

2011-2022 || **12 Years Solved**

Topic-wise Solutions of Previous Years' Papers

PHILOSOPHY

IAS Mains Q&A

**Also Useful for All State Public Service Commission
and Other Examinations**

Edited by - N.N. Ojha

Guiding Civil Services Aspirants Since 30 Years

Solved by - Chronicle Editorial Team

CHRONICLE

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ABOUT THIS BOOK

Philosophy - IAS Mains Q & A - revised and updated edition (2023) covers topic-wise solutions to previous 12 years' papers (2011-2022) as per the latest syllabus.

Ideally, going through last 10-15 years papers is enough for an aspirant to get a taste of the pattern of questions being asked and how their answers should be. So, keeping this in view, without compromising on quality of answers, we have provided last 12 years' answers. Further, this has been done to cap the price as well as number of pages i.e. to prevent the book getting bulkier.

Importance of Philosophy as an Optional: It has the shortest syllabus, so it saves time for preparation of 'General Studies' papers. The syllabus is also well-defined and compact. The syllabus for philosophy is almost entirely static.

Many topics of philosophy would be useful for other subjects like the Ethics and the Essay paper. Some of the concepts in philosophy can be used in the other general studies papers. Philosophy also provides ample material for topics like democracy, humanism, religion, morality, secularism, women empowerment and the like. The study of philosophy can equip candidates to tackle the unique nature of the Ethics paper (GS - IV). Philosophy can unleash original thinking in candidates. It can also improve the writing skills of students which will prove fruitful in all papers of the IAS mains. Another great advantage of philosophy is that candidates with just about any academic background can opt for this optional. Philosophy is an elementary subject and it does not require any prior knowledge. Some of the concepts are very general in nature.

Answer writing in this Book: We have put forth answers to each question as per the demand of the question. A descriptive approach has been adopted while writing these answers to arm you with relevant knowledge related to all aspects of a particular topic. In most of the answers, we have provided additional information, not necessarily adhering to the prescribed word limit while answering the questions covering all dimensions. This will enrich your knowledge on that topic, enabling you to write better answers in future.

How to use this book: This book will assist you in your answer writing practice in two ways - use this book as a source of reference for the topics and write answers in your own unique way or alternatively, you may write previous years' answers and compare them with the standard answers provided in this book.

Optional subject has become the deciding factor in getting an interview call. Though UPSC has introduced four GS papers to give a level playing field to all, the dynamic and unpredictable questions of GS papers defeated the purpose and made Optional paper the magic wand. The toppers' optional marks also tell it loudly that optional subject plays a defining role in determining the selection of the candidates.

So, overall this book is an ideal companion for you going to appear the Mains examination. To help the aspirants to get acclaimed with the pattern and trend of the exam, this book is a valuable gift to our readers.

—Editor

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PAPER - I

HISTORY & PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY

Plato and Aristotle
Rationalism
Empiricism
Kant
Hegel
Moore, Russell and Early
Wittgenstein
Logical Positivism
Later Wittgenstein
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INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

Carvaka
Jainism
Schools of Buddhism
Nyaya- Vaishesika
Samkhya
Yoga
Mimamsa
Schools of Vedanta
Aurobindo
Miscellaneous

1 CHAPTER

PLATO & ARISTOTLE

Q. How does Plato use the theory of forms to establish the relation between epistemology and metaphysics? Discuss. (I.A.S. 2022)

Ans. Three predecessors heavily influenced Plato's thoughts on metaphysics and epistemology - Heraclitus, Parmenides, and Socrates. Only fragments remain of the writings of Parmenides and Heraclitus, including some contained in the dialogues of Plato. Socrates wrote nothing. Plato's depiction of his teacher is our primary source of evidence for his philosophy. Parmenides argued that there is and could be only one thing, Being. One could not even think or say what is not.

Moreover, since change implies that something comes to be what it was not – I change from not being tan to being tan, nothing can change. Reality is static. The appearance of change is just that, a deceptive appearance. Unfortunately, what little we have left of Parmenides does not allow us to decide whether he argued that there is just one item, Being, in his universe – strict numerical monism – or whether there is just one kind of thing, beings or things that are. Parmenides' account of Being seems to have contributed to Plato's doctrine of Forms.

Plato's concepts of epistemology and metaphysics are very closely connected and are directly related to how we come to know things. What separates these two ideas is how each aspect deals with knowledge. There is an important difference between the knower and the known. The knowing aspect is a central focus of epistemology, while the objects that can be known are central to Plato's metaphysics. The divided line allows us to clearly distinguish between the two different disciplines.

Plato's Theory of Forms relies on the dichotomy between the physical realm and what Plato termed the realm of forms. The physical realm is easy enough to understand: it is the world that people inhabit. It is full of tangible objects and it is the only world that people ever actually experience during their lifetimes.

For Plato, however, the physical realm was insufficient to explain certain ideas. He posited the existence of a spiritual plane called the realm of forms. In this realm were the perfected and unchanging concepts behind physical reality.

Q. Is Aristotle's view of the nature of identity in consonance with his metaphysical view of causes as processes? Discuss giving suitable examples. (I.A.S. 2022)

Ans. The first major work in the history of philosophy to bear the title "Metaphysics" was the treatise by Aristotle that we have come to know by that name.

But Aristotle himself did not use that title or even describe his field of study as 'metaphysics'; the name was evidently coined by the first century C.E. editor who assembled the treatise we know as Aristotle's Metaphysics out of various smaller selections of Aristotle's works.

The title 'metaphysics' – literally, 'after the Physics' – very likely indicated the place the topics discussed therein were intended to occupy in the philosophical curriculum. They were to be studied after the treatises dealing with nature. In this entry, we discuss the ideas that are developed in Aristotle's treatise.

These causes and principles are clearly the subject matter of what he calls 'first philosophy'. But this does not mean the branch of philosophy that should be studied first. Rather, it concerns issues that are in some sense the most fundamental or at the highest level of generality.

Aristotle distinguished between things that are "better known to us" and things that are "better known in themselves," and maintained that we should begin our study of a given topic with things better known to us and arrive ultimately at an understanding of things better known in themselves.

2 CHAPTER

RATIONALISM (DESCARTES, SPINOZA, LEIBNIZ)

Q. Discuss the concept of substance according to Spinoza. Does his discussion on substance lead to pantheism? Substantiate your view.

(I.A.S. 2022)

Ans. According to Spinoza, everything that exists is either a substance or a mode. A substance is something that needs nothing else in order to exist or be conceived. Substances are independent entities both conceptually and ontologically. A mode or property is something that needs a substance in order to exist, and cannot exist without a substance.

For example, being furry, orange, hungry, angry, etc. are modes that need a substance which is furry, orange, hungry, angry, etc. Hunger and patches of orange color cannot exist floating around on their own, but rather, hunger and patches of orange color need something to be hungry and have the orange color. Hunger and colors are, therefore, dependent entities or modes.

According to almost all of Spinoza's predecessors there are lots of substances in the universe, each with their own modes or properties. For example, according to Descartes a cat is a substance which has the modes or properties of being furry, orange, soft, etc. (Though some have argued that Descartes cannot actually individuate multiple extended substances.

Spinoza, however, rejects this traditional view and argues instead that there is only one substance, called "God" or "Nature." Cats, dogs, people, rocks, etc. are not substances in Spinoza's view, but rather, cats, dogs, people, rocks, etc. are just modes or properties of one substance. This one substance is simply people-like in places, rock-like in other places, chair-like in still other places, etc.

Spinoza defines the term "attribute" in Definition 4 of Part One of the Ethics thus: "Per attributum intelligo id, quod intellectus de substantia percipit, tanquam ejusdem essential constituents." That is, "By attribute I understand what the intellect perceives of substance as constituting its essence."

Nonetheless, it is astonishing how little agreement there is among scholars as to some of the most basic features of Spinoza's theory of attributes.

Spinoza's Pantheism

The term 'pantheism' is a modern one, possibly first appearing in the writing of the Irish freethinker John Toland and constructed from the Greek roots pan (all) and theos (God). But if not the name, the ideas themselves are very ancient, and any survey of the history of philosophy will uncover numerous pantheist or pantheistically inclined thinkers; although it should also be noted that in many cases all that history has preserved for us are second-hand reportings of attributed doctrines, any reconstruction of which is too conjectural to provide much by way of philosophical illumination.

At its most general, pantheism may be understood positively as the view that God is identical with the cosmos, the view that there exists nothing which is outside of God, or else negatively as the rejection of any view that considers God as distinct from the universe.

Q. How does Rene Descartes explain the notion of certainty with reference to knowledge of the self? Critically discuss the way it differs from the knowledge of the world.

(I.A.S. 2022)

Ans. Descartes on Certainty: Certainty, or the attempt to obtain certainty, has played a central role in the history of philosophy. Some philosophers have taken the kind of certainty characteristic of mathematical knowledge to be the goal at which philosophy should aim. In the Republic, Plato says that geometry "draws the soul towards truth and produces philosophic thought by directing upwards what we now wrongly direct downwards".

Descartes also thought that a philosophical method that proceeds in a mathematical way, enumerating and ordering everything exactly, contains everything that gives certainty to the rules of mathematics".

3 CHAPTER

EMPIRICISM (LOCKE, BERKELEY, HUME)

Q. Why and how does John Locke refute the innate ideas? Elucidate the nature and source of knowledge in Locke's epistemology.

(I.A.S. 2022)

Ans. John Locke on Innate Ideas: Although Locke holds that all ideas come from experience, many of his contemporaries did not agree. For example, in the Third Meditation, Descartes argues that the idea of an infinite and perfect God is innate.

He argues that we cannot get the idea of an infinite God from our limited experience, and the only possible explanation for how we came to have this idea is that God created us so that we have the innate idea of God already in our minds. Other rationalists make similar arguments for other ideas. Following Noam Chomsky, this is sometimes called a Poverty of Stimulus Argument.

Locke has two responses to the Poverty of Stimulus Arguments for innate ideas. First, Locke argues that some people do not even have the ideas that the rationalists claim are innate. For example, some cultures have never heard of the theistic conception of God and so have never formed this kind of idea of God. In reply, some might claim that the idea of God is in the mind even if we are not conscious of that idea. For example, Plato suggests we are born with the idea of equality but we become conscious of this idea only after seeing equal things and thus "recollect" the idea; Leibniz suggests innate ideas are "petite perceptions" that are present even though we do not notice them. However, Locke argues that saying an idea is "in the mind" when we are not aware of it is unintelligible. An idea is whatever we are aware of, and so if we are not aware of an idea, then it is not "in the mind" at all.

Whereas rationalist philosophers such as Descartes held that the ultimate source of human knowledge is reason, empiricists such as John Locke argued that the source is experience.

Rationalist accounts of knowledge also typically involve the claim that at least some kinds of ideas are "innate," or present in the mind at birth. For philosophers such as Descartes and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, the hypothesis of innateness is required in order to explain how humans come to have ideas of certain kinds. Such ideas include not only mathematical concepts such as numbers, which appear not to be derived from sense experience, but also, according to some thinkers, certain general metaphysical principles, such as "every event has a cause."

Locke claimed that that line of argument has no force. He held that all ideas (except those that are "trifling") can be explained in terms of experience. Instead of attacking the doctrine of innate ideas directly, however, his strategy was to refute it by showing that it is explanatorily otiose and hence dispensable.

As Locke used the term, a "simple idea" is anything that is an "immediate object of perception" or anything that the mind "perceives in itself" through reflection. Simple ideas, whether they are ideas of perception or ideas of reflection, may be combined or repeated to produce "compound ideas," as when the compound idea of an apple is produced by bringing together simple ideas of a certain color, texture, odor, and figure. Abstract ideas are created when "ideas taken from particular beings become general representatives of all of the same kind."

The "qualities" of an object are its powers to cause ideas in the mind. One consequence of that usage is that, in Locke's epistemology, words designating the sensible properties of objects are systematically ambiguous. The word red, for example, can mean either the idea of red in the mind or the quality in an object that causes that idea. Locke distinguished between primary and secondary qualities, as Galileo did.

According to Locke, primary qualities, but not secondary qualities, are represented in the mind as they exist in the object itself.

PAPER - II

SOCIO-POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Social & Political Ideals

Sovereignty

Individual and State

Forms of Government

Political Ideologies

Humanism, Secularism, Multiculturalism

Crime and Punishment

Development and Social Progress

Gender Discrimination

Caste Discrimination

PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

Notions of God

Proofs for the Existence of God & their Critique

Problem of Evil

Soul: Immortality; Rebirth and Liberation

Reason; Revelation and Faith

Religious Experience

Religion without God

Religion and Morality

Religious Pluralism & Problem of Absolute Truth

Nature of Religious Language

1 CHAPTER

SOCIAL & POLITICAL IDEALS

Q. “Complete liberty may lead to inequality while order and restrictions imply a necessary loss of freedom”. Critically discuss.

(I.A.S. 2022)

Ans. Democratic societies expect a kind of balance: a compromise between liberty and equality. Complete liberty logically leads to inequality. A strong or ambitious person might acquire more goods and property than another, and someone is bound to dominate. But the line has to be drawn before an individual seizes power that greatly restricts the liberties of others.

One kind of balance is between order and liberty. Imagine a society in which everyone was perfectly free to do as he or she pleased, leading to chaos. Order implies a necessary loss of freedom if people are to survive. Democratic countries cherish individual freedom and generally believe that laws should not be repressive. A little order can be sacrificed in the name of liberty.

Governments might restrict their citizens’ liberty by overemphasizing equality. For example, governments can bring about equality by taxing rich citizens more than the poor, but if they carry their policies too far, they might restrict the individual’s freedom to strive for economic success. The balance between liberty and equality is an important cornerstone of democratic government.

Q. What arguments does Bodin present to contend that sovereignty must be absolute, perpetual and undivided? Is Bodin’s conception of sovereignty compatible with the social and political ideals of equality, justice and liberty? Critically discuss.

(I.A.S. 2022)

Ans. Jean Bodin’s theory of absolute and undivided sovereignty was a product of time and place. His ‘Les Six Livres de la République’ was written four years after the Saint Bartholomew’s ‘Day Massacre’, during

which thousands of prominent Huguenots were killed by the Catholic League a few days after the marriage of Margaret of Valois to Henry of Navarre, a Protestant who later converted to Catholicism when he ascended the French throne as Henri IV in 1589.

Protestant thinkers, such as François Hotman, who published *Franco-Gallia* in 1573, argued that French kings were initially chosen by the people and could be deposed by the people.

Bodin’s doctrine of absolute sovereignty was, as Julian Franklin has argued, a product of the Saint Bartholomew’s ‘Day Massacre’ and the Huguenot Monarchomach theories, to which Bodin was opposed. Sovereign power, Bodin hoped, could police and moderate the religious conflict between the Huguenots and the Catholic League that cost so many lives in his day. Bodin was a “politique,” a partisan of neither the Huguenots nor the Catholic League, who had the reputation of caring more for civil peace than doctrinal truth.

The word ‘sovereignty’ is one of those powerful words that had its own existence as an active force within social consciousness. Through the cognitive process of the human mind, not only can language represent reality, but it may play a leading part in creating and transforming reality, including modeling the shared consciousness of society.

Indeed, words are activities in themselves; they are dynamic mental-social phenomena; they actually exist and act within human consciousness. As such, words constitute organic instruments that can demonstrate, and may actually be strategically used to carry, tremendous social power within the shared consciousness of humanity.

Although for Bodin sovereignty is characterized by absolute and perpetual power he goes on to make a series of important qualifications to this concept.

SOVEREIGNTY

Q. Is Austin's theory of sovereignty compatible with democracy? Discuss (I.A.S. 2021)

Ans. Austin places the notion of sovereignty at the basis of his theory of law. Austin borrowed this from the European experience he had. The sudden break-up of the Roman Empire after thousands of years of peaceful rule made people realize that peace can be maintained only through a single unified authority with infinite power of command at its disposal.

Moreover, Austin wrote his works at a time when England was in need of vast legislative reforms. He had spent considerable years at German universities, as a lawyer he was trained on Coke Institutes, Blackstonian commentaries and chaotic other haphazard legal records available. This would have caused a deep dis-satisfaction with the form of English Law.

He attributed this chaos to lost thinking and did not regard natural law as a useful tool to bring in sound changes and since his aim was designed to search for a coherent system of law he divorced law from morals, ethics, religion and other social norms. Keeping in mind this factual context in which he was writing we shall discuss his ideas of sovereignty.

For Austin, laws are commands of sovereign supported by sanction. The word 'law' presupposes a command that obliges a person to a course of conduct, being a command it must issue from a determinate person with the threat of displeasure if not obeyed.

Austin's concept of sovereignty has been discussed in his book 'Province of Jurisprudence Determined'. He uses the concept of sovereignty to define law and the content of jurisprudence. In his own words:

"The matter of jurisprudence is positive law, law simply and strictly so called or laws set by political superiors to political inferiors. A law, in the most general acceptance in which the term is employed, may be said to be a rule laid down for the guidance of an intelligent being by an intelligent being having power over him."

Of the laws set by men to men, some are set by political superiors, sovereigns; by persons exercising supreme government, in independent nations or independent political societies [this is the subject matter of positive science of law.

Q. Discuss Kautilya's contribution regarding the concept of sovereignty. Is it applicable in a democratic form of government? Explain (I.A.S. 2021)

Ans. Kautilya's Arthashastra vests sovereignty in the Swami (ruler) which is the most important component of 'Saptanga State' (Kautilya described state as a body having 7 organs). The seven organs of the state are:

1. Swami-Ruler
2. Amatya-Bureaucracy
3. Janapada-Population+Territory
4. Durga-Capital City with Fort
5. Kosa-Treasury
6. Danda-Army
7. Mitra-Friend

The sole ruler of the entire territory or the kingdom was the monarch or the sovereign who had absolute control over the entire state. Kautilya favored hereditary monarchy as it ensured continuity. Kautilya's concern for preserving sovereignty led to extensive theory which included political, economic, and social dimensions. His sovereign concept does not only prescribe authority but even threats and maintenance of sovereignty.

Kautilya also explained the plausible dangers that a king can encounter with reference to his sovereign power. Kautilya made it very clear that dangers to the sovereignty come from three quarters, viz. from the enemy, within the territory and sometimes the wrong policy of the king himself. In some cases, even the ministers might be a part of the trouble when they feel neglected.

3 CHAPTER

INDIVIDUAL & STATE

Q. Does idea of unconditional rights necessarily leads to anarchy? Critically examine.

(I.A.S. 2022)

Ans. The universal concept of human rights is considered as a regulative principle for the possible critique of any state, including a democratic one. Moreover, the philosophical justification of the universal regulative principle for evaluating these states is vital for progressive political change and for the politics of human rights.

At the heart of the analysis is Kant's concept of human rights as freedom. It is opposed to a more utilitarian interpretation of rights and political paternalism. Kant's philosophy helps us to better understand the meaning of the definition of human rights as inherent, sacred, and inalienable, as formulated by Thomas Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence.

The prevalence of anarchy in the relations between states is the basic assumption of realism, a prominent school of thought in international relations theory. According to realists, international law in practice imposes few direct constraints on the behavior of states, in part because there is almost no way of enforcing it. In the absence of a suprastate power or arbiter, there are no enforceable rules of conduct, especially for strong states. The harsh interstate environment is anarchic both in the strict sense of lacking enforceable international law and in the broader sense of being violently chaotic. The prevalence of this environment in turn requires that the primary goals of individual states be survival and security.

Some scholars, especially those associated with the liberal approach to international relations, believe that anarchy can be overcome, or "excited," through international institutions such as the United Nations (UN) and through the widespread acceptance of international law, especially by strong states. For realists, however, the UN, at least in its present form, is incapable of fulfilling that promise, since it has no coercive power that is independent of the will of the major powers.

Thus, according to realists, unless the UN is fundamentally transformed or a genuine world state is created, the state of anarchy will endure.

Anarchy is often contrasted with law, order, or security. But anarchist societies, by which we mean societies that lack a monopoly of coercive force, need not be lawless. They can develop sophisticated legal systems that regulate the behavior of their members and protect their rights. International law, market anarchism, and other models of anarchism such as the one proposed by Chandran Kukathas already exhibit or could plausibly exhibit complex legal rules and institutions. Insofar as these models rely on consent, they all share similar structural flaws, namely, that they cannot meet basic rule-of-law values such as equality before the law and access to legal remedies for wrongs that embody and respect individual moral equality, even minimally conceived. So, legal systems, state-based or not, must have a strong non-consensual, coercive element: the process of making, applying, and enforcing law must, to some extent, be severed from consent if law is to perform its function of providing for minimal justice.

Anarchy is often contrasted with law, order, or security. Most social contract theorists justify the state as an alternative to a state of nature in which individuals enjoy little or no protection from law.

Q. Evaluate whether the social contract theory adequately addresses the different issues of human rights.

(I.A.S. 2021)

Ans. Social contract theory, nearly as old as philosophy itself, is the view that persons' moral and/or political obligations are dependent upon a contract or agreement among them to form the society in which they live. Socrates uses something quite like a social contract argument to explain to 'Crito' why he must remain in prison and accept the death penalty. However, social contract theory is rightly associated with modern moral and political theory and is given its first full exposition and defense by Thomas Hobbes.