

# **Module-1**

Syllabus 2018 CBCS SEMESTER-IV  
CORE COURSE- 10

**Epistemology and Metaphysics (Western)**

**B. Sources of Knowledge**

entitled as

**“Sources of Knowledge”**

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**Date- 18.01.2021**

## “Sources of Knowledge”

Philosopher arise question- How do we acquire knowledge?

According to Western Philosophy knowledge come under two main headings-

a) Reason

b) Experience.

## Reason

According to Parmenides( ancient Greek Philosopher) –

- 1.Reason is the sole judge of what is true and leads to the conclusion that there is no such thing as change in the universe.
- 2.He also said no such thing as nothing, there were empty space in the universe, that empty space would be nothing. In fact by the word “nothing” he meant empty bread is better then wisdom. That means wisdom is the best thing.

The word “reason” does not always carry the same meaning. One clear meaning that it does have is reasoning, and we shall begin with that. Obviously we arrive at truth through reasoning, but according to Parmenides we don't always reason correctly.

Question arise that-

Are there any criteria for when we do and when we don't ?

The name for the discipline that tells us this is logic. Logic is the study of correct reasoning.

# Logic

Logic is the study of the methods and principles used to distinguish good(correct) from bad(incorrect) reasoning. There are two types- Deductive and Inductive.

## **Deductive**

Suppose someone were to reason this way-

All cows are green.

I am a cow.

Therefore , I am green.

“That’s true or false- someone may says that not true but another person says that the reasoning is perfectly ok.

Point is that both are correct in what they are asserting. The first person is saying that cows aren’t green and so on, and that the statements are false.

The second person is saying that although the statements are false, the reasoning is valid-

That if all A is B and all B is C, then it logically follows that all A is C.

Logic is the study of valid reasoning. Tt doesn’t matter precede the premises are true. What matters is that if you grant the premises, you must logically grant the conclusion.

Now consider the following:

All cows are mammals.

All mammals are living things.

Therefore,

All living things are mammals.

In this instance, both premises are true, but the conclusion doesn't logically follow; the reasoning is invalid.

Actually arguments are valid or invalid depend of their form, regardless of their content. Its doesn't matter what premises you use, matter is whether the premises logically follows from the premises.

## Inductive reasoning:

General criteria that we use to determine when a conclusion of an argument logically follows from the premises.

Other hand Inductive reasoning the conclusion does not logically follow from the premises. In inductive reasoning the premises provide evidence for the conclusion without logically implying the conclusion.

Reasoning in the sciences is usually of this kind.

The other things of reasing that is the “Laws of Thought”



## The “Laws of Thought”

We use logic to get from one proposition to another: it tells us whether, if p is true, w must be true, false, or neither. But what about the propositions by themselves? According this problem philosopher admit three Laws of Thought:

a)The Law of Identity: A is A.

b)The Law of Noncontradiction: nothing can be both A and not-A.

c)The Law of Excluded Middle: everything is either A or not-A.

## Experience

Let us now consider the other principal source of knowledge, experience.

The word “experience” is somewhat vague, and it is not clear what all it is supposed to include. So let’s break it down into more manageable parts. Not every alleged source of knowledge that is claimed under this heading is equally acceptable, for reasons we shall consider.

Experience gets 6 paths:

- 1) Sense-perception
- 2) Introspection
- 3) Memory
- 4) Testimony
- 5) Faith
- 6) Intuition

## Sense-perception

“How do you know there’s a book in front of you?”

Ans: Through my senses; because I see it, I touch it, I can take pictures of it if you like, and other people can see and touch it also.

This is such a plain and obvious claim to knowledge that we generally take it for granted and don't think much about it. We believe that there is a physical world and that we can perceive it through our senses. But perceptual knowledge, as we shall see, is an unexpectedly complex and arduous subject.

We claim that :

- a) Sometimes our senses mislead us; we perceive things as having qualities they don't have, or even perceive things that aren't there at all.
- b) Perhaps our senses mislead us totally; maybe we're dreaming all the time, and there is no physical reality to perceive.
- c) Frequently we claim to perceive more than we actually perceive. A person says that she saw a

## Introspection:

We also have knowledge of our own thoughts and feelings. I know what I am thinking about right now. I know that I do or do not have a toothache at the present moment. I know that I feel a bit drowsy.

I think that I am reading a book

When we make such statements, to confuse a report of what we feel or think, with some interpretation of what we feel or think. If someone says, "I feel anger rising in me like a huge tide" is that a report of how she feels, or is she adding something to it?

Still, it's often difficult to know whether you are in a certain psychological state. If someone asked you at this moment, "are you happy? What would you say? You know whether you have a headache right now, but you may not know whether you are happy. But this may be because happiness, unlike pain, is not just a momentary state. Happiness is a long-term business; you may not know till the end of your vacation whether it was happy.

## Memory:

“How do you know that you met this person before?”

Ans: “ I remember it”.

In this context we constantly use memory as a claim to knowledge. Is not remembering an event just as good as seeing it happen right now?



Some time people often misremember. You may “remember” that you went to restaurant for dinner las Tuesday, and then you suddenly remember that it was Wednesday, Tuesday you were out of town. Actually this may not be true at all time.

We have no good reason to say that some memory-judgments are false, unless the truth of some memory-judgements is assumed. Unless we grant that some memory-judgment are true, our judgment that some memory –judgments are false can't even get off the ground, for there could be no evidence to support them. All such evidence comes from the past and is itself derived from memory.

## Testimony:

Testimony is the another source of sense experience.

We ourselves have never seen any of these things for ourselves nor do we remember them- we were not there and many of them occurred before we were born. We don't even remember our own birth, although we were there, we were not then in a position to remember anything.

Some time testimony may be mislead or misinform us depend on authentication.

## Faith:

The problem with faith is that by itself it doesn't justify any belief. Two people can both "play the faith game." and faith alone won't tell you which view, if any, is right. If you say that you know by faith that everything in the Bible is true, another person can say with equal sincerity that everything in the Koran is true, yet at many points the texts contradict one another. At the points where they contradict each other, they can't both be true.

People who claim to know any thing “by faith” often are unwilling to grant the same appeal to their opponents. “Faith is all right” as a justification of their own beliefs, but they won’t grant it as a justification of their opponents’ beliefs. Yet the same criteria that would justify their own beliefs would also justify their opponents’. The problem with faith is that it is a double-edged knife. Often people use it when it suits them and deny it when others also claim it.

Sometimes we have a reason for “having faith” and that reason does not lie in faith itself. If you are a trusted friend and I say, “I have faith in you,” my trusting you is not just “a matter of faith”. I have reason to trust you because you have always been truthful, reliable, and forthright with me.

## Intuition:

Instead of saying, “I feel that so-and-so is the case,” people sometimes say, “I know by intuition that so-and-so is the case.” People often appeal to intuition to support their claims to knowledge. “my intuition tells me that you’re laying ,”

Sometimes people speak of “intuition” when there is no claim to knowledge. How does a composer create new compositions? She has intuitions. What are these? She can’t explain exactly, an idea comes to her apparently from nowhere, and she starts working feverishly on her new score.

## Reference:

- An Introduction to Philosophical Analysis—John Hospers
- The Problem of Knowledge: A.J. Ayer
- Language, Truth and Logic: A.J. Ayer
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