

**Entrance Examination for Ph.D. Candidates in Philosophy (Autumn Semester 2022-23)**  
**Department of Humanities and Social Sciences**  
**Indian Institute of Technology Bombay**

11 May 2022  
1030-1230 hrs

Total Marks: 30

**Attempt one question from each section. There are 3 sections in total.**

SECTION 1: INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

Marks: 10

1. Compare and contrast Śaṅkarācārya's theory of error with that of Rāmānuja and Madhvācārya.
2. Draw a critical comparison of the theory of causality between the Mādhyamika Buddhism and the Sāṃkhya system.
3. Critically discuss the logical fallacies of inference (*hetvābhāsa*) in Nyāya.

SECTION 2: WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

Marks: 10

4. Discuss in detail how Hume's difference from Locke in his epistemological stance shapes major constituents of his (Hume's) philosophy?
5. Elaborate on Plato's notion of the soul? How is it related to morality?
6. "No hypothetical imperative can ever express a moral law. A moral law must necessarily be expressed in terms of a categorical imperative." Explicate the above assertions in terms of Kant's moral philosophy.

SECTION 3: PASSAGE (Choose ONE of the two given passages, read it carefully and answer the questions given below it.)

Marks: 10

7. PASSAGE A:

*Dvesatyesamupāśrityabuddhānāmdharmadeśanā;  
Lokasamvṛtisatyam ca satyam ca paramārthataḥ.  
Ye'nayornavijānantivibhāgamsatyordvayoḥ;  
Tetattvamnavijānantigambhīrambuddhaśāśane.  
Vyavahāramanāśrityaparamārthonadeśyate;  
Paramārthamanāgamyanīrvāṇamnādhigamyate*

—The *Madhyamakakārikā* 24: 8-10

“The teaching of the *Dharma* by various Buddhas is based on the two truths; namely, relative (worldly/conventional) truth, and the absolute (supreme) truth. Those who do not know the distinction between the two truths cannot understand the profoundness of the Buddha’s teaching. Without relying on everyday common practices (phenomenal life, i.e., relative truth) the absolute truth cannot be expressed. Without getting into the absolute truth, nirvāṇa cannot be attained.”

7.1. What are the two truths that Nāgārjuna explains in his *Madhyamakakārikā*. Explain on the basis of the verses given above. (5 marks)

7.2. Can the theory of two truths that one finds in Nāgārjuna be related (compared) to the three degrees of reality (truth) that Śankara advocates in his *Advaita*? (5 marks)

8. PASSAGE B:

“I will suppose, then, not that there is a supremely good God who is the source of all truth, but that there is an evil demon, supremely powerful and cunning, who works as hard as he can to deceive me. I will say that sky, air, earth, colour, shape, sound, and other external things are just dreamed illusions that the demon uses to ensnare my judgment. I will regard myself as not having hands, eyes, flesh, blood, and senses—but as having the false belief that I have all these things. I will obstinately concentrate on this meditation and will thus ensure by mental resolution that, if I do not really have the ability to know the truth, I will at least withhold assent from what is false and from what a deceiver may try to put over on me, however powerful and cunning he may be. But this plan requires effort, and laziness brings me back to my ordinary life. I am like a prisoner who happens to enjoy the illusion of freedom in his dreams, begins to suspect that he is asleep, fears being awakened, and deliberately lets the enticing illusions slip by unchallenged. Thus, I slide back into my old views, afraid to awaken and to find that after my peaceful rest I must toil, not in the light, but in the confusing darkness of the problems just raised.” (René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, translated by Ronald Rubin)

8.1. In the First Meditation, what is Descartes’s aim in introducing the evil demon hypothesis together with the dream hypothesis and the critique of sense perception? Do you think that Descartes is successful in his aim? (5 marks)

8.2. Consider that an evil scientist/technologist has removed your brain and placed it in a vat or tub, managing nevertheless to keep it alive. Consider also that he has connected your brain to a computer, which can simulate experiences that are qualitatively identical to your real experiences. You are now a brain in a vat experiencing a world of illusion. This scenario is also similar to humans in the matrix as in the movie *The Matrix* (1999, by Wachowskis) or humans deceived by Descartes’s evil demon. Do you think the skeptic’s conclusion that we can never be sure whether we are deceived wholesale by an evil demon or whether we are in a matrix is correct? What is the solution to this problem that Descartes offers in the second meditation, and do you think that this solution is good enough? (5 marks)

=====END OF QUESTION PAPER=====