

PhD Philosophy Entrance Examination – Spring Semester 2021
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology Bombay

Date: 25th November 2021
Time: 10.30 AM to 12.30 PM

Marks: 50

Attempt one question from each section. There are three sections in total.

Section-I

Mark: 15

1. Nāgārjuna says: “Emptiness misunderstood destroys the slow-witted (less wise) person like a serpent wrongly held or an incantation wrongly executed” (MK 24:11). Shed light on this statement of Nāgārjuna by explaining “emptiness” (*śūnyatā*) in the Mādhyamika philosophy.
2. “The reasoning process” in Nyāya syllogism “is not purely deductive but inductive-deductive” (M. Hiriyanna, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*). Taking cue from this statement, explain “inference” in Nyāya system.
3. ‘One should never abandon one’s specific work/duty, whether it be high or low’ (*Bhagavadgītā* 18: 47- 48). Explaining this statement from the *Bhagavadgītā*, show the direction in which activities should be exercised as envisaged in *Karma-yoga* notion of the *Bhagavadgītā*. Is it philosophically tenable?
4. How and why does Śāṅkarācārya *re-define* the concept of Māyā /Avidyā (illusion/error)?

Section-II

Mark 15

5. How does Immanuel Kant explain the formulation of the moral law and integration of duty with value? Discuss.
6. Write an essay on Sartre’s concept of bad faith with appropriate illustrations. Do you think that sincerity can be an instance of bad faith?
7. Compare and contrast between the social contract theories of Hobbes and Rousseau. Do you agree that the idea of the social contract is a philosophical myth?
8. Elaborate on Ludwig Wittgenstein's assertion in *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* that 'there can be no pictures of the logical form of the world.'
9. What would count as a moral motive according to Kantian moral philosophy? With respect to one feminist care ethicist, explain how Care Ethics would look at moral motive differently.

Section-III**Mark: 20**

Let us begin by considering the most common things, those which we believe we understand the most distinctly, namely the body we touch and see. I am not speaking of bodies in general, for these general notions are usually more confused, but of one body in particular. Let us take, for example, this piece of wax which has just been taken from the hive; it has not yet lost the sweetness of the honey it contained; it still remains something of the smell of flowers for which it was gathered; its colour, shape and size are apparent; it is hard, cold, it is tangible; and if you tap it, it will emit a sound. So, all the things by which a body can be known distinctly are to be found together in this one.

Rene Descartes, *Discourse on Method and The Meditations*

- a) Discuss the philosophical implications of the example of wax?
- b) How does one obtain a distinct knowledge of wax like things?

OR

“As a spider moves along the thread (it produces), and as from a fire, tiny sparks fly in all direction, so from this Self emanate all organs, all worlds, all gods and all beings. Its secret name (Upaniṣad) is ‘the Truth of truth’. The vital force is truth, and It is the Truth of that.”

(*Bṛhadāraṅkayopaniṣad* 2.1.20, Tr. by Swami Madhavananda)

- a. The above passage mentions—everything emanates from the Self—what is this Self?
- b. Why is the Upaniṣadic passage calling itself ‘the Truth of truth’?

*****Paper Ends*****