existence."<sup>7</sup>

Thus, by implication, Epicurus is stating that the soul is material and at physical death, it disintegrates or dissolves

with the body. On this ground, it will be absurd to be afraid of penalty of sin after death there is no life after death. The soul is simply a medium or principle of sensation, which ceases as a man dies. By comprehending this truth, Epicurus proposed that man would live a happy life devoid of fear of the unknown.

David Hume and Bertrand Russell they write their ideas from Epicurus that the reality of the soul as a substance distinct from the body is not true. To them, there is no entity in man called soul. Hume identified what we call the soul as series of perceptions. All he could observe when he analyzed himself was "Some particular perception or other of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure"<sup>8</sup> Russell's philosophy on this issue is that as the body changes and disintegrates so do the soul. The soul to him is simply series of experiences preserved through memory and habit within the structure of the brain. Thus, when a man dies, the soul dissolves or dies also with the body because there can be no memory without the brain. "If we were to believe that a person survives death, we must believe that the memories and habits which constitute the person will continue to be established in new set of occurrences"<sup>9</sup>

The Judeo-Christian tradition as against this claim believes in the immortality of the soul as earlier stated. The soul is perceived as an immaterial substance that survives physical death but the nature of its existence depends on how the individual has lived on earth either by living a good life or by living a bad life.

The Christian tradition believes that a belief in Jesus the Christ is a prerequisite for eternal and immortal existence that will be blissful.

## **Reincarnation**

The arguments presented above cannot be proved empirically because they are metaphysical problems. In addition to this is one of the most controversial doctrines in

religion especially within the confines of Judeo-Christian tradition and other religions and philosophies. This doctrine is the doctrine of reincarnation. Reincarnation is the belief that the soul of man can after physical death inhabit another body either human or animal (transmigration).

The earliest doctrine of immortality of the soul and the progress through a series of incarnation was that of Pythagoras. Other religions like Hinduism, Buddhism etc hold that man's soul survives death and continues to reincarnate until it purifies itself. In West African traditional religion, says T.N.O. Quarcoopome, "reincarnation is conceived as the birth of an ancestor into the family and of certain category of persons into the world."<sup>10</sup>

Generally in African traditional religion reasons to buttress the belief in reincarnation have been postulated and addressed by claims that some children have a physical replica of their dead ancestors. The issue of scars or deformity that a grandfather had as a result of an accident is born with the new child. Among the Yoruba the belief in reincarnation is expressed in such names "as Babatunde (Father has returned); Yetunde or Iyabo (Mother has returned)"<sup>11</sup>

This to the African tradition did suggest a close relationship between the child and a dead ancestor and also suggests proof of the existence of reincarnation.

There are cases of children regarded as Ogbanje (Igbo) Abiku (Yoruba) who are seen as migrants, they are born and die at will. Most times conspicuous marks are left on their dead bodies deliberately by members of the family to identify them when they come back again in their circle of life and death. This is done by either cutting of fingers, burning a part of the hands or legs etc. Many have testified that these children when born-again carry these marks. Thus they conclude that these marks must have been transferred from the dead children to the new ones.

There was a special incident observed in a polygamous family in a town in Rivers State, Nigeria. A child born by one of the two wives of a man was always found to be comfortable in the hands of the second wife instead of the biological mother. The child prefers to eat only when food is given to him by the other wife other than the biological mother and also prefers to sleep in her room. On a certain day, the child complained after observing that he was being discriminated by the woman when sharing out food to her biological children and would give little to him even though he was older than some of them. He complained, telling her that didn't she know that he was the eldest of her children. That wasn't she aware she aborted his pregnancy out of annoyance by drinking concentrated alcohol, just because of a quarrel with her husband? The child mentioned the time and date the incident took place and the decision he took to be born from the womb of the other woman instead of her own? On hearing this, the woman slumped and was unconscious with shock because all that the child recounted was true.

These are some of the events that serve as rational justification for the belief in reincarnation. The above issue would rightly be condemned by some religious individuals. Some will ascribe to this phenomenon as "devilish" and regard it as a "camouflage by Satan" to confuse "the believers". While others would not want to discuss the issue but may believe in their heart that such phenomenon is possible. In the Christian fold, many accept the statement made by our Lord Jesus concerning Elijah and John the Baptist, but would not openly propagate it because the issue has been controversial. In Luke 11:17 it was prophesied saying "And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias..." and Jesus confirmed it in Matt. 11:14 saying "And if ye will believe it, this is Elias which was for to come" After the transfiguration when Moses and Elijah appeared, the disciples of Jesus Christ asked him "why then say the scribe that Elias must first come?" and Jesus answered them "Elias is come

already and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed". The writer of Gospel of Mathew added "Then the disciples understood that he spoke unto them of John the Baptist" The above is the biblical evidence of reincarnation.

However, one may say that argument for reincarnation would not be emphasized in the Christian doctrine because the word reincarnation was not used in the Bible and that actually Jesus need not emphasize it since it is of no importance in the gospel of salvation. Other liberal Christian thinkers attest to this fact that the core of the Christian doctrine is to believe and be saved. A total surrender to Christ is regarded as a prerequisite to break the circle of reincarnation and leads to the salvation of the soul. On the other hand, for those who have heard the word of God and ardently refused to repent will be damned neither will they reincarnate.

Thus reincarnation is for those who have not heard the word of God. The issue of this general quotation which states that "It is appointed unto man to die once then judgment" applies to both judgment of retributive justice and that which may lead to hell or heaven as recorded in the scriptures. This position is that judgment is sure after physical death, but the judgment falls within retributive law back here on earth or hereafter depending on those who have heard the gospel of salvation. But those who have not heard about the gospel of salvation may reincarnate and still be judged according to their past activities. In all these some Christian philosophers and thinkers stressed that God is still the final judge, He determines the penalty.

However, whether the above is true or false, those who argue against reincarnation state that biological determined bodily traits constitute no evidence of reincarnation. Science has shown that DNA is the carrier of family resemblance, thus it will be erroneous to state that a soul now inhabits another body through birth in another family. Psychologists have

theoretically proved that the thought of pregnant women or mothers can directly affect the unborn child. Thus, a thought about a black spot on a child's face may manifest when the child is born.

The African offer justification of his belief in reincarnation by the examples cited. The phenomenon regarding this child retaining memories of events in previous existence is surprising. We can dismiss physical resemblance and defects as a result of biological functions. But how does biology or psychology account for a situation of memory transfer from a "conscious fetus" to the brain of a new child.

The above seems to support the Socratic – platonic issue of immortality of the soul and the soul having absolute knowledge of the truth before birth. Others may argue that the child must have been told but a situation in which a child of five years would give such account with accuracy and at level of authority that appears mystifying will rule out such possibility with a great amount of probability. If we philosophers can establish clear cases of genuine memory transfer, then we will be able to formulate a theory that explains nature that will accommodate reincarnation.

The problem of the nature of the soul, immortality and reincarnation like the existence of God can not be proved empirically since they are metaphysical problems. As at now, these phenomena can only be accepted through belief and faith backed by religious orientation and experiences that cannot be empirically verified. Nevertheless, some for the arguments presented are in certain degrees probably true. It has to some degree strengthened the faith of those who believe in immortality and stimulated those with philosophically oriented minds. In all, the whole intellectual exercise has however opened our awareness, thus buttressing our belief in one form or the other.

## 8.8 Why Prayer?

The issue of prayer is very important in all religious practices. It is a means of communication with God in order for him to grant a request. This issue raises fundamental questions in the minds of individuals. One major point to be raised in this is the quality of Omniscience (All knowing) attributed to God. If God knows all things including the contents of our minds, what is the use bothering to tell him through prayers what he already knows?

The Fideist may buttress this position of prayer by simply saying, "That God knows before hand what you have in mind, but you should still ask". If this is true, it then means that our anthropomorphic God will not do anything unless he is asked or instructed to do so. This in other words means that he does not know what to do until he is told or reminded to do so. God, as we may describe him, has the attribute of immortality, He is unchangeable and infinite. He has ordered the universe with his wisdom from eternity. Are the prayers we offer meant for him to change what he as an unchangeable God has destined to be? Does he learn anything new from our prayers addressed to him, a prayer informing him of something which would make him revise his plan or change his mind and do our wish? To ask God to change would lead to contradicting ourselves. In Judaism, He is referred to as "I am that I am", in the Greek philosophy of Aristotle, He is referred to as the "unmoved mover" etc how then do we expect him to be moved by emotions of men and change his ordered plan. If God should change by our prayers it then means that he is imperfect.

Saint Augustine in describing God, stated that the transcendental world is not a world of change, but an immutable world: "No time is co-eternal with you, because you never change...no new motion stirring in him, he is immutable and invariable in his being...admitting neither progress or diminution"<sup>12</sup> Soren Kiekegaard perceives prayer from a different perspective. To him, the prayers we offer to God



does not change God, what it does is that "It changes the one who offers it".<sup>13</sup> The prayer simply makes him to know himself better. In fact prayer to him is talking to oneself, since one simply succeeds in changing himself psychologically and not God who is unchanged.

We may however state that anyone who prays, pray because he hopes to change himself. The content of a religious man's prayer is to change the cause of things, to induce God to give him favour and fulfill his hearts desires. There are situations that people have prayed for weeks, months or years, while some get instant results, others pray endlessly without success. Various perceptions as to the reason for this have been postulated. Some would say he or she "prayed amiss" or that the individual did not offer the right type of prayers. Some would say the individual had no faith that was why his or her prayers were not answered.

Others may conclude that God has decided from eternity, on the basis of his infinite knowledge and goodness not to give or answer that particular prayer. Thus, no amount of prayer addressed to Him will induce him to change his mind. This they term as "God's will for the person" which invariably is proposing a philosophy of fatalism-what will be will be.

The issue of prayer is philosophically important when we view why some prayers seem to be answered while others are not. Faith plays a major role when we view it from Fideist point of view. But the issue of man's prayer not being answered due to lack of faith can be contested in the sense that a man who kneels down to pray cannot do that if he has no element of faith that his prayer cannot get to God, even if his faith is as small as "a mustard seed."

Many people who are sick or ill get well by applying the right medication while others die praying fervently for recovery. One begins to wonder if man's life actually has not been predestined. Will God change his mind or plan about

any issue by force of man's prayers when he knows best and has fixed his plans from eternity.

The above issue gives us food for thought. Are prayers really answered? If yes, how do we know a prayer that has been answered? Some clergy may have ready answers to these questions. But how can we justify the result of a prayer, even if an individual claims that action A (prayer) produced result B (answered prayer). We cannot rule out the possibility of coincidence neither can we prove a divine intervention in such a situation.

We may however state that religion is not rooted on rational or logical proceedings but on faith. The religious man does base his result on faith and that prayer actually changes the course of things. The possibility or impossibility of this act lies with the person involved and his "association" with God and the supernatural.

## 8.9 What is Truth?

When we hear questions like "What is truth? At first instance the question might appear simple, but on reflection, we will discover that it transcends our simple imagination when determining what truth really is. In the Bible, we read how Jesus told Pilate that he came to preach the truth. Pilate having probably perceived that the word truth is ambiguous, and then asked our Lord, "What is truth?"

In one of my lectures a couple of years ago, I asked my students "What is truth? One of the students suddenly leapt to his feet without reflection and stated that, "Truth is the original true thing", while another simple defined it as "The opposite of lie."

In order to determine what man should regard as truth, Philosophers developed theories of truth which should be regarded as criteria for judging what we may determine as true. These theories are *Correspondence theory of truth*, *Coherence theory of truth*, *Pragmatic theory of truth*, *Descriptive theory of truth* and *Relativist theory of truth*.

## **Correspondence Theory**

According to this theory, a proposition or an assertion is said to be true if it corresponds with objective fact. This implies that if there is a correspondence between what is asserted by the proposition or claim and what the state of affairs really is, then the assertion or proposition is true. This is the Realist method of determining what is true. According to Aristotle, truth is the conformity of the intellect with reality. An example is, if I make a claim that "I bought a BMW car and it is parked in front of my house", the truth or falsity of my claim can be verified through empirical investigation. If my claim corresponds with the given state of affairs then my claim is true, otherwise it will be false.

## **Coherence Theory**

According to this theory, a proposition or assertion is true if there is a comprehensive and systematic network or coherence between it and other assertions. This implies that if there are logically related statements and propositions that support or buttress one another, then the proposition is true. An example is "if I throw this chalk up, it must come down. "This statement is true because of its relationship to other true claims concerning the earth's gravitational pull. Another version of this theory is called **Semantic Theory** developed by Alfred Tarski. It states for example, the claim "The earth is round" is true if and only if the earth is really round. If all southerners are liars and I am a southerner making such a claim, it then implies that my claim that "All Southerners are liars" is false. The fact that it is false shows that it is true that all southerners are liars.

## **Pragmatic Theory**

The theory holds that a proposition or assertion is true if it works. Thus truth is what works or brings about good consequences. The meaning of an idea is determined by

reference to its scientific, personal or social consequences. What is true is actually what works in practice and leads to satisfactory results.

### **Descriptive Theory**

John Hospers developed this theory. It contends that a proposition or assertion is true if it describes a state of affairs that was, is or will be actual or that occurred, is occurring, or will occur in future otherwise it is false.

### **Relativist Theory**

This theory states that there is no difference between truth and opinion. Kwesi Wiredu argued in favour of this theory and states that if truth is categorically different from opinion then truth is unknowable because claims to truth are opinions put forward as truth.<sup>14</sup>

We may, however state that opinion is subjective and uncertain, while truth is objective and certain.

The above theories of truth we have assessed may not be satisfactory, but for the purpose of common sense, the first three theories appear to be more plausible explanations of what we regard as truth. The idealist may not accept this view since his perception and concept of truth appear to be transcendental.

## **8.10 Jesus: In the Light of Esoteric Philosophical Understanding**

The idea of the supreme Godhead of our Lord Jesus the Christ has been a controversial issue to some Christians and no Christians. To some non Christians, the idea of God the father and God the son amounts to a contradiction, while to others it is not only contradictory but amounts to ignorance and blind belief. Most Christians see Jesus as a personal God who provides, protects, and gives salvation only to religious men who profess the Christian faith. This may be a misnomer. The position of this discussion is not to determine which

religion is greater, or that performs miraculous or supernatural feats more than the other or is the only way to salvation, but to express the essence of Jesus the Christ, independent of religion or the perception of some Christian religious personalities.

In an attempt to proceed further into this discussion, it should be understood that issues that border on religious faith has no rational or scientific justification. Most religious or mystical activities are predicated on inexplicable supernatural acts, which hinges on belief and faith thus, I may be apologetic in trying to interpret the content of the beingness of Jesus the Christ. Being apologetic here is relative to my philosophical understanding of Jesus.

There are two ways in which Jesus is understood by some Christian and non-Christian. Each of these understanding shows our awareness and perception of religion or the Christian faith. Firstly, Jesus is perceived as a personal God that protects and provides for Christians. Secondly, Jesus is perceived as the manifestation of love or the universal idea of love independent of religion. We shall analyse these two ideas to see if there is justification for our claimed faith in Jesus and his mission on Earth. The first perception of Jesus sees him as a superhuman personality, god or God whose duty or obligation is to protect and provide for those who believe in Him. Thus, to benefit or achieve all these, we have to believe in him or assume to believe in Him. This idea of Jesus the Christ (or Jesus Christ as commonly called) is a limitation of the essence and beingness of the Messiah. This perception appears to be selfish and egocentric. A belief on the grounds of protection and provision is spurious because Jesus is seen as the property and instrument of those who assumed that they are his followers. Hence Jesus is taken as an instrument to an end, which is usually wealth and protection. My personal observation and analysis shows that ninety five percent of "Christians" filled up in churches every Sunday and days of the week are there for

three reasons. Firstly, for the purpose of protection from unknown enemies, secondly, provision of material wealth and lastly, salvation if it happens to be available for them. We are however not saying that they have acted wrongly or thought wrongly concerning their expectation, because, man has the natural instinct for self preservation and inherently insatiable. The issue is that the mission of Christ Jesus is not predicated only on mundane issues such as protection and provision to selected believers, but on total universal or absolute love.

The second perception as exemplified above is for those who see Jesus as a universal idea predicated on absolute love independent of religion, creed or dogma. God or Jesus from those with this perception is love. Thus, God is love or Jesus is love personified. He is the center of unity between the seen and unseen. Thus, whosoever has absolute love for mankind and nature independent of religious inclination is Christ like (Christian), a co-worker with Christ. It is this spiritual level that was discussed in the bible thus, "the spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly"<sup>15</sup> when this spirit aligns with the soul he becomes a "born again", Man of God or savant of God. Thus, men and women with godlike or Christ like spirit (Absolute love are co-workers with God. "Ye are gods"<sup>16</sup> at this spiritual understanding men will not think of religion or Christianity in terms of a means to an end such as for, protection and provision of material wealth because these virtues are immanent in such individuals. This is why Christ Jesus said "seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you".

## **The Logic of Salvation**

I have already stated that my work is apologetic in character, bearing in mind that religion and the supernatural has no empirical justification. Salvation within the Christian parlance or even other religions is not simply "the state of being saved from evil or death" but goes deeper

metaphysically to the mystical union between man's spirit and that of God. With this latter definition or understanding it will be expedient to logically analyse the Christian idea of salvation.

We have earlier made it known within this context that Jesus the Christ represents divine love (Agape). Love is the unifying force in the universe. The central link between man and God is through love. Love is a magnetic force that attracts, thus whosoever believes in Jesus, believes in His mission and believing in his mission implies aligning with the principles of love. Aligning with this principles means you will be a source of love that attract others, being a source of love is being like Christ (God is love) and being like Jesus the Christ and Saviour implies that you are saved. A Christ like man or woman with divine or universal love does not need to be informed that he is "saved" because the spirit and mission of Christ will be exemplified and immanent in his activity and consciousness. He will be a Saviour to others because he is an extension of the Saviour. That is why Christ said to his disciples "verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believe on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do because I go unto my father"

Whosoever that is Christ like or is "in Christ" cannot sin. This is premised on the statement that "love *covereth* multitude of sins". Anyone who posses universal love (Agape) will have an illuminated and enlightened conscience and consciousness thus, will never hurt intentionally or feel hurt because he understands all acts on earth as a manifestation of the divine will of God and that he is a co-participant in creation. Thus, by implication, if Jesus the Christ is a Messiah, those who are Christ like are mini messiahs in that light.

The idea or concept of salvation is a personal experience whereby there is an illumination of the individual soul as he receives a mystical union with God. This union is

characterized by the awareness of inner peace, joy, absolute spiritual confidence and natural affection for man and nature. Any man or woman who has fear for Jujus, gods witches or some old man or woman waiting for him or her in the village has sincerely not met the standards of our Lord Jesus Christ as a liberated soul and body. This is premised on the statement that says "God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of love and of power and of a sound mind". This however, does not mean that the above category cannot be classed as Christians. They could be categorized as "associate Christians" and they form the bulk of the 'Christendom'. The other category are wise men and women of God, who though are bereft of fear and posses, peace, love and power will not act on impulse or blind fanaticism but on "divine" instruction as against hallucinations reminiscence of the former. As we stated earlier, ninety five percent "Christians" including most clergymen and women assume Christ mission from a selfish and egocentric dimension. Hence, the purpose of their religion has been to institute warfare against unknown enemies amassing wealth and not to experience divine love that will neutralize fear, poyerty and its sources.

### **Miracles in the Christian Faith**

Miracles are supernatural acts that transcend laws of nature. Jesus performed various miracles while on earth, but miraculous acts are not the major issues why Jesus came, but to teach the "truth" that will bring or usher in liberty of the soul. That's why Christ said that in the last days some will say – We preached in your name, healed the sick and performed various miracles in your name and Christ will say "I know you not, depart from me you workers of iniquity"<sup>17</sup> Reason is that miracles or miraculous acts are not the essence of his manifestation but is simply one of the inherent attributes of all Christ like personalities. Thus, performing miracles without absolute love does not measure up to a Christ like standards. The issue therefore is that the churches are filled with fake



Christians practicing self-styled dogmatic religion that exploits and enslave men mentally. The true love of a Christian is boundless like that of Stephen (The first Christian Martyr) who at death, his love for the “ignorant” men who were throwing stones at him remained unshaken. He prayed “Lord lay not this sin to their charge<sup>18</sup>. This is reminiscence of the love of his master Jesus who healed the ear cut off by Peter on the day of his arrest.

### **The Personification of Jesus**

The above discuss is to make us understand that Jesus the Christ (Jesus Christ) is for all nations. He was not a Christian, only those who tried to act like Him were classified as Christians by the people of Antioch. He did not preach “religion”, but a way of life that will bring or usher liberty of the soul. To attain this state of liberty or salvation of the soul men have to align themselves to absolute love of which he is a clear personification. All His words and statements justify this. When he was asked what the greatest commandment was, he said “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind” and the second is “Your shall love your neighbour as your self<sup>19</sup>. In another advice to his disciples, he said “I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you that you may be sons of your father in heaven.

Jesus central teaching is on love and service to mankind. He explained, “for I was hungry and you gave me food then I was thirsty and you gave me drinks, I was a stranger and you took me in, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me; I was in prison and you came to me “Then the righteous will answer Him, saying “Lord when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and gave you drink? When did we see you a stranger and take you in or naked and clothe you? Or when did we see you sick, or in Prison and came to you? The Lord answered, I say to you, in

as much as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me”<sup>21</sup>

He admonished his disciples saying “Love ye one another, in this they shall know that ye are my disciples. This invariably implies that love is the central matrix of Jesus the Christ. Saint James summed the issue of religion by stating that “Pure and undefiled religion before God and the father is this, to visit orphans and widows in their trouble and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

My stand is that anyone who possesses this quality of being or consciousness of God’s love is Christ like or “Saved” whether he has heard formal preaching or not from a professed Christian. To these personalities, religion, race or dogma will not be a barrier to his universal love. Christian evangelism is only meant to introduce this standards and power inherent in it and this standard is simply Jesus (Universal Love Materialized).

## **Conclusion**

The problem with the world has been that of understanding the essence of Jesus the Christ. In trying to understand Him before and after He came, we see the manifestation of multifaceted religions of the world, including most Christian religious sects with unnecessary doctrines and dogmas designed to cage, exploit and enslave the human mind. Most religious leaders capitalized on the faith factor and the unquestionable religious authority of their faith to interpret the writings of their dogma as long as it is favourable to the goal and ambition of the leader or sect. Whosoever demands for a rational explanation of an unpleasant act or situation will be classified as an infidel, rebel or unbeliever. This is exemplified in irrational fanaticism among those who feel they have better knowledge of God, hence are ready to fight and kill fellow men and women on behalf of God in order to go to heaven or gain salvation. Others may religiously attend worship sessions everyday with pious disposition and outlook

but lacking freedom of the soul, peace of mind, love or spiritual confidence and natural affection. These virtues are what should be in every Christ like personalities and if most individuals have these virtues, there will be peace in the world.

**Note:** This work does not represent the view of any Christian sect, denomination nor does it have anything to do with the past or present denominational affiliation of the author, but simply a deep reflection on what is assumed a “truth”.

## **8.11 ABORTION**

### **Introduction**

Abortion is an important discussion in biomedical ethics. It has its own social religious and legal implication. What is abortion? Abortion,<sup>15</sup> premature termination and expulsion of the embryo or fetus and products of conception from the uterus.

### **Types of Abortion**

Abortion can be either spontaneous or induced.

#### **- A Spontaneous Abortion**

Spontaneous abortion is also known as miscarriage. It is estimated that 15-20 percent of all clinically documented pregnancies spontaneously abort, mostly during the first three months of pregnancy. About 80-90 percent of women who have a spontaneous abortion will go on to have a successful pregnancy afterwards.

There are a variety of causes of spontaneous abortion including increasing maternal age, abnormal development of the embryo or placental tissue, acute infectious diseases, systemic diseases, and severe trauma. Uterine malformations, including tumours, are also responsible in some instances.

Women who have repeated pregnancy loss (RPL) are defined as women who have three consecutive spontaneous abortions, and this condition affects 0.5-1 percent of pregnant women. RPL can be caused by genetic, anatomic, endocrine, immune, infectious, and environmental factors, but in up to 50 percent of women no cause can be identified.

The most common symptom of spontaneous abortion is vaginal bleeding, with or without intermittent pelvic pain. About 25 percent of all pregnant women bleed at some time during early pregnancy (known as a threatened abortion). However, in up to 50 percent of these women, the bleeding stops and they are able to continue the pregnancy to full term. Treatment for threatened abortion usually consists of bed rest.

Spontaneous abortion may result in expulsion of all or part of the contents of the uterus, or the embryo may die and be retained in the uterus for weeks or months in a so-called missed abortion. Most doctors advocate the surgical removal of any residual embryonic or placental tissue following a spontaneous abortion in order to avoid possible irritation or infection of the uterine lining.

## **B. Induced Abortion**

Induced abortion (also known as termination of pregnancy) is the deliberate termination of a pregnancy and removal of the embryo or fetus and products of conception from the uterus. It is currently performed by different procedures, according to the period of gestation (length of the pregnancy). In the first trimester (up to 12 weeks gestation), suction (or vacuum aspiration) or medical termination is used. Vacuum aspiration normally takes five to ten minutes to perform on an outpatient basis. The cervix neck of the uterus is dilated and the uterine contents are withdrawn by means of a small flexible tube called a cannula, which is connected to a vacuum pump or hand-operated syringe. Widely used in the Soviet Union (now Russia) since the 1920s, vacuum aspiration has replaced the traditional early abortion procedure of dilatation and curettage (D&C), in which the

curette – a spoon-tipped metal instrument – was used to dislodge the fetus.

Medical termination uses Mifepristone (also known as RU-486), a medication that blocks the hormone progesterone, and prostaglandins, and is available in Britain up to nine weeks' gestation. However, the pregnancy is not usually expelled from the uterus with this medication alone. Two days later, prostaglandins are taken in order to make the uterus contract, and expel the embryo or fetus and products of conception. Mifepristone was developed in France and approved for use there in 1988; it has been used in Britain since 1991.

Pregnancies in the second trimester (up to 24 weeks gestation) may either be terminated by a process of dilation and evacuation or medical termination. During dilation and evacuation, the cervix is dilated with dilators, osmotic agents (that expand in the cervix), or with medical agents, and then suction combined with forceps and instrumentation is used to remove the fetus and products of conception.

Medical termination in the second trimester can be done in a number of ways to induce termination of pregnancy and uterine contraction leading to the expulsion of the fetus and products of conception. Preparations that have been used include Mifepristone and prostaglandins, oxytocin, intra-amniotic saline, or urea. Disadvantages to medical termination are that it can take 24 hours or more, there is a higher risk of complications than when compared with dilation and evacuation, and side effects are common with the use of prostaglandins.

From a patient perspective, the surgical procedures mean that the abortion occurs more quickly, and the level of pain experienced will depend on the type of anaesthetic employed at the time of the surgical procedure. For medical procedures, patients experience the pain the vaginal bleeding

associated with the uterine contractions and the expulsion of the embryo or fetus and products of conception.

When performed under proper clinical conditions, first-trimester abortions are relatively simple and safe. The likelihood of complications increase with the length of gestation and includes infection, cervical injury, perforation of the uterus, and hemorrhage. Recent data, however, show that even late abortions place the patient at less risk than full-term delivery.

### **C. Regulation of Abortion**

The practice of abortion has been used as a means to control fertility since ancient times, and over time women often used methods that were harmful to them and frequently ineffective. These included rigorous exercises, taking of toxic herbs or medicines, uterine massage, or passing objects into the uterus to create bleeding. In the early 20th century, women used a syringe to irrigate the uterus and flush out the fetus. Many of these methods were toxic to the woman, and caused infection and other side effects.

Regulation of abortion has a large impact on the experience of women seeking termination of pregnancy. Restrictive laws in regards to abortion mean that women seeking the procedure are often subject to exploitation – financially or sexually. The quality and safety of the procedure is also affected.

Where abortion is not restricted, abortion is one of the safest surgical procedures, with very few complications associated with it. However, 59 percent of women worldwide do not have unrestricted access to abortion, which results in an estimated 20 million unsafe abortions per year, and approximately 80,000 abortion-related deaths per year. In recent times, it has been shown that making abortion illegal does not reduce the number of abortions that take place, but that it may affect the safety of these procedures, such as occurred in Romania in the 1990s.

The demand for increased access to unrestricted termination of pregnancy in certain countries, such as Britain in the 20th century, was associated with several factors. Increased recognition of the rights of women, high maternal mortality rates associated with termination of pregnancy despite many other advances in Western medicine, and the advent of increasingly effective contraception, such as the oral contraceptive pill in the 1960s, meant that women's expectations for controlling their fertility increased, as did their demand for access to abortion in the event of contraceptive failure.

Abortion has been restricted or forbidden by most world religions, but it was not considered an offence in secular law until the 19th century.

Abortions at the woman's request were first allowed in the post-revolutionary Soviet Union in 1920, followed by Japan and several East European nations after World War II.

In England, Wales and Scotland abortion has, since the 1967 Abortion Act, been available free on the **National Health Service**. A woman seeking an abortion has to secure the agreement of two doctors rather than just one – the only medical procedure in Britain where this is required. This law does not extend to Northern Ireland, or the Republic of Ireland, where abortion is still illegal. In 1973 the United States Supreme Court in *Roe vs. Wade* legalized elective termination of pregnancy in the first trimester, and allowed individual states to regulate second trimester abortions. Abortion remains largely illegal in many developing countries, (including Nigeria) particularly where there are strong religious influences.

With the above knowledge what should we do if a young lady gets pregnant through rape by armed robbers? Should we allow the fetus to develop to a human being thus having a bastard as a sibling and memory of horror of the incident thereby mentally and socially destroying the lady or

should we allow it on the grounds of avoiding committing “murder” or killing which is against the commandment of God?

In certain extreme cases if the fetus is allowed to develop normally, the mother herself will die, while in others pregnancy will result to a severely deformed baby. “The state has a legitimate interest in seeing to it that abortion like any other medical practice, is performed under circumstances that insure maximum safety for the patient” These issues are of moral implications that cannot be over looked.

## 8.12 EUTHANASIA

### Introduction

The issues concerning Euthanasia have been a problem in philosophy. What is Euthanasia? Euthanasia (literally “good death”), practice of ending a life so as to release and individual from an incurable disease or intolerable suffering, also called “mercy killing”, The term is sometimes used generally to refer to an easy or painless death. Voluntary euthanasia involves a request by the dying patient or that person’s legal representative. Passive or negative euthanasia involves not doing something to prevent death – that is, allowing someone to die; active or positive euthanasia involves taking deliberate action to cause a death.

### II. History

Euthanasia has been accepted both legally and morally in various forms in many societies. In ancient Greece and Rome it was permissible in some situation to help others die. For example, the Greek writer **Plutarch** mentioned that in Sparta **infanticide** was practiced on children who lacked “health and vigour”. Both **Socrates** and **Plato** sanctioned forms of euthanasia in certain cases. Voluntary euthanasia for the elderly was an approved custom in several ancient societies.



With the rise of organized religion, euthanasia became morally and ethically abhorrent. Christianity, Judaism, and Islam all hold human life sacred and condemn euthanasia in any form.

Following traditional religious principles, Western laws have generally considered the act of helping someone to die a form of homicide subject to legal sanctions. Even a passive withholding of help to prevent death has frequently been severely punished. Euthanasia, however, is thought to occur secretly in all societies, including those in which it is held to immoral and illegal.

### **III. Legal Aspects**

Organizations supporting the legalization of voluntary euthanasia were established in Britain in 1935 and in the United States in 1938. They have gained some public support, but have so far been unable to achieve their goal in either nation. In the past few decades, Western laws against passive and voluntary euthanasia have slowly been eased, although serious moral and legal questions still exist.

Critics point the so-called euthanasia committees in Nazi Germany that were empowered to condemn and execute anyone found to be a burden to the state. This instance of abuse of the power of life and death has long served as a warning to some against allowing the practice of euthanasia. Proponents, on the other hand, point out that almost any individual freedom involves some risk of abuse, and argue that such risks can be kept at minimum by ensuring proper legal safeguards.

In December 2004, a bill was sent through the UK Parliament which gives legal force to "living wills", in which people can say whether they want medical treatment withheld if they become severely incapacitated. The bill would establish a legal presumption that everybody is able to make decisions about their own treatment unless they are proved to be mentally incapable of doing so. It would also allow people

to give somebody the power of attorney to make decisions on their behalf, which could be challenged by doctors.

#### **IV. Medical Considerations**

The medical profession has generally been caught in the middle of the social controversies that rage over euthanasia. Government and religious groups as well as the medical profession itself agree that doctors are not required to use “extraordinary means” to prolong the life of terminally ill people. What constitutes extraordinary means is usually left to the discretion of the patient’s family. Modern technological advances, such as the use of respirators and artificial kidney machines, have made it possible to keep people alive for long periods of time even when they are permanently unconscious or irrevocably brain damaged. Proponents of euthanasia, however, believe that prolonging life in this way may cause great suffering to the patient and family. In addition, certain life-support systems are so expensive that the financial implications have to be considered. Conversely, some opponents of euthanasia argue that the increasing success that doctors have had in transplanting human organs might lead to abuse of the practice of euthanasia. That is, they fear that doctors may violate the rights of the dying donor in order to help preserve the life of an organ recipient. This is one area where proper legal safeguards are clearly required.

New professional and legal definitions of death and medical responsibilities are slowly being developed to fit these complex new realities. Brain death, the point when the higher centres of the brain cease to function and no electrical activity is registered in the brain, making death the inevitable outcome, is widely accepted as the time when it is legal to turn off a patient’s life-support system, the permission of the family.

Today, patients in many countries are entitled to opt for passive euthanasia; that is, to make free and informed choices to refuse life support. With regard to active

euthanasia, in the Netherlands, long known for one of the most liberal euthanasia policies of all industrialized nations, the Royal Dutch Medical Association (RDMA) issued revised guidelines on the practice in 1995. It has emphasized greater patient responsibility, whereby patients themselves carry out the final act, usually by taking an overdose of drugs that have been prescribed by a doctor, in what is termed “medically assisted suicide.” This is aimed at relieving in part the emotional stress and moral burden experienced by doctors who assist in such cases. Although consensual killing is still technically illegal, doctors are virtually guaranteed immunity from prosecution if they follow RDMA guidelines.

In Australia in 1996, after long debate, the Northern Territory passed pioneering legislation that permitted medically assisted suicide – using a computer program, which enabled the terminally ill patient to tap his or her command into a laptop computer and administer a lethal dose of drugs if appropriate – the first place in the world to make this form of euthanasia legal. However, in early 1997 the Australian government repealed the legislation. It had been condemned by Church, political and Aboriginal leaders.

With these understandings, when should we institute Euthanasia? If we do, are we not acting contrary to God’s law? If we do not and keep life support, the patient might die after we have been financially incapacitated. We may also be acting against the patient’s will to die in order to avoid suffering and pain. “If one simply withholds treatment, it may take the patient longer to die, and so he may suffer more than he would if more direct action were taken and a lethal injection given”<sup>25</sup>

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## CHAPTER NINE

### AN INSIGHT INTO AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy as we have come to know in our previous chapters is a reflective and critical activity that can be undertaken by man. Man cannot avoid philosophizing, because philosophy is an integral part of him. Every tribe, race or people have their own notable philosophers, their own Socrates, Aristotle, Saint Augustine, Descartes or Karl Marx. In a wider sense, every man is a philosopher in as much as he reflects over fundamental problems of life or existence in one time or the other. A thought is said to be philosophical when it expresses a critical attitude towards a world view. It is scientific or philosophic when it is an expression of individual investigation. Thus African philosophy can be defined as a reflective and critical attitude towards the world view of the African. Professor Chukwudum B. Okolo briefly defined African philosophy as the “critical thinking on the African and his experience of reality”<sup>1</sup> Udoidem defined it as “a reflection by Africans on the the fundamental issues of their experience.”<sup>2</sup> K.C. Anyanwu and Ruch on their part defined African philosophy as “the way in which African peoples of the past and present make sense of their existence, of their destiny and of the world in which they live.”<sup>3</sup>

Various African philosophers have given definitions that are similar to the ones above. These attempts to provide definitions are not unconnected with the problem of African philosophy.

#### 9.1 Problems faced by African Philosophy

Few decades ago some scholars asked, “Is there anything like African philosophy? or does African philosophy exist? What is it that should be identified as African philosophy? These questions arose because there were no ancient African documented works on critical reflections of the

world view of individual Africans. What is largely open to scholars was oral tradition through idioms, fables, folklore, myths, artifacts etc. Since there were no written traditions, it became an obstacle to identify the African worldview. Issues such as the nature of truth, existence, the nature of knowledge, science, ultimate reality, beauty, human freedom etc. are philosophical problems which are lost due to lack of written documents. All that have remained and can be identified and reconstructed are oral traditions. One major problem identified in the issue of African philosophy is the eurocentric bias and claims that Africans are intellectually inferior, hence cannot philosophize. They seem not to bother about distinguishing the difference between the philosophy of the African people (common beliefs as it differs from culture) and African philosophy (critical and reflective enterprise on African experience). This camp of scholars, claim that there is no philosophy in traditional Africa and that what can be identified was the collected worldviews of proverbs, fables and wise sayings. These to this camp are not philosophical reflections but cultural anthropology. As regard this, professor Ruch stated that

*What goes under the name of African philosophy is nothing more than cultural Anthropology decked out for the occasions in the cloak of philosophical jargon*<sup>4</sup>

These claims are due to the Eurocentric orientation of the scholars, because non-African scholars believe that Africans are intellectually inferior, thus refuse to consider African thought as philosophical.

However, it must be emphasized that philosophy is about dealing with problems. And the problem that has been, was the question of the existence of African philosophy. Now that the issue as regards what is African philosophy has been reflected upon, and also the problem faced by its early

development has been viewed in a nutshell, it is pertinent for us to see the challenges philosophy has posed to African philosophers. It is worthy of note that different problems challenge philosophers at different times, and it is the nature of particular problem that marks the different periods in the history of philosophy. With the dawn of literacy and written culture, the modern African philosophers are more rational and scientific in approach thus; to engage in African philosophy is to raise questions about the African and his issues, knowledge and perception of reality.

## **9.2 Contemporary African Philosophy**

Philosophy generally reflects the socio-political situation or structure of a people in a given time. These socio-political situations generally raise many questions in the minds of people. Thus to understand a people or philosophy of a given area, one has to know the socio-political climate from which the philosophy emanates. Joseph Omoregbe in his book **Knowing Philosophy** stated that contemporary African philosophy is predominantly a political philosophy and it reflects the socio-political situation from which it arose.”<sup>5</sup>

African nations, under colonialism suffered domination and exploitation by their colonial masters. They were exploited in all ramifications, but thanks to education which infiltrated through the “cross” and the “sword”. This education brought the rise of nationalist movement and the struggle for political independence. This struggle for independence was masterminded by notable nationalists like Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe, Kwame Nkrumah, Leopold Senghor, Julius Nyerere etc. These notable African thinkers focused their attention on political freedom, intellectual and cultural emancipation from colonial mentality. In trying to reflect on the fundamental issues and problems of Africans, they are thus identified as contemporary African philosophers because they propounded social and political philosophy for the benefit of Africans. With Nnamdi Azikwe, Kwame Nkrumah Leopold Senghor and



Julius Nyerere are other philosophers like Kwasi Wiredu, Obafemi Awololow, Oruka etc.

**Nnamdi Azikwe**, (popularly known as Zik of Africa), in his book **Ideology for Nigeria: Capitalism Socialism or Welfareism** propounded a political philosophy which he called Neo-Welfareism. His political philosophy is that of compromise. He examined the systems of Capitalism, Socialism and Welfareism, and found problems in each of them. However, behind these dark clouds of political systems is a silver lining of good ideologies.

**Zik** in his political philosophy accepted what he identified as Eclecticism. This acceptance was motivated by the fact that he believed that these three political ideologies of capitalism, socialism and welfareism are embedded in our African politics. Its inherent nature in the traditional African politics has been a success. He talks of Eclecticism as “a term used in philosophy to identify a composite system of thought, which incorporates ideas selected from other systems. It does not modify but blends opposite views...”<sup>6</sup> He worked towards the harmonization of these ideologies into what he called Neo-welfarism. This political ideology he hoped would be suitable for contemporary Nigeria.

**Leopold Senghor** of Senegal is known for his philosophy of Negritude. Negritude is a philosophical ideology, which rejects the French colonial policy of assimilation. He asserts the absolute value of the African culture and identity and propagated the distinctive out look of African life and culture. He was antagonistic to the individualistic and capitalistic nature of the foreign culture of the French people as against the African communalistic culture.

Negritude is a philosophy of rediscovery, and cultural reawakening. Its aim is for Africans to appreciate the value of their culture as distinct from the French culture and identity. (Read “What is Negritude?” in **Readings in African Political Thought G.C.M.** Mustoso (ed).

**Kwame Nkrumah** of Ghana developed a political philosophy known as “philosophical consciencism.” This political philosophy is opposed to capitalism which he believes is not peculiar to African society, and being aware of how colonialism began in Africa and how they fought for independence and emancipation, he encouraged and warned that “it is by the sweat of the people’s brow that nations are built. The people are the reality of national greatness the people must not be insulted by a dangerous flirtation with colonialism.”<sup>7</sup>

Colonialism, according to Nkrumah brought with it individualism, elitism, fascism, imperialism and capitalist exploitation. He advocated the establishment of socialism which he believes will later develop communalism. He went further to state that “Practice without thought is blind,” thus the transformation through revolution must be based on “philosophical consciencism.” This philosophy is aware of inherent conflict, tension, struggle, strife as conditions of progress. This implies that he believes in dialectical materialism.

The philosophical materialism of Nkrumah does not deny the existence of spiritual or immaterial realities. For him spiritual realities develop from matter through a dialectical tension where matter becomes converted into spirit.

**Julius Nyerere** of Tanzania based his political philosophy on the Ujama principle. In his book titled **Ujamaa: Essays on Socialism**, Nyerere agrees with both Nkrumah and Senghor that capitalism and individualism are alien to the Africans. Hence he advocated for the communalism of traditional African society. African communalism he argued does not base on conflict and tension but on what he identified as “family hood” or family relationships.

To him, when colonialism, exploitation and inequality has been eliminated, individuals will be liberated. When individuals are liberated then development has come. Nyerere sees liberation as tantamount to development and this is only

possible in a communalistic society based on family hood or family relationship.

Obafemi Awolowo, Kwesi Weridu, H. Odera Oruka Richard Wright, C.S Momoh, I. C. Onyewuenyi, Bodunri etc. are more of philosophers. Awolowo was more of a thinker, philosopher, than a politician. Joseph Omoregbe said of him.

*If there is any Nigerian thinker whose ideas have influenced the lives of millions of people, it is Obafemi Awolowo<sup>8</sup>*

Most of Awolowo's political philosophy can be found in his book titled, **Peoples Republic**. He was an uncompromising advocate of socialism and believes that capitalism is an evil ideology, which will one day give way to socialism. The above insight shows the efforts of some African thinkers trying to ask questions and solve problems relating to their worldviews and social milieu.

### 9.3 Main Branches of African Philosophy<sup>9</sup>

African philosophy as we have highlighted is a critical reflection towards the worldview of the African. These reflections are departmentalized for an indebt investigation into each area. Thus we have various branches of philosophy, which the African philosophers reflect. These branches include Logic, Epistemology, Aesthetics Metaphysics, and Ethics. African philosophers apply each of these branches to the worldview of the African.

#### (a) Logic

Logical thinking is an integral part of mankind. But the degree of logical thinking differs from one person to the other. Logic in African philosophy does not mean or imply the thinking process of the African but the application of logic to the worldview and culture of the African. This application is seen in his language, interaction, and social discourse. Logic

is clearly identified in speeches or orations and in dispute settlement.

B.N. Eboh made an important contribution to logic in African philosophy in her book: **The Structure of Igbo Logic: (As shown in dispute settlement in Igboland with social reference to Nzerem Town)**. In this book she made an important philosophic contribution to applied logic as it relates to judicial proceedings. It aimed at presenting the systematic and scientific pattern of the Igbo thought in dispute settlement.

### **(b) Epistemology**

Epistemology as a theory of knowledge asks questions such as what can we know? How does man obtain knowledge? What is knowledge? What are the sources of knowledge? How can we distinguish true from false knowledge?

Knowledge includes what we know and how we come to know it. This implies that knowledge is determined by the source, and these sources differ from one another as we highlighted in our previous chapters. Professor Okolo in addition to the truism that all knowledge has a source, added that how we know is “culture bound” According to him,

*Culture gives the African easy evident in traditional or pre-modern African) his distinct way of thinking and knowing<sup>10</sup>*

What Okolo is saying in effect is that the African traditional approach to life makes his understanding of reality distinct. Thus an African philosopher delving into epistemology in African philosophy must understand the difference between the modern scientific and sophisticated approach of the African or Europeans etc. Hence he will be compelled to look at things and general attitude to life peculiar to the African.

### **(c) Aesthetics**

In this branch of African philosophy, the nature of beauty is studied. What is African aesthetics? How do we identify African works of art, drawings, and paintings,

philosophers, though seem not to have shown much interest in this area of philosophy, but Africa has made great contributions in the area of aesthetics.

Philosophy of African aesthetics is an important area to delve into because it will, with the analyses and principles of ideal forms of African beauty and works of arts, express their worldview and their perception of reality. It depicts African personality through creativity.

#### **(d) Metaphysics**

Metaphysics is one of the most important branches of African philosophy. It investigates the African worldview especially the area of ultimate reality of the African. It goes further into the relationship between seen and unseen beings or forces in nature. While placid Temples describes the nature of reality in Bantu philosophy in terms of "Force" or "Vital Force." The Ibibio according to Udoidem refers to the "Ibom" as a limitless, infinite and unlimited being Abasi-Ibom thus mean a divine being who is limitless.

What metaphysics in African philosophy does is to articulate the nature of African reality. The nature of reality however differs from one culture to the other.

#### **(e) Ethics**

Ethics is also one of the most lucrative branches of African philosophy. This is because it deals with the study of human conduct with emphasis on African concepts of good and evil, moral obligations, ideal moral life, justice etc.

It also deals with the African person and his relationship with God and people in general. Since ethics is viewed as practical philosophy, it means it will deal with the practical way the African deals with morality. However, these ways differ from culture to culture, because norms and traditions differ in various African communities. The existence of African philosophy has been from the beginning of what is identified today as western philosophy in Greek City States.

The revered thought and philosophies of ancient Africans before the emergence of early Greek City States have been the pivot and evolution of what we identity as western thought. The following is an exposition of this neglected fact.

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## CHAPTER TEN

### THE CONTRIBUTION OF ANCIENT AFRICAN THOUGHT TO GREEK PHILOSOPHY

This title might evoke reaction from Western scholars who are biased against the African intellectual contribution to the western world. Till now, there has been a flow of consciousness concerning the aggressive nature of eurocentric teleologism on all aspects of life against what the western scholars call the third world, particularly Africa. This eurocentrism has infiltrated into all spheres, ranging from social structure of the society, science and especially philosophy. This unabashed way of acceding all success and achievement of mankind to the west has just come to notice with the rise of awareness of this anomaly. It is in the light of this, that African philosophers and objective writers of history of philosophy and science etc. have tried to correct.

Firstly, when we delve into the account of the origin of philosophy or the history of philosophy, we will come to find a marginalization of African contribution to knowledge and civilization. No credit has been accorded wholly to Africa because there is this negative conception of the intellectual ability of the black race. They dismiss anything intellectual or anything contributing to scholarship that comes from Africa. This issue can be traced from the western documents, which see their own scholars as foremost in all knowledge. They began this by attributing the origin of philosophy to ancient Greek City States. Hegel, led by racism, believes that philosophy is the self-consciousness of the spirit and that Africa has not yet attained self-consciousness hence there is no rational thinking or philosophy in Africa. To the western scholars, Thales was the first known philosopher who offered a rational explanation of the nature of the universe. To buttress this claim and consciousness, western scholars have introduced the criteria which they feel will present what



philosophy is universally. There has been indoctrinations of African scholars (either consciously or unconsciously) who studied in the west to believe in it. One of the notable African scholars (today) who claimed that there is nothing like philosophy in Africa is Theophilus Okere.<sup>1</sup>

Western scholars tried to make us believe that philosophy has nothing to do with customs and traditions. But they have forgotten that wise sayings, proverbs, myths and religion in Africa are deep philosophical reflections by gifted individual thinkers who were African philosophers of the past. If we take a look at the widely acclaimed notion that **Thales** was the first philosopher, we will discover that the western historians of philosophy failed to include how and where Thales developed his theory of the composition of the universe. They failed to mention that Thales studied in Egypt, and that his famous dictum that “Water is the fundamental stuff that constitutes the universe” was influenced by the Egyptian theory that water is the origin of all things, even the gods. This reminds us of the great importance attached to the Nile River in Egypt as the source of all lives.

In Egypt, there were great schools at Heliopolis and Memphite. These were great centres of learning. Heliopolis is derived from the Greek word *Helios* and *Polis*, meaning Sun or Fire and City respectively. Thus it means the place where the sun or Fire god was worshipped. The Greeks who came to worship with the Egyptians gave this name. Memphite was one of the great Egyptian centers of learning where it is believed that God (*Atum-Ra*) emerged from “*Nun*” (water). Sources confirmed that after “having practiced philosophy in Egypt Thales came to Miletus. Plutarch, an ancient doxographer noted this of Thales “Thales made water principle and birth of all things through learning from the Egyptians<sup>2</sup> with this knowledge acquired, he was able to construct canals and irrigations which was one of the notable Egyptian engineering and source of good agriculture.

He used this knowledge to the advantage of his country during the Persian invasion. With the knowledge of mathematics acquired in Egypt (Egyptians were known for their geometry and ability to calculate the height and breath of their great pyramids) he was able to measure distances at sea and was also able to predict the eclipse of 585BC. It was this same great ancient nation that western scholars like Leonard Wooley said had “no real science at all” that they “merely wanted certain working rules which would enable them to deal with practical problems in daily life.”<sup>3</sup> What a prejudice, and he was probably satisfied when he stated that “the Babylonians possessed a scientific knowledge of algebra, geometry and Arithmetic”<sup>4</sup> Even Plato acknowledged the Egyptians in mathematics when he said “They go on to exercise in measurement of length surface and cubical content...by which they dispel the native and general but ludicrous and shameful ignorance of mankind about the whole subject”<sup>5</sup>

**Anaximander, a Miletain**, born in 610BC was a student of Thales, and being a student of Thales must have been influenced by Thales studies in Egypt. He believes that the basic stuff in the universe was boundless, infinite or unlimited and this was influenced by the Egyptian perception of the *Huk* (boundless).

**Anaximenes** (585-528 BC) was also a student of Thales. He saw air as the primary substance from which all things in the universe emanated. This idea was borrowed from the Egyptian philosophy that SHU the air god was the life force. We can also see this in the ancient religion of the Jews under Moses. In the book of Genesis it is said that God breathed into man the breath of life, and man became a living soul. The creation story recorded in Genesis dates back many centuries before the time of the Ionian philosophers. It emphasized water, air and earth as the major elements that constitute the universe of man. Professor Onyewuenyi on this issue states, “We are told not only by the Bible, but also by the

historian Philo, that Moses was an initiate of the Egyptian Mysteries and became a Hierogrammat; learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptian people”<sup>6</sup>

This gives a good example and how he got an insight into the mysteries and philosophies of the Egyptians.

**Pythagoras** was born a Ionian in 530 BC and later migrated to Croton in Southern Italy. He was believed to have formed a philosophic religious community with scientific and mathematical background. He postulated that all things in nature are composed of numbers and he also taught the doctrine of immortality of the soul, reincarnation and transmigration of the soul. Pythagoras was believed to have spent twenty two (22) years of his life studying in Egypt and learning their mystery systems and mathematics.

The doctrine of the transmigration of soul and immortality maintains that the supreme good in man is to become godlike, or unification with the divine through purification.

*“The Egyptian mysteries were to make man godlike by the purificatory agencies of education and virtue. Consequently it is clear.. Pythagoras obtained this doctrine directly from the Egyptian mysteries”<sup>7</sup>*  
*Onyewuenyi concluded.*

**Heraclitus** (530-470 BC) was impressed with the phenomena of change. He believed that all things are in a state of flux and that the system of the universe was that of conflicts of opposites: good and evil, light and darkness, hot and cold, wet and dry, black and white, male and female etc. The thing that brings about this change in things was fire, thus the primary substance of everything is fire. Fire is the basic reality of the One, “this he identifies with God and the Logos, the universal reason. This identification of the basic substance as fire, reflects the Egyptian god of fire. *Atum Ra*, which was believed to sustain and purify everything in nature. The

Egyptians were fire worshippers because they believe that fire was the creator of the universe. Thus they built pyramids (Pry-fire) in order to worship the god of fire.

**Anaxagoras** was born around 500-430 BC at Claxomenae. He tried to reconcile Parmenides and Heraclitus theories. He saw everything as a combination of several different particles. These particles are infinite and result in the formation of everything.

He believed that behind motion in the universe was the NOUS (mind, intelligence, consciousness or spirit). It is the mind that brings order in the universe. This doctrine is associated with or similar to the Egyptians who identified Khu with the mind.<sup>8</sup>

**Democritus** (420 316 BC) was believed to have studied both Astronomy and Geometry for five years in Egypt and Ethiopia. He came up with a theory that the basic stuff that constitutes the universe was atom. It is believed that the word atom is an adulteration of the Egyptian word for fire-Atum<sup>9</sup> the Egyptian mystery system was the source of his atomic theory. This simply implies that there is nothing new or spectacular about the theory.

**Socrates** was born in Athens in 469BC. He spent forty (40) years of his early life unknown. At this time, it is believed he was involved in the secret mystery schools especially in Egypt where vows of secrecy from Neophytes and initiates are expected. He evinced an extra ordinary power of self-discipline and indifference to discomfort. He (Socrates) claimed that he was being guided all his life by an interior voice, a divine voice or oracle. His objective in philosophy is the salvation of the soul. He also propounded the theory of transmigration of the soul, immortality and the soul being trapped in the body. This reflects his familiarity with Egyptian doctrine or his contact with the Pythagoreans.

Like Jesus Christ and Buddha in the East, Socrates left no writing. He wrote nothing. This was the characteristics of

the Egyptian practices and had led to others writing about them.

**Plato**, born in 427 BC was a devoted disciple of Socrates. After the death of Socrates he fled from Athens to Euclid at Megara and later to Egypt. He studied under an Egyptian priest and picked up his social strata from the Egyptian social system. He classified society under (A) philosopher kings, (b) the Auxiliaries of soldiers and Artisans. In his *Tamaeus*, he wrote that “the warriors in Egypt are distinct from all other classes, and commanded by the law to devote themselves solely to military pursuits. He also adopted the Egyptian theory of immortality of the soul. His theory of ideas had its influence from the Egyptian concept of the “ka” while his idea of the good was influenced by the Egyptian theory of salvation.

On astronomy, Plato acknowledged the Egyptians as the first observers and their discoveries have stood the test of time. He states...

*Egypt and Syria are so notable; they had a view of the stars, we may say all the year round, as clouds and rains are perpetually banished from their quarter of the world. Their observations have been universally diffused among ourselves as well as elsewhere and have stood the test, a vast, indeed incalculable, lapse of years.*<sup>10</sup>

In all spheres of life, Egypt had always played a leading role. Making references to the ancient Egyptian calendars, Robert, R. Newton quotes Neugebauer (1957 p. 81) and said as regards Egyptian Calendar as “... the only intelligent calendar which ever existed in human history.”<sup>11</sup>

**Aristotle** was a student of Plato who went to Egypt with Alexander the great. He acquired books freely from the library of Alexandra, which was the most equipped library in

the whole world. He also had access to the great temples in Egypt where great books of wisdom and materials kept by the priests were got. Through his studies there, he adopted the Egyptian notion of *ptah* as the “Unmoved mover” as well as the doctrine of the soul as explained in the Egyptian Book of the dead.

With this account of similarities, which exist between ancient Greek philosophers and that of the Egyptians (Africans) and with a great many example of studies in Egypt, it is reasonable to see the western indebtedness to ancient African philosophical heritage. The ancient Egyptians laid the foundation for modern science. Greek science is found to be the culmination of African science. The logic then is that since modern science is an off shoot of medieval scholasticism and medieval science an off shoot of Greek science, and if Greek science is a culmination of African science, then modern science is an off shoot of African science.

The question to be asked is what are the grievances or problems faced by western scholars that will necessitate such an unabashed derogatory remarks on the Negroid race? Egypt existed as a highly advanced civilization at least two to three thousand years before Crete, the first of Greek civilization to come into being. Greece was a colony of Egypt for many centuries as was most present day Asia Minor. Egypt boasted of many distinguished scholars in every field of learning, for she had a kind of university known as the mystery system where every kind of discipline was taught by Egyptian priests.”<sup>12</sup>

Another notable achievement is that “The first physician of antiquity of any fame was the black Egyptian Imhotep, who lived about 2900 BC during the third dynasty.”<sup>13</sup> Imhotep was worshipped like a god centuries after his death. But today, the western world regards Greek Hippocrates as the father of medicine even though he came 2000 years after Imhotep. A Greek historian, Homer also acknowledged Egyptian

advancement when he said, "In Egypt the men are more skilled in medicine than any human kind."<sup>14</sup>

The above facts show the political and racial bias by western scholars, ranging from the historians, anthropologist or philosophers. It also shows attempts to marginalize African contribution to scholarship: V. Volney Count lamented over the disparaged image of the Egyptian Grandeur in 1787 when he wrote. "To think that a race of black men who are today our slaves and object of our contempt is the same one to whom we owe our arts and sciences and even the very use of speech."<sup>15</sup>

Western propaganda against the Negroid race has almost succeeded beyond imagination such that Ake wrote, "It is the measure of the success of western imperialism that third world scholars have largely accepted that their countries are underdeveloped and that they ought to become more like the industrialized nations."<sup>16</sup> This propaganda has been aggressive through the channels of marginalizing all African thought with emphasis on intellectual ability of the Negroid race. Any wonder racist Hegel claimed that African has no mind or attained self-consciousness. However, Karl Jasper has actually exposed the fact that "Man cannot avoid philosophizing". This meant that men all over the world philosophize and all people have their own philosophers whether documented or not documented.

The chapter as a whole has been an attempt to minimally expose ancient African contribution to Greek philosophical thought. It also shows a scintilla of the content of European bias. However, to limit and possibly exterminate this aggressive eurocentricism, which has undermined the thought of scholars and general self-esteem of the Negroid race; African scholars have tried to suggest solutions. Professor Y. Ben-Jochannan feels that, firstly it has to be stressed that the Europeans were to a large extent "civilized" (cultured) by the Africans (Negroes). Secondly, there should be a re-education of the nation including most of the "educators" who are

prejudiced and biased.<sup>17</sup> From Claude Akes' stand point, what has to be done is that "the prevailing western notions of development (which puts third world, Negroid race of Africa at the bottom of the evolutionary ladder) have to be understood and exposed... and a mass interest oriented idea of development has to be developed and elaborated."<sup>18</sup>

Thus, an extensive orientation of our youths concerning the western bias and the marginalizing of our great contribution to knowledge and civilization should be stressed. Also the notion of European intellectual superiority as they have made many to believe should be addressed.

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## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### INTRODUCTION TO LOGIC

#### 11.0 Logic

Logic as a systematic study of methods and principles of argumentation began with Aristotle. It is derived from the Greek word *logos*, which means reason, intellect, word etc. Our emphasis in this chapter is on reasoning. It is the study of the principles of reasoning or the art of argumentation.

Historically logic has passed through various stages in its development. These stages or periods are (i) classical or Aristotelian logic. This same period is also referred to as Traditional logic. (ii) Modern logic is the development of scholastic logic of Aristotle. (iii) Symbolic or mathematical logic which is sometimes referred to as logistics is the application of symbols in logic.

#### 11.1 Definition of Logic

Logic is perhaps the most fundamental branch of philosophy. Though all branches of philosophy employ thinking, but whether this thinking is correct or not depends upon whether it is in accord with logical laws. The interest of logic is mainly reasoning or the aftermath of reasoning. Irving M. Copi defined logic as “the study of the methods and principles used in distinguishing correct (good) from incorrect (bad) argument.”<sup>1</sup> Popkin and Stroll defined it as “that branch of philosophy which reflects upon the nature of thinking itself”<sup>2</sup>

Logic can also be defined as the science of the laws of thought. When we say that it is the science of the laws of thought, we should in addition know that thought is not reasoning. Reasoning is only an aspect of thought, hence the laws of thought implies rules for correct thinking. When one thinks correctly, following specific rules or laws, we can say that the individual is thinking logically. On this ground we can

define logic as the study of the principles and methods for evaluating reasoning as either correct or incorrect.

Logic is not interested in factual evidence, but in relations between languages or propositions. A proposition is the meaning given to a statement. Logic deals only with declarative sentences. This means that it deals with those types of sentences which are used to make assertions. The following does not apply to logic: Interrogative (Questions), Imperative (commands), and Optative (wishes) statements.

Since these are no propositions or assertions, they are not part of logic. In delving further into this area it is pertinent that we have an idea of some terms such as **propositions, premises, inferences, argument and conclusion.**

A **Proposition** is a statement that is either true or false. An example is "There is a student that is mentally deranged here." This statement is either true or false. It is left for us to prove its truth or falsity. A **Premise** or **Premises**, is or are propositions proffered as evidence or support to prove the truth or falsity of another proposition or assertion. An **inference** is the end point of reasoning or statements made from known to the unknown. It could either be inductive or deductive. An example can explain this. Idu was accompanied by Efuru to check her final year results at her department. Efuru was outside the office when she heard files being opened by the secretary to the Head of Department. When Idu came out, her face was beaming with smiles. Efuru reasoned (inference) Idu must have passed all her exams.

Irving Copi described inference as "the process by which one proposition is arrived at and affirmed on the basis of one or more propositions accepted as the starting point of the process."<sup>3</sup>

**Arguments** are statements or premises used to establish the truth or falsity of a conclusion. A **conclusion** on the other hand is the proposition whose truth or falsity has been established based on given premises.

## **Types of Logic**

Logic is divided into two main branches (i) **Deductive** and (ii) **Inductive Logic**. Both branches are concerned with the rules of correct reasoning or argumentation.

### **Deductive Logic**

This branch of logic deals with reasoning which attempts to establish conclusive inferences. An inference is conclusive when the reasons given are true. Thus, if all the reasons given are true, it will be impossible for the inference based upon it to be false. This type of reasoning is called valid reasoning.

Deductive argument is evaluated as either valid or invalid. When the premises of an argument are true, invariably the conclusion must be true.

Deductive logic is concerned with inference from the general to the particular. This means inferences are assertions about the whole of a class of things to assertions about some of them. An example of a valid deductive argument is:

All undergraduates are intelligent  
Efuru is an undergraduate  
Therefore Efuru is intelligent.

The above argument is valid. How is it valid? It is valid because if the proposition. All undergraduates are intelligent is true and that Efuru is an undergraduate, invariably it will be impossible for the inference or conclusion which says that Efuru is intelligent to be false.

It should be noted that validity and invalidity is ascribed to only deductive argument and not propositions. Propositions can either be true or false. Hence it will be wrong or incorrect to state that a proposition is valid or invalid or that an argument is true or false.

Validity or invalidity depends on logical entailment and not on the truth of the propositions embodied in the argument. On this we can have a valid argument with false premises and

a false conclusion. The premises need not always be true. An example is:

All dogs are birds

All birds can fly

Therefore all dogs can fly.

This argument is valid with false premises and false conclusion.

All p is q

All q is r

All p is r

The above argument is valid regardless of the falsity of its premises and its conclusion. Its validity lies on the logical relation between the premises and conclusion.

### 11.2.2 Inductive Logic

As against deductive logic, inductive logic is a process of reasoning whereby the mind moves from particular experiences to general propositions or claims about the experience. More explicitly, we will say that it is concerned with inferences from the particular to the general.

An example of particular instances to generalization is: a child may through years of experience discover that whenever he throws any stone up, it comes down. With this experience, the child on growing may now conclude that any stone thrown up must come down. A better example could be thus:

**Day i:** Boma drank tea and used a rubber spoon to stir the tea and had stomach upset.

**Day ii:** Boma drank tea and used a rubber spoon to stir the tea and had stomach upset.

**Day iii:** The same experience happened to her.

**Day iv:** When she drank tea without a rubber spoon, she had no stomach upset. She therefore concluded that whenever she drank tea with a rubber spoon,

she will have stomach upset. This general claim was derived from the particular experience during her process of drinking tea.

Inductive logic is not concerned with the rules for correct reasoning in the sense of valid or conclusive reasoning, but rather with the soundness of those inferences for which the evidence is not conclusive.

The conclusion of an inductive reasoning coincides with what has been called “probability theory” The reason is that inductive reasoning is based on sense experience of particular instances. But since one has not yet exhausted all the instances of the rubber spoons or other process of making the tea, it becomes a problem for one to make a general or universal claim about it. The truth of an inductive logic is probable; it could be false after other instances are tested.

### **11.3 Syllogism**

Syllogism is generally defined as an argument which is composed of two premises and a conclusion. Every syllogistic argument must be composed of three propositions. Propositions are put forward to establish a conclusion. An example is:

- All men are mammals (1)
- All mammals are animals (2)
- All men are animals (3)

Proposition (1) and proposition (2) are premises of this our sample argument, while proposition (3) is the conclusion. The above premises imply the conclusion or that the conclusion follows from the premises.

#### **11.3.1 Middle, Major and Minor Terms**

Syllogism is composed of three terms which must be distributed two times in any syllogistic argument. the terms are (I) Middle term (II) Major term and (III) Minor term. Let us

use another example of a syllogistic argument to explain our use of

### **Middle, Major and Minor Terms.**

All undergraduates are rational

Gogo is an undergraduate

Therefore Gogo is rational

By the “**Middle**” term, we mean the term, which appears in both premises. The Middle term does not appear in the conclusion since each term is used twice and only twice. In our example above the word “Undergraduate” is the middle term, since it occurs in both premises.

The “**Major**” term means the term, which occurs as the predicate of the conclusion. The major term is also found in the first premise of our example above. In the example above the word, “rational” is the major term. The phrase “Major term” is applied to the predicate of the conclusion. It is the term designating the major discourse. The “**Minor**” term is the subject of the conclusion. The “Minor term” will be noticed once in the premises, as well as being the subject of the conclusion. In the example above “Gogo” is the minor term.

### **11.4.0 Propositions**

We shall be discussing various types of propositions as they are used in logic. These propositions are simple propositions, which consist of a subject, attribute and copula. Compound propositions consist of two or more propositions with logical connectives (i.e.  $\wedge$ ,  $\vee$ ,  $\rightarrow \equiv$  ) **Categorical proposition**, which asserts classes that are either A.I.E.O. **Affirmative proposition, negative proposition, universal proposition, particular proposition, singular proposition and indefinite proposition** (A proposition whose subject is unmodified with quantifiers like All, No, Every etc).

### 11.4.1 Standard Proposition of Logic: Quantity & Quality

#### 4.4.2 Quality: Affirmative and Negative Propositions

We have earlier stated that logic deals only with declarative sentence or sentences used for the purpose of making assertions. Declarative sentences may be classified as either Affirmative or Negative. An example of an affirmative sentence is: "All policemen are greedy."

Another example that gives an opposing assertion to that claim is "No policeman is greedy." Another example is "No politician is honest."

When there is a word such as "No, None, Not or nothing", then the proposition is negative.

Sometimes it is difficult to determine when a proposition is affirmative or negative. For example:

- (i) 'Some lecturers are non-smokers and
- (ii) Some lecturers are not smokers." The first proposition.

(i) Is affirmative because it asserts that some lecturers belong to the class of non-smokers. The second proposition (ii) is negative because it denies that some lecturers belong to that class of smokers.

From the above examples it should be noted that from the fact that a noun or adjective is modified by words such as "none," does not infer that the proposition is negative what actually determine a proposition to be Negative is whether the word "Not" or "No" modifies the copula.

Thus: No politician is honest = Negative

John is living above many people = Affirmative

Policemen are not untrustworthy = Negative

None but the students know if the

Lecture was comprehended = Affirmative

Whenever we describe propositions as either 'Affirmative' or 'Negative,' we are invariably describing the quality of the proposition. Now let us describe the quantity of propositions.



### 11.4.3 Universal, Particular and Singular Propositions

When we talk about all of a subject term, some of them or about a single individual, then invariably, we are also talking about universal, particular and singular propositions.

If I say, "All hard drug dealers are rich," I am implying that each and every hard drug dealer is rich. This statement is **universal** in scope. It is talking about "All" on the other hand, if I say, "Some hard drug dealers are rich, with this I am referring to a certain set or group of them. This statement or proposition is referred to as **particular**. If I state again, "John Ben is rich" I am referring to one and only one person, hence my judgment is said to be **singular**.

However, singular propositions are interpreted as universal ones. For example in the proposition "John Ben is rich," we are referring to all of John Ben not to a part of him. This is the characteristic of universal. Thus if I say that "Ijaws are dark skinned", it can as well be "All Ijaws are dark skinned. This statement is universal.

Some Kalabari women are very fat = particular

This Oguta man is very tall = Universal

Hausas Love Kolanut = Universal

Men have eaten rats as rabbits = Particular

No man is an Island = Universal

Some ladies are pretenders = Particular

Note that in men have eaten rats as rabbits, "ALL" is expected to make it universal, hence it will be interpreted to mean some men.

The above standard propositions show that every declarative statement will either be Universal, particular or singular and either affirmative or negative. Indefinite proposition, in this the subject term is not modified with any quantifier such as "All, No, Some, Every etc". Examples are. "Men have eaten rats as rabbit", goats are stupid, dogs are beautiful or cult members are ugly. Here we do not exactly know if the statement implies all or some. If it is definite you

can affirm or deny it. Logicians have devised symbols for each of these propositions and the symbols are A, E, I, O.

The **Universal Affirmative** proposition is identified with **A**. This is derived from the Latin word “*Affirmo*” meaning ‘I assert.’

The **Universal Negative** proposition is identified with **E**. This is derived from the Latin vowel “*Nego*” meaning ‘I deny’

The **Particular Affirmative** proposition is identified with **I**. This is derived from the second vowel “*Affirmo*.”

The **Particular Negative** proposition is identified with **O**. This is derived from the last Latin vowel “*Nego*.”

With the foregoing, the Affirmative propositions are A and I while the Negative propositions are E and O. On the other hand, the Universal statements are A and E, while the particular statements are I and O.

The following are examples of combination of these standard propositions.

All Nigerians are ambitious (A = Universal affirmative)

No politician is honest (E = Universal Negative)

Some students are here because they want knowledge (I = Particular affirmative)

Some students are not here for knowledge but certificates (O = Particular Neg.)

Efuru and Idu are very beautiful (A = Universal affirmative)

Soingo and Taribo are not interested in football (E = Universal Negative)

Some great writers are non-smokers (I = Particular affirmative)

Some authors are not footballers (O = Particular Negative)

#### 4.5 Logical Argument: Validity, Invalidity and Distribution of Terms

It should be noted that an argument cannot be valid and at the same time invalid. For a syllogistic argument to be regarded as valid, it would have to obey the following rules.

- i. The middle term must be distributed at least once in the premises.
- ii. If a term is not distributed in the premises, it must not be distributed in the conclusion.
- iii. No conclusion can follow from two negative premises.
- iv. If the two premises are negative, the conclusion must be negative.
- v. A negative conclusion cannot follow from two affirmative premises.

**Rule 1.** The middle term must be distributed at least once.

This syllogistic argument violates the rule

All men are rational

All women are rational

Therefore, all women are men.

The middle term in the above argument is "rational". Since it is the predicate term in both premises, and since both premises are "A" Propositions, neither premise distributes its predicate. Thus, the middle term is undistributed. The fallacy or error in the argument is this: even though it is true all men are rational and that all women are rational, it does not follow that they cannot both belong to the same class, that is rational; and yet be different from each other, since at no stage does the syllogism assert that either men or women constitute the whole class of rational. In short, the two premises are not connected by the middle term. This fallacy is called "fallacy of undistributed middle."

**Rule 2.** If a term is not distributed in the premises, it must not be distributed in the conclusion.

This syllogistic argument violates the rule

All men are mammals

No Gorillas are men

Therefore no gorillas are mammals

The fallacy involved in the violation of this rule is sometimes called “illicit distribution” or “illicit process”. It should be noted that the term “mammals” is distributed in the conclusion, but not in the major premise. This is because the major premise is an “A” Proposition and does not distribute its predicate; but the conclusion is an “E” Proposition which does. The error of illicit “process” is one in which the conclusion attempts to give us more information than is contained in the premises. The premises do not tell us about all mammals; but the conclusion does. The argument would be valid if and only if we could infer that all mammals are men; but this statement goes beyond our information which is merely that all men are mammals.

**Rule 3.** No conclusion can follow from two negative premises.

The following syllogistic argument violates this rule:

No Lions are cold-blooded

No cold-blooded things are capable of roaring

Therefore, no lions are capable of roaring.

When we have two negative premises, we fail to establish any connection between the terms of the argument. For example, in order to show that no Lions are capable of roaring, we have to show that Lions belong to the class of cold-blooded things; but this would be to assert an affirmative premise, that is All Lions are cold-blooded-which contradicts the information given us in the premises.

**Rule 4.** If either premises are negative, the conclusion must be negative the following violates this rule:

All kidnappers are heartless

Some Boko Haram members are not heartless

Therefore some Boko Harams members are Kidnappers

The general principle of syllogistic argument posits that the

Conclusion does not say more than is said in the premises. Again, if one premise is negative, the other must be affirmative to connect one term to the middle term; and the conclusion must be negative so that the major and minor terms would disagree. To violate this rule is to commit the fallacy of drawing an affirmative conclusion from a negative premise.

**Rule 5.** A negative conclusion cannot follow from two affirmative premises.

The following violates this rule: All men are mortals

All mortals are fallible

Therefore, some fallible things are not men.

This is an error since we go beyond the information given us on the bases of the two premises, that all men are fallible. But we cannot conclusively infer either that there are some fallible thing which are not men, or there are not some fallible thing which are not men.

In order to delve further into our discussion logically, it will be pertinent for us to understand distribution of terms in propositions. A term is said to be distributed when it refers to all the members of the class denoted.

"All men are equal". The term "men" is distributed since we are referring to all men. What should be noted is that every proposition has a subject term and predicate term. It is undistributed when the term refers to some members of the class denoted by the term. The following examples may clarify our discussion.

The proposition "All men are great" is an "A" proposition. The subject term is distributed since it refers to all men, but the predicate term is not distributed because we are not referring to all great things. The proposition "No man is great" is an "E" proposition. The subject and predicate terms are distributed or taken universally. If you get all men, you

won't find "great" among them, and if you get all things you won't find men.

The proposition "some plants are edible" is an "I" proposition. In this, both subject and the predicate are undistributed. It means that we are asserting that the class of plants and the class of edible things have a common member in that we are not talking about all plants and all edible things but about some.

The proposition "some golden spoons are not good" is an "O" proposition. Here the subject term is undistributed while the predicate term is distributed. This is because we are saying that some "golden spoons" are excluded in the entire class of good things.

PROPOSITION	SUBJECT	PREDICATE
A	Distributed	Undistributed
E	Distributed	Distributed
I	Undistributed	Undistributed
O	Undistributed	Distributed

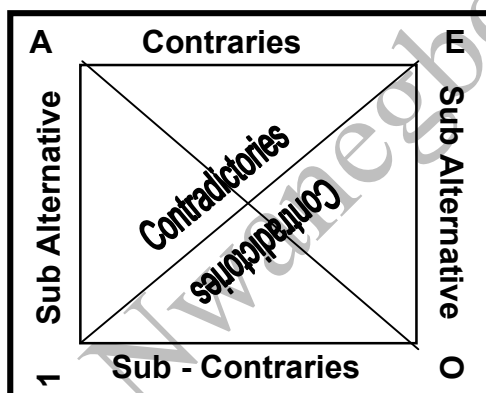
### 11.6 Square of Oppositions

Standard form categorical propositions having the same subject and predicate term may differ in quality or in both. These differences are regarded as "oppositions".

(a) **Contradictories:** Two propositions are contradictories if one is the denial or negation of the other, that is, if they cannot both be true and they cannot both be false. e.g. A and O propositions.

(b) **Contraries:** two propositions are said to be contraries if they cannot both be true, that is, if the truth of either one entails that the other is false. e.g. A and E propositions.

- (c) **Sub-contraries:** Two propositions are said to be Sub-contraries if they cannot both be false, although they may both be true. e.g. I and O propositions.
- (d) **Sub-alternation:** Where two propositions have the same subject and the same predicate terms, and agree in quality, but differ only in quantity; they are called “Corresponding propositions” thus, the A propositions, “All men are wise” has a Corresponding I proposition – some men are wise, and the E proposition “No man is wise”, has a corresponding O proposition “Some men are not wise”



The difference between A and E is quality and not quantity.

The difference between A and I is quantity

The difference between E and O is quantity

The difference between E and I is quantity and not quality

The difference between O and I is quality

The difference between A and O is quantity and quality

A and E cannot be true at the same time, but can be false.

A and O cannot be true at the same time. It will also be impossible for E to be true and I true etc. The table below is a good example.

PROPOSITION	A	E	I	O
If A is true		False	True	False
If A is false		Undetermined	Undetermined	true
If E is true	False		False	true
If E is false	Undetermined		True	Undetermined
If I is true	Undetermined	False		Undetermined
If I is false	False	True		True
If O is true	False	Undetermined	Undetermined	
If O is false	True	False	True	

An argument is said to be valid if the premises are true and invariably making conclusion that is true. If one accepts the premises of an argument as true, then one would also be bound to accept the conclusion of the argument to be true.

However, it should be noted that whether the premises of an argument are in fact true or not, has nothing to do with the question of the validity of the argument. By this, we are saying that we can have valid arguments with true premises and valid arguments with false premises.

These are examples:

All university students below bachelor's degree are undergraduates.

Jennifer is a university student below bachelor's degree.

Therefore Jennifer is an undergraduate

The above syllogistic argument is valid. It is valid because the premises are true and the premises imply the conclusion. It also fulfilled all the rules for valid reasoning. On the other hand, we have arguments that are valid with false premises.

All girls are liars

All Rev. Sisters are girls.

Therefore all Rev Sisters are liars. The above arguments are valid but have both false premises and false conclusion.

There are other situations where the premises and conclusions are true but invalid. An example is

All boys are male siblings

All women are female siblings

Therefore all men are male siblings



We can see that the premises are true and the conclusion is true, but it did not follow the rules for determining validity. There is no logical relationship between the premises and conclusion.

## Symbolic Logic and Truth Tables.

Logicians, for the purpose of accuracy when carrying out their work, developed symbols instead of words. This procedure involves translating ordinary language into logical symbols or formula.

In symbolic or mathematical logic, letters such as **p, q, r, s...** are used as statement variables, and may also be used to represent a sentence. For example, "Efuru is beautiful" can be symbolized as "**P**". The letters used to represent propositions are called variables.

There are different types of propositions; these propositions are called simple propositions and compound propositions. A **simple proposition** is one that contains one proposition such as the statement "Efuru is beautiful". A **compound proposition** is one that contains more than one proposition. An example is "Efuru and Belema are beautiful ladies."

In dealing with propositions, logicians have special symbols that represent different types of proposition and their quality. The following will be discussed as we proceed further into this area of logic.

- i. Not (Negative) - ,  $\sim$
- ii. And (Conjunction),  $\wedge$
- iii. Either OR (Disjunction)  $\vee$  (Inclusive) ( $\vee$ ) (Exclusive)
- iv. If...then (Conditional)  $\rightarrow, \wedge, (\rightarrow = \text{arrow})$  ( $\rightarrow = \text{horse shoe}$ ) (implication/Hypothetical).
- v. If and Only if (Biconditional)  $\leftrightarrow, \equiv$  (Referred to as Equivalence) in addition to the above symbols is the sign "T" and "F" representing True and False respectively. Let us now see how we can connect or combine propositions using the symbols above.

### 11.8 Truth Function and Connection of Propositions

In propositional calculus, it is assumed that every statement has a truth value. When a statement is true, it is said that its truth value is true and when it is false, it is said that its truth value is false.

In truth functional calculus, compound statements are formed by a logical connection from simple statements as I have exemplified.

#### The “Not” (Negation) - , ~

A statement such as “Abacha was a dictator” can be negated if the word “Not” is inserted into it. Thus its negation shall be “Abacha was not a dictator. This implies that “It is not the case that” or it is false that” An expression such as “Senator Arthur Nzeribe is a millionaire” can be negated by stating:

“Senator Arthur Nzeribe is not a millionaire”

The symbol - , ~ is either called a tilde or curl. Symbolically, the above statement could be addressed thus:

P, not P or P, ~ P

Senator Arthur Nzeribe is millionaire = P

Senator Arthur Nzeribe is not a millionaire = ~ P

Negation reverses the truth value of a sentence. Thus, if P is true, then ~ P is false.

In drawing a truth table, we have two lines, one running vertically while the other horizontally. The vertical lines are known as columns while the horizontal lines are known as rows. This truth table will represent the statements above.

P	~ P
T	F
F	T

If P is true (T) then  $\sim P$  is false (F) P is false (F) then not P is true (T).

**The “And (Conjunction),  $\wedge$**  the examples given above are classed as simple statements or propositions. When we go back to our earlier example of a compound proposition like “Efuru and Belema are beautiful ladies”, we will discover that there are two statements there. The first being “Efuru is beautiful” and “Belema is beautiful.” The “and” connects them to form a compound proposition. It is called conjunction. The first conjunct is “Efuru is beautiful” while the second conjunct is “Belema is beautiful”. The two statements are represented with the variables **p, q** the variables p, q can be written symbolically as  $p \wedge q$ . Let us use a truth table to determine the truth value of this conjunction.  $p \wedge q$ .

P	q	$P \wedge q$
T	T	T
T	F	F
F	T	F
F	F	F

A conjunctive proposition is True (T) if and only if both of its conjuncts are true. This means if it is true that Efuru is beautiful and Belema is beautiful then it is true that Efuru and Belema are beautiful ladies. It will be false for us to state at the second row that Efuru is beautiful and Belema is ugly. Neither would we state at the third row that Efuru is ugly and Belema is beautiful or that both Efuru and Belema are ugly.

**“Either or” (Disjunction)  $\vee$  (Inclusive) (V) Exclusive**

**V Inclusive Disjunction**

An example of an inclusive disjunction is: As a member of the club “in Restaurant A”, you either take a plate of goat and cow tail pepper soup or a plate of rice and stew” or both each day. The variables  $p$ ,  $q$  can be written symbolically as  $p \vee q$ . Let us use a truth table to determine its truth-value.

$p$	$q$	$p \vee q$
T	T	T
T	F	T
F	T	T
F	F	F

An inclusive disjunction is true if and only if at least one or both of its disjuncts are true.

### (V) Exclusive Disjunction (Strong Sense)

Like the last example given, “As a member of the club in restaurant A”, you are entitled to either a plate of goat and cow tail pepper soup or a plate of rice and stew, but not both. The variable  $p, q$  can be written symbolically as  $P (V) Q$ . to determine its truth-value, let us use the truth table below:

$p$	$q$	$p (V) q$
T	T	F
T	F	T
F	T	T
F	F	F

An exclusive disjunction is true if and only if one or the other, but not both of its disjuncts are true or observed.

### If... Then (Conditional, Implication Or Hypothetical $\rightarrow$ , $\supset$ ,

An example to show a statement that is conditional is ‘if I go to London this year, then I will get what I had wanted to get in Boston Massachutes’

The sentence which follows “if” is called the Antecedent of the conditional. Thus, “if I go to London this year”, is the antecedents while the statement “then I will get what I had wanted to get in Boston Massachutes” is the consequent. The variable p, q can be symbolically written thus:  $p \rightarrow q$  hence

p	q	$p \rightarrow q$
T	T	T
T	F	F
F	T	T
F	F	T

A conditional or hypothetical proposition is false if its antecedent is true and its consequent is false, otherwise it is true.

### If And Only If (Biconditional or Equivalence) $\leftrightarrow$ , $\equiv$

An example to show statement that is biconditional is “Undergraduates will be graduates if and only if they pass all their courses in the Universities”

Symbolically it is  $(P \rightarrow Q) \wedge (Q \rightarrow P)$

Biconditionally it is  $P \leftrightarrow Q$  or  $P \equiv Q$

p	q	$p \equiv q$
T	T	T
T	F	F
F	T	F
F	F	T

A biconditional proposition is true if and only if the antecedent and consequence are both true and both false otherwise it is false.

## Punctuations

In translating ordinary language into logical notation punctuations are necessary. An example like this can clarify this area of our discussion.

Mary and Martha went to MISTER BIGGS. This can simply mean  $p \supset q$ , however, if we say that Mary and Martha did not go to MISTER BIGGS we can as well write  $\neg p \supset \neg q$  or we write  $\neg (p \wedge q)$  using parenthesis.

If we state that "Mary and Martha will go to the swimming pool, if and only if the swimming pool has been cleared," it can be symbolically written.  $(p \wedge q) \equiv r$ . Two types of propositions are involved in this, and they are conjunction  $\wedge$ , and Biconditionals.

## 11.9 The Laws of Thought and Logical Fallacies

One of the definitions of logic in the first segments of this chapter is that logic is the science of the laws of thought. The laws of thought are rules of right thinking developed from traditional logic of Aristotle. It has been found that it is impossible to achieve straight and correct thinking without an adequate knowledge of the laws of thought.

The laws of thought include:

- (i) The law of identity
- (ii) The Law of Contradiction
- (iii) The Law of Excluded Middle

- (i) **The Principle or Law of Identity:** This law states that if any statement or assertion is true, then it is true. Thus, the same statement or assertion cannot be both true and false at the same time. An example is A is A or  $P \equiv P$  "What is," and cannot be another. A better symbolic representation is  $p \equiv q$ . p is equivalent to q. John Stuart Mills in his work the **System of Logic** explained the law of identity as anything that is true in one form of word, is true in every other form which

conveys the same meaning. This law applies to statements whose truth values do not change with time. For example, the truth of the mathematical proposition  $5+5=10$  is not relative to change in time or place.

- (ii) **The Principle or Law of Contradiction:** States that no statement or assertion can be both true and false at the same time. This law is also identified as the law of non-contradiction. It can be symbolically represented thus  $\sim (P \wedge \sim P)$ . This law is similar to that of identity.
- (iii) **The Principle or Law of Excluded Middle:** This law states that any statement or assertion is either true or false and that there is no middle way between the statement being either true or false. This law has nothing to do with contraries such as up and down, black and white or love and hate etc. A symbolical representation of this law is  $P \vee \sim P$ .

### Fallacies in Logic

Robert H. Thoules in his book **Straight and Crooked Thinking** state that "We can only understand crooked thinking when we have followed it in our own minds as well as in the writings and speeches of others."<sup>4</sup>

This statement in other word expresses the process of reasoning that is wrong or erroneous. Hence any process of reasoning that does not conform to the rules or laws of logic is termed as fallacious.

Popkin and Stroll defined fallacy as "any sort of mistake in reasoning."<sup>5</sup> It is a term used to denote anything that causes an argument to go wrong<sup>5</sup> Etuk defined fallacy as any pieces of mistaken belief or faulty assumption.<sup>6</sup>

It is worthy of note that there are numerous errors in speech and reasoning but we shall in this section examine

some of them. Irving M. Copi and Carl Cohen, defines fallacy as “a type of argument that may seem to be correct but that proves, on examination, not to be so.”<sup>7</sup>

### **The Semantic Fallacies or Fallacies of Ambiguity**

A term or statement is regarded as ambiguous if it has more than one meaning. The word semantics has to do with meaning of words, statements etc. Thus the fallacies we are going to treat in this section have the content of ambiguity in various dimensions.

#### **(a) Equivocation**

This is taken from the Latin word *acquus vox* meaning, equal voice. In this, a single word may be used in two different senses. It also means the use of word with two or more meaning without clarifying the sense in which it is used. An example is “I had a good smile.” This could mean that my smile was beautiful probably because I was well dressed and had a good make up. Secondly, it could mean that after a long struggle over an issue I succeeded at last. Thus, when we confuse the several meaning of a word or phrase accidentally we are using the word equivocally. If we do that in the content of an argument, we commit the fallacy of equivocation.

#### **(b) Amphiboly**

This fallacy is as ambiguous as that of equivocation, but emphasis is on the structure of the grammar. The word in the sentence may not be ambiguous but at last its meaning will be confusing. Imagine a situation were a Nigerian politician goes to visit a false prophet to find out if he would win an election.

The prophet after viewing the politician for sometime replied. “Okafor Bimbola shall win. In this situation if it was Okafor that consulted the prophet, it could mean that Okafor would win Bimbola or that Bimbola will win Okafor. A statement is ambiguous when it's meaning is indeterminate



because of the loose or awkward way in which its words are combined. Thus, the statement may be true in one interpretation and false in another.

### **(c) Contextual Fallacies**

#### **(i) Fallacy of Accent**

This type of fallacy depends upon the context in which an utterance is made. In both spoken and written forms of communication, sentences may intentionally or unintentionally mislead. An accent on a word or idea can give an entirely different meaning even beyond that of the speaker or writer". A young man might tell a lady friend of his "Oh! You are always beautiful." This utterance could mean that she is beautiful, but more attractive to him now. It could also be a sarcastic statement, implying the opposite. The most important thing to note in this fallacy is the stress on the idea. For example, if the word "beautiful" is written in italics, the meaning of what was originally written changes.

#### **(ii) Fallacy of Significance**

This is another form of contextual fallacy that has an element of ambiguity. The print media and advertising agencies often commit the fallacy of significance. An example is "Milo the food drink of champions." This is misleading because we cannot determine or know the champions that drink it.

To know the significance of the assertion, we have to find out if it is true. Another example goes thus: A new governor on visiting a local government on a familiarisation tour was asked by a journalist. "Have you seen the lepers here? The governor then asked "Are there lepers here?" The journalist then goes to publish: "Governor asks for lepers" The journalist had avoided the real issue or the significance in order to sell his papers.

**(iii) Fallacy of Emphasis**

This is another common contextual fallacy which depends on the erroneous emphasis of the words in a sentence. An example is a club may write on its board 'THIS CLUB IS FREE FOR ALL. But with some charges'. By printing the first part of the sentence in large letters they are offering that amenities are free, but by printing the other with smaller letters, they had withdrawn their statement. Another example is GO FOR GOLD. GO FOR BENSON AND HEDGES. Ministry of Health warns that smokers may die young.

It should be understood that the central matrix of this contextual fallacy is predicated on the attraction that the emphasis on the words used may have in the minds of the readers. By implication we may assert that it is a deceptive form of advertisement in order to win customers.

**(iv) Fallacy of "Quoting out of Context"**

This is also another contextual fallacy that can be committed through the print media. For example in trying to describe a town called Humberland, a writer may say "Traveling to Humberland is a horrible experience except for the interesting and beautiful scenery one sees before arriving there. "A businessman who wants to attract tourists may quote the above writer thus: traveling to Humberland... is for the interesting and beautiful scenery one sees... By careful manipulation of the other writer's statement, the reader has been given a favourable expectation.

**(d) Fallacy of Composition**

In this fallacy what is assumed to be true of a part is asserted or claimed to be true of the whole. This fallacy tends to look reasonable because it sounds like an inductive reasoning. For example, Audu, Tayo and Osita all Nigerians were caught with hard drugs in Germany; therefore Nigerians are drug peddlers. This conclusion is fallacious because it is

stating that what is true of the three individual is applicable to all Nigerians.

**(e) Fallacy of Division**

This fallacy is directly the opposite of the fallacy of composition; it holds that what is true of a whole must be true of all its parts. An example is "Nigeria is an oil rich country," therefore Difu who is a Nigerian is rich. However, it does not follow that because the country is oil rich that Difu is rich. Another example is lawyers called to the bar between 1985 and 1990 are good and honest. Noble Ajama was called to the bar between 1985 and 1990 therefore he is good and honest. However, what is applicable to all may not apply to him. Some logicians identify another fallacy called **figure of speech**.

**(f). Figure Of Speech**

This fallacy has its ambiguity in language. It can be expressed with an example of the Ibos of the coastal area and others. An Ibo of the coastal area was found telling another Ibo of not being impressed with his behaviour. He used the word "Ikegi" which to him meant "you" but to the other Ibo this meant his "buttocks". Hence it meant that he was not impressed with his buttocks. Another practical example is what took place between a professor of linguistics and students at a university in the western part of the country in the sixties.

The professor, an English man tried to explain a term in Igbo language using "Ikechukwu. He was trying to say, "The power of God is wonderful. But the tone gave a different meaning, thus he was found saying that God's buttocks is wonderful" the students who understood the language informed others and they laughed and made fun of the professor. The professor as we heard left Nigeria as a result of the embarrassment. Another example: a Frenchman took offence as his English friend thanked him for his "invaluable service". The French man was not happy knowing that

“invaluable was the opposite of “valuable”. Thus, this fallacy arises from its confusion on mistaken belief that words similar in form are derived from the same root.

## **2. Pragmatic Fallacies or Fallacies of Relevance**

In this type of fallacy, the argument appeals to some reasons which are not relevant to the conclusion. The fallacy occurs during speech or writing, but reaches a conclusion establishing something other than what it set out to establish.

### **(a) Argumentum Ad Verecundian or Appeal to Authority**

The truth or falsity of a given statement or assertion cannot be ascertained merely because an authority has said so. An assertion should not be taken as true just because Professor “A” has said so, or that an acclaimed expert has said so. However, when we argue that a given conclusion is correct on the ground that an expert authority has come to that judgment is not conclusive proof. The fallacy “arises when an approach is made to parties having no legitimate claim to authority in the matter at hand.

### **(b) Argumentum Ad Baculum or Appeal to Force**

The truth or falsity of an argument of this nature is influenced by who is involved. This fallacy occurs when careful reasoning is replaced with direct or insinuated threats to cause the acceptance of some conclusion.

An employer may be found guilty of an offence and the only witness is the employee. But due to fear of losing his job he may make statements contrary to the truth. Another example is on the political situation of the country some people where campaigning for Abacha to succeed himself as a civilian president, not out of a clear conscience but out of fear of the possibility of political victimization if they acted in opposition to him. Their actions were predicated on the awareness of the implications if they acted otherwise.

(c) ***Argumentum Ad Populum* or Appeal to Public Opinion or Emotions**

This argument attempts to establish that a given statement is true or false by stating how people feel about it. It is an appeal to mass opinion. This fallacy occurs when careful reasoning is replaced with devices calculated to create enthusiasm and emotional support for the conclusion advanced. For example A politician might appeal to people's opinion or sentiment during his campaign and makes statements such as "You all know that we are not living happily and that we are living in a depressed economy. So vote for me to change the system." Another example is, "You are all rational human beings; don't allow our opponents to deceive you". The fact that the public accept a view or an opinion does not suffice it to be true.

(d) ***Argumentum Ad Hominem***

These words refer to an argument that is directed at a man, rather than against what a man says, in order to show that what he says cannot be true. In an argument a speaker could tell another, "Do not mind or accept the statements made by Nikoy, he is a communist, he cannot make any useful contribution". This argument is directed at the personality of Nikoy. Such an argument is misleading.

The attack could be directed at a person to bring discredit or to defame (abusive ad Hominem) or directly against persons, chiefly due to special interests or circumstances (circumstantial ad hominem).

(e) ***Argumentum Ad Miseriocardiam* or Appeal to Pity**

A judge, in an attempt to sentence a man to imprisonment, might hear a defense by a lawyer with the argument that he has two wives and thirteen children. And that he is the only "bread winner" in the family. Another example is that of a final year student begging for a pass mark to enable him or her graduate, without which he or she

might spend an additional year for the course alone. This is an appeal for mercy. Thus this fallacy occurs when careful reasoning is replaced by devices calculated to play on the sympathy on the part of the hearer for the objects of the speaker concerned.

**(f) *Argumentum Ad Ignorantiam***

This argument can be called “argument from ignorance”. The argument asserts that some statements must be true because there is no evidence to disprove it. A young girl might run down home telling her parents that she saw an angel appear to her. This claim might be refuted with vehemence because there is nothing to prove the claim of the young girl. But for the fact that the parents have never seen an angel does not prove that angels do not exist. This argument thus states that a proposition is true on the grounds that it has not been proved false, or when it argued that a proposition is false because it has not been proved true.

**(g) The Fallacy of *Ignoratio Elenchi* or “Missing the Point”**

This fallacy is also called “**irrelevant conclusion**” in the sense that it is an argument in which one hopes to prove a case, but instead proves something else. Making a conclusion that does not follow or relate to the issue itself is referred to as ***non-sequitur*** (“it does not follow”). An example is if I attempt to prove the time and distance a traveler will take from Abonema, town in Rivers State to Oguta another town in Imo State, but instead established that their cultures are similar, I have committed the fallacy of irrelevant conclusion.

**(h) The Fallacy of Accident**

This is a form of argument from general rules to specific ones. An example is that we have a constitutional right to freedom of movement or speech etc. A policeman now arrests a young man moving quietly at the middle of the

expressway around 2.00am. When asked why he was wondering at that time of the day, his answer was that he has constitutional right to move freely. Udoidem gave a more plausible example. "The constitution allows every citizen the right to bear arms thus; my right to own this gun is in accordance with the constitution and should not be challenged. The general rule in the constitution is not necessarily a premise from which we can validly deduce a conclusion relating to an individual case"<sup>8</sup> thus when we apply a generalization to individual cases that does not properly follow, we commit the fallacy of accident.

**(i) Fallacy of Converse Accident (Hasty Generalisation)**

This fallacy is also called the fallacy of hasty generalization. It is inductive in a sense because it proceeds from particular to universal. It means taking a few instances of an occurrence or experience and making them look like a general rule. An example is "Motor Parks are most times filled with criminals," a woman heard her husband telling another. Days later her husband says to her, "Let us go to the motor park and see if someone can help us get a good driver for our car". But the wife replied immediately, "No, all those at the motor park are criminals." This is fallacy of hasty generalization. This fallacy is like that of composition. Thus, when we apply a principle that is true of a particular case to the cases, we commit the fallacy of converse accident.

**(j) Fallacy of False Cause or Non-Cause Procausa**

"Non-cause *causa*" means "No cause for cause". Another name given to this fallacy is *Post hoc Ergo Propter* which means "after this, therefore on account of this". The idea of this fallacy is that "B" follows, "A" whether several times or once. A comes to be regarded as the cause of B. That A leads to B does not necessarily follow that A is the cause of B. The fact that I hit my left leg on a stone while

about to go out and did not find the person I went to see does not mean that that is what follows. Thus, the reasoning that relies on treating as the cause of a thing what is not really its cause is the fallacy of false cause.

**(k) *Petitio Principii* or Begging the Question**

This fallacy occurs when either the same statement is used in an argument as both a premise and a conclusion. The fallacy is committed when we try to assume that we are trying to prove something. It is sometimes referred to as circular argument.

An example is this:

- A. God exists
- B. How do you know?
- A. Because the Bible has confirmed it
- B. But how do you know the Bible is telling the truth?
- A. Because the Bible is an inspired word of God.

**(l) Fallacy of Complex Question**

This is a fallacy where the answer to a question is difficult to come by. An example is "Have you stopped being wicked? Or "Have you stopped going after other people's wives"? Such questions cause confusion; it is not simple but complex questions. To answer "yes" or "No" implies acceptance of the claim by the accuser. The defendant will find this question difficult to answer. It is asking a question in such a way as to presuppose the truth of some conclusion inherent in that question.

**(m) Statistical Fallacies**

This is committed when the findings of statistical methods are wrongly appropriated. An example can be given with two gluttons. One day, both of them ate a big plate of beans and drank water before going to bed and discovered that they had stomach upset. After observing this twice, they changed their meal. On their experiment (1) they ate a big



plate of rice, drank water and went to bed and still had stomach upset. The second experiment (II) they ate a big plate of yam, drank water and went to bed and still had stomach upset. The third experiment (III) they ate a big plate of eba, drink water and went to bed and had stomach upset. Fourth experiment (IV) they ate a big plate of plantain, drank water and went to bed and still had stomach upset. So they concluded by this statistical method that water was the source of their stomach problems.

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## **SECTION B**

### **CHAPTER TWELVE**

#### **12.0 THE SEARCH FOR AN ABSOLUTE BEING (AN INSIGHT INTO MAN AND PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION)**

Man is an embodiment of mystery. Attempt by man to understand himself lead to a search that far exceeds a probe into the vastness of the cosmos. Questions as to how he came into being, the purpose of his existence, the complexities observed in his nature etc, are fundamental in trying to comprehend man. Religion, science and philosophy are mere tools which man uses to have a glimpse at himself. While religion emphasizes belief and faith as means to understand all that pertains to man, science advocates empirical or experimental proof for the comprehensibility of man. Philosophy on the other hand demands rational or logical proof as a means to assess the claims made by either religion or the empirical science.

Various people view philosophy as a discipline that delves into occultism, mysticism and things beyond the reach of the ordinary mind. Their perception of philosophy and philosophers calls for deliberation and better exposition of the contents of philosophy, it has also been observed that those who hold to the above views tenaciously are those who can be classified as having “better religious” orientation.

The writer once met a renowned preacher and general overseer of one of the largest churches in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. During the process of discussion, the preacher learnt that the writer studied philosophy. The preacher’s immediate reaction was, “Oh, you are one of those that do not believe in miracles”.

Thus, to him philosophers are those who do not believe in miracles. Others simply react by saying, “Oh you are one of

those who do not believe that God exists. These are people's perceptions of philosophy and philosophers. The mystery surrounding the word philosophy tends to pose a threat among religious individuals. Philosophers are viewed as strange professionals who should be dealt with a level of caution lest you be converted from theism to atheism. They are viewed basically as atheists by the unenlightened, and perceived as those with special minds and gifts beyond ordinary sense perception.

Whatever, the perception they have about philosophy. It should be known that every individual can philosophise as long as he can reflect on fundamental issues that border on his existence. This is a product of the fact that religion is a major force and an interesting phenomenon in human life that cannot be ignored even by atheists. The fundamental problems bordering on religion is the object of our intellectual reflections and deliberations. This is because there is no other phenomenon which moulds, controls or channels the life of man like religion. The strong desire to explain the mysteries of life and the nature of God or an absolute being appears to be partly responsible for the evolution of religion. Philosophy of religion is simply an unprejudiced inquiry into the meaning and purpose of religion.

This section should not be seen as an exposition of the whole gamut of philosophy of religion, but as a preamble with the intent to give an insight into the nature of philosophy of religion. This section is specially streamlined for neophytes and undergraduates in the universities, seminaries and students who wish to expand their knowledge in critical thinking as it relates to religion and the nature of God.

## **12.1 The Emergence of Man**

According to Protagoras of Abdera (481 BC) "Man is the measure of all things, of those that are, that they are, of those that are not that they are not". As we delve into philosophy of religion, we must try to find out the origin of man

on whom all knowledge and philosophies revolve. Without man there is no knowledge because, he is the “measure” of all things and all about knowledge and knowing has to do with his intellect. If man does not exist whatever claims to knowledge by any being is useless.

Man as a term simply means both the human male and female. Man’s nature has been a mystery. This mystery relating to the nature of man has been the subject of philosophizing and search for better explanation has led to various theories and schools of thought. Man has a natural desire to know, because by nature he is curious. Like things around him, he emerges into the world and dies or disappears from it. He has no control of his present existence and does not know how he came into being. The Emergence of man has two contending views, the **Theological** and **Biological** views. This view emanated from mans natural yearning to understand his place in the universe. The theological attributes the origin of man to the inexplicable act of supernatural ruling power or creative force that is in itself uncreated. This creative force has been interpreted in various ways by different religions as the source of all created and temporal things.

The biological viewpoint on the other hand claims that man evolved from a simple organism, through a process that spanned more than six billion years.

## 12.2 Theological Viewpoint

The major theological view as to the emergence of man is the **Eden theory**. This theory states that God created man out of the dust of the earth. After man has been moulded in God’s “image”, He breathed into man the breath of life and man became a living soul. This breath is believed to be the life force, the animating force in man. The first man was called Adam while the first woman, Eve, was created out of the ribs of the first man.

Man from this theory depended entirely on God for direction and was instructed not to eat the “forbidden fruit” in the midst of the Garden of Eden. On this ground, we say that man’s life was determined by God. The theory however added that man was given the capacity to know good and evil, this means that man possesses the power of reasoning. This ability he acquired after eating the “forbidden fruit” contrary to the instruction given by God.

Myths as regards creation vary from society to society, culture to culture, and religion to religion. In Yoruba myth, God the creator is known as ‘*Eleda*’ The creator, the maker. He is the origin and giver of life and in that capacity he is known as “*Elemi*” The owner of the spirit or the owner of life.<sup>2</sup> In Igbo he is identified as *Chukwu* – The great provider, *Chineke*, *Olisa* or *Osebuluwa* Lord carrier of the world. There are several myths which narrate how *Chukwu* created the world<sup>3</sup>

The Eden theories like other theological views are accepted through simple belief on the authority of the writers who are believed to have been inspired by God. Hence this view need not have any logical or empirical justification. Its claim needs no scientific proof but lies on the unquestioned authority of the Almighty’s supernatural acts.

### The Biological Viewpoint

This view point as we stated earlier postulates that man evolved from a simple organism, through a process that spanned millions of years. The first evolutionist on this ground was a philosopher called Anaximander born in 610 BC. **Anaximander** held that all living things originated from the sea and in the course of time these things developed into various forms by means of adaptation to their environment.

Man according to him evolved from “a specie of fish” However, this theory was not satisfactory because it did not provide full explanation as regards the developmental stages from fish to man.

**Empedocles** (440 BC) is another philosopher and an evolutionist who postulated that man and other creatures came into being through chance. Such things like the organs, limbs, etc. were not designed on purpose to be as they are. Things had to struggle for existence in the environment they found themselves. The less fitted for survival perished; only those organs, limbs and shapes most fitted to the environment survived. All living things came by the chance combination of four elements (Air, water, fire, earth). There is no creative god or mind responsible.

Limbs, ears, digestive organs were adapted for functions which they have to perform. He believed that originally there must have been men with heads of cattle, animals with branches like tree instead of limbs. But during the struggle for existence, those not fitted for survival perished.

**Charles Darwin** (1809-1882) published his work titled “**The Descent of Man**” In this book Darwin propounded that man must have evolved through a single celled organism through a long evolutionary process. He classified living things under plants and animal kingdom. Man according to him belongs to the animal kingdom-*Animalia* and the order of primates consisting of apes, monkeys, etc. This also belonged to the sub-order *Anthropodae* and to the family of *Hominoidae* (which includes Apes) to the sub-family *Hominidae* (modern man). He belongs to the Genus of *Homo* and specie of sapiens, (*Homosapiens*). Geological time states that living things came into being about 6 billion years ago while man and other primates began theirs about 75 million years. To buttress this claim, archeologists have used various dating methods such as uranium and thorium dating, Argon –40 readings,<sup>5</sup>, and carbon-14 dating.

However, this discovery may look, the whole claim falls under probability. How can we ascertain if the empirical tools

dated correctly and in addition able to determine the type of things in existence at that time?

The issue of organic evolution from earlier evolutionist like Anaximander and Empedocles has been similar to that of modern evolutionist. The only difference with some of them has been the method of investigation. The ancients were speculative and applied deductive methods while some of the modern were inductive using the scientific method. Rutherford Platt in his book, **The River of Life** (1956.P6), stated that “when living things came out of the sea to live on land fins turned into legs, gills turned into lungs, scales into fur”. This claim simply echoes the philosophy of Anaximander. There were actually no proofs to justify this claim.

**Charles Darwin's** Theory was simply a neo-Empedocles evolutionary theory. It stated that “members of different species competed with one another for life, and in such struggle any advantageous variation would enable it possess or to gain the upper hand. The fittest, therefore, would survive, others would perish. The survivor would pass on the beneficial variation to their offspring; accounting eventually for the evolution of new forms of life in fact no difference between this theory and that of Empedocles.

Many accept evolution as a fact as against the Eden theory etc. Even a pastor in a journal of March 5<sup>th</sup> 1966 stated. “There is no doubt about the fact of evolution.”<sup>7</sup> The Encyclopedia Britannica stated “we are not in the least doubtful as to the fact of evolution.. The evidence by now is overwhelming”<sup>8</sup> However, as far back as 1966, the world book Encyclopedia stated “No one should make the mistake of saying that evolution is fully understood.”<sup>9</sup>

The whole discussion boils down to man as a mysterious being. An investigation into the nature of man opens more doors of mystery which leads us to the search for God or Absolute for explanation. As we tend to search for God, we reflectively discover that we are searching for ourselves.



A glimpse at the nature of God , the Absolute where our minds hope to find solution bring us to the vastness of his Being. This brings wonder, awe and possibly fear which is said to be the beginning of wisdom.

### **12.3 Philosophy of Religion**

Man, as we have stated earlier, is a mystery to himself. This mystery revolves around his nature as a corporeal being. He sometimes sits and begins to wonder at the nature of his existence, the purpose of human life and the teleology embedded in it. When man begins to wonder about all these, then he has begun to philosophize. When man begins to examine himself in pursuance of the Socratic advice that “the unexamined life is not worth living” he discovers that sometimes all his struggles, aspiration or goals can be shattered by sudden death which he never bargained for. He is convinced that he never chose to come into this world, he simply found himself in it and does not know why. He is very intelligent, powerful and can subdue other creatures yet too weak to change any situation that brings anxiety and sorrow to him. He discovers also that disasters and misfortunes negate his beautiful plans as a living being and he has no control over what he thinks is his destiny. When all these incongruities to these aspirations begin to plague him, he would be compelled to look for solace or a helper who may salvage him from all his sorrows and unanswered questions.

This search for a helper leads to the search for the Absolute (God), which is the beginning of religion. The branch of philosophy that is called philosophy of religion is not concerned with justifying, appraising, disparaging or discrediting the claim of any religion; rather, it examines the intellectual questions that arise in considering religious views. These questions are usually epistemological or metaphysical, because they involve analysis of claims to religious knowledge and constructs intended to explain certain concepts adduced by various religions. Religion is the belief in

a Supreme Being. It is man's response to his experience of a supernatural ruling and Supreme creative being. This response can be positive or negative, thus leading to theism-the-belief that there is God or there are gods who have direct or personal relationship with human beings; or atheism which is the theory that there is no God, or if there is, he cannot in any way affect human existence. These two theories are the basis of philosophical discourse as regards man's perception of the nature of God.

**John Lewis** defined religion as "The attitude of individual in a community to the powers which they conceive as having ultimate control over their destiny and interest"<sup>10</sup>.

This implies that religion came into being as a result of man's search for an Absolute that can change his destiny for better. **A.C. Bouquet** defined religion as the "the relationship between the human self and some non-human entities, the sacred, the supernatural, the self existent, the Absolute or simply God"<sup>11</sup>

**While T.N.O. Quarcoopome** defined it as "the belief in a supernatural Being, who is the creator and controller of the universe and establishing a moral relationship with man"<sup>12</sup> It is infact the philosophical search for an all pervading Supreme Being that led to religious experience.

The analysis and critique for the purpose of justifying religious claims resulting from questions such as "What is religion? Does God Exist? How can we know of His Existence? These and other questions are the subject matter of philosophy of religion.

Philosophy of religion is not the study of religion from any specific religious or non-religious views, but a careful analysis and critical evaluation of the philosophical implications of religion. It subjects the claims of religion to vigorous tests applying logic or reasoning. This critical attitude of philosophers has led to their being classified as atheists, cynics, unbelievers or iconoclasts.

Some philosophers regard the philosophy of religion as an attempt to find a rational justification or explanation of their religion. Some see it as an attempt to justify or explain the grounds or basis of their disbelief, while for others it is merely an attempt to examine another area of human interest and experience. The relationship between philosophy and religion can be categorized into three schools of thought. Some believe that philosophy and religion have nothing in common; hence they are two different disciplines. The second group or schools of thought are those who believe that one of the ways of man's response to the philosophical search for the meaning of human existence is through religion. The third school of thought are those who believe that philosophy is the hand maid of theology-which means that we need a philosophical mind to clarify theological issues or claims. The attempt by man to explain the content of his belief in God and claim to religious knowledge through rational means has led to schools ranging from Theism, Atheism, Pantheism, Monotheism, Polytheism, Fideism, Deism, etc. Despite the rational claims by these schools of thought their knowledge is plagued with problems.

## **12.5 Epistemological Problems of Religious Knowledge**

In this section, we are going to examine the nature and scope of religious knowledge with emphasis on the limits of **revealed** and **scientific** knowledge.

All the religions of the world purport to possess important knowledge and information about the role of man and the nature of the world. If we examine the kind of information involved in religious knowledge and the kind of evidence for it, certain problems rise which shows that religious knowledge and scientific knowledge defer in their mode of investigation.

In many religions of the world, the type of information that is regarded as very important consists of reported revelations of the word of God. If we ask, how did human

beings discover this knowledge and what guarantee do they have to justify that it is true? One finds a remarkable difference between revealed knowledge and ordinary knowledge. No matter what theory of knowledge or epistemological experience we have, we would agree that whenever a stone is thrown up, it comes down, that water (H<sub>2</sub>O) is composed of hydrogen and oxygen, and that former Nigerian head of state. **Gen. Sani Abacha** died on the 8th of June 1998 under mysterious circumstances. But the same type of agreement does not hold for religious information. What is the difference? The difference lies in the standards for evaluating the truth.

In ordinary or experiential knowledge, we appeal to experimental data, to records, to public experience in order to establish "the facts of the case". But in religious knowledge, these methods no longer appear to be applicable. If we ask whether the Bible contains religious information, this is no longer a scientific question that appeals to experimental data. There are questions such as when the various books of the Bible were written and who wrote them? When was King Solomon born? Did king Solomon live before or after Socrates or Aristotle? These questions could be answered using historical facts and standard techniques of historians. But when we ask, does the Bible or Koran contain religious information? The answer will be difficult to determine.

The above question may sound absurd to most religious persons, since the Bible says clearly that it is not a mere record of some events in history but the word of God, and for you to understand this, you have to read the Bible. Anyone can write a book such as the Koran, the book of Mormon, the Grail message etc. and claim that it contains religious information regarded as the word of God. The question would be whether the claim is true.

The fact that a book contains sentences claiming to be the word of God can be established; the truth-value of the claim cannot be established. We are all aware through

historical records that a man called Moses lived and performed certain supernatural acts recorded in the Bible. He also asserted that he had received important religious information from God. But whether his assertion is true or false cannot be proved through scientific investigation. Religious knowledge cannot be examined or evaluated in the same manner we examine our ordinary empirical knowledge. The standard we apply to determine historical information and scientific information do not help us to determine if some particular books or persons possesses some religious information. What seems to be involved in the case of religious knowledge as against scientific or empirical knowledge is some element of belief, faith or religious experience.

In Epistemology (a branch of philosophy that deals with the theory of knowledge), various sources of knowledge can be identified, and revelation is just one of them. Despite the authenticity tied to this source of knowledge by the belief of the person who claims possession of the knowledge, the philosopher is not interested in it as a source of knowledge. He is not because the truth and falsity of the content of this knowledge cannot be justified. It cannot be justified because there is a difference between knowledge and belief or faith. Knowledge is primarily based on conclusive evidence.

The man who believes in revelation may argue that his claims were conclusive out of his religious experience over a period of time. But these experiences are subjective and perceived by the individual alone. It could be "received" due to hallucination or other sensory defects. There are situations where some individuals claimed to have received a revelation from God identifying another as his or her spouse in a religious congregation. Some claimed to have seen it as a vision while others as dreams. Some even purport to have heard voices from above. However, in some cases where psycho-theological analyses were made, it was found that the claimed revelations were simply products of the individuals'

sub-conscious mind. Some also have been under certain hypnotic spells unknown to the individual involved. (The issue of psycho-theological analysis and claim to hypnotic spells are contestable).

A remarkable incident occurred in one of the most popular religious congregation in Port Harcourt, Nigeria where a man claimed that a “sister in the Lord” had been identified by God as his wife. Unfortunately, the man was unaware that the beautiful young sister was already married with children. In this case, it is either he lied out rightly, or he was deceived by his imagination through his subconscious in a dream. If however, it was a revelation from God, how are we to know if it is true since we are not aware of the manifestation of his revelation? If he claims to have seen a vision, how can we determine the authenticity of the vision? The claimed vision might be a product of hallucination due to some brain and psychological defects of the individual.

On the above grounds, how can we tell if a holy book contains religious information purported to be from God. Those who ascribe to revelation buttress their stance with faith and religious experience. In all, man’s attempt is to go closer to God, hoping that through that he would discover himself. Some major questions that may be asked are: Who or what is God? Does he exist? How can we determine his existence?

## **12.6 The Nature and Concept of Religion**

There are various theories on the nature and emergence of religion. These theories are Theological theory, sociological theory, Anthropological theory, Marxian theory and Psychological theory.

**Theological theory** of religion has its main exponents as **Saint Augustine** and **F. Rossano**. Both philosophers postulate that man by nature is religious. He has within him the natural desire to search for an infinite Being. Man naturally feels a vacuum, emptiness within him, he feels unease and

insecure, and thus he is restless and feels that God is the only solution to this inner conflict. Saint Augustine in his book, **The Confessions** states, "You have made us for yourself and our hearts are restless until they rest in you."<sup>13</sup>

According to **Rossana**, this inner conflict in man which manifest as insecurity, emptiness etc is simply "a psychological manifestation of the human spirits search for the infinite spirit. Thus what **Augustine** and **Rossana** are saying is that naturally man is pulled towards knowing God, hence man is a worshipping being.

Another theory is the **Sociological theory** proposed by **Emile Durkheim**. In his book titled, **The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life**, he stated that religion is the product of the society. To him the society uses religion as an instrument of control. This it does by using it to channel and direct the thoughts of people. God in his terms is simply a symbol of the might of the society. The idea of God is nothing other than the personified force of the society. Thus, attributes such as justice, goodness, power or authority etc which are ascribed to God are simply qualities of the society. What religions regards as commandments or laws of God are simply moral demands of the society. For example "Thou shall not kill", "Thou shall not steal", etc to the religious man is a commandment of God.

But Durkheim's position is that it is simply what the society demands that we should not kill nor steal. "Men know well that they are acted upon but do not know by whom. So they must invent for themselves the idea of these forces"<sup>15</sup>.

The society, from this theory directs and influences its members, thus nobody is above the law (law of the society) because of the might of the society. The religious man from this foregoing may simply interpret it as nobody is above God. This is because the authority of the society and order within, are so overwhelming that they invent the ideas of an absolute as responsible.

**Anthropological theory** was made popular by **Ludwig. A. Feuerbach**. Man in an attempt to explain the complexities observed in nature the sorrows, joy, pain, death, disasters etc. began to search for a redeemer, a helper beyond himself. This search invariably is the search for self realization, a process to find solutions to his predicaments. With this search, he focuses attention on an absolute with anthropomorphic qualities like love, mercy, goodness, wisdom, justice etc. These qualities are found in human nature, but are seen as limited in individuals. Thus, according to this theory, what man does is the alienation of himself in order to create the highest and divine qualities that will describe the imaginary all Pervading God. With all these mental creations man eventually comes to “realize that he has been worshiping himself, praying to himself and that the divine essence is nothing other than the essence of Man.”<sup>16</sup>

Ludwig Andreas Feuerbach in his book, **The Essence of Christianity**, posited that the mystery surrounding religion can be seen simply as man's attempts to project himself into objectivity. To him this can be seen in the Christian faith where God became man in the person of Jesus Christ. Thus, God is man as recorded in the doctrine of incarnation. When trying to reveal himself to his disciples “I and my Father are one”.<sup>17</sup> this shows that human nature is divine and man's search for God is simply a search for self realization, to become as perfect as the divine. The Bible goes further to state, “Be ye perfect even as your father which is in heaven is perfect”. According to Feuerbach, the desire for man towards a being above himself is nothing but “the longing after the perfect type of his nature, the yearning to be free from himself, i.e. from the limits and defects of his individuality”<sup>18</sup>.

What the anthropological view point is stating is that man creates the idea of God by conceiving and ascribing perfect and highest possible qualities to Him, that man's nature as a finite being cannot conceive anything beyond his knowledge, at the end he comes to realize that he has been



worshipping and praying to himself, and all the divine attributes ascribed to God are simply the essence of man projected.

The exponent of the **Marxian Theory** of religion was **Karl Marx**. According to him what drives man into religion or makes him form the idea of God is due to economic exploitation and oppression of the masses in a capitalist system. The masses that are oppressed and exploited look up to the sky for a messiah or saviour who will deliver them from their oppressors. To Marx, religion comes into being through the idea of God or a father (by the masses) who is expected to liberate them from their suffering. Thus religion is a by-product of exploitation, suffering and oppression. Hence only the poor and the oppressed practice it.

Marx went further to state that religion is used by the capitalist exploiters to pacify the poor being oppressed, by promises of reward in heaven. It is used to prevent any revolution or uprising that may arise from the oppressed. To him, "religion is the opium of the masses.

It is the sign of the oppressed creature, the feeling of a heartless world<sup>19</sup>. The only solution according to Karl Marx is to wipe out the capitalist structure which produces exploitation and oppression

Though the Marxian theory did not adequately explain religious phenomena, but it appears that religion is practiced mostly among the poor and the suffering than among the rich and well to do. After all Christ confirmed it by saying "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for the rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

One of the most interesting theories is the **Psychological Theory** masterminded by **Sigmund Freud** the founding father of **Psychoanalysis**.

According to Sigmund Freud, religion is nothing other than childhood mentality extended to adulthood. Man due to diseases, death, misfortune etc realizes that he is weak and helpless to these problems of life. When he observes this, he turns to an imaginary father (God) whom he sees as very

powerful and all knowing. This he does just as a child turns to his father for solutions and protection. Freud sees religion as childishness or disease which he calls "childhood neurosis", resulting from the father complex which hunts man to his adulthood.

He advised that man must have the courage to encounter problems and adversities without seeking the protection of an imaginary father. In his work, **Totem and Taboo**, he writes: "The psychoanalysis of the individual being teaches us quite special instances that the god of each of them is formed in the likeness of his father that his personal relation to God depends on his relation to his father in the flesh and oscillates and changes along with that relation, and that at the bottom God is nothing other than an exalted father<sup>20</sup>."

To overcome this childhood neurosis, man must acquaint himself with scientific knowledge and intellectual sophistication. Without this, man will remain mentally imprisoned and would lack development in its entirety.

The development of those theories is to explain the nature and origin of religion which invariably is man's search for God whom he believes is the source of his existence. However, the question as to whether or not God exists is a question which philosophers from Aristotle to contemporary times have tried to answer in one way or the other.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### 3.1 Does God Exist?

The above is a great question asked by both philosophers and people of all walks of life. Some religious people after trying fruitlessly to attain or achieve certain goals through prayers or meditation would begin to wonder if really there is a father up there watching over mankind that can answer prayers. At every point in the life of man, there are times when he would begin to question his religious belief by doubting why certain misfortunes would take place in a world governed by an Omnipotent and Omniscient God. This brief moment of doubt comes from the minds of men who believe in existence of God without proof. Thus, when one loses his loved ones, God may be asked, "If you really exist why are all these happening to me?" If one has a protracted illness, doesn't He see my predicament?" If a man is very poor, he would ask, "What did I do to merit this poverty, if God really exists why should I suffer all these?" etc.

Atheistic questions as to the non-existence of God are asked mostly by religious men who are materialistic and have lost faith in their belief due to a possible delay of their expectations by a god they believe in. A disappointed and frustrated man could reject the possibility of the existence of God. To question such a frustrated man, another who thinks he possesses a better knowledge of God within the Christian parlance might quote Psalm 14 verse 1 of the Bible which says "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God". If however he is asked to prove God's existence, his solution would simply be going back to the Bible, thereby falling into a logical error of *petitio principii* or circular argument. However, if we simply say "God exists" how can we prove his existence to someone who has no religious experience? In addition, since God may not announce with a voice from the sky to prove his existence and even if he does how can we know or

ascertain that the announcement is from God. Even if some individuals claim to have heard Him, how can we determine if they are not subject to hearing or auditory defects? To resolve this, philosophers right from 400 BC, have put forward arguments to prove the existence of God.

The arguments offered to prove the existence of God range from Cosmological argument, Ontological argument, Teleological argument or argument from design, and argument from Moral and Religious experiences.

**Cosmological** argument is an argument which begins from fact of our experience or phenomena (motion of change) in the universe to cause out side the universe. Philosophers such as Plato (427348/47 BC), Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274 AD) emphasized this method to prove God's existence.

**Ontological** argument is an argument based on the definition of a Supreme Being or the very concept of God. It tries to prove God's existence by analyzing the very idea that God exists and concludes that such a being necessarily exists. The argument bears no relation to our experience, but only to the idea of a Supreme Being. Philosophers like **Saint Anselm** (1033-1109 AD) **Rene Dercartes** (1596-1660) and **Benedict Spinoza** (1632-1677) emphasized this method to prove God's existence.

**Teleological** argument (Argument from design) is an argument which hopes to establish the existence of God from an examination of an inductive inference that we have observed about the universe, like beauty, harmony, purposefulness, etc in the universe. With this there is a conclusion that there must be an intelligent being responsible for all these, that being is called God. One of the foremost philosophers in this school of thought was **David Hume**, though he later presented a good criticism against this method. This argument was applied in different ways by Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine, Aquinas, Leibniz and William Paley (1743-1805).

## **Argument from Morality and Religious or Mystical Experience**

These arguments are based on morality traced to a transcendental being with absolute morality which will also in the long run punish evil and reward goodness. On the other hand arguments based on religious experience are based on mystical or miraculous occurrences and experiences. It is argued that these occurrences and experiences of miracles attest that God exists. Philosophers in this area of religious experience include Frederick Copleston and A.E. Taylor.

In discussing these arguments we shall limit ourselves to few philosophers without which we shall find ourselves delving into over twenty philosophers' attempt to prove God's existence. It should be noted that many philosopher in their attempt to prove that God exists applied the arguments shown above interchangeably. Some simply modified the argument. It is on this ground that few philosophers will be dealt with to avoid duplication of ideas.

### **13.2 Proof to Establish the Existence of God**

(a) **Aristotle** (384-322 BC) is one of the greatest exponents of the **cosmological** or **causal arguments** for the existence of God. However, his ideas were a by product of his master and teacher **Plato** (427-347 BC). Plato used three arguments to prove God's existence. (i) Argument from motion (cosmological), (ii) Argument from design (Teleological), (iii) Argument from universal conviction of mankind of God's existence. Aristotle used change or motion to establish his argument of stating that for anything to move, it has to be moved by another. A being in potency would require a being in act to move it from potentiality to actuality. The motion or change in the universe presupposes a mover that undergoes no change or motion. Motion involves a transition from the state of potency to the state of act. Therefore, for a being to move (from potency to act), it

requires a first mover which is itself unmoved<sup>21</sup> and is pure act. This mover is necessary for the process of change and motion in the universe. That prime mover must be an unmoved mover. The unmoved mover undergoes no change, contains no matter, hence no potentiality. He identifies this unmoved mover as God.

Aristotle's conception of God in this sense is a god that does nothing and plays no part in the activities of the world but serves it by being its goal. This means that God is the cause or origin of everything but has nothing to do with prayers and anthropomorphism. In addition, Aristotle used comparism in form of grade of perfection to prove God's existence. This he did by stating that where there is good and better, there must be best. The best of all things of which all others are striving to attain must be the divine, which is God. God possesses the supreme good; so to wish for all good, with a change of personality, would mean wishing to be God.<sup>22</sup> that is wishing to be perfect as God is perfect. The same applies to all qualities in the universe.

### **(b) Saint Aquinas (1224-1274 AD)**

Aquinas was one of the greatest medieval philosophers who were pre-occupied with the task of using Aristotelian philosophy to reconstruct and buttress the Christian faith. Medieval philosophy was a combination of faith with reason. Among Christian philosophers of note were Saint Augustine (345-480 AD) (over eight hundred years before Aquinas), Saint Anselm (1083-1109), Saint Bonaventure (1221-1274 AD). There were Islamic philosophers like Alfarabi (893-950 AD), Avicenna (Ibnsina), (980-1037) etc. who offered arguments to prove God's existence. Other philosophers are Moses Maimionides (1135-1204), Don Scotus, William of Ockham (1290-1349). Saint Thomas Aquinas is in fact the greatest philosopher in the middle ages. He was a Dominican priest who presented a cosmological or causal argument

regarded as conclusive evidence for establishing the existence of a Supreme Being by the Catholic Church.

Aquinas philosophy is realistic in approach and adopted the Aristotelian metaphysics. He formulated five proofs or ways of demonstrating the existence of God. His approach was the opposite of St. Anselm. Anselm began his proof with the ideas of a being "than which no greater can be conceived" from this, he inferred the existence of that being in as much as the actual existence is greater than the mere idea of a perfect being. By contrast Aquinas said that all knowledge must begin with our experience of sense objects. Instead of beginning with innate ideas of perfection, he rested all five proofs upon the ideas gotten from a rational comprehension of the ordinary objects that we experience without or with our sense.

### **Proof from the Point of View of Motion**

Aquinas stated that it is clear to our senses that some things that are in motion are moved or caused by something. If anything is static, it will never move until something acts on it. When a thing is static, it is potentially in motion. Motion only takes place when a thing potentially in motion is moved and actually in motion. Motion is the transformation of potentiality into actuality. According to Aquinas, "Motion is nothing else than the reduction of something from potentiality to actuality" and that "nothing can be reduced from potentiality to actuality except by something in a state of actuality". Whatever is in motion is moved by another if that other is itself moved, it must be moved by yet another agent. And as infinite series of this is impossible, we come to the possibility of an unmoved mover, a first mover. This unmoved mover for Aquinas is God.

### **Proof from Efficient Causality**

According to Aquinas, nothing can be the cause of itself (an efficient cause is the agent responsible for bringing a thing into being).

The workers in a dockyard are the efficient cause of a boat available for water transportation. Nothing can be the cause of itself. The cause is prior to an effect and every thing has its own prior cause, and it is impossible for causes to continue infinitely. Therefore there must be a first efficient cause, and this efficient cause Aquinas identified as “that which everyone gives the name God”.

### **Proof from Necessary versus Possible Being**

The third proof was taken from possibility and necessity. Things come and go. The possibility of things to be or not to be shows that they are contingent and not necessary beings, since if they are necessary they would always have existed and would neither come into being nor pass away. There was a time a plant did not exist then, it existed and finally it went out of existence.

To say that it is possible for the plant to exist must mean that it is also possible for it not to exist. Possible beings have the character that it cannot exist. At one time it did not exist, will exist for a time and will pass out. That which does not exist begins to exist through something already existing. Thus, there must exist some being having of itself its own necessity, and not coming into being from another. The necessary being must be the reason contingent beings come into existence. And as it is impossible to find any necessary being which have their necessity caused by another as it is with efficiency, it seems possible then to postulate the existence of some being having itself its own necessity. This being is what Aquinas called God.

### **Proof from the Degrees Perfection**



The fourth proof took its stance from the idea of the degree of perfection, the gradation to be found in things. Among things we make comparative judgment of truth, beauty, good etc. This gradation or degree of perfection in things shows the existence of a best of beauty, truth, goodness, etc. The highest of this degree or gradation of truth, beauty, goodness etc, is God, from him others have their foundation.

### **Proof from the Order of the Universe**

The fifth argument he presented was buttressed with his perception that nature was teleological (Argument from design). Things in nature are striving towards an end, but that this does not happen by chance, but by design they achieve their end. Thus, there exists an intelligent being by which all these are directed and this being is God. The major characteristics of these five proofs are (i) they are founded on sense experience. (ii) They rely solely upon the notion of causality.

### **13.3 Criticism Presented Against the Argument of Aristotle /Aquinas**

The above philosophers have presented proof to establish God's existence. But these arguments are not satisfactory or convincing to all philosophers. Let us examine each of these arguments. Arguments from motion (causal), (cosmological), if we say that for a thing to move it must be moved by another and so in a series until we trace the first mover as the unmoved mover which is God. To accept this inference means that God is part of the series and therefore part of the universe he is seen as one of the series of movers, though regarded as the last in the series. It is not reasonable to trace motion beyond the universe to a being out side the universe.

**David Hume** (1711-1776) argued that there is no valid argument that can establish the existence of God or a

supreme being. According to him, the observable succession of events that we consider causes and effects, require no ultimate beginning, since they can be conceived of as continuing indefinitely, forward or backward<sup>23</sup>. To him, even if there were to be a first cause or mover, why could this not be the material physical world rather than God?

**Immanuel Kant** (1724-1804) argued against the principles of the first cause or mover. Before presenting a critique of the cosmological argument, Kant stated, if anything exists then an absolutely necessary being must also exist. Therefore an absolutely necessary being also exists,<sup>24</sup>. The importance of this argument to Kant is based on sense experience. The issue that every event must have a cause is, as far as we can tell, only to the world of sense experience. The cosmological argument presents an empirical knowledge beyond the world of sense experience to a transcended Being. To Kant, this is unjustified and illegitimate and that we have no rational means for arriving at the end of or quest for causes and explanation. Nor have we any way of determining when the series of causes and explanations have been completed.

**Professor Fredrick Copleston** criticized Aquinas and regarded the Cosmological argument presented as rather hasty generalization. He said, "Because he was looking for arguments to prove the existence of the God in whom he believed, was he not perhaps over hasty in identifying the first mover?"<sup>25</sup> Aquinas to him was not right to ascribe the necessary being as God; that a purely philosophical argument does not bring us to the full revealed notion of God. He viewed Aquinas as a theologian who is crowded with dogmatism and belief in God.

He went further to criticize Aquinas for not being able to tell us "whether that being is material or immaterial" Other arguments, for example against "Necessary Being" states that

the argument does not show that there must be only one necessary being responsible for the coming into existence of all contingent beings. If we are not just granting God and exemption without proof, it would imply that God also owes his existence to another being.

The argument of grades of perfection fails to show that all qualities or perfection are embodied in one being and that there are not as many absolute standards (God) as are qualities.

**David Hume** once more attacked the argument from design (Teleological) which he for years have shown its merits. He examines that we have experienced the relationship and connection between human planning and the achievements which emanates from it. But with nature, we have no experience of the cause but the effect alone. Things are in motion, but whatever puts it in motion we cannot tell because we cannot tell how. We ascribed the cause to a transcendental being which we cannot experience and call that being God. Hume says can you pretend to show any such similarity between the fabric of a house and the generation of a universe. Have worlds ever been formed under your eyes, and have you had the leisure to observe the whole progress of the phenomena. An effect must be like its cause, and if we have to infer a cause from an effect, the cause to be inferred must be like the effect which we are making the conclusion.<sup>26</sup> Hume showed that the attempt to establish the existence and nature of a divine being was inconclusive, and the more plausible the argument might be made, the less it will seem to prove any kind of divine Being similar to the ones perceived by religious individuals.

### **13.4 Proof to Establish God's Existence Continued**

**Saint Anselem (1033-1109 AD)** was the exponent of the ontological argument. He argued that God or Supreme

Being is the Being “than which no greater can be conceived”. He is the greatest possible being we can ever think of. As long as we can think of Him, it means that He exists in our minds. But if a being exists in our minds alone and does not exist outside our minds, then, it is not the greatest possible being because any other being that exists outside our mind would be greater, since it is greater to exist both inside and outside the mind than to exist in the mind alone. Thus, God cannot only be conceived in our minds, but also as existing in reality, that is independent of our ideas. In other words, God actually exists in reality (outside our minds) otherwise he would not be the greatest possible or conceivable being.

Anselm's other argument was based on various degrees of perfection in things. We observed that one thing is beautiful and later find others more beautiful and so on. If this process is followed, we shall come to an absolute beauty where all others derived their beauty. This also leads us to absolute goodness, wisdom, justice etc. The absolute being that embodies all these degrees of qualities is the highest degree, which is the source of all. This highest degree is God.

### **(b) Criticisms Presented Against Anselm**

The Ontological argument presented by Anselm is not convincing. The first attack came from Gaunilon a monk of Marmoutier, who stated that for the fact that the greatest conceivable being can be thought in the mind is no proof that God actually exists in reality (outside the mind). Saint Thomas Aquinas criticized it saying that, no matter how great the idea of a being is, it remains an idea in the mind. Argument of this nature should proceed from creatures to creator or from effect to the cause. For the fact that one merely conceives or thinks of God as existing does not follow that God actually exists in reality.

Anselm's point is that it will amount to a contradiction to state that the greatest possible being does not exist in reality. It will simply mean that one is stating that the greatest

possible being is not the greatest possible being. If it does not exist in reality (outside the mind) he cannot be the greatest possible or conceivable being.

In the argument using the degree of perfection, Anselm was criticized in that if there is an absolute beauty, absolute justice, wisdom, goodness etc. these, in the first place still remain ideas and not realities. Logically it would lead us to assume that there are as many Gods or absolute beings.

**(c) Rene Descartes (1596-1650 AD)** was a French mathematician and philosopher who advanced arguments for the existence of God, based on the concept of God as an "infinite, independent, all-knowing, all-powerful and by which myself and everything...have been created".<sup>27</sup> The idea of an infinite being according to Descartes cannot come from him (Descartes) because he is a finite being, hence cannot be the originator of an infinite idea. According to him an infinite idea can only come from an infinite being and it must be this infinite being that plants or impresses this idea into his mind. With this argument, he concludes that an infinite being exists therefore God exists. In addition, he states that it is impossible for him who exists and is finite to have an idea of an infinite being.

"I recognize that it is not possible that my nature should be what it is and indeed that I should have in myself the idea of God, if God did truly exist"<sup>28</sup>. Like Anselm, Descartes states that we perceive closely that infinite or absolute perfection belongs to the idea of God. This means invariably that God has all perfections, and since perfection is a part of existence, it follows that God has existence thus God exists. "... After we have with sufficient accuracy investigated the nature of God, we clearly and distinctly understand that to exist belongs to his immutable nature. Therefore we can with truth affirm of God that he exists".

(d) **Benedict Spinoza (1652-1677 AD)** was a Jewish philosopher whose notion of God was rather different from others. In his work titled **The Ethics**, he presented an ontological argument to prove the existence of God. According to him God is defined as a “being absolutely infinite, that is, a substance consisting of infinite attributes, each of which expresses eternal and infinite essence. According to him, there is only one substance in reality and it is infinite, eternal and divine. It can be called God or nature. Existence appertains or belongs to the nature of substance. All things proceed from this one substance by necessity as its expression and manifestations. To him God is the nature (*naturing nature*) while other creatures are *Natura Naturan* (The natured nature). All finite things are manifestations, part of modifications of God. God or nature necessarily exists. To say that God does not exist, will not hold, because the reason must be either in the very nature of God or outside his nature why he should or cannot exist. There is actually nothing within or outside God to prevent him from existence. Thus it is of necessity that he does exist.

In addition, Spinoza stated that to say that God does not exist is to state that he has neither power nor ability to exist. Inability to exist is want of power while that ability to exist is power. If finite beings which have limited power can exist, it means that infinite beings will have infinite power. Thus existence will be part of the essence of the infinite.

(e) **Criticism presented against the argument of Descartes and Spinoza**

**Descartes** argued that it is reasonable to state that infinite being cannot come from a finite being. But this does not mean that the idea of an infinite being cannot come from a finite being. Thus, the claim that the idea of an infinite being must come from an infinite being does not follow. On this ground we may state that Descartes has not adequately established the existence of God. The argument posed by

Spinoza is also not convincing. It only rests on the definition of substance which states that it necessarily exists. It amounts to *petitio principii* or begging the question. The idea of the ability to exist is also informed because it pre-supposes that a thing could have ability to exist prior to its existence. A non-existent thing cannot have the power or the ability to exist prior to its existence.

**Immanuel Kant** undertook to demonstrate that existence is not the kind of property that can be part of the definition of any conception. The force of the concept or idea of God or a perfect being is not increased by thinking of it as existing, or merely thinking about it.

**(f) Argument from Religious/Mystical and Miraculous Experiences**

Philosophers have postulated various ways to prove God's existence. Some argue that the experiences of religious people and mystics attest to the existence of God.

**A. E. Taylor** (1809-1945), argues that there must be objective reality which religious people such as pastors, prophets, and saints etc. experience. To him, it will be erroneous to dismiss the experience of these people as simply illusions. Taylor compared the religious man and the mystic to an artist or thinker.

Just as the artist conceptualizes and sees beauty everywhere, and the great thinker who creates ideas that become real, so does the religious man perceive the divine presence everywhere. Taylor however does not rule out the possibility of a claim to divine revelation and experience which are illusory. But the fact that some experiences in the religious circle are illusory does not mean that all are illusory. Religion, he stated "is not proved to be an illusion by its aberrations."<sup>30</sup> He went further to argue that there are authentic religious

experiences that testify to the existence and reality of God as against some whose experience are illusory.

**Prof. Fredrick Copleston** did not accept the claim that religious experience is a strict proof of the existence of God. Religious experiences according to him, "is a loving but unclear awareness of some objects which irresistibly seems to the *experiencer* as something transcending all the normal objects of experience. Something which cannot be pictured or conceptualized, but of the reality of which doubt is impossible at least during the experience."<sup>32</sup>

Copleston believes that such experiences above are objective and actual because he found out that they actually influence the lives of those who experienced it. This shows (according to Copleston) that the object of the experience is real. Miraculous occurrences are usually adduced as evidence of God's existence. Miracles are simply unusual occurrences which defy explanation with scientific tools or transcend known laws of nature. However, the fact that miracles defy explanation does not mean that they attest to God's existence because we believe that someday science will be able to explain certain miraculous feats.

As we observed from the foregoing, philosophers have presented various proofs to establish the existence of God. But from other philosophers, some of these proofs are not adequate or sufficient; it then becomes clear that generally they agreed that the existence of God can neither be proved nor be disproved. The issue as we may sum it is that God's existence remains a matter of faith and belief and not of philosophical or scientific explanation. The authors of the Bible seem to have foreseen the possibility of these arguments when they documented God's word which says "as the heavens are high above the earth, so are my thoughts and your thoughts" <sup>33</sup>. God remains a mystery to man because he is transcendental and beyond our sense perception.



The way God is conceived in any religion shows the world view and belief of the people from which that religion emerged, thus religion is culture bound. The African traditional religion (ATR) is a product of the African world view or culture of the African people.

John Nwanegbo-Ben

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### THE PROBLEM OF THE NATURE OF GOD

#### 14.1 What Kind of Being is God?

What kind of being is God? What is He like? For man to believe that God exists or not depends on what he means by the term God. We all have different perceptions of what God may look like. The most common perception is an imaginary very great being seating on a white throne high up in the sky with hosts of angels all around him probably waiting for instructions on what to do. Others view God as a force, an unseen moral order without anthropomorphic qualities like love, hate, anger, jealousy etc. To them, God transcends these emotional qualities. In addition, others see God in everything physical thing. To them, the universe and all things are simply an expression or manifestation of God.

There are various perceptions depending on the orientation of the philosophers or individual. These perceptions have led to various religious beliefs and philosophical speculations leading to Atheism, Pantheism, Polytheism, Monotheism, Agnosticism, Fideism etc.

Questions that may be asked are why do we bother about God? Why are we preoccupied with knowing God or want to go closer to Him? Why do we always feel that God is the solution to that emptiness? Miguel de Unamuno in his book, **Tragic Sense of Life**, stated that "Mans' search for knowledge about God is as a result of the instinct of self preservation."<sup>34</sup>

Man is preoccupied with himself, his existence and the meaning and purpose of life. He wants to find out where his destiny lies after death and this is prompted by his hunger for immortality. Man would like to live forever, but discover that sudden death takes him away to an unknown destination. Man's thirst for God seems naturally based on his thirst for immortality.

Jean Paul Sarte, an existentialist philosopher, describes the desire for immortality by man as a desire to become like God. This for Sarte can be observed in mans' feeling of emptiness and uneasiness within him. Hence his major passion or desires to become like God. However, to Sarte, "this endeavour is impossible for man because God does not and cannot exist, thus, man is seeking the impossible. This is due to the fact that the very idea of God is a contradiction"<sup>38</sup>. To him God cannot be the cause of his being.

The way God is conceived in any religion shows the world view and belief of the people from which that religion emerged, thus, religion is culture bound. The African Traditional Religion (ATR) is a product of the African world view or culture of the African people. Christianity and Judaism are the products of the worldview and culture of the Hebrews and Romans. Islam or Mohammedanism is a product of the culture of the Arabians. Hinduism and Buddhism represent the culture and worldview of the Indians and Chinese people. As a result of cultural differences it became difficult for religions of an alien culture to be introduced to another. This difficulty led to the use of force by the Muslims which they regard as Jihad or holy war.

The early Christians, after the protestant revolutions used signs and wonders" which manifests as miracles of healing to gain followership outside the cultural emergence of these religions.

## **14.2 The Anthropomorphic God of all Religions**

All religions basically worship a particular type of God, but from different perspective. The God of all religions is conceived in the image and likeness of man with human attributes like hearing, seeing, speaking etc. He is an emotional God that can love, hate, could get angry or be jealous or regret after taking a decision. He could be merciful and can reason with man. By logical or philosophical analysis,

(Bear in mind that God is known by faith and not by philosophical analysis see Fideism) this “God” is an embodiment of contradictions. How can a spiritual being have ears, eyes, or nose to perceive incense. If he has all these traits then he must be a corporal being. He is said to all knowing (Omniscience). How come after creating man he did not know that man would contravene his law, instead he regretted the creation of man and sought to wipe him out of the face of the earth. In addition, he is not perfect morally because he is subject to anger, hate and jealousy. This means that he has human limitations hence cannot be infinite or Almighty.

The anthropomorphic God of all religions is simply the product of human imagination. It demands sacrifice of blood and asks for food and drinks. In African traditional religion, He is seen as having intermediaries (gods) or sons and daughters who help in the execution of his laws, thus He is approached through the lesser chiefs, prince and princesses<sup>36</sup>. In Judaism we see how the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah and God smote him there because he put forth his hand to the Ark and he died there beside the Ark of God<sup>37</sup>. In Christianity he is seen as the Trinity-he has a son-“God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son...<sup>38</sup>”. In Islam Allah (God) told Abraham to sacrifice his son to test his faith. Didn't Allah know that Abraham (Abraham) has faith in him? To show this in remembrance Muslims celebrate this incident annually by killing rams.

Indeed from the foregoing, it will be difficult to practice any religion without anthropomorphism. If God were to desire praises, singing, prayers and be asked for forgiveness, burning candles and incense and sacrifice to be offered to Him then God is an anthropomorphic deity. If really He possesses these human traits which religion attributes to Him, then He would be an imperfect being with limitations.

### **14.3 Philosophical Perception of God**

God to both Greeks and Christian philosophers differ from the anthropomorphic deity portrayed by religion. The concept of God of classical philosophy is solely based on the metaphysical foundations of Heraclitus, Parmenides and Plato.

While Heraclitus held that change was the illusion of the senses, that reality was unchanging. Plato in reconciling these philosophies postulated two worlds-the world of change and that of changelessness. The world of change to him is the inferior world it is an imperfect reflection of the unchanging world.

If God were to change, he would be imperfect, thus he is immutable, transcendental and ideal. Aristotle being influenced by Plato his teacher postulated two elements in the world of change. Potentiality is the possibility to change while actuality is the goal towards which change is directed. An absolutely perfect being cannot be subject to change, means that such a being cannot be composed of potency and like finite or imperfect being. God, according to Aristotle, is pure act without potency. It is not subject to change, nor has the emotions such as jealousy, anger, mercy, sympathy, love etc. The above are marks of imperfection. God is eternal, self subsisting and immutable. He is pure Act, without potency, needs nothing outside himself and cannot be influenced by anything outside Himself. He did not create in order to gain anything from creation.

Aquinas maintained that we cannot know what God is nor essence but only what he is not. All that we attributes are done only by analogy. To Aristotle, motion in the universe is the result of God which is himself unmoved but responsible for all motion. God is self-sufficient, he does not need man's worship because he is immutable and nothing external to him can affect or influence him. He does not need our prayers or sacrifices. Since he is eternal and immutable can man ever induce him to change his mind through prayers? God as

perceived philosophically differs from the anthropomorphic God of religion.

Whatever perception we have about the nature of God, reflects our worldviews, orientation and culture. For example the philosophical orientation of Heidegger is responsible for his perception of God as the Being of beings, the source from which individual beings derive their being. On the other hand, within the framework of Hegel's metaphysics the concept of God as an evolving, development and suffering deity evolved. To this process philosophy, cosmic development is part of the development of God. Each stage in the world's development is the Absolute to achieve competent self realization. Cosmic evolution is in fact the evolution of God in and through the cosmic. The God of process philosophy suffers along with humanity and changes along with the historico-cosmic process<sup>39</sup>.

The development of the universe according to this process is the development of God, likewise the evolution of the universe is the evolution of God. Saint Paul stated that "It is in God we live and move and have our being, which means that the universe as a whole, including human beings is within God. In process philosophy the universe is also part of God (Pantheism) God transcends the universe as a whole transcends a part God is the soul while the universe is the body.

In order to find out the kind of Being God is, we need to understand that he is the very essence on which our existence evolves. He is the essence of our search. God is an incomprehensible mystery. The more we search, the more we are overwhelmed and the more we discover that our knowledge of him is limited. As long as we cannot stop searching because of the natural yearning to know, the issue of God cannot be erased from our minds, hence He would continue to exist at least in the consciousness of men even if we cannot empirically prove it.

## 14.4 Atheism and the Death of God

This topic will be greeted with a shudder by some individuals. The religious man who sees it would conjure up damnation that may be meted out on whosoever will advocate atheism and worse to who will ever imagine that God is dead. The title will even be an eyesore to many who may imagine hailstones from God coming down to destroy just as he did to Sodom and Gomorrah. Others may find it exciting to find out how it is that God is dead. All these perceptions depend on the constitution of the mind and orientation of the individual.

Atheism is simply the belief that there is no God, if there is, he cannot in any way affect human existence. One atheistic school of thought maintained that God once existed but is now dead. Who killed God?

Science has led many thinkers to claim that all problems can be resolved by natural, rather than supernatural means. Supernatural concepts can themselves be explained in natural terms. This atheistic contention is that questions that formally were considered in terms of God can now be answered in terms of scientific knowledge. In addition, we now have information that explains why people hold religious beliefs. And the role played by religious beliefs in human history has nothing to do with the actual existence of God.

**Ludwig Feuerbach** maintained that God is no other than the “projected image of human nature”. God is simply “an imaginary being formed imaginatively by man through the projection of his highest qualities e.g. power, goodness, love etc. **Sigmund Freud** also holds this view that God is simply an imaginary father led by childhood neurosis. **Jean-Paul Sartre** on his part to prove that God does not and cannot exist, argued that, if God exists, man will be subordinate to him hence will not be free. It is either there is God and man is not free or man is free and there is no God. But we know that man is free. Therefore there is no God. If God exists man is nothing if man exists. He went further to state that man’s subjectivity will disappear if God exists because God’s look

will open man's innermost secrets. But since we know that man has subjectivity, it also means that God does not exist. In addition he stated that the very idea of God is a contradiction because God cannot be the cause of himself as other philosophers have postulated. How can a being be the cause of his being? To be the cause of his own being could mean that he would have to exist first to cause himself.

A materialistic or naturalistic metaphysics which attempts to account for our knowledge and experience in terms of a cosmos containing nothing but material objects has been advanced as a rational justification of atheism. Some philosophers have posited that no satisfactory theory of the nature of God explained how a divine Being can have the properties attributed to it and yet have any association with man.

**Friedrich Nietzsche** (1844-1900) was the son of a Lutheran pastor. He was the first philosopher who announced to the world that God is dead. His attempt was to disprove God's existence but simply tells us that God is dead. Nietzsche tells us in his book. **"Thus Spoke Zarathustra"** "Have you not heard of the madman who on a bright morning lit a lantern and ran into the market-place crying incessantly: I am searching for God...as it happened many were standing there who did not believe in God, and so he aroused great laughter. The madman leapt into their midst. Where is God, he exclaimed; well, I will tell you. We have killed him- You and I. We, all of us are his murderers"<sup>40</sup>.

The death of God according to him has set man free; it has led to man's liberation, because man is now free from his oppressive commands and prohibitions which are obstacles to the development of the human race. Nietzsche attacks Christianity which preaches morality. He divided, morality into two namely slave morality and master morality. Christianity according to him preaches slave morality which teaches love, humility, peace, kindness, meekness, sympathy, gentleness etc. All these are considered as virtue by slave morality. It



sees weakness as good and strength of character as bad. It prevents people from developing into strong men and sees such men as evil. This according to Nietzsche is an obstacle to human development. The master morality is the morality of the strong and powerful. Man should rejoice and be merry for God the enemy of human development is dead. The churches we see today are simply his tombs or graves of God. "What are these churches now, if they are not the tombs and monuments of God<sup>41</sup>?"

The master morality is the morality of the strong and powerful who have liberated themselves from the commands and prohibitions of God. This morality is characterized by great passion, instinct for war, pride, revenge, adventure, egoism etc.

The death of God to Nietzsche however has two consequences which can be seen as positive and negative. The positive side of it is man's liberation from the oppressive rule of God which has prevented the development of man. Man, with the death of God, is master of himself who can decide on the type of moral values that will suit him, not one provided by Christianity.

On the negative side Nietzsche saw the death of God as a tragedy for the human race. Human life is now meaningless and without purpose. He observes that we are all responsible for this misfortune. God "has bled to death. Under our knives-who will wipe this blood off us? With what water could we purify ourselves...<sup>42</sup>?" Metaphorically Friedrich Nietzsche is stating that God once lived in the hearts of men (including him). During the 19<sup>th</sup> century dispensation in Europe when scientific findings dominated religion, God died in their hearts. God or religion no longer dominate or controlled their lives as it was in medieval Europe. Thus he felt probably that Europe was now heading towards a period of instability, aimlessness and darkness. The revolutions and the world wars of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries seem to justify this prediction. The collapse of the Soviet Union (a country

that never believes in God) could attest to this. The question philosophers have asked is whether Nietzsche actually was an atheist or if he was not merely propagating the gospel metaphorically.

There were other schools of thought that referred to themselves as “Christian Atheists”, radical theologians, atheistic theologians etc. These posited that God once lived as a transcendental being, but came down in the person of Jesus Christ of Nazareth and died on the cross. Since he died, he has remained dead on the cross and that was the end of him. The exponents of this theological movement in the 1960's are **Thomas Altizer, William Hamilton, Van Buren etc.**

**Thomas Altizer** in his book **The Gospel of Christian Atheism** stated that the death of God is good news for mankind because man has been liberated. Only the Christians know that God is dead.

He stated that God in the person of Jesus stripped himself of his divinity to become man and later died on the cross. With this, all about God ended and it is only the Christians that know this secret.

The arguments presented are literally amusing and unconvincing to both Christians and non-Christians. Since philosophy cannot show conclusively that God does not exist, it therefore allows the possibility of religious belief or faith. In addition to faith or fideism is **agnosticism**, which contends that there is no sufficient rational evidence to establish either the existence or non-existence of a supreme being. This means that nobody can know whether or not there is God. It implies therefore that the position of religious faith is just as reasonable as those of atheism and agnosticism. In addition, I am compelled to state that as long as man continues to be satisfied with answers offered by religion to fundamental questions bordering on God or man himself, it cannot be said to be nonsensical or outdated.

### 14.5 Pantheism

Pantheism is a theory of the nature of God which some religious groups tend to see as atheism. Pantheism is the view that God is not a separate being, but the entirety or aspect of the natural order. The theory contents that the universe as a whole is God or the force or energy that pervades the cosmos is God. Hence to this view, God is everywhere, in everything and is everything.

There are philosophers, philosophical schools of thought and religious beliefs that ascribe to pantheism. Benedict Spinoza presented one of the most interesting metaphysical systems as regard the nature of God.

To him, God and Nature are one and the same substance and that everything that exists or takes place in the world is an aspect, modification, or attribute of God. Every physical or mental event in the universe is an aspect of one of the two known attributes of God or nature. This two attributes are thought and extension. According to Spinoza, God has personal qualities and is not independent from the universe. The issue of anthropomorphism which was ascribed to God by others was lacking in Spinozaistic metaphysical system. The attribute proper for the divine nature is "The intellectual love of God and the understanding of the nature of reality" What Spinoza expresses here is that through comprehending the structure of the universe by understanding the enormous scientific system that determines events in the cosmos is inevitably expressing the intellectual love of God.

God as portrayed in **John Scotus Eriugena's work on the division of nature** is identical with that of Spinoza that universe is not different from God because it is God that created himself in all things and manifest himself in them. God is the essence of all things, invisible reality which makes itself visible in things. The universe is simply the manifestation of the invisible reality, visible aspects of the invisible, and the corporeal aspect of the incorporeal.

Hinduism conceived God (Brahman) as the reality that exists. The universe is a manifestation of God including man. Thus God is not external to us. He is our ultimate, deepest or innermost self. It is the universal consciousness of which man's individual consciousness is a part. All physical things are mere appearances and not realities. The only reality is the universal self.

God according to Stoic<sup>43</sup> philosophy is *logos*, that is the universal intelligence or universal soul of which man's soul or intelligence is a part. God and the universe are not separate entities, but only one entity. (This is similar to the God of Hinduism). God is universal reason. It is conceived of as a cosmic power that organizes and governs the entire universe from within. It is the guiding principle of the world.

#### 14.6 Deism and Theism as the Theories of the Nature of God

**Deism** is the theory of the nature of God, which maintains that there is a divine being separate or distinct from the physical world which it has created. This Divine Being however has no direct influence on events occurring within the universe. The universe according to this theory is seen as self contained mechanism which works like a clock and each successive state of affairs or condition can be explained in terms of the previous condition of the mechanism. God according to this theory has created or regulated the world to the best rational principle, and having set all machinery in motion, no longer played any role in the affairs of the natural world. There is no relationship between man and God. Man needs not to pray to God at all because prayer cannot change or affect the ordered system of the universe.

**Theism** is the theory of the nature of God that best suits most religious doctrines. This view states that God stands in some kind of personal or direct relationship with human beings. Theism consist of two schools of thought, namely, **Monotheism** which advanced that there is only one

God as is the case with Christianity, Judaism or Mohammedanism. The other school of thought is **Polytheism** which contends that there are many gods as is the case of African traditional religion.

In **Monotheism** as it is with Christianity, Islam etc. God is portrayed as all powerful and unlimited in what He is able to do. However, the issue of reconciling the concept of the Divine Nature with the evils that occur in this world was to portray God as lacking absolute power or knowledge.

As regards morality, Plato asked, is a thing right because the gods will it or do they will it because it is right? However, a theory which is called Voluntaristic theory states that God has unlimited power such that he makes various things true or good, and for the fact that it has been willed by God then it is right.

Critics however, have proposed that the proposed theories do not meet the requirements of a rational mind, that we cannot rationally know anything at all about the nature of God. Some mystics and fideists maintain that God is beyond any of the classifications that man can conceive. From the point of view of negative theology, for example "God is not bad," God is not a beast etc. The philosopher in examining the issue of religious knowledge and metaphysical theories about the nature of God is not concerned for or against any particular theory or belief. It is not our character to be apologetic, rather our interest to analyse it and raise questions in order to comprehend it rationally.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### 15.0 WHY IS THERE EVIL IN THE WORLD WHERE GOD EXISTS?

The problem of evil in a world governed by an Omniscience and Omnipotent God has been of great concern to philosophers and men of various orientations. Evil in the world has long been a puzzle to the human mind. If God exists and he is infinitely good and powerful, and if the world was actually created by him, it is not possible to understand why there could be so much evil in it. To explain this, philosophers and different schools of thought have postulated various doctrines. These doctrines are the doctrine of the Stoics, the doctrine of the Manicheans, the doctrine of Neo-Platonism, Augustinism and the Judeo-Christian explanation. Each of these doctrines shall be treated in order to find out a plausible explanation of this puzzle.

#### 15.1 The Doctrine of Stoicism

Zeno the founder of stoicism around the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) century BC propagated a pantheistic worldview which maintained that God is simply the soul of the universe while the universe is the body of God. The universe is a well-ordered system, which is governed by rigid laws of nature.

The stoic universe is deterministic because their doctrine states that every thing has been carefully planned from eternity, nothing happens by chance. If any thing occurs, then it falls within the confines of the laws of nature and is part of the whole plan of the universal order. Thus what we regard as evil to the stoics is just part of the eternal plan which contributes towards the order and harmonious existence of the whole universal system. There is really no evil from pantheistic and deterministic worldview because good and evil are useful and complimentary to one another and are all part of God.

According to the stoics, we call certain things evil because we do not understand the mode in which they aid or contribute towards the order and harmony of the universal system. For example earthquakes, floods, AIDS, volcanic eruptions, wars, etc. may appear evil in our eyes but it may simply mean the method in which God in his eternal plan harmonises the population of the world to fit in with trends prevalent in the world.

### **15.2 Doctrine of the Manicheans**

Manes during the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) century BC when the stoic tradition was popular founded the school of the Manicheans.

To resolve the problem of evil and explain the presence of evil in the world, the Manicheans postulated two ultimate principles in the universe. These principles are (i) The principle of good (Ormuzd) and (ii) the principle of evil. (Ahriman). These principles are the ultimate sources of all things in reality.

Ormuzd (Good). This is the principle and source of all spiritual things and of right. In the human, the soul came from ormuzd, the principle of good. **Ahriman** (evil) this is the principle and source of all evil things, darkness and of all material things. To the Manicheans, matter is evil. The human body has its source from the Ahriman (evil). These two ultimate principles are divine, eternal and are in an eternal conflict with each other. This conflict is extended to all that emanated from them, thus, in the universe conflicts are bound to exist. The conflicts between light and darkness, good and evil, ups and downs, spirit and matter, love and hate, joy and sadness etc. are normal in the universal system.

### **15.3 Doctrine of Neo-Platonism**

Plotinus is the founder of the neo-platonic school of thought (An extension of Plato's philosophy). His philosophy on the whole is mystical. As a mystic he presented a

metaphysical viewpoint which explained evil as the negation of being or lack of being.

According to Plotinus all beings emanated from the transcendent deity which he identified as the One. The “One” is the ultimate source of light and source of being. The only being which emanated from one is a divine being which Plotinus called **nous** (Nous means mind or spirit). Out of this nous the world soul emanated.

The world soul has two aspects, namely the **inner** and the **outer** or the **higher** and **lower** aspects. The outer or lower aspect of the world soul is nature, and it is from this aspect that the material world emanated. Matter is at the lowest of being and light in the process of emanation, hence it lacks being and light. The inner or higher aspect of the world soul is being and light. Thus evil is precisely the lack of being and matter is evil and darkness. The above doctrine shows that evil on its part is not a positive thing or an entity, but the absence, privation, or lack of being. And as long as man lives in this material world and is attached to material things, he is bound to experience evil. The only way for the soul to be free from evil is to detach ourselves from material things and the more we detach from material things the less evil we experience.

In addition, what this school of thought is stating is that one could change one’s fundamental nature by renouncing interest in material things and being concerned instead solely with the ideal world. If we can contemplate the ideas the one, a mystical union would take place between oneself and the “One”. According to Popkin and Stroll “we are told that Plotinus was so convinced of this other worldly and mystical side of Platonism that he tried to avoid showing even enough interest in his physical life to take a bath, and instead devoted himself to his studies and to contemplation so as to achieve this mystical union.

**Augustinism** (The philosophy of St. Augustine) Saint Augustine was the Bishop of Hippo at the decline of the



Roman Empire. He adopted the philosophy of the Manicheans when he became disturbed by the problem of evil in the world.

He could not understand how and why there could be evil in world created and governed by God. He wondered where evil came from since God is infinitely good and could not have created evil. Then how did evil come into being? Earlier enquiries led to the adoption of the Manichean philosophy, but after reading the works of Plotinus, he rejected the Manichean explanation in favour of Neo-platonic philosophy, Augustine as a Christian disagreed with Plotinus on some aspects of the doctrine. According to Augustine, every positive thing was created by God. God is the creator of all things all created by him is good. God did not create any thing bad. Matter was created by God and it is therefore good as against the neo-platonic conception that matter is evil.

He went further to state that since evil is not a positive thing as neo-Platonism postulates, but only the negation of being. It is then unreasonable to ask who created evil. Thus evil was not created by God and cannot exist since it is not a being. Substance or things can exist on their own and they are all good because they are creation of God. Nothing according to Augustine is completely evil, instead they can be partially evil and nothing can completely lack being and still be in existence. This is because they emanated from the 'One' the ultimate source of light and being.

Moral evil from this stand point is a product of man's misappropriation of his freewill.<sup>45</sup> Thus, if man misuses his freedom of the will by making an evil choice; he then is the source of evil. God to Augustine is the source of happiness and all things.

#### **15.4 Judaism, Christianity and Islam on the Problem of Evil**

These religions emphasize absolute power and sovereignty of God, and man's duty is to submit unconditionally to His will. Since God is the absolute creator

and lord of the universe everything is under his sovereign manipulation and control. This also means that evil too is under the sovereign control of God, for nothing is outside his control. In the Judeo-Christian philosophy, evil is attributed to God. They held the view that evil was sent by God to punish people for their sins. Evil acts according to this doctrine are executed by an entity called "Satan" which is regarded as a creation of God who revolted against his creator. God can use him to punish evil doers. God said to David when he sinned by killing Uriah and taking his wife, "Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of *thine* own house, and will take thy wives before *thine* eyes... the Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife bore unto David, and it was very sick"<sup>46</sup>. Here, we can see God as the cause of both evil and sickness.

However, Jesus Christ did not preach that evil things happen to men because of their sins. He said 'Do you imagine that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffer such things? I tell you, nay; but except Ye repent ye shall all likewise perish'<sup>47</sup>. And when he was asked by his disciples if a certain man who was blind from birth was as a result of his sin or that of his parents, Jesus answered "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him"<sup>48</sup>. On this ground, it means that evil or suffering is not for the purpose of punishing people. The above thus proposes that Christian doctrine states that God permits evil because he would later turn the evil into good. This can be seen in the suffering and death of Jesus Christ which culminated into glorification and salvation for mankind. Thus God at the end will turn all sorrows that plague mankind into joy and all bad things or evil into good.

### 15.5 Critique of these Doctrines

The stoic metaphysical worldview which is pantheistic does not accurately give a solution to the origin of evil in the world where an infinitely good God exist. The mere

understanding of what evil is does not solve the problem at hand.

The Manichean doctrine has no place for God as the all Powerful and infinite being. This is because good and evil seem to sum up all things in reality. Thus it tends to mean that God is good and evil or that he has nothing in the affairs of men.

Plotinus view of evil as a negation of being is not satisfactory. There is more to evil like pain, sorrow, death, destruction etc, much more than mere absence or lack of being. The Augustine's claim that moral evil is a product of man's misuse of his freewill is not adequate. Didn't the Omniscience" or all knowing God know that man would misuse this freewill which will eventually bring evil? And the claim by Judaism, Christianity and Islam that evil is to test man's faith is unfounded in terms of man's claim that God is Omniscience or all knowing

If He is all knowing, He should know before hand that man will fail or succeed within the framework of such a test. In addition, for God to test a man and get satisfied when he succeeds, makes God an anthropomorphic being. This also is inconsistent with God as Omnipotent or all powerful being. He should have the power to wipe out evil or make man succeed with the test always. In the light of what we have discussed and analysed above, it seems plausible to state that the problem of evil is a product of anthropomorphic conception of God. Why should an infinitely loving father allow his children to be afflicted with so much evil when he could have prevented it? Does it not show that man perceives God as an imaginary father with limitations like our biological father? In all we may conclude that God remains a mystery and that we cannot logically assert from this fact of evil in the world that God does not exist, but that he differs from what we perceived of him.

## **15.6 The Importance of Religion**

We shall conclude this work by stating the importance of religion to mankind. Firstly, we shall examine the influence of religion on our knowledge and try to find out if religion has led to a peaceful co-existence and to national development.

We are all aware how people use the word “know” while in the real sense they mean to say “belief”. If you ask a religious man, “Does God exist?” His answer will be, “Yes I know God exist” if he is asked how you do know that God exists? If he is a Christian, he would simply add, “Because the Bible says so “. On this ground, it means that his claim to knowledge lies in the belief that the Bible (which is his source of authority) says so.

This in fact is not knowledge but belief. Knowledge is based on conclusive evidence. This means that knowledge needs to be proved to be true and in addition must be capable of being demonstrated or shown to be true. Belief on the other hand is not based on conclusive evidence neither can they be proved to be true. What we believe is what is true but cannot be proved. Thus, what we believe may be false even if we believe it to be true.

Knowledge is accompanied with belief, but belief does not include knowledge, and to believe a thing does not mean to know it. A person can believe or say that God exists, but nobody can say that he knows that God exists since he cannot prove conclusively that he actually exists.

The above then means that religion deals with belief not with knowledge. It does not provide man with knowledge but with belief. Religion in fact adds nothing to our ordinary knowledge.

Religion also has been seen as a source of intolerance, discrimination and wars. This we can see in denominational discrimination among Christians, destruction of lives and property here in Nigeria among religious groups. For example the Maitersine Muslim, the Sharia riot which claimed hundreds of lives in Kaduna, Kano, Sokoto, Niger and

Zamfara States of Northern Nigeria, and in Aba, Umuahia, Uyo towns in Southern Nigeria. In March 2000, the Vanguard Newspaper reported that “twenty three babies were delivered in refugee camps in Kaduna, thousands of displaced persons sought refuge in barracks where the army reference hospital is also located and thirteen persons receiving treatment in hospitals for machete wounds.”<sup>49</sup> Boko Haram, an Islamic religious sect that is opposed to western education has been terrorizing Nigeria with suicide bombing and kidnapping with the intent at total Islamization of Nigeria. Few centuries ago, there were “holy” wars or jihads by the Muslims and crusade by the Christians. Others include the caste system in India and religious clashes between the state Muslims and other Muslim groups.

The cause of these evils perpetuated by religion in the name of God is the totally unjustified claim by each religion that it is the custodian of the only way to God. Other religions according to each of them is not the right way to God hence they will be condemned or destroyed by God. This claim is simply a product of ignorance and narrow-mindedness, intolerance and fanaticism. An open minded individual with a broad and universalistic outlook would not ascribe to his religion as the custodian of the way to God neither would he claim that the rest of mankind will be condemned by God. This also shows that religion is a by-product of the worldview of a given people. Each of the religions mentioned throughout this book simply reflect the worldview of the people of that social milieu. It is impossible to understand any of these religions without understanding the culture or worldview of the people.

Despite all the ills we have highlighted so far, religion has also done a lot of good to mankind. Karl Marx identified it as the “opium of the masses” which means that it is used as a tool to pacify the masses that may revolt due to the oppressive capitalist structure. It has inculcated in many people the spirit of self discipline and service to one another.

Its doctrine has brought meaning, purpose and a sense of direction in man's life. Men who had lost hope of living, who are frustrated and saw suicide as the only escape from worldly predicaments found meaning and consolation when they turn to religion.

Religion teaches and encourages morality. Every religion has its own moral or ethical code of conduct. This however does not mean that there is no morality without religion because it is not the foundation of morality. But it aids to maintain societal norms. It helps people to find meaning and purpose in life and encourages them to live moral lives. Its major achievement is the promotion of morality in society.

In all, when we view man's natural urge to search for the Absolute, we discover that there is interplay of the struggle of two worlds, the known and unknown worlds. The known world is that of the sense experience., which we can prove empirically. The second is the unknown world that is transcendental or beyond human perception. Since man is naturally curious to know the unknown, the search for an Absolute that may be the source of this transcendental or natural world led to the development of religious doctrines backed by belief and faith as a source to true knowledge. Thus Saint Thomas Aquinas stated that we need to believe first in order to know. Hence, the search for the absolute is the search for an unknown truth or knowledge that cannot be proved or justified, but accepted by belief and faith.

## CHPATER SIXTEEN

### THE IMPORTANCE OF PHILOSOPHY IN HUMAN AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We sometimes wonder when the issue of philosophy as a course comes into our mind. And due to conception that philosophy has to do with the extra-mundane or abstract entities or realities, we tend to ask ourselves or others questions such as, “what is the importance of philosophy to man and the society he lives in?” This question, when viewed critically also expresses a question such as, “what is the essence of philosophy?”

Philosophy is both theoretical and practical in dimension. It is a misconception to classify philosophy as only theoretical and abstract without practical relevance. Ethics is a good example of practical philosophy. Good behaviour, moral rectitude, scientific and technological development etc can only be possible in a cultured philosophic (investigative) mind.

Philosophy has three major functions. Firstly, it is *Normative* in the sense that it prescribes how men ought to be, thus leading to the development of various philosophical systems as model. Secondly, it is *Analytic*. It tries to resolve or clarify meanings of concepts, beliefs, opinion or ideas. Thirdly, philosophy is *Interpretative* in that it explains, interprets or reveals the true meaning and nature of realities or symbols of human experience. All ideologies and philosophical systems revolve around these three functions.

Philosophy strives by question, thus fosters the attitude of reflection and analysis, hence eliminating dogmatism and parochialism. It inquires deeper into the problems of human existence and as a science is an ordered, systematic and critical evaluation of our worldviews. Thus, making us to have clear ideas of what we believe in.

Philosophy enhances one's intellectual development in the area of critical thinking. It exposes us to the meaning of right and wrong, human value, justice etc. It deepens our understanding of society, man and his environment. An orientation in philosophy frees us from the illusion as regards the belief in the absolute certainty of the methods of scientific proceedings and the dogmatic acceptance of the superiority of any given paradigm and education in favour of an undogmatic approach to knowledge. Philosophy leads to the renewal of our personality.

In trying to delve into the exposition of the essence of philosophy to man and his society, it will be pertinent to trace historically some practical effect philosophy had in the lives of people in the past.

The first practical effect of philosophy on people in the West was from the sophists whose interest was on man in society. Sophists were teachers of rhetoric who through their teachings instructed the youths on how to participate in the domestic government of Athens. Through their teachings, they prepared the minds of the youths in critical thinking, such that they were able to comprehend the dialectics of the Socratic teachings.

The anti-social philosophy of Diogenes and Antisthenes the cynics developed into stoicism and consequently into the Christian philosophy. These philosophies have influenced the moral lives of millions all over the world even up till date.

The Socratic teachings which contend that the "unexamined life is not worth living" and that "Man know thyself and ways" were a product of ethical teachings which affected the lives of the Athenian youths. His teachings were not accepted by the Athenian government who saw his philosophy as misdirected and miss-education of the youths. On this account, Socrates lost his life and many philosophers left Athens.



In the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, the philosopher Hegesias philosophized over the worthlessness of human life on earth. This philosophy led to the suicide of many people who attended his lectures. He was however forced to stop his teachings.

The French revolution came as a result of the philosophy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. In his social contract he states "Man is born free and is everywhere in chains". The American and British constitutions have their bases on the philosophy of John Locke. The workers uprising of 1848 in Europe was a by-product of Marx and Engels' philosophy.

Philosophy as a source of human and national development is a thing that develops gradually through the human mind. For a nation to develop, the primary area to direct attention is the human dimension. In other words, the development of a nation is primarily the development of the human personality.

The vital contribution of philosophy is the development of the human person. It is on this ground of emphasis on the human person that Socrates advised saying: "Man know thyself". This statement as we have discussed earlier in this book focuses attention on man's attention to himself. When man views himself, he discovers that he is surrounded by mystery which he cannot explain. He begins to wonder about the worth of his existence. Albert Camus as an existentialist stated concerning man in his book titled **The Myth of Sisyphus** that "I see many people die because they judge that life is not worth living"<sup>50</sup> What philosophy does is to teach you how life ought to be lived, and this is done mainly in the development of the mind and will of men. The training of the mind comes when we begin to see things critically which aids in acquiring the right sense of value and right attitude to living.

In addition to the development of the person through critical thinking is moral development, which is a very important aspect of the development of the human personality. Moral development of the citizens is a condition

or a *sine-qua-none* for the development of a nation. Any nation where there is moral debasement, corruption relating to fraud, embezzlement, robbery, murder, bribery and various vices, such a nation will never develop. A nation where selfishness, individualism and greed are an integral part of their social set up, the issue of development will be an illusion.

The branch of philosophy, which takes care of morality, is ethics. Ethics as a branch of philosophy is also termed practical philosophy which includes social philosophy, political philosophy and philosophy of law (jurisprudence). The political philosophy of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, summed in neo-welfarism is an attempt to propagate a peaceful communalistic society.

Philosophy deals with different types of moral laws, social consciousness and emphasizes how to live in order to achieve a good and happy life for all. With a good critical and moral attitude, there is every tendency for a nation to achieve material possessions and good standard of living for its citizenry. It should be noted that it is not the mere knowledge of philosophy that brings the good life or change in a nation or person, but in acting according to the truth known through a given philosophy. When we talk of happiness as the goal of mankind, we will discover that true happiness is an activity of the soul that does not depend on the knowledge of the good, but in living a good life. True happiness is not in understanding life but in living with understanding among men and nature. True happiness is not much in education and learning but in having good will that attracts men to God and makes them geniuses of their time. It does not merely know the good, but acting as a good man is what brings change in a society. We all know that drugs and drug abuse is bad, but it is only when we desist from trafficking in it that social change will be assured in that dimension. Our Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth said "ye shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free". This statement by implication states that truth transcends mere knowledge of a principle, but accepting and acting in accordance with universal principles.

Therefore, for philosophy to be meaningful to the individual or the nation of Nigeria as a whole, one should not merely be excited by its use of fantastic words nor be carried away by its brain teasing questions, but acting as one who has got the knowledge of the good. It is only with this awareness that a positive societal change for the better will be achieved. What we as philosophers have done, is to interpret the world, while the change lies in everybody's hands.

### **Some Philosophical Systems or Schools of Thought**

There are various schools of thought or philosophical systems and these systems depend on the orientation and epistemological worldviews of the philosophers that propounded them. It is the varieties of worldview that has given rise to the various systems of philosophy. Below are examples of some of these systems.

**Rationalism:** This is a philosophical system that emphasizes the application of reason alone as the source of knowledge. It holds that the mind has the power to know some truths that are logical prior to experience. It maintains that we cannot find any absolute certain knowledge in sense experience, but have to seek for it only in the realm of the mind. The major proponents of this system are Plato (437BC) Rene Descartes (1396, 1650) Benedict Spinoza (1632-1677) Gottfried Leibniz (1646-1716) and Immanuel Kant (1724-1804).

**Empiricism:** This emphasizes that experience is the sole source of knowledge. Empiricism is opposed to abstract speculative or deductive method. It is a school of thought that denies or doubts the validity of all intellectual knowledge and admits only the certainty of sense knowledge. It proposes induction, observation, test and verifiability. To this system there is no such thing as innate ideas that have not come from experience. Notable advocates of empiricism are Francis Bacon (1361), John Locke (1632) David Hume (1711) Saint Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274) and George Berkeley (1685).

Berkeley later went further to an idealistic philosophy which we identify as immaterialism. Modern science is empirical, it is interested in facts.

**Idealism:** Is a theory or philosophical system which emphasis mind, spirit, soul or ideas as the ultimate source of knowledge. One of the earliest idealists in the history of philosophy is Plato (427BC). Others are George Berkeley (Subjective idealism or immaterialism) and Fredrick Hegel (1770) Absolute or objective idealism). Hegelian idealism contends that mind is real and only mental actions and efforts can form the basis for the world of our experiences.

**Realism:** The fundamental tenet of realism is that there exists a physical world that is real and independent of the mind's perception of it. What we perceive is the physical world and the physical objects in it. Aristotle (384BC) is the founding father of realism. Realism is the most closely related theory of knowledge to empiricism.

**Materialism:** This is the view that everything is to be accounted for in terms of material causes, that the whole of reality consists of matter e.g. atoms, energy, and electrons. Mind, God, mental or spiritual entities are rejected or reduced to matter.

There are three types of materialism, **Historical, materialism, Dialectical materialism and Mechanistic materialism (Mechanism)** based on Karl Marx's theory. Marx tried to explain history in terms of the struggle between classes. These classes are determined by economic means and conditions of production. All changes in history, according to this school of thought, take place in accordance with the law of the dialectics: a thesis is produced, it develops an opposition (its antithesis), a conflict between them ensures and the conflicts is resolved into a synthesis which includes both thesis and antithesis. The dialectics is a logical process, which proceeds from thesis to antithesis and to a synthesis, which combines them both. Dialectical materialism lays emphasis on a view of historical development in which matter,

in the form of the economic organization of society, determines reality.

**Mechanistic Materialism** (Mechanism) is a philosophical system that proposes that the world and changes in the universe consist of matter and motion. All mental activities are reduced to muscular and neural acts. No freewill whatsoever, because man is a part of the physical universe determined by the physical laws of nature. Everything in the universe including body and the soul are composed of atoms.

To this school of thought, freewill and whatever action or thought a man has are influenced and determined by impulses coming from objects that act on the sense. It rejects spiritual or immaterial substances in man. Philosophers who are exponents of these schools of thought under materialism are Democritus, Epicurus, Thomas Hobbes (1588) and Karl Marx (1818).

**Naturalism:** This is a theory that claims that all features of the universe can be explained or accounted for in natural or experiential terms, (unlike materialism, which emphasizes physical concepts of matter and motion. Materialism is a restricted form of Naturalism). Naturalism allows for the inclusion of any of the concepts that arises from our study of nature and experience and not merely the concepts of physical science. It rejects the supernatural and divine revelation and contends that natural causes and laws explain all phenomena. Things and events have natural rather than a supernatural cause; that the cosmos and man has a natural rather than supernatural origin.

**Pragmatism** (Instrumentalism) is a theory, which contends that a theory is true if it works. It emphasizes experience, experimental enquiry, and truth, which have satisfactory consequences. The meaning of any theory is determined by its workability and its practical, social or scientific consequences. Pragmatism is a method of solving or evaluating problems or our attempt to resolve difficulties

that arise in the course of our attempt to deal with experiences. Our theories are instruments employed in order to solve problems in our experience. If the theory is successful, then it is true and has a cash value. John Dewey's version of pragmatism (instrumentalism) states that ideas are instruments for practical use in changing the problematic conditions of one's existence.

The major exponents of pragmatism are John Dewey, Charles Sanders Pierce and William James. It was a philosophy that developed as a reaction against metaphysics.

**Existentialism:** This was the last form of contemporary philosophy, which emphasized human existence. It stresses the human existence. It stresses the human predicament or feelings distinctive to individuals rather than man as an abstract concept. The existentialists are not concerned with the existence of wood, trees, dogs, rocks etc, but only with human existence. These things do not exist, they simply are. Only human beings exist. To exist is to be personally involved in the drama of life rather than a passive spectator. It is a philosophy that is against Hegelian idealism. It is a philosophy that is concerned with describing and exposing human uniqueness and the primacy of existence as against essence.

The major exponents of this philosophy are Søren Kierkegaard, Karl Jasper, Gabriel Marcel, Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre etc.

**Marxism:** This is a philosophical tenet of Karl Marx, a theory and principle of scientific socialism based on economic and political forces, which can be understood in terms of certain general laws of history called "the dialectic". It teaches that change is fundamental. The philosophy revolves around class struggle, labour theory of value, the nature of alienation and the call for aggressive revolution that will usher in a state of perfection exemplified in a classless communist society.

**Determinism:** This is a philosophical theory which denies that man is really free. Several reasons are advanced to prove this, thus we have ethical, theological physical, psychological and historical determinism. These theories postulate that man's actions are determined by what they see. Theological determinism postulates that God knows in advance and has predestined all actions of man. Man is a physical (physical determinism) part of nature thus all his actions are determined by physical laws. Human actions are (psychological determinism) determined by his feelings and emotions. They have in their environment and that Man's life is determined by historical events (historical determinism). Thus man in conclusion is not a free agent.

**Positivism:** This is a philosophical system developed by August Comte. It is based on observable phenomena and positive facts rather than speculations. It emphasizes analysis and verification of empirical statements by observation. Comte's (classical) positivism maintains that the human mind develops through three distinct stages namely religious, metaphysical and positive stage. The later being a stage of positive science, the stage in which scientific worldview replaces religious or metaphysical worldviews.

**Atheism:** Is the view that there is no God, or if there is he cannot in anyway affect human life or existence.

**Theism:** Is the view or theory that maintains that there is a god or gods that have direct personal relationship with human beings.

**Monotheism:** Is the view that limits the conception of divinity to one God, like that of the Christians and Muslims.

**Polytheism:** This is the view that there are many gods as is the case in African traditional religion, Greek mythology and Hinduism.

**Deism:** This is a theory that maintains that there exists a divine power or being that created the physical world, but this being has no influence in the affairs of the world. Thus,

since God takes no active part in the affairs of the world, there is no point in praying.

**Anthropomorphism:** This is the view that the natures of God are like human beings. God has the human quality of anger, happiness regret laughter etc.

**Solipsism** (Immaterialism) this is a philosophical theory propagated by George Berkeley (subjective idealism). It states that the universe is nothing but my mind, its ideas and myself.

**Fideism:** This is a school of thought that proposes that religious knowledge transcends the limits of man's rational faculties and understanding, and should be based solely on faith. Most religious traditions are based on fideistic theory.

**Pantheism:** This is the view that God is not a separate being, but is the entirety or aspect of the natural order. This theory contends that the universe as a whole is God, or the force or energy that pervades the cosmos is God. To this view God is everywhere, in everything and is everything. The view goes further to postulate that the universe is part of God, that God and the universe are one and the same thing. The major proponent of Pantheistic philosophy is Benedict Spinoza. Spinoza's view is that God is not separate from the universe. Every physical or mental event is an aspect of one of the two attributes of God or nature, thought or extension.

**Agnosticism:** This is philosophy, which contends that there is no sufficient rational evidence to establish either the existence or the non-existence of a supreme being (God). Opinions as to what to accept are withheld until such a time when more decisive evidence is proffered. It is the view that nobody knows and nobody can know whether or not there is God.

**Fatalism:** This is a philosophy that believes that "what will be, will be". That events and human actions are irrevocably fixed and that historical events, such as wars and revolutions are "fated" to happen, and are therefore unavoidable.



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## **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

True happiness is an activity of the soul that does not depend on the knowledge of the good, but in living a good life not in understanding life, but in living understandingly. Neither is it in much education and learning, but by having goodwill that attracts man to God and makes him a genius of his time.

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