

## THE NATURE OF PHILOSOPHY

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2<sup>nd</sup> Year

Roll 413

Philosophy literally means 'love of wisdom'. It is an attempt to arrive at a rational conception of the reality as a whole. It enquires into the nature of the universe in which we live, the nature of the human soul, and its destiny and the nature of God or Absolute and their relation to one another. It enquires into the nature of matter, time, space, causality, evolution, life, and mind, and their relation to one another. It is the art of thinking all things logically systematically, and persistently. It is the art of thinking rationally and systematically of the reality as a whole. Plato rightly conceived of philosophy as the persistent attempt to seek clear notions. It examines, clarifies and explains popular and scientific concepts of matter, space, time, causality, evolution, mechanism, teleology, life, mind or soul, God or the Absolute, right and wrong, good and evil beauty and ugliness, and the like, and arrives at a rational conception of the reality. Philosophy is the critical analysis of the popular and scientific concepts, and the discovery of their relations to one another.

Philosophy is the rational attempt to have a world-view. Philosophy is the criticism of life. It enquires into the nature, meaning, purpose, origin and destiny of human life. It is the interpretation of life, its value, and meaning. It is an enquiry into its source and destiny. It investigates the nature of the supreme norms, ideals, or values of life. It investigates the relation of values to reality. In this sense, philosophy is the interpretation of life. The humanistic aspect of philosophy is emphasized in recent years. Philosophy is regarded now more as an interpretation of human life, its source, value, meaning and destiny, than as an enquiry into the nature of the world, soul and God. It tries to understand the universe in relation to man. It seeks to give a rational conception of the reality as a whole which satisfies man's deepest intellectual, moral, aesthetic, and religious aspirations.

Man is a rational being. He lives in the physical and social environment. He reacts upon his environment and adjusts himself to it. Though he is a free center of activity, he is moulded by the environment and moulds himself accordingly to his ideal. He reflects upon the environment and himself, and also their relation to each other. He reflects upon the meaning, value and purpose of his life. He reflects upon the nature, value and purpose of the world and

society in which he lives. He reflects upon the deepest mystery of the universe, the real nature of his own soul, the innermost core of reality, the nature and meaning of God in relation to human experience. Man as a rational being, cannot but philosophize. Philosophy is a rational reflection on life. It is a criticism of life and experience.

Man lives and reflects upon his life. He reflects upon the nature, meaning and destiny of life. Man reflects upon his life and makes an intellectual effort to harmonize the various aspects of his experience, intellectual, aesthetic, moral and religious with one another by a rational conception of the reality as whole. Thinking is a hard job. Rational thinking is harder still. Rational speculation on the whole of human life and experience, the totality of the various aspects of human and a have a synoptic view of the universe is the task of a philosopher. It cannot be satisfied with a partial fragmentary, sectional view. Philosophy seeks to have a complete view, a vision of the whole. □