ENTRANCE TEST FOR M.A. PROGRAMME IN PHILOSOPHY, MAY 2018

PHILOSOPHY

Time : Two Hours   Maximum : 100 Marks

Answer any five questions from the following.
Each question carries 20 marks.

1. Read the passage below carefully and answer the following questions :

   In his views on knowledge, Aristotle accepted the Platonic idea that what is known must have a certain stability, and immunity from change and fluctuation. Genuine scientific knowledge is of that which 'cannot be otherwise'; it concerns 'eternal truths', not particulars. Aristotle also lays out a normative framework for such knowledge: it must proceed from self-evident premises, or starting points, and advance by rigorous logical steps from premises to conclusion. Notice that there are two requirements here. The second, that the conclusion should follow from the premises, is the requirement of deductive validity in argument ('deductive' because the conclusions follows inevitably from the premises from which they are logically deduced).

   Aristotle, in his famous theory of the syllogism, had drawn up a procedure for testing the validity of arguments (syllogism is a standard pattern of formal valid argument, such as 'all As are B, all Bs are C, therefore all Bs are C). But validity alone does not suffice to produce knowledge. The syllogism 'All planets are stars, all stars are square, therefore all planets ate square' is perfectly valid-the conclusion follows inescapably from the premises-but it is worthless as a contribution to scientific knowledge, since the premises, or starting points of the argument are false. So Aristotle insists that for what is required for deductive knowledge, in addition to the logical validity of the relevant argument patterns, is that the starting points themselves should be self-evidently true.

   (a) What is Plato's view on knowledge? How does Aristotle respond to this view ?

   (b) What is the first requirement for a piece of knowledge to be genuine and scientific according to Aristotle ?

   (c) What is deductive validity ?

   (d) What is syllogism ? What is Aristotles's procedure for testing the validity of arguments ?

   (e) Is the argument 'All planets are stars, all stars are square, therefore all planets are square' valid ? Why is it worthless as a contribution to scientific knowledge ?

2. Write an essay on the nature of philosophical inquiry. How do you distinguish it from the inquiries in the fields of social and natural sciences ?

3. Write short notes on the following statements :

    (a) 'Beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder'.

    (b) 'One cannot step twice in the same river'.

    (c) 'Unexamined life is not worth living'.

    (d) 'Philosophers have only interpreted the world in many ways; the point, however, is to change it'.

4. Write short notes on the contributions of the following thinkers :

    (a) Narayana Guru.

    (b) M.K Gandhi.

    (c) Immanuel Kant.

    (d) Jean Paul Sartre.

5. Write an essay on the ethical issues concerning the role of technology in contemporary society and everyday life.

6. Discuss the fundamental features of any of the classical Indian intellectual traditions.

7. Write short notes on the following :

    (a) Rationalism.

    (b) Mind-Body Dualism.

    (c) Buddhist ethics.

    (d) Dialectics.

$(5 \times 20 = 100$ marks)