Course Code   **PHL 216**

Course Title   **Medieval Philosophy**

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DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

FACULTY OF ARTS

NATONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

ABUJA

Course Guide for PHL 216 – Medieval Philosophy

Introduction

This is PHL216: Medieval Philosophy. PHL216 is a three-credit unit course which has minimum duration of one semester. It is a compulsory course for all undergraduate students in National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). The course will expose the students to Medieval thoughts in the history of Philosophy. Some of such issues are the problem of Faith and Reason, existence of God, immortality of the Soul etc.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course you will be able to:

- Explain the emergence and the development of Christian thought.
- Explain what constitutes the problem of "Faith" and "Reason" and the attempts made by some philosophers to resolve the problem.
- Articulate and explain the various arguments put forward by different medieval philosophers to prove God's existence.
- Explain how different philosophers in the medieval period articulated, explained and even tried to resolve the problem of evil in the world.
- Discuss the various recommendations made by different philosophers on the best attitudes towards human suffering.
- Explain the various arguments for the immortality of the soul.
- Discuss the interpretation of Aristotle's philosophy by some medieval philosophers.

Working Through this Course

To successfully complete this course, read the study units, do all the assignments, open the links and read, participate in discussion forums, read the recommended books and other materials provided and participate in the online facilitation.

Each study unit has introduction, intended learning outcomes, the main content, conclusion, summary and references/further readings. The introduction will tell you the expectations in the study unit. Read and note the intended learning outcomes (ILOs). The intended learning outcomes tell you what you should be able to do at the completion of each study unit. So, you can evaluate your learning at the end of each unit to ensure you have achieved the intended learning outcomes. To meet the intended learning outcomes, knowledge is presented in texts, and links arranged into modules and units. Click on the links where provided as the case may be to either read or download texts, pictures etc. the conclusion gives you the theme of the knowledge you are taking away from the unit. Unit summaries are also presented for proper articulation of the salient points made in unit.

There are two main forms of assessments – the formative and the summative. The formative assessments will help you monitor your learning. This is presented as in-text questions, discussion forums and self-Assessment Exercises. The summative assessments would be used by the university to evaluate your academic performance. This will be given as computer Based test

(CBT) which serves as continuous assessment and final examinations. A minimum of two or maximum of three Computer Based Tests will be given with only one final examination.

Study units

There are 5 Modules with a total of 24 units. They are presented as follows:

Module 1
Unit 1:   The Development of Christian Thought
Unit 2:   The Philosophy of Plotinus
Unit 3:   The Philosophy of St. Augustine
Unit 4:   The Philosophy of Boethius
Unit 5:   The Philosophy of St. Anselm

Module 2
Unit 1:   The Philosophy of John Scotus Erigena
Unit 2:   The Philosophy of Peter Abelard

Module 3
Unit 1:   The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas
Unit 2:   The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure
Unit 3:   Duns Scotus
Unit 4:   William of Ockham
Unit 5:   Francis Suarez

Module 4
Unit 1:   The Philosophy of Al-Farabi
Unit 2:   The Philosophy of Avicenna
Unit 3:   The Philosophy of Averroes
Unit 4:   The Philosophy of Moses Maimonides
Unit 5:   The Philosophy of Solomon Ibn Gabirol

Module 5
Unit 1:   The Philosophy of Ibn Paquda
Unit 2:   The Philosophy of Albo Joseph
Unit 3:   The Philosophy of Noccolo Machiavelli

References and Further Readings

Copleston, Frederick (1993) A History of Philosophy Volume 2. New York: Image Books.

Lawhead, William (2002) *The Voyage of Discovery*. Belmont, USA:Wadsworth.

O'Connor, D.J (1985) A Critical History of Western Philosophy. New York: The Free Press.

Omoregbe, Joseph (1997) A Simplified History of Western Philosophy. Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers Limited.

Russell, Bertrand (1986)   The History of Western Philosophy. New York: Simon and Schuster Inc.

Presentation Schedule

The presentation schedule gives you the important dates for the completion of your computer-based tests, participation in forum discussions and participation at facilitation. Remember, you are to submit all your assignments at the appropriate time. You should guide against delays and plagiarisms in your work. Plagiarism is a criminal offence in academics and is highly penalized.

Assessment

There are two main forms of assessments in this course that will be scored. The Continuous Assessments and the final examination. The continuous assessment shall be in three-fold. There will be two computer Based Assessment. The computer-based assessments will be given in accordance to university academic calendar. The timing must be strictly adhered to. The Computer Based Assessments shall be scored a maximum of 10% each, while your participation in discussion forums and your portfolio presentation shall be scored maximum of 10% if you meet 75% participation. Therefore, the maximum score for continuous assessment shall be 30% which shall form part of the final grade.

The final examination for PHL216 will be maximum of three hours and it takes 70 percent of the total course grade. The examination will consist of 5 questions out of which you are expected to answer 4.

Note: you will earn 10% score if you meet a minimum of 75% participation in the course forum discussions and in your portfolios otherwise you will lose 10% in your total score. You will be required to upload your portfolio using google Doc. What are you expected to do in your portfolio? Your portfolio should be note or jottings you made on each study unit and activities. This will include the time you spent on each unit or activity.

How to get the Most from the Course

To get the most in this course, you need to have a personal laptop and internet facility. This will give you adequate opportunity to learn anywhere you are in the world. Use the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) to guide your self-study in the course. At the end of every unit, examine yourself with the ILOs and see if you have achieved what you need to achieve.

Carefully work through each unit and make your notes. Join the online real time facilitation as scheduled. Where you missed the scheduled online real time facilitation, go through the recorded facilitation session at your own free time. Each real time facilitation session will be video recorded and posted on the posted on the platform.

Work through all self-assessment exercises. Finally, obey the rules in the class.

Facilitation

You will receive online facilitation. The facilitation is learner centered. The mode of facilitation shall be asynchronous and synchronous. For the asynchronous facilitation, your facilitator will:

- Present the theme for the week
- Direct and summarize forum discussions
- Coordinate activities in the platform
- Score and grade activities in the platform
- Score and grade activities when need be
- Upload scores into the university recommended platform
- Support you to learn. In this regard personal mails may be sent.
- Send you videos and audio lectures; and podcast

For the Synchronous:

There will be a minimum of eight hours and a maximum of twelve online real time contact in the course. This will be through video conferencing in the Learning Management System. The sessions are going to be run at an hour per session. At the end of each one- hour video conferencing, the video will be uploaded for view at your pace.

The facilitator will concentrate on main themes that are must know in the course. The facilitator is to present the online real time video facilitation time table at the beginning of the course.

The facilitator will take you through the course guide in the first lecture at the start date of facilitation.

Do not hesitate to contact your facilitator. contact your facilitator if you:

- Do not understand any part of the study unit or the assignment
- Have difficulty with the self-assessment exercises
- Have a question or problem with an assignment or with your tutor's comments on an assignment.

Also, use the contact provided for technical support.

Read assignment, participate in the forums and discussions. This gives you opportunity to socialize with others in the programme. You can raise any problem encountered during your study. To gain the maximum benefit from course facilitation, prepare a list of questions before the discussion session. You will learn a lot from participating actively in the discussions.

Module 1

Unit 1: The Development of Christian Thought

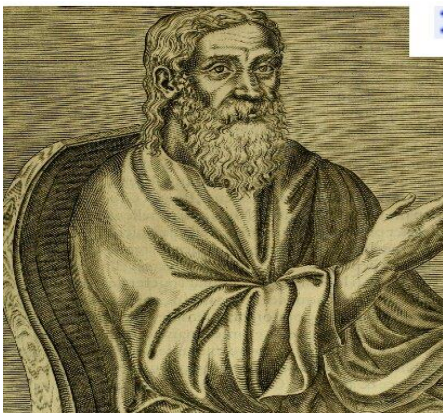Unit 2: The Philosophy of Plotinus

Unit 3: The philosophy of St. Augustine

Unit 4: Boethius

Unit 5: St. Anselm

JUSTIN MARTYR

en.wikipedia.com

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

en.wikipedia.com

MODULE 1

UNIT 1:   The Development of Christian Thought

Contents

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        3.2.1   Justin Martyr

        3.2.2   Clement of Alexandria

4.0   Conclusion

5.0   Summary

6.0   References/ Further Reading.

1.0   Introduction

This unit discusses the development of Christian thought. Certainly, Christian thought did not emerge from nowhere. It has a background but more importantly, it is a reaction against some aspects of Greek philosophy that contradicted Christian faith. Therefore, in this topic, you will realize the nature of the encounter between Greek and Christian thought. It is interesting to note that Greek philosophy is presented through systematic reasoning, whereas Christian doctrines and beliefs seem to be largely faith-based. However, the later must be made to appeal to converts who were already exposed to philosophy, thus the problem of reconciling faith and reason. This problem will be looked into through the thoughts of Justin martyr and Clement of Alexandria.

2.0   Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain how Christian thought emerged
- Articulate what constitutes the problem of faith and reason

- Know the thoughts of Justin and Clement of Alexandria as regards the problem of faith and reason.

3.0   Main Content

3.1   The Encounter Between Greek and Christian Thought

Christianity at a point in history dominated the intellectual life of Western Europe. William Lawhead (2002:111) claims that the rise of Christianity is an important turning point in the story of philosophy, for it overlapped with the decline of the Roman Empire and of Greco-Roman or Hellenistic Philosophy. Although at the beginning of patristic philosophy, the fathers of the church who were mostly Neo-Platonists sought and formed a conception of God which is philosophically appealing. But at the initial stage, many differences existed between Greek tradition and Judeo-Christian thought. For instance, the Greeks are polytheists but the Jews and the Christians are monotheists. Again, the gods of the Greeks were limited and not sovereign over the world. For instance, Plato's creator (the Demiurge) consulted the pre-existing Forms when imposing order on a pre-existing matter. Aristotle's deity, as a result of his immanence in the world was highly limited. On the other hand, the God of the Judeo-Christian faith was said to be all-powerful and transcendent. It created the world and rules over it. Whereas Plato's and Aristotle's the Good and Unmoved mover respectively were impersonal God, the Christian God is personal and lovingly cares for all that he created (Lawhead, 2002).

Concerning human history, for Christian thinkers, it is a history of sin, grace, salvation and eternal life. For them, this is held not as a philosophical doctrine but moments in the individual's spiritual journey. Although these differences exist, Christian philosophers endeavor to make their thoughts and beliefs philosophical in other to make it acceptable to their new converts who were hitherto exposed to Greek philosophies. In other to do this, Christian faith had to shift its focus from trying to reconcile itself with Jewish tradition to rather reconciling itself to Greek tradition. To succeed in this all important task, Christian thinkers employed the tools of Greek philosophy to support their position and achieve conceptual precision. Thus Christian thinkers by this showed that their faith was mature and respectable (Lawhead, 2002).

3.2   The Problem of Faith and Reason

Certainly, Christian faith thrives on revelation (and revelation is a matter of faith) whereas Greek tradition was dependent on unaided human reasoning. Thus, in conducing

Christian faith with Greek philosophy, the problem of reconciling faith with reason became inescapable. The critical question here is which is the way to truth – revelation or reason? Or can Greek and Christian philosophers reach different conclusions on the way to truth, how then can one deal with the conclusions if he/she would embrace the two ways to truth? For instance, Greek philosophy believes in reincarnation whereas reincarnation conflicts with the biblical account of afterlife. In another development, the Epicureans (also Greek) believe and taught that pursuit of pleasure is the goal of life and not obedience to God as expounded by their philosophers. These and other differences exist between Greek philosophy and Christian faith. Let us see how this problem is explicated by our earlier identified Christian thinkers.

3.2.1 **Justin Martyr**

Justin Martyr was a Platonist before he encountered Christianity. Justin enthusiastically believed in the harmony between Greek philosophy and Christianity. Justin admonished those wary of philosophy that the best philosophy is "the greatest possession and most honourable before God, to whom it leads us and alone commends us, and these are truly holy men who have bestowed attention on philosophy" (Lawhead, 2002:114). Justin does not see competition between Greek philosophy and Christianity. Both to him, points to the same truth. He gives an illustration to buttress his claim when he points out that Plato and the scriptures agree that our souls have a special affinity to God, that we are morally responsible for our actions and that there is a time of reckoning in the world to come. Justin argues that both Greeks and non –Greeks could discover God's truth and follow them because those truths were implanted in them by the Divine Logos. Thus, for Justin, there is really no competition between Greek philosophy and Christianity. He died a Christian martyr in Rome around A.D. 165.

3.2.2 Clement of Alexandria

Clement believes that both philosophy and Christianity are complementary. For him, philosophy can help in the understanding of scriptures. In his work 'Stomata', he argues that Christians should treasure Greek thought. He derives his support from the book of Psalms 29:3 which says that, "The Lord is on many waters" ( ) arguing that the "the many waters" includes Greek philosophy and not limited to biblical faith. According to Clement all truth is one and all wisdom is from the Lord such that any wisdom we see, for instance, in Plato is from the Lord. Quoting him in The Stomata bk 6, chap. 8, Lawhead says that fragments of God's eternal truth

have found their way even to pagan philosophy. Clement therefore admonishes Christians not to be foolish to reinvent the wheel. By this he means that if Plato has good arguments for the immortality of the soul, then we can use his work and not to waste effort in duplicating his efforts.

Clement claims that when Paul made a negative comment about philosophy, that he was not referring to all philosophies but only such philosophy as Epicurianism which abolished providence and deified pleasure. Summarizing his philosophy, Lawhead quotes him in The Stomata thus:

> Philosophy is not, then, the product of vice, since it makes men virtuous: it follows then that it is the work of God, whose work it is solely to do good. And all things given by God are given and received well (2002:114).

4.0   Conclusion

In this unit, you have learnt how Christian thought emerged and also what constitutes the relationship between faith and reason. Faith and reason complement each other. One reinforces the other and vice versa. Therefore, faith and reason should not be seen as being antagonistic to each other nor should Greek philosophy and Christian philosophy be seen as opposing each other.

5.0   Summary

The following are the summary of what you have learnt in this unit:

- the emergence of Christian thought
- the nature of the problem of faith and reason
- the thoughts of Justin Martyr and Clement of Alexandria on the subject of Faith and reason.

Self-Assessment Exercise

Discuss the nature of the problem of faith and reason.

6.0   References/Further Studies

Clement of Alexandria (1962) *The Stromata*. MI: Eerdmans.

Lawhead, William (2002) *The Voyage of Discovery*. Belmont, USA:Wadsworth.

Martyr, Justine (1956) *Dialogue with Trypo*. MI: Eerdmans.

Tutor Marked Assignment

How did Clement of Alexandria respond to the problem of Faith and Reason?

Answer: Clement believes that both philosophy and Christianity are complementary. He claims that philosophy can help in the understanding of scriptures. He derives his support from the book of Psalms 29 verse 3 which says that, "The Lord is on many waters. Clement claims that "the many waters" includes Greek philosophy and not limited to biblical faith.
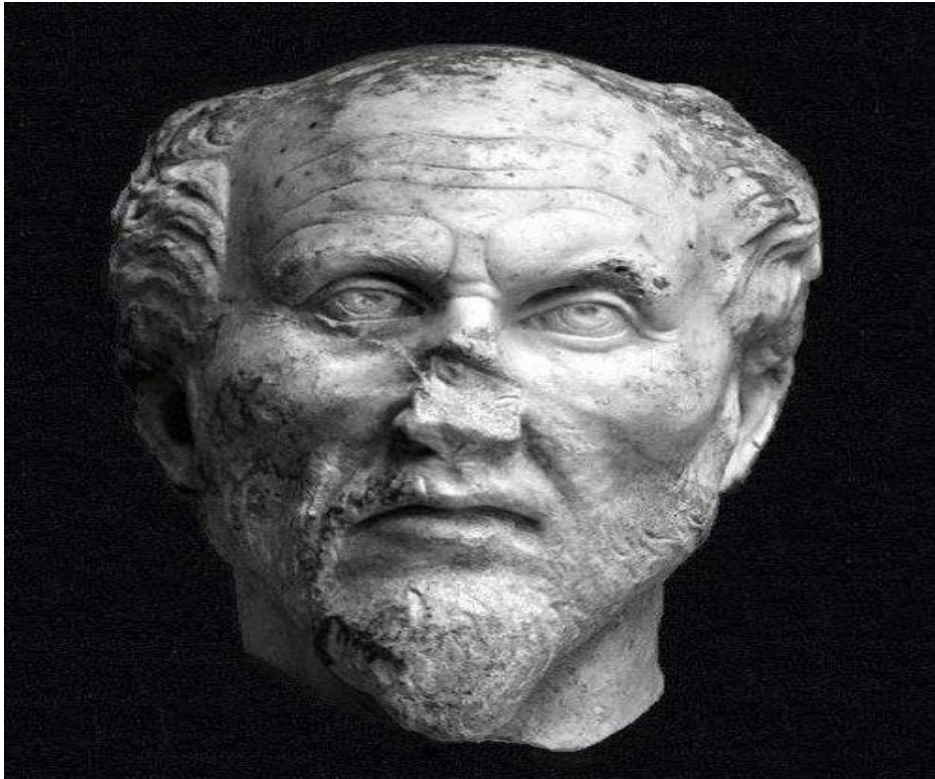
PLOTINUS

Module 1 : Unit 2   Plotinus

Contents

1.0   Introduction

In the previous unit, you have learnt how Christian thought emerged and the nature of the problem of faith and reason. In this unit, you will be learning the philosophical thoughts of Plotinus on various issues of philosophical concern, namely: the doctrine of the One, the Spirit, the Soul, the Problem of Evil and Human Suffering.

2.0   Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the Doctrine of the One as understood and espoused by Plotinus.
- Know the thoughts of Plotinus as regards the Problem of Evil, the Spirit, the Soul and Human Suffering.

3.0   Main Content

3.1   Plotinus: Short Biography

Plotinus was born in Egypt around A.D 205. Prominent among those under which Plotinus trained was Ammonius Saccas who was a gardener and one of the mystical figures in Egypt. Plotinus later migrated to Rome where he founded a school of Neo-Platonic philosophy.

According to Gabriel Idang (2014: 369), Plotinus lived a quiet, modest and selfless life and was believed to have possessed an uncanny ability to penetrate into human character and its motives and so he was sought out for all manner of practical advice. He later died in A.D 270.

3.2 The Doctrine of the One

For Plotinus, of all the beings there are, the highest being is The One which is wholly transcendent and equally beyond all thought and being. It transcends essence and existence, life, time and whatever anyone can think of. In short, The One is incomprehensible. How then can we understand The One. For Plotinus, this is only possible by attributing properties to it. But he is not any property or the sum total of all the properties so attributed to him. The One is nothing but absolute unity and absolute goodness, however he possesses this by way of analogy because in actual sense he is beyond these properties (Idang:2014). The One of Plotinus refers to God, the Good, First Existent, the Absolute, the Infinite, and the Father. However, in the hierarchy of existence, The One comes before the Good and the Beautiful. Lawhead, says of the One that although he does not consciously act, he is so full that it overflows and all things emanate from it (103). Since all things emanate from it, it follows that the One is the source of the world and itself is uncreated. According to Idang (2014:371), Plotinus believes that the One is not merely an intellectual conception but that which can be experienced.

3.3 The Spirit

As we saw in the Doctine of the One, everything emanates from the One, the Nous being the first. The Nous is translated as Intellect, Intellectual Principle, Divine Mind or Spirit (Lawhead, 2002). So here, we shall use the spirit, Nous, the Mind, the Intellect to mean the same thing. The Nous is absolutely perfect and free without any encumbrances. Like the One, it is indivisible and cannot be dissolved into parts. However, on the other hand, it is different from the One in that it can be distinguished into aspects which are the Knower and the objects of its knowledge. The intellect knows two objects: the One and itself. It knows the Platonic Forms as a collection in one, eternal and unified vision. According to Omoregbe, the Nous is the closest being to the One and as that it is like the image of the One or like the mirror in which the One

sees itself (1997:90). The Nous is the One's own vision of himself. St. Augustine (the Christian Platonist) refers to Plotinus's Mind as the mind of God in which the eternal ideas of all things were present before creation.

3.4 The Soul

Another divine being that emanated from the Mind is the Soul and it is the third and the lowest being in Plotinus' Holy Trinity. The soul is of two kinds namely: the Higher (inner) Soul and the Lower (outer) Soul. The Higher Soul belongs or is closer to the Mind and is spiritual while the lower Soul is the source of nature from where the material world emanates. Whereas the Higher Soul belongs to the spiritual realm, the lower Soul has contact with the body. This is where Plotinus is Platonic in his conception of the Soul which according to him (Plato) is formally in the world of forms before it got trapped in the body. In the same vein, Plotinus believes that the human soul is immortal however, it requires liberation from the human body (to which it got trapped as a result of commission of offence) through a cycle of rebirths based on purity of life. Idang (2014) believes that Plotinus derived this notion of the soul from Pythagoreans who believe that the soul has to go through a number of rebirths before being liberated from the cycle and the liberation is made possible through an ascetic life of high moral standards. According to Omoregbe, a life of stude and contemplation is also needed to achieve purification. You should note that the ultimate goal of the Soul is to get back to the Nous and finally achieve ecstatic union with the One.

Having achieved ecstatic union with the One, the soul loses its self-consciousness and its experience with the One from that moment becomes indescribable and in fact mystical. Plotinus was himself a mystic who had mystical and ecstatic experiences. As soon as the soul achieves ecstasy, it loses individuality and multiplicity. This shows that Plotinus believes that reality is one,

3.5 The Problem of Evil

Plotinus does not blame God for the reality of evil in the world. He believes that matter is responsible for the evil in the world. In his conception of the material world, he believes that matter is at the lowest level of being and therefore a privation or negation of being. As a lowest level of being, matter negates light and therefore represents darkness. It is a negation of good and

the source of evil. Evil therefore, for Plotinus, is a negation of being. It is not a positive thing. It is a privation of being. Be that as it may, Plotinus does not believe that the material world is completely evil in that it shares in the goodness of its source as the last in the series of emanations from The One.

3.6   **Human Suffering**

Plotinus already considers matter or the material world as signifying imperfection and as it were a privation of being. Therefore, since human beings are in the world and in constant experiential contact with the material body, then suffering becomes an inescapable feature of human life. Man cannot escape nor avoid suffering except on one condition which is the detachment of the soul from the material body and the material world. Thus Plotinus preaches a life of asceticism which encourages detachment from materialism. According to him, any soul that frequently unattaches itself from the material world and goes to the spiritual world will not experience suffering. However, how this is possible remains to be seen.

No doubt, Plotinus has contributed immensely to the development of Philosophy although some of his thoughts have been criticized. His understanding of The One as being indescribable and incomprehensible smirks of skepticism. But the question, is, how does Plotinus know that the One cannot be comprehended? Again, Christian faith will disagree with Plotinus who believes that there is nothing good about the material world. Christianity believes that the world as created by God was perfect.

4.0   Conclusion

In this unit, you have been exposed to the man Plotinus and his thoughts on various issues of philosophical concern. your understanding of these issues will enable you to appreciate Plotinus contribution to the development of Philosophy especially during the medieval period.

5.0   Summary

The following is the summary of what you have learnt in this unit:

- That Plotinus lived a quiet, modest and selfless life which endeared him to many people and made him highly sought after for practical advice.

- That the One (God) is nothing but absolute unity and absolute goodness from which the Spirit and the Soul emanate.
- That evil and human suffering is not caused by God but by man due to his attachment to the material things of this world and that ascetic life is the solution to the problem of human suffering.

Self-Assessment Exercise

What did Plotinus say about human suffering and what is the best antidote to it?

6.0   References and Further Reading

Idang, Gabriel (2014) "Plotinus" in Andrew Uduigwomen and Christopher Udofia (E.ds) *A Critical History of Philosophy*. Calabar: Ultimate Index Book Publishers.

Lawhead, William (2002) The Voyage of Discovery. Belmont, USA: Wadsworth.

Omoregbe, Joseph (1997) A Simplified History of Western Philosophy. Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers Limited.

Tutor Marked Assignment

Does Plotinus blame God for the problem of evil in the world?

Answer: Plotinus does not blame God for the problem of evil in the world, rather he blames matter for it. According to him, matter is at the lowest level of being and therefore a privation or negation of being. As a lowest level of being, matter negates light and therefore represents darkness. Matter is a negation of good and therefore the source of evil in the world.

ST. AUGUSTINE

Module 1: Unit 3 - St. Augustine

Contents

5.0 Summary

6.0 References/ Further Reading.

1.0 Introduction

In the previous unit, you have learnt the thoughts of Plotinus on various philosophical issues. In this unit, you will be learning the philosophical thoughts of St. Augustine on various issues of philosophical concern namely: his epistemology and his metaphysics.

2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain what constitutes St. Augustine's epistemology.
- Explain the role his epistemology plays in our search for truth and the knowledge of God.
- Know the thoughts of St. Augustine as regards some metaphysical issues like the problem of evil, Creation, Freedom etc.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 St. Augustine: Short Biography

St Augustine (Aurelius Augustinus being his real name) the acclaimed greatest father of

the Church was born in North Africa in A.D. 354 in Tagaste which was then a town in North Africa but now known as Algeria. St. Augustine is known by several names such as the Angelic Doctor of the Roman Catholic Church, the Christian Neo-platonist and the North African Bishop (Abakedi, 2014). St. Augustine was brought up as a Christian by his Mother who was a devout Christian (but whose father was a pagan). Records show that Aurelius Augustinus drifted away from Christianity as a youth and did not live a very religious life during this time in that he had a son outside wedlock given birth to him by his mistress whom he lived with for ten years. St. Augustine was educated in Thagaste, Madauros, and Carthage. In 383 A.D he left North Africa to Rome where he got a job and taught rhetoric as a professor. Later on, he resigned from the professorship in 386 A.D. and submitted himself to be baptized by Bishop Ambrose of Milan on Easter Sunday. After few months in Milan, St. Augustine while returning to North Africa, lost his mother at Ostia, a sea port outside Rome. He also lost his son in North Africa and was later

dedicated to the affairs of the Catholic Church. St. Augustine was later made the Bishop of Hippo and 35 years later he died in August 430 in Hippo.

3.2   St. Augustine's Epistemology

According to Lawhead (2002), Augustine's interest in the nature of knowledge was not an end in itself but as a means to an end. What is this end? Epistemology, for him, serves a practical, and religious purpose in that it weeds out false views of knowledge that subvert the soul's journey to God and also guides us in the search for truth. For Augustine, truth is relevant for a happy life and brings us closer to the Author of all truth.

Augustine believes in and sought for certainty in knowledge. This quest was founded upon the fact that he believes that certain, eternal and absolute truth is foundation for a solid life. For this reason he fiercely criticized the skeptics who held the views that nothing can be known and that assent should not be given to anything. Contrary to some of the Skeptics who believe that people find wisdom and happiness in just pursuing truth and not in possessing it, Augustine argues that it takes the knowledge and possession of truth to be wise and happy. On the bases of this, he argues that skepticism is not possible for doubting itself presupposes one's existence. One, anyone who doubts anything at least knows for certain that he is doubting, two, if one does not exist, one cannot doubt so doubt is a proof of one's existence. "But supposing I am deceived into thinking that I exist, supposing it is simply an illusion". Augustine replied, "if I am deceived, I am'. To be deceived is itself a proof of one's existence" (Omoregbe, 1997:100).

As a Neo-Platonist, Augustine believes that the object of true knowledge are not the material things of this world but eternal and immutable truths or ideas in the mind of God as exemplars or patterns of creation. Note that these eternal truths are not in the world of Forms as claimed by Plato but in the Mind of God. Eternal truths and immutable ideas are in the Mind of God not in the human mind and that the Mind of God is superior to the human mind. How then does the human mind acquire these truths and ideas since it is not in the same class with the mind of God which is eternal and immutable? According to Augustine, this is possible through the aid of a divine illumination needed by the human mind to grasp what transcends it. The divine light is what illuminates the human mind for the acquisition of eternal truths and ideas. Thus to Augustine, the divine light is to the human mind what the sun is to the eyes. Augustine believes that the divine light can illumine the truth within us but we may fail to notice and cognize it and

this is what happens to the atheists who don't believe in God. It is not the case that the divine light does not shed abroad the truth in their heart, they have only failed to recognize it just as it is possible for one to look at a physical object and yet not actually see it.

3.3   Augustine's Metaphysics: God, Creation, Freedom, Evil, Time

3.3.1   God's Existence

Augustine's argument for God's existence can be considered an example of a cosmological argument since it is based on moving from effect to its cause. Augustine saw the universe as the effect of a cause. And as it is common knowledge, one can know the cause through its effect. In the same vein one can know the creator through its creation. Thus, one can know the source of beauty, goodness, eternal and immutable truth by reflecting on beautiful things, examples of good things and example of truths in human experiential existence. God is the source of perfect beauty imperfectly reflected in beautiful things. Equally, God is the source of ultimate goodness imperfectly reflected on good things in life. The imperfections and ephemerality of things in the world show that they have a source which is perfect, eternal and immutable. Therefore, God exists. Another argument for God's existence according to Augustine is the universal conviction of mankind that God exist. Augustine invited us to consider that if God did not exist how then did the whole world get convinced of his existence? How can anybody explain this universal conviction of mankind? However, the question is: is it everybody that is convinced that God exists? What about the atheists who do not believe that God exists or even the agnostics who are not sure if he exists or not?

3.3.2   Creation

Augustine believes both by faith and reason that the world was created (Lawhead, 2002). In this regard Augustine notes that God created out of nothing, that creation was an act of divine freedom, that the world is composed of form and matter, that biological species emerge from seminal forms and that God created time itself. Though a Platonist and Neo-Platonist, Augustine however differs from Greek account of creation in many respects. One, God created the world out of nothing (ex nihilo). This is contrary to Greeks belief that the world is either eternal or created out of some pre -existing matter separate from God. Two, Augustine believes that God freely created the world and not by necessity as argued by Plotinus. As a sovereign God he

asserted his sovereignty and freedom by creating the world and sharing his goodness with creatures. Three, the world of particulars is based on the eternal forms. All creatures are brought into existence as a combination of form and matter. This is platonic. However, he differs from Plato by insisting that the eternal forms as the archetype of or exemplars of physical objects do not have independent existence but lives in the Mind of God. No eternal form by which mutable and ephemeral things in the material world are, can exist on their own outside God who gives them their existence. He also rejects plato's view that the Demiurge functions to impose form on pre-existing matter. Augustine's contention is that such formless matter would need a cause to bring it into existence in the first place. Four, Augustine believes that God is the creator of everything but has placed rational seeds or seminal reasons (rationes seminales) in the world from which future created things will emerge. With this kind of theistic evolution, Augustine forecloses the possibility and the rationality of biological evolutionism (Lawhead, 2002).

3.3.3 Freedom

It is God's foreknowledge (the fact that all the moments within time are known to God as one eternal present moment) that is the basis for the problem of human freedom in Augustine's philosophy. The problem is, if God has a foreknowledge of your actions even before they happen, how free is your action? If am battling with a decision of what course of action to take, whether to travel to my village this weekend for a child dedication service or to stay back and complete a research project that is ongoing, whatever course of action I eventually choose, according to Augustine, God already knew what I will do before I do them. How then do I reconcile my freedom with the foreknowledge of God. For Augustine, this does not pose any problem. God's foreknowledge does not proscribe the reality of our choices. If I eventually choose to go to the village, god already knew that I will choose so. Therefore, God's foreknowledge is not a threat to our freedom (Augustine, *City of God*)

However, Augustine compounds this problem when he claims that God does not only foreknow but also foreordains our actions. How then is human freedom possible if we cannot but do what God has foreknown and foreordained?

3.3.4   Problem of Evil

Augustine sees God as absolutely perfect. Whence then comes evil? He writes:

> Whence then is evil? What is its origin? How did it steal into the
> world? What is the root or sees from which it grew? Can it be that there
> is simply no evil? whence then does evil come if God made all things,
> and because he is good, made them good too? (Augustine, *Confession*)

The Manicheans' explanation of evil is dualistic. The Manicheans presented a causality theory that described existence as the conflicting consequence of two fundamental principles, namely, the principle of good and that of evil. These principles according to the Manicheans are eternal and perpetually in conflict. Augustine was first attracted to it but later on after reading Plotinus' explanation of evil, he abandoned the Manichean explanation and embraced that of Plotinus which sees evil as an absence of being, as lack of being, a privation of being. Evil is not a thing. It was not and could not be created. As we noted earlier, everything God created is good and since evil is not good, then it was not created. It is not a substance. evil must be understood for what it is. It is a negation, a privation, a corruption, a defect, a perversion of what is good.

Further in his explication of the problem of evil, Augustine claims that God brings out good from seeming instances of evil. A good example is the cry of a baby when he is vaccinated with an injection which eventually restores the child's health (Lawhead, 2002). Augustine blames the problem of evil on human perversity. This he calls moral evil arising from a defective will that turns away from God in disobedience.

3.3.5   Time

The concept of time is an elusive one beyond grasping. In defining time, Augustine says, "if anybody asks me, I know it but if I wish to explain it to the person who asks, I no longer know it (Augustine, *Confession*). There are three aspects of time – past, present and future. For Augustine, "neither the past nor the future exists for the past is gone and the future is not yet. But even the present itself is only a passing moment" (Omoregbe, 1997:104). The past is nothing other than the human as it remembers. The future refers to the expectation of the human mind while the present is nothing but the present consideration by the human mind. It is the reference point for both the past and the future. Both the past and the future has no objective existence

outside the human mind. Time is a mental phenomenon existing only in the human mind without any objective existence. Augustine adumbrates that God is outside time. God is not subject to remembering nor expecting for everything is eternally present to him.

4.0   Conclusion

In this unit, you have been exposed to St. Augustine, the Angelic Doctor and his thoughts on various issues of philosophical concern. your understanding of these issues will emphatically help you on your search for truth, the knowledge of God and also help you find answers to the problem of evil in the world.

5.0   Summary

The following is the summary of what you have learnt in this unit:

- That St. Augustine, the Angelic Doctor of the Roman Catholic Church rose from a humble beginning to become the Bishop of Hippo later in his life.
- That Epistemology serves a practical, and religious purpose of helping to weed out false views of knowledge that subvert the soul's journey to God. It also guides us in the search for truth.
- That evil and human suffering is not caused by God but by human perversity, that is, from a defective will that turns away from God in disobedience.

Self-Assessment Exercise

How did St. Augustine explain evil? Who or what is the cause of moral evil?

6.0   References and Further Studies

Abakedi, Dominic (2014) "Early Medieval Philosophy" in   Andrew Uduigwomen and Christopher Udofia (E.ds) *A Critical History of Philosophy*. Calabar: Ultimate Index Book Publishers.

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St. Augustine (1991) Confessions, translated by Henry Chadwick. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

St. Augustine (1998) The City of God, translated by R.W. Dyson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tutor Marked Assignment

How does Augustine argue for God's existence?

Answer: Augustine's argument for God's existence can be considered an example of a cosmological argument since it is based on moving from effect to its cause. Augustine saw the universe as the effect of a cause. And as it is common knowledge, one can know the cause through its effect. In the same vein one can know the creator through its creation. Thus, one can know the source of beauty, goodness, eternal and immutable truth by reflecting on beautiful things, examples of good things and example of truths in human experiential existence. Therefore, God exists. Another argument for God's existence according to Augustine is the universal conviction of mankind that God exist. Augustine invited us to consider that if God did not exist how then did the whole world get convinced of his existence? So since all mankind have the idea of God, it goes to show that God exists.
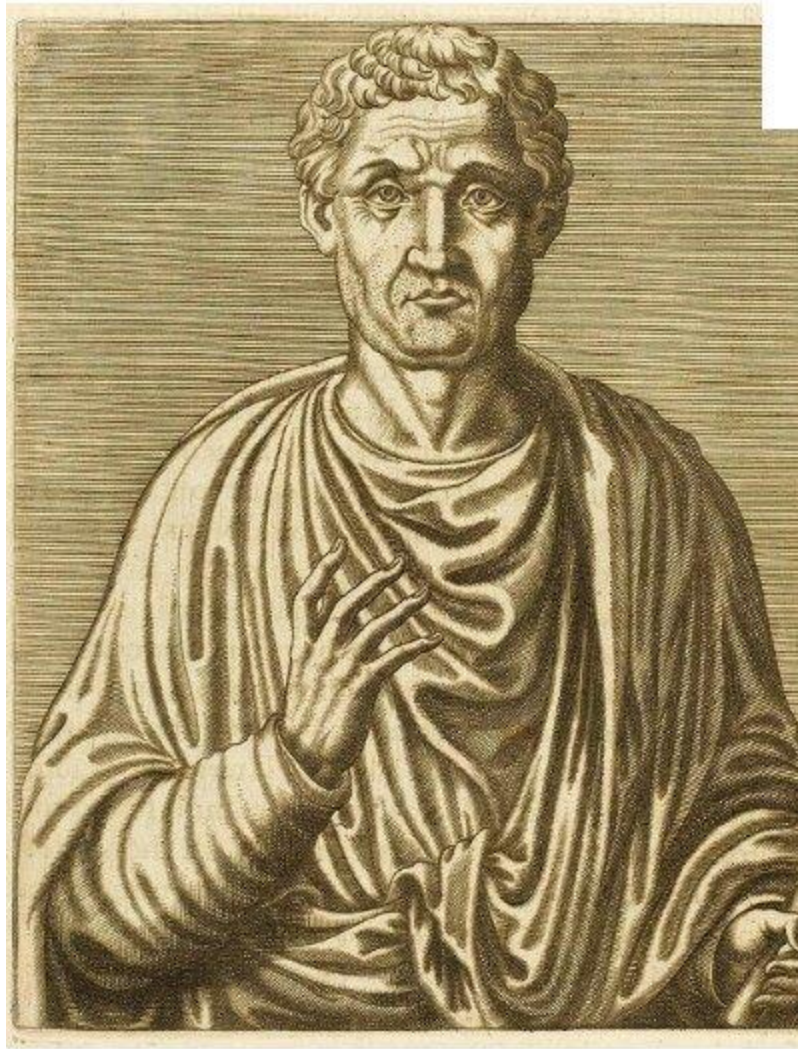
BOETHIUS

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Module 1: Unit 4 - Boethius

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1.0   Introduction

In the previous unit, you were exposed to the philosophical thoughts of St. Augustine, the Angelic Doctor of the Roman Catholic Church, on various issues that engaged philosophers of the Medieval period. In this unit, you will be learning the philosophical thoughts of Boethius who provided what could be called today the classical definition of the human person. As you will see shortly, his philosophical thoughts are contained in his classical book The Consolation of Philosophy which is very engaging and thought provoking

2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain what constitutes the dialogue between Boethius and philosophy in his work, The Consolation of Philosophy.
- Explain how through Dialogue, Boethius was able to resolve the problem, misfortune or better put the problem of evil and suffering, in the world.
- Explain Boethius' thoughts on the question of human freedom and God's foreknowledge.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Boethius: Short Biography

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, Anicius Manilius Severinus Boethius was born around 470-475 A.D. in Rome, Italy. He is considered as the last of the Romans and the first of the medieval scholastics. Lawhead (2002) opines that Boethius writings communicated the philosophies of the ancient world to the Middle Ages. He was born and raised in a politically famous Roman family. He was educated at Athens where he masterfully learnt Greek Language which enabled him to read and understand in its original language, the works of Plato and Aristotle. He attempted to translate all their works into Latin, but, he could not accomplish his

desire of translating the complete works of Plato and Aristotle. However, was able to translate into Latin Aristotle's writings on logic. He also wrote commentaries on them. Boethius equally translated into Latin, and wrote commentaries on, the Introduction to Aristotle's Categories written by the Neoplatonist Porphyry. He wrote several works on logic and theology. One of the famous work of Boethius is his celebrated De Consolatione Philosophiae – Consolation of Philosophy which he wrote while in prison. Boethius was raised by Quintus Aurelius Memmius Symachus whose daughter he later married (Abakedi, 2014). Boethius was a prominent political figure and held high office but later fell out of favour with the government of his time who charged him for high treason for which he was later executed.

3.2   Boethius' Philosophy

The Consolation of Philosophy is written in the form of a dialogue between Boethius and a Lady. The lady assumes the role of philosophy. Boethius was complaining of his changed fortune from a consul to a prisoner and philosophy appeared to him in the form of a lady to console him. The lady, although agreeing with him on the reality of his misfortune, blamed him for lack of courage and pointed out to him the circumstances of the death of Socrates. Philosophers are known for being persecuted by people whose actions are criticized for being unsavory for the society. Boethius question on why there is good and evil in the world was answered by philosophy with a more fundamental question on whether the universe is governed by intelligence or whether things just happen by chance (Omoregbe, 1997). At the background of this question is however whether there is any aim, goal or purpose in nature. Boethius and philosophy agreed that the universe is governed by God who is the origin of all things and that nature is teleological meaning that there is purpose and aim in the universe and that the universe works towards a goal. This is itself a confirmation of the reality of a grand intelligence behind the universe.

In the dialogue philosophy speaks of the reality of change which equally affects human life thus the incongruity of Boethius complaints about his change of fortune. Nothing is permanent in life. No condition is permanent, therefore one should not attach oneself to possessions and positions in life. It pays better to be unattached to anything so that when things change, one will still remain undisturbed otherwise one will go through the pain of loss and disappointment.

Lawhead notes that Boethius discusses the themes of human freedom and divine providence (foreknowledge) in the course of the dialogue to resolve the apparent contradiction between the freedom of human action and the foreknowledge of God. Because God is outside time – He experiences our past, present and future as simultaneous moments in his eternal present, the actions we will perform in the future are already present to him and they are known by him as free actions. For just as our knowledge of the sun is currently rising does not determine it to rise, so God's timeless foreknowledge of our free acts does not make them determined (Lawhead, 2002). The Theological works of Boethius are the following:

De Trinitate: in this work, Boethius defends the Trinitarian position of Council of Chalcedon which upholds the three persons of the God head which is one and the same in nature. His position on the trinity of God is opposed to the Arian (King of Italy) view of the nature of God.

Utrum Pater et filius et Spiritus Sanctus de divinitale substantialiter praedicentur which means "Whether Father, Son and Holy Spirit are substantially Predicated of the Divinity". In this work, he employs reason and the Epistemology of Aristotle to argue for the correctness of the Catholic views on the nature of God.

Quomado Substantiae

De Fide Catholica which means On the Catholic Faith.

Contra Eutychen et Nestorium which means "Against Eutyches and Nestorious". Eutyches and Nestorious were contemporaries who held divergent views on natures of Christ.

4.0 Conclusion

In this unit, Boethius' philosophy was our focus. We discussed the issues of change in fortune, the fact that nothing is permanent in life – No condition is permanent, and what should be our attitude towards these realities when and if we face them. Your understanding of these issues and your cultivation of the required attitude towards them will be an advantage to you as you go through life journey.

5.0 Summary

The following is the summary of what you have learnt in this unit:

- That good and evil, change of fortune are realities of life and that you require the right attitude to overcome them.
- That human freedom and the foreknowledge of God can exist without any contradiction.

Self-Assessment Exercise

What is the right attitude towards the realities of misfortune or good and evil in life as recommended by Boethius?

6.0   References/Further Studies

Abakedi, Dominic (2014) "Early Medieval Philosophy" in   Andrew Uduigwomen and Christopher Udofia (E.ds) *A Critical History of Philosophy*. Calabar: Ultimate Index Book Publishers.

Chadwick, H. (1981) Boethius: The Consolation of Music, Logic. Theology, and Philosophy. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Lawhead, William (2002) The Voyage of Discovery. Belmont, USA: Wadsworth.

Omoregbe, Joseph (1997) A Simplified History of Western Philosophy. Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers Limited.

Tutor Marked assignment

How did Boethius resolve the contradiction between the freedom of human action and the foreknowledge of God?

> *Answer: according to Boethius, Because God is outside time – He experiences our past, present and future as simultaneous moments in his eternal present, the actions we will perform in the future are already present to him and they are known by him as free actions. For just as our knowledge of the sun is currently rising does not determine it to rise, so God's timeless foreknowledge of our free acts does not make them determined*
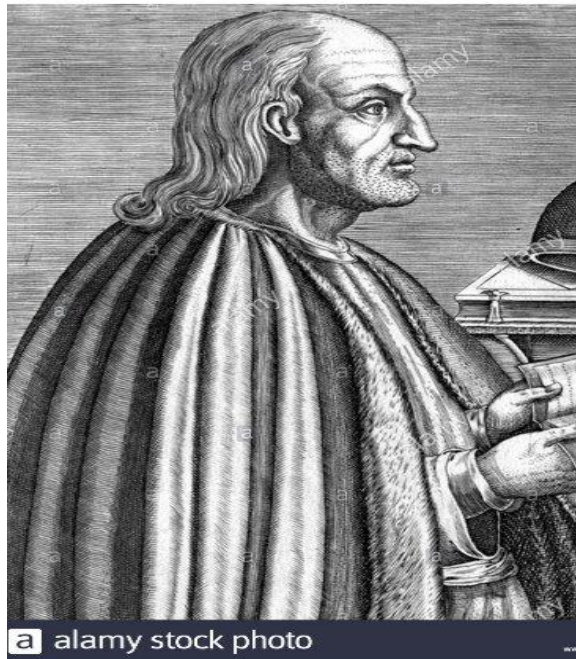
ST. ANSELM

Module 1: Unit 5 – St. Anselm

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1.0   Introduction

In the previous unit, you were exposed to the philosophical thoughts of Boethius, the Author of a famous book, *The Consolation of Philosophy*. In this unit, you will be learning the philosophical thoughts of St. Anselm especially the Ontological Argument for God's existence for which he is known. Apart from the Ontological argument, he equally gave other arguments for God's existence which shall be discussed shortly.

2.0   Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain St. Anselm's Ontological Argument for God's existence.
- Critique Anselm's ontological argument using the thoughts of Gaunilo.
- List and explain St. Anselm's other arguments for God's existence.

3.0   Main Contents

3.1   St. Anselm: Short Biography

St. Anselm well known for his credo (I believe in order to understand) was born at Piedomont, Italy in A.D. 1033. At the age of twenty -three, the little Anselm left home and settled at Normandy in 1059. One year after, i.e Anselm entered the Benedictine abbey. In 1063, he was elected as prior of the Abbey and in 1078 he became the abbot of the monastery upon the death of Herluin, the founder and first abbot of Bec. As an astute administrator and leader, the reputation of Bec as an intellectual center grew. Anselm contributed immensely to the development of Philosophy and Theology through his scholarly works which include: The *Monologium* where he discusses and establishes the necessity of an absolute being., The *Proslogium*, De *Grammatico*, *De Veritate*, *De Libertate Arbitrii* and *De Casu Diaboli*. St. Anselm later became the Archbishop of   Canterbury in 1093 on the death of the previous Archbishop Lanfranc. St. Anselm has to his credit many works he did while serving as an Archbishop which include: the *Epistola de Incarnationa Verbi*, *Cur Deus Homo*, *De ConceptuVirginali*, *De ProcessionaSpiritus Sancti*, the *Epistola de Sacrificio Azymiet Fermentati*, *De Sacramentis Ecclesiae, De Concordia*. Anselm died on April 21, 1109 at the age

of seventy-six and was canonized in 1494. St. Anselm was named the Doctor of the Church in 1720.

3.2   St Anselm's Contribution to Philosophy

His major contribution to philosophy was his classical arguments for God's existence. "His philosophical goal was to provide conclusive arguments to rationally demonstrate the Christian teachings he has accepted on faith" (Lawhead, 2002: 157). As an Augustinian, he believes the primacy of faith over reason thus his credo, " I believe in order to understand". Lawhead reveals that although Anselm was deeply pious, he however was a confident rationalist who was convinced that all reasoning should follow the deductive method which will lead to all fundamental truths.

St. Anselm's argument for God's existence for which he is widely and famously known is the ontological argument which was invented by him. According to this argument, God is that being greater than which nothing greater can be thought. This means that the idea of God is the idea of a being to which no other being is greater and can be conceived. God is the greatest possible being. No other being can be conceived as being greater than Him. This idea exists not only in the mind but also outside the mind, that is both intramentally and extramentally. A being that exists only in the mind will not be the greatest possible being for a being that exists both in the mind and outside the mind (in reality) will be greater than a being that exists only in the mind as an idea. Therefore, God a being than which nothing greater can be conceived necessarily exists in reality and not only in the mind. This is the first aspect of the ontological argument. The second aspect of this argument is that it is not possible even to imagine God not to exist. The being which cannot be thought not to exist is greater than a being which can be conceived not to exist. God is the possible greatest being we can ever think of, therefore, it follows that God is a being that cannot be thought not to exist. God's existence follows necessarily from his nature as the greatest possible being that can be conceived. Since God cannot be conceived not to exist, it follows that he necessarily exists. Therefore, God exists.

The ontological argument is based entirely on the nature or the idea of God as a being that cannot be thought not to exist therefore, he exists. Thus, the ontological argument stems from the study of God's essence (ontos – eseence and logos – science of). This argument was however attacked by a monk and contemporary of Anselm named Gaunilo. Gaunilo argues that

for the fact that we can think of being does not confer existence to that being. Gaunilo said that my idea of a most beautiful Island does not mean that such an Island exists in reality. However, Anselm replied him by saying "God is not an Island" and that the idea of the most beautiful Island can not necessarily imply its existence since the Island is not an absolutely perfect being. An absolutely perfect being cannot but necessarily exists for it will be contradictory to think of God as an absolutely perfect being without conceiving him as necessarily existing. St. Aquinas also criticized this argument by stating that since we do not know God's essence, His existence cannot be self- evident to us as St. Anselm wants us to believe.

St. Anselm equally developed other arguments for God's existence. One of such arguments is based on the degrees of perfection found in things. The varying degrees of perfection points to the fact of the existence of an absolute perfection. In life if you observe well, you will discover that there are degrees of beauty and what this points to is that there is an absolute standard of beauty from which these other degrees of beauty derive their beauty. Also note that the same thing applies to degrees of goodness, wisdom, justice etc as we experience in life. Another argument given by St. Anselm is based on comparison. In life, you will discover that you do compare things based on their quality. These differing qualities is a testimony that there is an absolute standard against which these qualities are measured and compared. This argument is more like the one on degrees of perfection.

Another argument given by St. Anselm is based on the fact of existence. Existence according to Anselm has a causal relationship. One thing is the cause of another. For instance, biologically parents are the cause of their off springs, and the parents today were the off springs of their parents and the regression continues (Umotong, 2006:38). Nothing can bring itself into existence for whatever exists will require another thing to bring it into existence. But things cannot bring each other into existence for that will be an impossibility, for instance A cannot bring B into existence and B in turn bring A into existence. They will rather require one common source for their existence and God is this common source for all existing beings in the world and therefore God exists. However, St. Anselm needs to reconcile his proposition that nothing can bring itself into existence with his view that God was not brought into existence by any other.

4.0   Conclusion

In this unit, we discussed the contributions of St. Anselm to philosophy. This we have done through a treatment of his classical and famous Ontological argument for God's existence. We saw that St. Anselm argued for God's existence through the analysis of His nature or Essence. He equally gave other arguments for God's existence which are not ontological but cosmological. If you understand God's nature from the perspective of Anselm, you will believe His existence needs no further demonstration and cannot be doubted for it's only a fool that says in his heart, there is no God.

5.0   Summary

The following is the summary of what you have learnt in this unit:

- That Anselm's Ontological argument is original with him and that it is this argument that he is famous for.
- That the Ontological argument states that God is the Greatest Possible Being and nothing greater than Him can be thought.
- That Anselm has other arguments for God's existence namely: argument based on the degree of perfection and the argument based on the fact of existence.

Self-Assessment Exercise

Explain Anselm's Ontological argument for God's existence and discuss Gaunilo's critique of it.

6.0   References/Further Studies

Abakedi, Dominic (2014) "Early Medieval Philosophy" in   Andrew Uduigwomen and Christopher Udofia (E.ds) *A Critical History of Philosophy*. Calabar: Ultimate Index Book Publishers.

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Umontong, Iniobong (2006) Medieval Philosophy. Uyo: Afahaide & Brothers Publishing Company.

Tutor Marked Assignment

Explain Anselm's argument for God's existence based on the fact of existence.

Answer: Existence according to Anselm has a causal relationship. One thing is the cause of another. For instance, biologically parents are the cause of their off springs, and the parents today were the off springs of their parents and the regression continues. He maintains that nothing can bring itself into existence for whatever exists will require another thing to bring it into existence. But things cannot bring each other into existence for that will be an impossibility, for instance A cannot bring B into existence and B in turn bring A into existence. They will rather require one common source for their existence and God is this common source for all existing beings in the world and therefore God exists. However, St. Anselm needs to reconcile his proposition that nothing can bring itself into existence with his view that God was not brought into existence by any other.

JOHN SCOTUS ERIGENA

MODULE 2

Unit 1:   The Philosophy of John Scotus Erigena

Unit 2:   The Philosophy of Peter Abelard

Unit 1:   The Philosophy of John Scotus Erigena

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1.0   Introduction

John Scotus Erigena is one of the early medieval philosophers. It is important that you note that early medieval philosophers and in fact medieval philosophers generally were both philosophers and theologians who made no clear-cut difference between philosophy and theology in their works. Of course they were guided by the principle of *credo ut intelligam* which means I believe in order to understand. Part of what consists their philosophy among other things is pantheism which made no difference between God and nature. This is one prominent system found in the philosophy of John Scotus Erigena. Therefore, in this unit, you will learn the pantheistic philosophy of Erigena, his idea of nature and God and his four aspects of nature. You will equally learn his thoughts on the immortality of the soul and his philosophy of the human person.

2.0   Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain what Erigena means when he says God and nature are one and the same thing.

- Understand Erigena's four aspects of Nature

- Know the thoughts of Erigena concerning the Human Person

- Learn about Erigena's defense for the immortality of the Soul

3.0   Main Content

3.1   John Scotus Erigena: Short Biography

Although Erigena's date or place of birth is not certain according to Encyclopedia of Philosophy, some Authors (Stumpf, 1979; Lawhead 2002; and Omoregbe, 1997) claim that he was born around 800/810 AD in Ireland and died around 877 AD. He studied in an Irish monastery which happened to be a centre of learning where the knowledge of Greek was still very much valued though unknown in the rest of the world. Erigena was a great Greek scholar. His scholarship endeared him to King Charles the Bald who commissioned him to translate into Latin the writings of some of the fathers of the church including Pseudo Dionysius whose philosophy influenced him a great deal. Pseudo-Dionysius was a Christian Neo-Platonist who combined Neo-Platonism with Christian doctrines. You will recall that this Dionysius the Areopagite was one of St. Pauls converts mentioned in Acts 17:34 (Lawhead, 2002). John Scotus Erigena is famous for his Masterpiece "On the Division of Nature". You should note that although this work has some affinity with some basic Christian doctrines or concepts as used by St. Augustine, the pantheism inherent in the work made Pope Honorius III to condemned it as false teaching (Stumpf, 1979: 156-157; Abakedi, 2014:424).

3.2   John Scotus Erigena's Metaphysics

Arising from his book *On the Division of Nature*, Erigena considers nature to mean the whole of reality including God. He divides nature into four. 1) the nature which creates and is not created. This nature refers to God as the cause of all things but Himself is not caused by anything. 2) the nature which is created and also creates. This nature consists of divine ideas which are the blueprints and the primary causes of all things. This is Erigena's version of the Platonic Forms and Plotinus' Nous. 3) the nature which is created but does not create. This nature talks about all creatures and finite beings. This is the created universe itself. 4) the nature which neither creates nor is created. This nature is also God but not as creator or the source of all

things but as the ultimate end of all things. This God is the final end of the creative process. The *terminus ad quem* of all things. Here, Erigena showcases the belief that things will ultimately return to their source and be reunited with the being of God (Omoregbe, 1997; Lawhead, 2002). Erigena believes that God and Nature are one and the same thing. This is the pantheistic metaphysics of Erigena for which Pope Honorius III condemned his works. Erigena believes that God creates himself in creatures and manifests himself in them in the same way the intellect makes itself in thoughts and manifests itself in thoughts (Omoregbe, 1997:114).

The idea that God created the world implies that there is motion in God. The reason is that if God is eternal and immutable, then it would not make sense to conceive God as first existing and then decides to create the world. The concepts of creating and making involve motion. Is God then subject to motion? So what actually do we mean when we say that God created the universe or that He made all things? In this regard, Erigena is of the view that what this means is that God is the essence of all things and that God is in all things. God is the reason for all things. There is nothing that is, that does not come from Him. In Him does all things consist. All things are the manifestation of God. According to Omoregbe, "In things, the invisible makes himself visible, the incorporeal makes himself corporeal, the intangible makes himself tangible, the unapproachable makes himself approachable, the inaccessible makes himself accessible etc. Thus all visible things are the self- manifestation of God. Nature is the comprehension of the incomprehensible, the appearing of the invisible, the manifestation of the hidden, the speaking of the ineffable, the approach of the unapproachable, the understanding of the unintelligible, the body of the incorporeal, the essence of the super-essential, the form of the formless etc. When we say that God created all things out of nothing, it means, according to Erigena, that God appeared from the incomprehensibility, from his ineffability, to become accessible and visible in things. In other words, 'out of nothing' here means out of incomprehensibility, inaccessibility, ineffability etc (Omoregbe, 1997).

The pantheistic philosophy of Erigena was influenced by Neoplatonism. Given this, it would have been impossible for Erigena to believe in the orthodox doctrine that God is absolutely separate from creation. The Neoplatonism of Pseudo-Dionysius states that the only possible way to conceive the world as depending on God was to suppose that the world participates in the being of the world or flows from it. Lawhead states that Erigena, in support of

this claim, quotes the author which he thought was Dionysius when he says that God "is called the One because he is all things universally, for there is nothing in existence which does not participate in the One" (DN, 1976:149). In fact, according to Erigena, "God extends itself into everything and the extension itself is everything" as a necessary Being, god has no accidents in Him for everything that proceeds from God does so necessarily. The universe is a necessary fulfilment of the divine creativity, just as the infinite number series is a rationally necessary procession from its source in the number 1. The universe proceeds out of necessity from God otherwise, God will be a mere potential creator, unfulfilled and defective (Lawhead, 2002). What this shows is that God's being is like a river that flows into everything, while the waters remain the same.

What is the implication of this pantheistic view of God? Among other things, this view of God raises the problem of evil. The book of Genesis 1:31 says, "and God saw everything He has made, and behold, it was very good…". God Himself is good and everything He created is very good. If this is the case, why is evil in the world? Erigena's treatment or answer to this problem is Augustinian in nature. Just as Augustine saw darkness as not being a positive entity in itself but the absence of light, likewise evil is the absence of good or privation of good. Again, like Augustine, Erigena is of the view that our experience of evil is due to our limited view of the universe. According to Lawhead, Erigena quotes Augustine by saying that "what appears to be evil is like the shadows in a painting. Seen by themselves, they are ugly, but in the context of the whole, they help create the beauty of the painting".

In Erigena's four aspects of nature, the last aspect talk about the nature that neither creates nor is created. Here, Erigena believes that all distinctions and fragmentations will be overcomed when everything eventually returns to the same unity from which they emerged. However, the account that everything will eventually be absorbed by the unity of all things which is God diminishes the significance of time and creation. This is how Henry Betts reacts to this account as quoted by Lawhead. He says,

> It seems to be impossible to retain the reality of the temporal universe in any satisfying sense. For when all has been reabsorbed into the Absolute, what has the cosmic process accomplished? What is different because everything did ever exist? What has been

achieved by the immense structure of the creation, by all the labour

and experience and suffering of humanity?

Concerning the Christian notion of the immortality of the soul, does this account hold any implication? The answer is yes despite the fact that Erigena tries to preserve the idea of individual immortality. Erigena says, "At the end of time, every creature will be cast into the shade, that is, changed into God, as the stars at the rising of the sun. Another problem raised by Erigena's account is the problem of religious language. This problem is raised by his statement that God is above and beyond all categories of being and thought. The problem is all about the appropriateness of using words and concepts 'drawn from our finite and earthbound experience to describe an infinite and transcendent being'. In a response to this problem as a way of providing solution to it, Erigena employed the thesis of both affirmative and negative theology. For instance, when we say that 'God is good', since our notion of 'goodness' is not appropriate for describing God, we must quickly add that 'God is not good'. This is because God cannot share anything in common with man because the two are not in the same class or degree of being. God is infinite, man is finite. God is Absolute, man is temporal. God is necessary, man is contingent. But because the use of the negative theology may again be understood literally therefore, the best thing to do to overcome our affirmative or negative description of God is to apply superlative theology. Here, instead of saying God is truth, we should rather say God is Super-truth, God is Super-good, God is Super-wisdom etc. This means that God does not share any similarity with earthly beings.

3.3   Erigena on the Nature of the Human Person

Omoregbe opines that in Erigena's philosophy, man is seen as a microcosm of creation, for he sums up, within himself, in his nature, both the spiritual and the material worlds. His view in this regard is not different from that of Aquinas. Man shares with the plants the power of nutrition, with the animals, the power of sensation and with the spiritual beings, the power of intellection. Man has a spiritual soul which is present in all the parts of his body. Given this therefore, man is a combination of visible and invisible, material and immaterial, corporeal and incorporeal. Originally man was created asexual but after the fall, man became sexually differentiated. Erigena believes that at the end when all things will be absorbed by the Absolute,

when all things will go back to their Source, then man will be restored back to his asexual state. Erigena talks about the mode of existence. According to him, there are five ways of interpreting the mode of things. According to the first mode, things accessible to the senses and the intellect are said to be, whereas anything which, 'through the excellence of its nature' transcends our faculties are said not to be. According to this classification, God because of His Transcendence is said not to be. He is 'nothingness through excellence'. The second mode of being and non-being is seen in the 'orders and differences of created natures' whereby, if one level of nature is said to be, those orders above or below it are said not to be. For an affirmation concerning the lower (order) is a negation concerning higher and so to a negation concerning the lower (order) is an affirmation concerning the higher. According to this mode, the affirmation of man is the negation of Angels and vice versa. This mode illustrates Erigena's original way of dissolving the traditional Neoplatonic hierarchy of being into dialectic of affirmation and negation: to assert one level is to deny the others. In other words, a particular level may be affirmed to be real by those on a lower or on the same level, but the one above it is thought not to be real in the same way. If humans are thought to exist in a certain way, then Angels do not exist in that way. The third mode contrasts the being of actual things with the non being of potential or possible things still contained in Erigena's memorable phrase, - in the most secret fold of nature this mode contrasts things which have come into effect with those things which are still contained in their causes. According to this mode, actual things, which are the effects of the causes, have being, whereas those things which are still virtual in the primary causes (e.g the souls of those as yet unborn) are said not to be. The fourth mode offers a roughly Platonic criterion for being: those things contemplated by the intellect alone may be considered to be, whereas things caught up in generation and corruption, viz. Matter, place and time, do not truly exist. The assumption is that things graspable by intellect alone belongs to the realm above the material, corporeal world and hence are timeless. The fifth mode offered by Erigena is essentially theological and applies solely to humans: those sanctified by Grace are said to be, whereas sinners who have renounced the Divine image are said not to be (plato.stanford.edu).

4.0   Conclusion

In this unit, you have learnt in details the philosophy of John Scotus Erigena. The philosophy of Erigena was heavily pantheistic in that he sees no difference between God and nature stating that nature has four aspects. Erigena's philosophy of the human person is germane

for a holistic interpretation of man in that he sees the human person as a composite of the material and the immaterial which is the spiritual aspect. Understanding man as both material and spiritual is germane for the flowering of human dignity.

5.0   Summary

The following are the summary of what you have learnt in this unit:

- That Erigena's philosophy was pantheistic
- That nature has four aspects
- That the soul of man is immortal
- That the human person is a composite of material and immaterial aspects.

Self-Assessment Exercise

List and briefly discuss the four aspects of nature as conceived by Erigena

6.0   References/Further Studies

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Tutor Marked Assignment

How did Erigena explain the nature of the human person?

Answer: according to Erigena, man is seen as a microcosm of creation, for he sums up, within himself, in his nature, both the spiritual and the material worlds. His view in this regard is not different from that of Aquinas. Man shares with the plants the power of nutrition, with the animals, the power of sensation and with the spiritual beings, the power of intellection. Man has a spiritual soul which is present in all the parts of his body. Given this therefore, man is a

combination of visible and invisible, material and immaterial, corporeal and incorporeal. Originally man was created asexual but after the fall, man became sexually differentiated. Erigena believes that at the end when all things will be absorbed by the Absolute, when all things will go back to their Source, then man will be restored back to his asexual state.

PETER ABELARD

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Unit 2: Peter Abelard

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4.0   Conclusion

5.0   Summary

6.0   References/ Further Reading.

1.0 Introduction

Abelard in his philosophy appears to have disagreed with his predecessors in most cases. For instance, against the prevalent tradition of his time he believes that the intention of the agent is more important in deciding the rightness or wrongness of an action for according to him, "God considers not what is done but in what spirit it is done; and the merit or praise of the agent lies not in the deed but in the intention". Thus for him, sin is a contempt for God manifested in our willing what we know to be wrong but if we act with a sincere conscience and do what we believe is right, we may err, but we do not sin. A strict adherence to his teachings will help one build the right conscience which is required for right actions.

2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain correctly Peter Abelard's Philosophy
- Articulate Peter Abelard's thoughts on the importance of intention as a determinant factor for the wrongness or rightness of man's actions.

3.0   Main Content

3.1   Peter Abelard: Short Biography

Peter Abelard was born in 1079 to the family of a minor aristocrat at Le Pallet near Nantes in Brittany France. According to Lawhead, he studied at the new schools of Philosophy and Theology at Chartres and Paris. He was an exceptionally brilliant student who however had the reputation for being arrogant and disagreeable scholar most times. After completing a course, Abelard would teach the subject he learned to others in competition with his former teacher of the subject (Lawhead, 2002). John Marenborn recorded that in 1113 after a failed attempt to study theology from the famous St. Anselm who was then a teacher at Leon, Abelard soon became Master of the school of Notre Dame (Marenbon, 2002:41-43). As a Logician, Abelard

wrote the book the Dialectica which covered most areas of logic taught at the time. Abelard secretly married Heloise, the niece of Fulbert, a Canon of Notre Dame after impregnating her. This act made the family of her lover to punish him. The punishment was that Fulbert masterminded the castration of Abelard which, made him (Abelard) become a monk of St. Dennis. According to Abelard, "her family punished me by cutting off those parts of my body with which I had done that which was the cause of their sorrow". Abelard became a Monk as a result of this castration and Heloise went to convent where she became a Num . According to Lawhead, Abelard's life was enmeshed in controversy as his book On the divine Unity and the Trinity was condemned and burnt at an ecclesiastical council at Soissons in 1121. Twenty years later, around 1141, he was summoned to a council at Sens where he was prosecuted for heresy because of his *Introduction to Theology* (Lawhead, 2002:160). Abelard died in 1142 and 20 years later Heloise also died and she was buried beside him.

3.2   Abelard's Philosophical Teachings

In his metaphysics, Abelard avers that universals are nothing but words. He holds that there is no real object in the world that satisfies Boethius criteria for the universal. Thus for Abelard universality is not an ontological feature of the world but a semantic feature of language (Abakedi, 2014:441). According to Abelard, common nouns such as animals, verbs and negative names such as 'Not-Socrates are correct predicable of many and thus count as universals. These terms are semantically general for they apply to more than one thing. Example is animal which he refers to as a living substance and it applies to each individual animals since they are all living substance.

Abelard's moral philosophy had great influence on scholastic moral theology. His moral philosophy was according Lawhead against the legalistic tendencies of his time in which moral goodness was seen simply as an external conformity of an act to the law of God while sin was seen as a factual transgression of law whether the transgressor or the agent is ignorant of his wrong doing or not. To Abelard, the intention of the agent is more important in deciding the rightness or wrongness of an action for according to him, "God considers not what is done but in what spirit it is done; and the merit or praise of the agent lies not in the deed but in the intention". Thus for him, sin is a contempt for God manifested in our willing what we know to be wrong but

if we act with a sincere conscience and do what we believe is right, we may err, but we do not sin. In support to this, he cites the words of Jesus about his persecutors, "father, forgive them for they know not what they do" (Lawhead, 2002:160). You must note that Abelard was not condoning simple-minded and ignorant sincerity concerning morality rather he maintained that the morally good is a person who out of goodwill makes determined effort to know and do what is right based on the best light he or she can find.

On the subject of the human person, Abelard states that among all material beings made up of form and matter, that its only the human person that has its form existing separately from its matter. The soul is the form while the body is matter. You will recall that Plato and the Pythagoreans had earlier held such view of the separateness of the soul and the human body.

4.0   Conclusion

In this unit, you have learnt in details the philosophy of Peter Abelard. His philosophy was a departure from the philosophical thoughts of his day. We noted that his moral philosophy was according against the legalistic tendencies of his time in which moral goodness was seen simply as an external conformity of an act to the law of God while sin was seen as a factual transgression of law whether the transgressor or the agent is ignorant of his wrong doing or not. Understanding his philosophy and a strict adherence to its ideals will help one build a strong moral conscience requisite for living right.

5.0   Summary

The following are the summary of what you have learnt in this unit:

- That Abelard is famous for always departing from the prevailing thoughts of his time.
- That an actor's intention is germane for determining the morality or otherwise of one's actions.

Self-Assessment Exercise

Why does Abelard think that one's intention is important for determining the morality of one's actions?

Note: the answer is found on page 51.

6.0   References/Further Studies

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Tutor Marked Assignment

What did Abelard say about Universals?

Answer: In his metaphysics, Abelard avers that universals are nothing but words. He holds that there is no real object in the world that satisfies Boethius criteria for the universal. Thus for Abelard universality is not an ontological feature of the world but a semantic feature of language. According to Abelard, common nouns such as animals, verbs and negative names such as 'Not-Socrates are correct predicable of many and thus count as universals. These terms are semantically general for they apply to more than one thing. Example is animal which he refers to as a living substance and it applies to each individual animals since they are all living substance.

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

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MODULE 3

Unit 1:   The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas

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1.0   Introduction

St. Thomas Aquinas is still today celebrated as the greatest medieval philosopher. He was among the medieval philosophers of the scholastic tradition which was the dominant philosophy of the medieval period. In this unit, you will be exposed to the philosophical thoughts of one of the finest of philosophers across periods. You shall learn and be inspired by Aquinas' thoughts on the existence of God, Aquinas' epistemology and Aquinas' moral philosophy. A strict adherence to the consideration of the four things required for making a moral judgement concerning an action is paramount for moral judgement.

2.0   **Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)**

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand and explain correctly Thomas Aquinas' Philosophy in a general term.
- Articulate particularly Thomas Aquinas' thoughts on the importance of the four things required for making moral judgement of actions.
- Understand and correctly explain Aquinas' arguments for God's existence.

3.1   **St. Thomas Aquinas: Short Biography**

Aquinas was such a philosopher and Theologian who created a niche for himself through his thoughts on numerous philosophical and theological issues. His thoughts touch on many aspects of philosophy spanning through metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, political philosophy etc. His scholastic synthesis of Plato, Aristotle and Christian faith made him a profound thinker. Born in 1225 AD at the castle of Roccassecca near Naples, Aquinas came from the noble Italian family of Count Landulf of Aquino. After his elementary education at a Benedictine Abbey, Aquinas at the age of fourteen was sent to study at the University of Naples. In Naples, around 1244, he joined the Dominican order under whose influence he formed his philosophical thoughts and later went to Paris where he continued with his studies at the University of Paris. Aquinas eventually became a professor of philosophy and theology and taught at the university of Paris and many other theological institutions in Italy. Lawhead records that Aquinas' membership of the Dominican Order was well pleasing to his parents because the Dominicans were not influential administrators but humble and impoverished preachers and scholars. Thus, to bring Thomas back to track, his brothers, in his (Aquinas') en route to Paris, kidnapped him and kept him in a tower for over a year. However, after discovering that Aquinas could not changed his mind, they left him to pursue his ambition. As a prolific writer, Aquinas had many works to his credit but the two most famous of his works are his two Summa – Summa Contra Gentiles and Summa Theologica. St. Thomas Aquinas died in 1274 at the age of forty-nine on his way to attend the Council of Lyons to carry out a diplomatic mission.

3.2   Aquinas' Metaphysics: (the Physical world, Essence and Existence, God's existence)

The Physical World

In tandem with Aristotelean Form and Matter, Aquinas states that the physical world is made up of a collection of concrete individual substances (trees, dogs, stones, Socrates etc) and every one of these substances can be explained by two fundamental principles which are Form and Matter. The Form is the universal character of a thing, that which all members of a class or species share in common. Example is the substantial form of humanity which all human beings share in common that differentiates them from plants and animals. Whereas the other principle of a substance is matter. For instance, the matter of a tree is the woody and fibrous material which we associate with the interior of a tree.

Essence and Existence

The Essence of a being is that which makes a being the kind of a being that it is. It is more or less the nature of a being. Finite beings have essence as well as existence but their essence and existence are not identical, they are distinct. It is only God that essence and existence are identical. This is because God is a Necessary Being whose essence is to exist. God's essence involves existence. Therefore, as a Necessary Being God's essence is the same with His existence because His essence is such that he must necessarily exist. God and all immaterial beings have essence which is composed of form alone without matter. But concerning finite beings, their essence and existence are distinct. They are not necessary beings meaning they receive their existence from outside of them. All material substances are composed of matter and form and the two are distinct but inseparable. There cannot be an existence without an essence for it is the essence that determines the existence. It is the essence of a thing that determines the kind of a thing that it is. Also, there cannot be essence without existence. Essence without existence makes no meaning because it is existence that actualizes essence (Omoregbe, 1997).

God's Existence

Aquinas produces five arguments for God's existence or what is popularly called Aquinas Five Ways. They are as follows:

1. **Argument from Motion**

Experientially, if you observe well, you will discover that motion is a fact of existence. Things do move and motion involves a movement from a state of potency to a state of act. But you know that a thing in a state of potency cannot bring itself to a state of act, in other words, cannot move itself unless it is moved, that is brought into a state of act by a thing or being already in a state of act. This means that nothing moves itself. Whatever is moved is moved by another. That thing that moves the other is itself moved by another and this another is itself moved by another thing and it goes on like that. However, common sense tells us that these series of movement cannot continue *ad infinitum* and therefore there must be the beginning of the series of movement. That beginning is that which moves others but itself is not moved. Aquinas calls it The Unmoved Mover and that is God. Therefore, God exists.

2. **Argument from Cause**

Again in the world you do observe that one thing causes another and this thing that caused the other is itself caused by another thing. Such as we considered above, the series of causes cannot continue ad infinitum. There must be a beginning of the series of causes. That beginning is what people call God – the Uncaused Cause. Therefore, God exists.

3. **Argument from the Contingency of Being**

Any being that comes into existence and goes out of existence is a contingent being. Unlike a being that does not come into existence and go out of existence which is called a Necessary being and this is God. If you observe well, you will discover that all beings in this world are therefore contingent being because they all come into existence and go out of existence. Their existence is not necessary. And being not necessary, they may exist or not exist. All beings cannot be of this nature if not it will be impossible to account for their existence if there is no Necessary Being to bring them into existence. God is this Necessary Being that brings all other contingent beings into existence. Therefore, God exists.

4. **Argument from the Degrees of Perfection**

You must have certainly observed around you that there are degrees of perfection, beauty, goodness, justice etc. for instance, one thing is better than the other and the second is

better than the third and the third is better than the fourth etc. the same is true of beauty, goodness, justice etc. A is more beautiful than B, and B is more beautiful than C and C is more beautiful than D etc. what this points to is that there is the standard of perfection, beauty, justice, goodness etc against which these degrees are measured. That Standard is God. Therefore, God exists.

5. Argument from Order

It is a fact that there is purpose, order and harmony in the world. Nature is so orderly and harmoniously arranged. Even inorganic things which do not have aims and intentions do exhibit some purpose. This shows that there must be an Intelligent Being behind the purpose, order and harmony we find in life. This Intelligent Being is what men call God. Therefore, God exists (Omoregbe, 1997:143).

3.3   Aquinas's Epistemology

Aquinas's epistemology is a major reflection of Aristotle's epistemological thoughts although with minor differences. For instance, one of such differences lies in the relationship between the soul and the body. Against the Aristotelean view that body and soul are like matter and form and that the disintegration of the body means the destruction of the soul, Aquinas maintains that the soul is the form of the body and is united with the body. However, the unity does not suggest that none can exist without the other. Instead of agreeing with Aristotle that the soul perishes with the body at death, Aquinas maintains the immortality of the soul and that the soul goes back to its creator at the disintegration of the body. This is a Platonic injection into Aquinas's Philosophy.

Following Aristotle's doctrine of Active and Passive Intellects, the Averroists interpreted it to mean that all men have one common and unified cosmic intellect. But Aquinas opposes this view and argues that each man has his own unique intellect which explains the diversity in ways of thinking, understanding and expression of opinions even on the same issue amongst people. According to Aquinas, man is also endowed with a will which is a rational appetite and that the will is oriented towards good at all times and cannot desire evil. If however, the will desires

anything evil. It is because it sees it as being good in some respects. The will is constituted to desire good at all times (Omoregbe, 1997:148).

As an Aristotelian, Aquinas opposes the reality of innate ideas. He agrees with Aristotle that there is nothing in the intellect that is not first in the senses; that all human knowledge derives from sense perception and is acquired through the senses. Aquinas added four internal senses to the already existing five external senses. First is the common sense which is the internal sense that distinguishes the data of various external senses. Second, is the imaginative sense which preserves the data apprehended by the external senses. Third, is the estimative sense which helps us to perceive what cannot be perceived by the external senses. The last is the memorative sense or power with which the data known through the estimative sense is preserved. Aquinas maintains further that although all human knowledge comes from sense experience, however, the sense can only perceive particular individual objects and not universal ideas. But man does have universal ideas. How then does he acquire them? Aquinas says that is possible from the object of sense perception through the process of abstraction. The image formed in the mind when we perceive an object is what the active intellect illuminates by removing its particularizing features and extracting the essential and universal characteristics, the active intellect impresses it on the passive intellect which reacts to it and produces it as a universal concept (Omoregbe, 1997:150).

3.4   **Aquinas' Moral Philosophy**

Aristotle's influence on Aquinas cannot be over emphasized. In Thomistic Ethics, you will see a reflection of Aristotelianism coloured with a Christian tradition. Lawhead (2002:177) sees it as a "Christian adaptation of Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics". This is understandable if he must continue to uphold his doctrinal beliefs as a faithful catholic. Re-echoing the thoughts of Aristotle, Aquinas believes that teleologically, all human activities and in fact all events in the universe are directed towards some end. Humans are the only earthly creatures that can choose how to fulfil a given end. Ethics therefore is concerned with what ends are worthy for us to pursue. Humans are made and directed to always pursue the good. Good therefore is natural with man and evil is that which prevents us from achieving fulfillment. What then is the highest good for man? Aquinas agrees with Aristotle that it is the intellectual contemplation of the highest object which is God. However, Aquinas differs from Aristotle for whereas the later talks about

the intellectual contemplation of God the unmoved mover, the former talks about the beatific vision of God in heaven, not only by philosophers but also by even the simpleminded people who lived a good life while they were here on earth (Omoregbe, 1997:150).

Living a good life is living morally. And one can live morally if one can think or reason well. This is what Aquinas believes in, he therefore assigns reason an important role in morality. Rationality makes room for morality. Man is a moral being because he is a rational being. Animals therefore, are not expected to exhibit moral responsibility because they are not rational. For him, virtue is the rule of reason over the passions. Reason performs two functions namely: practical and speculative functions which corresponds to practical and speculative intellects. The speculative intellect is used for abstract reasoning as in metaphysics while the practical intellect helps in guiding human behavior towards good and away from evil. Aquinas differentiates between human actions and the acts of humans. Human actions are voluntary, self- willed and well -reasoned actions done for the sake of certain ends whereas, acts of humans are involuntary actions over which we do not have control for example sneezing. While human actions can be good or bad, acts of humans are neither good nor bad. They are amoral in nature. Ethics therefore has to do with the rightness or wrongness of voluntary human conducts.

Again, Aquinas agree with Aristotle that virtue is the mean between two extremes and when this is achieved, human beings will live a good life having allowed their reason to control their passion. But it must be noted here that in the attainment of a happiness to which human life aims, that reason is limited. Aquinas brings in the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity which according to Aquinas surpass human reason and are supernaturally geared towards God. For Aquinas, man needs God's Grace to attain true happiness (Agu & Dimgba, 2014:504). Aquinas further states that two factors influence human actions: the intellect and the Will. The role of the intellect is to illuminate, enlighten and examine an action to determine its appropriateness while the role of the will is to implement an action in agreement with the intellect. But the question is does the intellect always perform this role undisturbed or unhindered? The answer is No, for the intellect is in constant conflict with the passions and sometimes the passions overpower the intellect and the Will and gets it derailed.

Aquinas gives four things that must be considered before we can make a moral judgement concerning an action. They are as follows: 1) the action must be voluntary, free and

deliberate. 2) the specific nature of the action must be considered. Example telling lies, killing, dispossessing someone of his property against his will etc. 3) the intention of the action must be considered and 4) the circumstances within which the action is performed must also be considered (Omoregbe, 1997).

You must have noted that as a commentator on Aristotle's works, Aquinas very much attempted a synthesis of Aristotelianism with Christian doctrines. However, Aquinas has been accused by Russell for being more interested in synthesizing than in originality. Russell wrote as quoted by Agu and Dimgba that:

> There is little of the true philosophic spirit in Aquinas. He does not like the Platonic Socrates, set out to follow wherever the argument may lead. He is not engaged in the enquiry, the result of which it is impossible to know in advance. Before he begins to philosophize, he already knows the truth, it is declared in the Catholic faith. If he can find apparently rational arguments for some parts of the faith, so much the better, if he cannot, he need only fall back on revelation (Russell, 1946:427).

4.0   Conclusion

In this unit, you have learnt in details the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas very much attempted a synthesis of Aristotelianism with Christian doctrines. Although Aquinas was accused by Russell for being more interested in synthesizing than in originality, yet the contributions of Aquinas to the development of medieval philosophy cannot be over-emphasized. Little wonder he is unarguably regarded as the greatest medieval philosopher. His cosmological arguments for God's existence popularly called the Aquinas' Five Ways are classical and his thoughts on the four things that must be considered in making moral judgement of actions are very instructive.

5.0   Summary

The following are the summary of what you have learnt in this unit:

- That Aquinas is regarded as the greatest philosopher of the medieval period given his classical thoughts on important philosophical issues.

- That Aquinas developed five arguments for God's existence popularly called Aquinas' Five ways.

Self-Assessment Exercise

Mention and adequately explain Aquinas Five Ways for God's existence.

6.0   References/Further Studies

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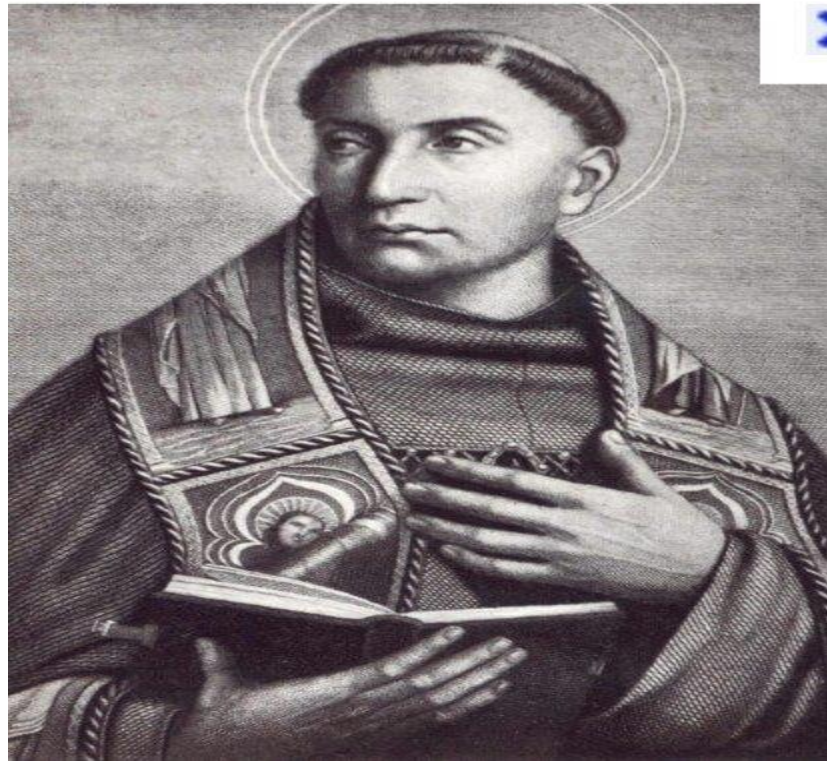
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Tutor Marked Assignment

What does it take to live a good life according to Aquinas?

Answer: according to Aquinas, living a good life is living morally. And one can live morally if one can think or reason well. This is what Aquinas believes in, he therefore assigns reason an important role in morality. Rationality makes room for morality. Man is a moral being because he is a rational being. Animals therefore, are not expected to exhibit moral responsibility because they are not rational. For him, virtue is the rule of reason over the passions. Reason performs two functions namely: practical and speculative functions which corresponds to practical and speculative intellects. The speculative intellect is used for abstract reasoning as in metaphysics while the practical intellect helps in guiding human behavior towards good and away from evil. Aquinas differentiates between human actions and the acts of humans. Human actions are voluntary, self- willed and well -reasoned actions done for the sake of certain ends whereas, acts of humans are involuntary actions over which we do not have control for example sneezing. While human actions can be good or bad, acts of humans are

neither good nor bad. They are amoral in nature. Ethics therefore has to do with the rightness or wrongness of voluntary human conducts.

ST. BONAVENTURE

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MODULE 3, Unit 2: St. Bonaventure

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3.1 St. Bonaventure's Short Biography

Bonaventure was born in 1221. He attended the University of Paris where he eventually taught and by dint of hard work rose through the rank to become a professor of theology. Bonaventure was a Franciscan and rose to the rank of a bishop and a cardinal. He equally rose through the rank to become the minister general, that is, the head of the Franciscan order. He was an Augustinian-Neoplatonist. He equally exhibited elements of Aristotelianism in his thoughts as a philosopher. Bonaventure later died at the age of 53 in 1274AD.

The importance of revelation in Bonaventure's philosophy cannot be over emphasized. Revelation is the required beacon that guides the philosopher otherwise such philosopher will certainly fall into errors. He said, 'philosophical reasoning without the aid of revelation will surely fall into errors' (Bonaventure, 1946). Relying solely on unaided human reasoning is the cheapest way to fall into errors. For him, Aristotle is a good example of a philosopher who relied on human reason alone and as such he fell into many avoidable errors. such errors are the denial of divine providence, the assertion that God does not know the world, that the world was not created; that the world is eternal, the denial of the immortality of the soul and a host of others.

3.2 St. Bonaventure's Metaphysics

Bonaventure also joined the likes of Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas to provide arguments for God's existence. He argues that all men have an implicit knowledge of God's existence. This implicit knowledge of God's existence becomes explicit through reflection. He argues that our implicit knowledge of imperfection presupposes the existence of absolute perfection. For if there is no such absolute perfection, it will not be possible for us to have the implicit knowledge of absolute perfection. According to Bonaventure, this absolute perfection is God, thus all men have the implicit knowledge of God's existence.

Another argument employed by Bonaventure is based on our knowledge of the existence of finite beings. This knowledge presupposes the existence of an infinite being. It will not be

possible for us to talk about finite beings if we do not have the implicit knowledge of infinite being. This infinite being is God, therefore God exists.

The third argument deployed by Bonaventure is based on our natural desire for happiness. God is the author or the source of the supreme good and perfect happiness consists in the possession of supreme good. Now since all men have the natural desire for perfect happiness, it shows that all men have the knowledge of God who is the source of the supreme good which in turn constitutes perfect happiness. Providing further explanation to this, Omoregbe writes that nobody can desire anything if he does not have the implicit knowledge of what he desires and since all men by desiring perfect happiness, desires God, it goes to show that all men have the implicit knowledge of God and that this implicit knowledge becomes explicit through reflection (1979:132).

Again, Bonaventure argues that anybody who affirms any truth is implicitly affirming God's existence. This is because God is the foundation of all truth and the Primordial Truth. Thus anybody who affirms any truth is implicitly affirming the foundation of truth which is God, therefore, God exists.

At this juncture, may we note that the above arguments of Bonaventure for God's existence are cosmological in that they are based on the principle of causality, that is arguing from effect to their cause or from creatures to their creator. This is where the influence of Aristotle is noted in Bonaventure's philosophy. His argument is also Aquinas-like in that Aquinas admitted an implicit knowledge of God. However, by this Aquinas meant that the mind has the power of attaining to the knowledge of God's existence through reflection on the sensibility. However, Bonaventure differs a bit from Aquinas in that he maintains that the knowledge of God could be developed without necessarily having recourse to the sensible world (Terver, 2014:568). Our souls' ascent to God makes it indubitable to disprove the facts of God's existence. However, may we also note that these arguments may be considered to be begging the question. Arguing that God exists based on self-evident truth possessed by contingent beings which shows that there must be a Necessary being responsible for these self-evident truth in contingent being leads to the fallacy of begging the question. Terver corroborates this when he puts the argument in a logical sequence thus:

1.   if there are contingent beings, then there must be a necessary being, God.

2.   there are contingent beings

3.   therefore, there must be a necessary being, God

Terver argues that the above argument is a modus ponens argument which is correct and valid logically and structurally but upon closer examination the fallacious nature of the argument based on the content is unearthed. Quoting Bonaventure in De Mysterio Trinitatis, Terver writes:

What Bonaventure meant by God's existence being self-evident because it has been thought so by intelligible beings (men) is assumptions. This lacks a logical conclusion and equally appears difficult on how creatures (men) could come about the explicit and clear knowledge of self-evident, God. Bonaventure holds that, "it is useless to prove the existence of that which is self-evident, of that concerning which no one doubts, that though the existence of God is indubitable so far as objective evidence is concerned" (2014:567).

Bonaventure accepts Plato's doctrine of eternal ideas and criticises Aristotle for rejecting it. eternal ideas are the examplars or patterns of the things in this world. All things have their examplary patterns in the eternal ideas, thus the doctrine is the heart of metaphysics. According to Bonaventure, these eternal ideas are in the Logos and the Logos is Christ. The Logos is God's image of himself. He is the express image of God, the expression of God and through him God created thus he is the examplary cause of all things. He is the medium of creation. This is in line with John 1vs 1-12. Here, you can note a movement from philosophy to theology. Bonaventure argues that the eternal ideas are the divine ideas and the divine ideas are not distinct from the Divine being itself but identical with God himself. This shows that there is a similarity between God and the creatures. To this end therefore, Bonaventure argues that we can argue from the knowledge of the creatures to the existence of God. That is from the known to the unknown, that is, from the effect to its cause.

We also see traces of Aristotle's Hylemorphism in Bonaventure's philosophy. Bonaventure agrees with Aristotle and Avicebron that all things are composed of matter and form. Avicebron added that spiritual beings also have matter and form. For Bonaventure, matter is the potentiality to receive forms - both spiritual and corporeal forms. Bonaventure states that it is only God, of all the spiritual beings, who do not have matter, meaning that God is pure Act

(actus purus) without potentiality. Thus Bonaventure's Hylemorphism is Aristotelianism with a difference (Omoregbe, 1979).

Bonaventure believes that the human soul is a spiritual substance composed of spiritual matter and form. He defends the immortality of the soul with various arguments. He argues that the human soul naturally desires perfect happiness and that perfect happiness is eternal happiness which does not end or affected by the encumbrances of this life. Perfect happiness cannot be lost if not the fear of losing it will make the person desiring it or enjoying it not to be perfectly happy. This means that perfect happiness is necessarily eternal and thus the soul that desires it must equally be eternal . To possess it, the soul must be immortal. This is because like attracts like. He equally argues that since perfect happiness can only come through the possession of the highest good, which is God and since the soul is capable of possessing perfect happiness, it means that the soul is capable of possessing God. The soul then must be eternal or immortal for it to be able to possess God, therefore, the soul is immortal.

Another argument employed by Bonaventure to prove that the soul is immortal is based on the necessity of adequate sanction for the moral law. Bonaventure is of the opinion that if someone should sacrifice his life and other appetites to obey God by observing the moral law and eventually dies without any hope of an afterlife, then that will be contrary to divine justice. The soul therefore must need survive death in order to be rewarded for its obedience to the moral law and that can only be done if the soul is immortal. Therefore, the soul is immortal and is adequately rewarded for its obedience to the moral law.

3.3   Bonaventure's Epistemology

Bonaventure's epistemology is copiously a representation of Aristotelian epistemology. So as it were, he was an empiricist epistemologist. He believes that man's mind is a tabula raza at birth and that it is only through sense experience that man acquires knowledge (Umotong, 2006:64). Notwithstanding, he makes an exception to this acknowledging that there are other two kinds of knowledge that are not empirical or experiential but innate. They are the knowledge of God's existence and the knowledge of the moral virtues. In his usual way, he states that these two kinds of knowledge are implicit in our minds but become explicit through reflection. As we said earlier, objects of knowledge of God's existence and that of the moral virtues are not objects of sense perception and are not acquired through sense perception. With the exception of these two,

all other kinds of knowledge are obtained or acquired through sense perception. The process of the acquisition of all other kinds of knowledge is that the objects impress themselves on our sense organs followed by sense perception. This process is followed by the unification of the separate sensations by the common sense and this is stored in the imagination. When this is done, the active intellect abstracts the sensible contents from the imagination while the passive intellect receives it and thus an idea is formed. Ideas are therefore the product of the abstractive functions of both the active and the passive intellects. This is Aristotelian and Aquinas-like. It is important you note that this does not mean that there are two intellects, rather the active side of the intellect and the passive side of the intellect are just two aspects or functions of the same intellect. It is like the two sides or aspects of the same coin.

Bonaventure also contributed, in his epistemology, on the subject matter of Truth. According to him, Truth is the conformity of the intellect with objective reality, that is, when what is in the mind conforms with what is in reality, then there is truth. It should be noted that this is the notion of truth that Aquinas adopted and amplified as an Aristotelian too. So truth is the correspondence of the mind or the intellect with reality. How does the mind or the intellect grasp reality since reality is always changing? Bonaventure explains this by adopting St. Augustine's doctrine of divine illumination. In this theory, Augustine explains that the intellect is aided by divine illumination and the objects of true knowledge are not the changing things of this world but eternal ideas which are the immutable essences of things. The intellect rises above the changing aspects of reality and grasps the underlying essences which do not change and which are eternal ideas. When you closely look at Bonaventure's epistemology, you will discover that it is a marriage between Aristotelianism and Augustinianism. If Bonaventure pursues Aristotelian epistemology to its logical conclusion, he will run into the problem of excusing the inadequacy of the senses in giving us certainty in knowledge since the senses are limited. He therefore cleverly brings in Augustine's theory of Illumination to supply what Aristotle's epistemology lacks. For Bonaventure, divine illumination is necessary to enable the mind go beyond the changing and mutable objects or nature of reality to grasp their immutable and unchanging essences. Omoregbe (1997:135) explains that for Bonaventure this divine illumination comes from the logos which is Christ.

4.0   Conclusion

In this unit, you have been exposed to the philosophy cum theology of St. Bonaventure. If you appreciate the power of divine revelation and illumination and apply them in your quest for philosophical knowledge, your reasoning will be properly guided to avoid falling into gnoseological errors.

5.0   Summary

The following is the summary of what you have learnt in this unit:

- the short biography of St. Bonaventure
- that God exists because all men have the implicit knowledge of His existence
- that the human soul is immortal because it naturally desires perfect happiness which is eternal and immutable
- that philosophical reasoning without the aid of divine revelation will surely fall into errors.

Self-Assessment Exercise

Discuss two arguments employed by Bonaventure to prove the immortality of the soul.

Note: the answer is found on pages 70-71.

6.0   References/ Further Studies

Mamadu, Terver (2014) "Saint Bonaventure (1221-1274 AD)" in Andrew Uduigwomen & Christopher Udofia (Eds.) *A Critical History of Philosophy*. Calabar: Ultimate Index Book Publishers.

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Copleston, Frederick (2007) A History of Philosophy: Medieval Philosophy. New York: Continuum.

Tutor Marked Assignment

Why did Bonaventure consider revelation important in philosophical reasoning?

Answer: according to Bonaventure, the importance of revelation in philosophy cannot be over emphasized. He avers that revelation is the required beacon that guides the philosopher otherwise such philosopher will certainly fall into errors. He said, 'philosophical reasoning without the aid of revelation will surely fall into errors'. Therefore, relying solely on unaided human reasoning is the cheapest way to fall into errors. For him, Aristotle is a good example of a philosopher who relied on human reason alone and as such he fell into many avoidable errors. such errors are the denial of divine providence, the assertion that God does not know the world, that the world was not created; that the world is eternal, the denial of the immortality of the soul and a host of others.

JOHN DUNS SCOTUS

MODULE 3 Unit 3: John Duns Scotus

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1.0　Introduction

In this unit you shall be exposed to the philosophies of John Duns Scotus popularly called the "Subtle Doctor" due to his brilliantly complexed and nuanced thoughts. His discussions on the problem of universals, religious language, matter and form, attack on skepticism and rejection of illumination shall be exposed in this unit. Also you shall be exposed to his thoughts on the morality of human act, the intellect and freedom and the will as parts of his moral philosophy.

2.0　Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand and correctly explain John Duns Scotus philosophy.
- Articulate his understanding of metaphysics as science of *being qua being*, not as particular being before us but being as such.
- Understand and correctly explain why Scotus thinks that its only man that has the capacity to know.

3.1　John Duns Scotus' short Biography

Although little is known about John Duns Scotus's life, Titus Terver Mamadu (2014:257-258), however, provides a concise and precise biography of John Duns Scotus, the Subtle Scottish Professor. According to him, Duns Scotus was born on the 17th March 1266 in the Scottish village Maxton near Duns in Scotland. He joined the Order of Friars Minor called the Franciscans, at Saint Andrew's Priory in Northampton, England, on 17th March 1291 and was ordained a catholic priest in Wycombe on 23rd December, 1290. In October 1288, he began his studies at Oxford and concluded the studies in June 1301. 1298/1299 academic year, Duns Scotus commented on the Sentences of Peter Lombard. However, in June 1303, Scotus was expelled from France with other eighty members of the Friars for supporting Pope in a dispute

with the King but were recalled back in April, 1304 and not too long afterwards, Duns completed his lectures on the Sentences. Duns was appointed the Franciscan regent master in Theology at Paris on the 18th day of November 1304. Later, he was transferred to the Franciscan Studium at Cologne in October 1307 for reasons not too clear. One year after, precisely on the 8th day of November 1308, John Duns Scotus died at the age of 42years old.

Duns Scotus was an original thinker whose thoughts were formed by the philosophical reflections of the problems of his time. This is expected because every philosopher's thoughts are the products of the problem of the time of the philosopher. The main springs of Scotus thoughts are the philosophy cum theology of Thomas Aquinas and the Augustinian tradition (Umotong, 2006). In this regard, Scotus differed from Aquinas on many points. Among Scotus's works were *Parva Logicalis* (little logical works), commentaries on Porphyry's *Isagoge* and Aristotle's *Caregories*, *Peri Hermeneias,* and *De Sophisticis elenchis*. These works were probably done around 1295. Scotus other Aristotelian commentary is the Quaestiones subtilissimae super metaphysicam Aristotelis. According to Mamadu, Scotus also wrote an exposition on Aristotle's metaphysics. Scotus also wrote commentaries on the four books of Sentences of Peter Lombard. The Lectura presents Scotus's notes for his Oxford lectures on Books 1 and 2 of the Sentences. There is also the Reportatio of lectures at Cambridge written between 1297 and 1300. Also, there is the Ordinatio of lectures at Oxford based that are based in part on the Lectura and the materials from his lectures in Paris. Scotus also had lectures at Paris on the Sentences and there are many Reportationes of these lectures. There are also about 46 short disputations called Collationes written between 1300-1305. There is also a work in natural theology called De primo pincipio and Quaestiones Quodlibetales written between 1306 and 1307. Scotus also had to his credit the work called Theoremata.

3.2   Scotus' Metaphysics

According to Scotus, metaphysics is the science of being as being (Omoregbe, 1997:105). However, being is impossible to define because it is the simplest of all concepts and the most all-embracing in that it embraces the concept of anything that exists. Contrary to Aquinas' thesis, Scotus avers that the concept of being is univocal and not to be used analogically. The concept of being is applied to all being finite and infinite, material and immaterial in the same way and with

the same meaning. Being includes that which has extramental and intramental existence. It is that which transcends all genera. This makes the concept of being very wide in its application. It applies to both God and creatures with the same meaning if not it will be impossible to argue from creatures to God. Unless the concept of being is predicated of God and creatures with the same meaning, any such argument from creatures to God will be fallacious. In the same vein, other positive attributes of God like justice, goodness, wisdom ets must be predicated on human beings with the same meaning that is univocally, otherwise it will be impossible to talk about and argue validly from creatures to God. However, these concepts are used for creatures in their imperfect forms. Scotus equally rejected Aquinas' distinction between essence and existence. For Scotus both are the same (Omoregbe, 1997:155-156).

Scotus categorizes being into passions convertible and passions disiunctae. Passions convertible beings are those categories of beings which are designated by one name and which do not go in distinct pairs and are convertible with being. Example of passions convertible categories are, one, true, good etc. there exists no real distinction between them and being. However, there is a formal distinction between them because they denote different aspects of being. On the other hand, passions disiunctae are not simply convertible with being when taken singly but are convertible when taken in pairs. Example, not every being is necessary and contingent. Every being is either necessary or contingent. In the same vein, not every being is simply act and potency. But every being is either act or potency or act in one sense and potency in another sense (Mamadu, 2014:530).

Concerning the issue of universals, Scotus avoids all the traditional answers and agrees with Aquinas who holds the moderate realist position in that he accepts that universals have objective reality but quickly differs from Aristotle on what distinguishes one individual of a specie from another. For Aquinas, it is their individual matter that makes Socrates different from Plato since both of them show the same form of humanity. Scotus rejects this and rather argues that since matter is an indefinite bundle of potentialities, it cannot define the concrete individuality of Socrates. According to Scotus, something this indefinite cannot be the object of knowledge (Lawhead, 2002). In fact, for Scotus, matter can exist without form since it is an entity in its right. If matter can receive form, as believed by Aquinas and Aristotle, it then follows that matter is prior to form and therefore can exist on its own without form. In fact, he

agrees with St. Bonaventure on the reality of plurality of forms. Not all created substances are composite of forms and matter and that one and the same substance can have more than one substantial form. The soul, for instance, is not the only form of the body. The body itself has its own form that makes it a body prior to it having a rational soul that makes it a human body. This is logically true because when the soul leaves the body, the body still retains its form, that is, that form of corporeality which makes it a body. In fact, for Scotus, matter can exist without form. That is what is called "prime matter". Aquinas had earlier rejected the reality of prime matter saying that Aristotle never intended that and that it could never exist on its own because anything devoid of form will be completely featureless, pure potentiality and therefore nothing. On the contrary, Scotus argues that prime matter does exists on the ground that it is one and the same stuff that underlies every substantial change. A good example of a substantial change is when a paper is burnt and it becomes ashes. Before it was burnt, it was having the substance of a paper, but after it was burnt, the substance changes from that of a paper to that of an ash. This is unlike an accidental change in which the substance does not undergo any change. For instance, when a blue ink is poured of a white paper which completely changes its colour from whiteness to blueness. In this case, the substance remains which is the paper. It is only the colour that changes.

On the existence of God, Scotus prefers the argument from contingency to necessary being. To him the argument from motion to prime mover is not satisfactory because the prime mover in this argument does not transcend the physical order since it is at the beginning of the series of movers. He therefore prefers the contingency of being argument.

Scotus adds that there cannot be more than one Necessary Being otherwise there would have to be a distinction between their essence and existence of each of them. If there is such distinction, then being a necessary being will not be part of their individualities which will mean that they are not necessary beings. Thus there can only be one Necessary Being which is called God. There is also one essential order in the universe which lays credence that there is only one Cause of this order. Scotus believes with Aquinas that a good argument for the existence of God must a posteriori and not a priori. He therefore rejects Anselm's ontological argument which he regards not as a proof but a mere probable persuasion which requires rephrasing by adding 'without contradiction' to it in order to have the status of a proof. Scotus restated the argument

thus: God is that being than which having been thought without contradiction, a greater being cannot be thought without contradiction. His argument is that since the intellect finds no contradiction between the concepts of being being and infinite, the idea of an infinite being is therefore a logical possibility and the existence of such a being is therefore logically possible (Omoregbe, 1997:168).

Scotus yet employed another argument to prove God's existence. According to him, the human heart has a natural inclination to love an infinite good and cannot be satisfied with anything less. If the human heart has such inclination, it shows that the infinite good must exist otherwise the human heart will not desire such. This infinite good is God, therefore, God exists.

3.3   Scotus Epistemology

It appears Scotus belongs to the empirical tradition epistemologically. According to him, our knowledge is based on sense experience and that no special illumination is required for intellectual activity. However, it is noted that in his epistemology, the senses and the intellect (intellective power of abstraction) cooperate for the knowledge of both material and immaterial things. These two cognitive powers, that is, the senses and the intellect differ but must cooperate in the pursuit of knowledge. In the cognitive process, the intellect must take the raw materials provided by the senses in the form of material images and translate them into objects for understanding. This process is called abstraction. The intellect pulls out, that is abstracts the universal from the material singular in which it is embedded. This is the role performed by the active intellect which takes the images, that is, the phantasms derived from sense experience and turns them into essences, that is, objects of understanding. These essences or 'intelligible species' (mamadu,2014) are then received and stored by the receptive or passive intellect. Contrary to Aquinas, Scotus argues that the active and the passive intellect are not distinct rather it is just one intellect performing two different functions. Although he agrees with Aquinas and Aristotle that the knowledge of universals is known through abstraction, Scotus adds that universals are not the only object of human intellect. The intellect can and do acquire knowledge through intuition.

According to Scotus, the object of human intellect is being and whatever is a being can be known by the intellect. Being for Scotus covers both finite and infinite being or material and immaterial beings. This means that being has a wide application in Scotus usage. However, he states that in man's present state of existence, he cannot have a direct and natural knowledge of

God given that his intellect is directed towards sensible objects. However, when man gets to heaven, he will be capable of knowing God directly since in principle he has the capacity to know all immaterial beings including God.

Scotus, in line with Aristotle and Aquinas, equally rejects the theory of innatism and maintains that all knowledge including the knowledge of primary principles comes from sense perception. For instance, the knowledge that a whole is greater than its part is known through our sense experience of what a whole is and what a part is in order for us to know that a whole is greater than its part. Scotus equally rejects Augustinian theory of divine illumination. The human intellect does not require any special divine illumination to grasp the truth. For him, there is nothing divine about intuition. It is just the knowledge of a thing as it exists in itself. It also comes through sense perception just as abstractive knowledge does.

On the question of the possibility of human knowledge. Scotus believes in the capacity of the human intellect to achieve certainty in knowledge through the exercise of its own natural powers without any divine help. In this regard, Scotus rejects the thesis of skepticism and illuminationism. The later' avers that the human intellect needs divine help (illumination) in order for it to acquire certainty in knowledge whereas, skepticism rejects completely the possibility of knowledge or the attainment of certainty in truth. Scotus' attacks on skepticism and illumination are contained in his reply to Henry of Ghent in his (Scotus) Ordinatio as translated in Philosophical Writings by Wolter (1987). Henry notes that truth involves a relation to an exemplar and that there are two exemplars- created and uncreated exemplars. Created exemplar is mutable and therefore cannot give us immutable or infallible knowledge. Its mutability can only be remedied by something less mutable or immutable. The human soul is mutable (though less mutable than the created exemplar) and therefore subject to error. The created exemplar is also incapable of giving us certainty in knowledge given its incapability to distinguish between reality and dreaming. On the other hand, certainty resides with the uncreated exemplar but we cannot attain certainty because we cannot access the uncreated exemplar with our natural powers. We therefore need the help of divine illumination to help us attain certain truth.

Scotus debunks Henry's arguments by stating that since the soul is naturally prone to error, that even the understanding so achieved by the help of divine illumination is mutable and therefore not error-free. It is not out of place for you to see situations where those who receive

divine insight or revelation do wrongly interpret or erroneously apply such insights. In Ordination 1,3, pars 1,4, n. 221 as quoted by Mamadu (2014), Scotus argues that if the created exemplar is such as to preclude certainty, then adding extra exemplars (like uncreated exemplar) will not solve the problem. This is because, "when something incompatible with certainty occurs, certainty cannot be attained". Therefore, Henry's argument rather than showing the possibility of attaining certainty through divine illumination, leads to pervasive skepticism. Scotus believes in the possibility of our attaining certainty in the knowledge of the truth through unaided or natural intellectual powers or reasoning.

Scotus identifies four types of knowledge in which infallible certainty is possible. First is the knowledge of the first principles of which the intellect only needs to form to ascertain their truth. Second, is the certainty of causal judgement derived from experience. Third, Scotus argues that many of our acts are certain like those of first principles. Although our acts are contingent, however, it is not difficult to show that some propositions can be known immediately without recourse to other propositions. Finally, there are propositions about present sense experience that are also known with certainty when properly vetted by the intellect (Mamadu, 2014).

Scotus denies universal hylemorphism which states that all created substances are composites of form and matter. The Greek word hyle means matter while morphe means form. Universal hylemorphism was a predominant view among the Franciscans before Scotus rejected this idea. Contrary to St. Bonaventure's thesis on the inconceivability of a formless matter or matterless form, that even angels could not altogether be immaterial, but must be compounds of form and spiritual matter and that if the angels were altogether immaterial, they will be pure actuality without a mixture of potentiality, Scotus denies the unqualified equation of matter with potentiality and form with actuality. For Scotus, prime matter though without form is actual and a purely immaterial being is not devoid of potentiality.

The implication of the view that the soul is the one and only substantial form of the human being is that when a human being dies and the soul no longer informs the parcel of matter called the body, then what is left is not the same body that existed before the exit of the soul. If the soul is the only thing that informs the body, then upon the separation of the soul from the body, what is left is not the body but a mere corpse. In fact, what is left should not even be regarded as the body and perhaps treated with reckless abandon since its not the body we used to

know that is before us now. In this regard therefore, Scotus argues that the human body has at least two substantial forms – the 'form of the body' that makes a given parcel of matter to be a definite, unique, individual human body and the 'animating form' which makes the human body alive. What happens is that at death, the 'animating form' ceases to vivify the body while the 'form of the body' keeps the body from immediately decomposing at least for some time. The idea that the form can exist without the body offers a great deal of freedom and autonomy to the soul and thus gives room for the immortality of the soul. This is so since the soul can exist without the body (Mamadu, 2014).

3.4   Scotus' Ethics

Although Scotus does not have an elaborate system of ethics like St. Thomas Aquinas, however, certain factors are required for an action to be regarded as being moral. The motive, nature and the circumstance in which the action is performed is crucial in determining its morality or otherwise. The action must conform to right reason and must be objectively good. In Scotus rating, the most important aspect of the morality of an action is the end. However, the end of an action is not enough because the end does not necessarily justify the means. In addition, the circumstance of an action must be considered. An action cannot be said to be good irrespective of the circumstance in which it is performed. No action is said to be good or bad in itself without considering other circumstances. However, there are two kinds of action that are morally good irrespective of the circumstance. They are love of God and the hatred of God. The love of God is always and in all circumstances good while hatred of God is always and in all circumstances bad for no intention or circumstance can justify hatred of God. So an action that satisfied all the requisite aspects of a morally good action is the action that is in conformity with right reason. And it is only an action done in accordance with right reason that is a morally good action.

What is the norm of morality and right reason? According to Scotus, an action is in accordance with right reason if there is no evil inclination or motive behind it. The inclination and motive of a morally good action must be objective. It must proceed from a completely free will and right intention. For every action, there is always what the actor has in mind to achieve through the action. This end, purpose, aim, goal, objective of the action is what is meant by inclination or motive. In life, nobody ever acts for nothing or just for the sake of acting. There is always a motive driving whatever we do. Thus an action is morally good when it is a free action

carried out with good , clear and right intention. In human experience, you may have discovered that people can perform a good action but with a wrong motive. For instance, someone may render help to you because of what he/she will get in return whether now or later. But at the same time, it is possible for someone to perform an action without having anything in mind, that is any advantage. In fact, the motive may be indifferent. This is where Scotus disagrees with St. Thomas Aquinas who says that an action is either morally good or bad and that there is no morally indifferent action. Contrary to this, Scotus states that actions done with spontaneous inclinations without moral intentions are morally indifferent. Aquinas is of the view that the first and fundamental moral principle is that good must be pursued while evil must be avoided, whereas, for Scotus, the first and fundamental moral principle is that God should be loved. Action done based on the love of God is, to Scotus, the best action whereas, any action that is not in conformity with the love of God is evil.

Scotus believes in the primacy of the will as regards the morality of human action. He regards the voluntareity of the will as regards the morality of human action. Scotus asserts thus:

> That the will is not determined by a knowledge of the good, but only chooses the good if it freely decides to do so. Whereas the intellect is determined by the object known, the will can accept or reject what is brought before it. Hence the total cause of willing in the will is the will (quoted in Leff Gordon, 1959).

According to Lawhead, "whereas Aquinas intellectualism dictated that we find eternal blessedness in contemplating God, Scotus voluntarism led him to say that we find blessedness in the love of God, an act of the will that unite us with him, hence, Scotus does not agree with Aquinas that morality is based on the natural tendency to pursue happiness. The obligation of morality depends solely on what God commands, independent of consideration of personal happiness. Aquinas thought we can discern the moral law by studying human nature, but Duns Scotus thought there is no way to learn ethical truth by natural mean" (Lawhead, 2002:188).

4.0   Conclusion

In this unit, you have learnt that certain factors are required for an action to be regarded as being moral. The motive, nature and the circumstance in which the action is performed is crucial in

determining its morality or otherwise. The action must conform to right reason and must be objectively good. If you do well to adhere to these requirements, you will certainly live a good life.

5.0   Summary

The following are the summary of what you have learnt in this unit:

- That being is applied to all being finite and infinite, material and immaterial in the same way and with the same meaning
- That according to Scotus our knowledge is based on sense experience and that no special illumination is required for intellectual activity.
- That The motive, nature and the circumstance in which the action is performed is crucial in determining its morality or otherwise

Self-Assessment exercise

What arguments did Scotus employ to defend God's existence?

Note: the answer to this question is found on pages 80-81

6.0   References/Further Reading

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Scotus Duns (1987) Duns Scotus: Philosophical Writings. Trans. Wolter, Allan. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company.

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Tutor Marked assignment

Explain Scotus' categorization of being into passions convertible and passions disiunctae?

Answer: Scotus categorizes being into passions convertible and passions disiunctae. Passions convertible beings are those categories of beings which are designated by one name and which

do not go in distinct pairs and are convertible with being. Example of passions convertible categories are, one, true, good etc. there exists no real distinction between them and being. However, there is a formal distinction between them because they denote different aspects of being. On the other hand, passions disiunctae are not simply convertible with being when taken singly but are convertible when taken in pairs. Example, not every being is necessary and contingent. Every being is either necessary or contingent. In the same vein, not every being is simply act and potency. But every being is either act or potency or act in one sense and potency in another sense

WILLIAM OF OCKHAM

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MODULE 3 UNIT 4: WILLIAM OF OCKHAM

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1.0　　　Introduction

In this unit you shall be exposed to the philosophies of William of Ockham. His writings as philosopher, theologian and a political writer are very important and instructive because arguably he stands as the most influential philosopher of the fourteenth century. So in this unit, you shall learn William Ockham's thoughts on metaphysics, epistemology and his famous Ockham's Razor. In all you shall be exposed to the two themes derivable from William's philosophy which are his religious conception of God's omnipotence as a religious faith affirmed and his religious empiricism which condemns any act of going beyond experience by appealing to speculative explanations.

2.0　　　Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand and correctly explain William of Ockham's famous principle called Ockham's Razor
- Articulate his arguments for insisting that universals do not exist outside the mind.

3.0　　　Main Content

3.1　　　William of Ockham's Biography and Writings

William of Ockham, known as Invincible Doctor or worthy initiator was a Franciscan philosopher, theologian and a political writer who stands as the most influential philosopher of the fourteenth century. Apparently, he was born sometime between 1280 and 1290 at the village of Ockham, in Surrey, near London. Entering the Franciscan order at an early age, he commenced his course of theological study at Oxford and taught there from 1309 to 1319. He completed the requirements for the degree of master of theology with the delivery of his lectures on Peter Lombard's *Book of Sentences.* Although an old tradition indicated that he studied under John Duns Scotus, it seems unlikely that he did so, since Duns Scotus left Oxford at the beginning of the century and died in 1308. Ockham's writings show intimate familiarity with the

teachings of Duns Scotus, but this is explained by the dominant position Duns Scotus had acquired at Oxford, particularly within the Franciscan order.

Ockham's lecture on the *Sentences* made great impression on theologians at Oxford though his new way of treating philosophical and theological questions aroused strong opposition by many members of the theological faculty (Borchet, 2006). John Lutterell "former chancellor of Oxford University, presented the pope with a list of fifty-six allegedly heretical theses extracted from Ockham's writings (Audi, 1999) in the papal court of Avignon in 1323. Due to this allegation, his academic career was interrupted. Denounced by Pope John XXII for dangerous teachings, he was held in house detention for four years at the Papal palace in Avignon, in France as the orthodoxy of his writing was examined. Despite the lack of teaching chair, Ockham was very active in developing his philosophical and theological positions. During his detention, Ockham became involved in the dispute regarding the question of apostolic poverty. Siding with the Franciscan general against the Pope, Ockham fled to Munich in 1328 to seek the protection of Louis of Bavaria IV, Holy Roman emperor, who had rejected papal authority over political matters. Excommunicated by the Pope, Ockham wrote against the papacy and defended the emperor until the emperor's death in 1347. The philosopher died in Munich, apparently of the Black Plague in 1349, while seeking reconciliation with Pope Clement VI though the outcome is unknown (Borchet, 2006).

Ockham's writings however abstract and impersonal fall into two different groups associated with the two different periods of his career. 'The whole political and polemical treatises written against the Avignon papacy were written during his residence in Munich. Some are of historical interest. These other works such as *Dialogus Inter Magistrum et Discipulum, Octo Quaestiones Super Potestate ac Dignitate Papali,* and *Tractatus de Imperatorum et Pontificum Potestate,* present Ockham's philosophy of the Church and state and shows his in-depth conviction concerning the religious mission of the Church. The non-political writings that carry Ockham's contributions to philosophy and theology were probably all written while he was at Oxford and at Avignon. The earliest of these include the lectures on the *Sentences,* Ockham's most important work on logic was a systematic treatise titled *Summa Logicae* (Borchet, 2006)

Two important themes are derivable from Ockham's philosophical discourse. One is his religious conception of God's omnipotence which is a religious faith affirmed. His second guided theme is his religious empiricism which condemns any act of going beyond experience by

appealing to speculative explanations (Lawhead, 2002). This is Ockham's principle of "Parsimony" which is otherwise known as "Ockham's razor."

3.2   Ockham's Razor

William of Ockham is known for his principle; "Ockham's Razor." 'The modern scientists now call it "principle of parsimony" or the "principle of economy"' (Lawhead 2002, 189). It asserts that "*Pluralitas non est ponenda sine necessitate"* which means that "Plurality is not to be assumed without necessity" (Britannica) and "What can be done with fewer (assumptions) is done in vain with more" (Borchert 2006, 772). It has been also understood to mean that 'entities are not to be multiplied beyond necessity'; 'entia non sunt multiplicanda praeter necessitatem' (Dafe in Uduigwomen 2014, 511) Ockham employed this principle of parsimony as a methodology in eliminating pseudo-explanatory entities hence, giving precedence to simplicity. The principle has been invoked before Ockham by Durand de Saint-Pourçain, a French Dominican theologian and philosopher, who used it to explain that abstraction is the apprehension of some real entity, such as an Aristotelian cognitive species, an active intellect, or a disposition, all of which he rejected as unnecessary. Likewise, in science, Nicole d'Oresme, a 14th-century French physicist, used the principle, as did Galileo later, in defending the simplest hypothesis of the heavens (Britannica). The principle became known as Ockham's razor due to his frequent use of it.

3.3   William of Ockham's Metaphysics

Ockham as a critical philosopher and logician subjected his predecessor's doctrines to critical scrutiny. This is shown in his postulation that 'the universals do not exist outside the mind. In other words, no common element between two members of the same species exists anywhere but in the mind. It is only individuals that exist and only as individuals can things exist in the world. Hence, the notion, universals are simply ways of understanding individual things not entities themselves. This means that discussions of essences or common nature of things of the same species as if they exist somewhere is not necessary' (Omoregbe 1991, 171). Audi is of the opinion that on most metaphysical issues, Ockham sees himself as the true interpreter of Aristotle. By rejecting the doctrine that universals are real things other than names or concepts and considered them as the worst error of philosophy, Ockham harshly criticized not only Platonism, but also "modern realist" doctrines which asserts that reality enjoys a double mode of existence and are universal in the intellect but numerically multiplied in particulars. He argues

that everything real is individual and particular, while universality is a property pertaining only to names (Audi 1999, 628). Ockham's razor is rightly displayed here. His theory of universals has been classified as a form of conceptualism. It reduces the importance of metaphysics and subjects scientists to stick faithfully to empirical facts. Lawhead adds that "the rigidity of Ockham's position would not have given us powerful laws and theorems in modern physics because, contrary to Ockham, science cannot do without speculation and theorizing about what is behind and beyond the observable facts" (Lawhead 2002, 191-192).

3.4 William of Ockham's Epistemology

Ockham's significance, both as a theologian and as a philosopher, lay in his rejection of the metaphysical and epistemological assumptions of medieval realism, and in his reconstruction of the whole fabric of philosophy on the foundation of a radical empiricism in which the source of all knowledge is direct experience of individual things and particular events (Borchert 2006, 772). He rejects the theory of innate ideas and upholds the theory that 'all knowledge is derived from sense perception (experience). He classifies knowledge into two kinds; demonstrative and intuitive knowledge. The former is arrived at through the process of reasoning whereas the latter is knowledge gained through immediate apprehension of a thing as it exists' (Omoregbe 1991, 171-172). This could be called a realistic empiricism.

4.0 Conclusion

In this unit, you have learnt about the two important themes derivable from Ockham's philosophical discourse. One is his religious conception of God's omnipotence which is a religious faith affirmed. His second guided theme is his religious empiricism which condemns any act of going beyond experience by appealing to speculative explanations. This is Ockham's principle of "Parsimony" which is otherwise known as "Ockham's razor." You equally learnt that for Ockham, the universals do not have objective reality outside the mind.

5.0 Summary

The following are the summary of what you have learnt in this unit:

- That the universals do not have any objective existence outside the human mind.
- That Ockham defends the legitimacy of man's ownership of property and as it were cannot be deprived of him by any human power.

- That Ockham's Razor is a principle which requires that we apply some economy or a miserly approach to explanations in such a way that we keep the number of kinds of entities posited to a minimum.

Self-assessment Exercise

What do you understand by Ockham's Razor? Explain this with an example.

Note: the answer to this question is found on pages 92-93

6.0 References/Further Readings

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Robert Audi, Ed. *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*. 2nd ed. New York: Cambridge University Press. 1999. Non Print.

William F. Lawhead, *The Voyage of Discovery: A Historical Introduction to Philosophy.* 2nd ed. USA: Wadsworth and Thomson Learning. 2002.

Tutor Marked Assignment

William of Ockam rejected innatism and upheld empiricism. Explain.

Answer: William's rejection of innate idea lay in his rejection of the metaphysical and epistemological assumptions of medieval realism, and in his reconstruction of the whole fabric of philosophy on the foundation of a radical empiricism in which the source of all knowledge is direct experience of individual things and particular events. He rejects the theory of innate ideas and upholds the theory that 'all knowledge is derived from sense perception (experience). He classifies knowledge into two kinds; demonstrative and intuitive knowledge. The former is

arrived at through the process of reasoning whereas the latter is knowledge gained through immediate apprehension of a thing as it exists'. This is called realistic empiricism.

MODULE 3, UNIT 5: Francis Suarez

Content

Content

1.0   Introduction

In this unit, the philosophy of Francis Suarez is discussed. You shall be exposed to the thoughts of Suarez on the meaning and nature of being and his thoughts concerning the existence of God. Suarez regards every existing thing as a being such that being extends to both material and immaterial beings albeit, he concentrated on immaterial being. Suarez opposes the idea of God as the unmoved mover arguing that there are things that move themselves. All these and more shall engage your interest as we discuss Suarez in this unit.

2.0   Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand and correctly explain Francis Suarez' idea of being which for him is the central focus of metaphysics.
- Understand Suarez' reasons for rejecting Aquinas' argument for God's existence especially that of God as the unmoved mover.
- Understand Suarez' idea of law and the conditions upon which a law can be an unjust law.

3.0   Content

3.1   Francis Suarez' Short Biography

The birth place of Suarez was Granada, Spain in 1548. he was a Spanish Jesuit and was trained in Salamanca. Suarez gained prominence through his works Metaphysical Disputations and De Legibus (philosophy of Law). He was versed in metaphysics, Theology and Philosophy of Law and so spent most of his life teaching philosophy and theology.

3.2   Metaphysics

Suarez defines metaphysics as the science which studies being as being, that is , being qua ta le. Being for Suarez includes all beings namely finite beings, infinite beings, material beings and immaterial beings. However, for him, metaphysics primarily deals with immaterial beings and only deals with material beings in order to distinguish them from immaterial beings. There are three transcendental attributes of being according to Suarez. They are, Unity, Truth and Goodness. What this means is that being is undivided, true and good. According to Suarez, individuality defines being in that it helps to constitute the nature of being metaphysically. However, at this point you may wish to note that Suarez disagrees with St. Aquinas that the principle of individuation is matter. For Suarez, the principle of individuation is the union of matter and form and not matter alone. Suarez disagrees with Scotus that being is predicated of both God and creatures univocally rather the concept of being is predicated of both God and creatures analogically based not on proportion but on attribution, every creature is a being because they participate in the being of God or imitates the being of God and as a result they are dependent on God (Omoregbe, 1997).

Aquinas had earlier argued for God's existence through his cosmological arguments called his Five Ways. However, Suarez avers that these cosmological arguments of Aquinas is inconclusive. He attacks the argument from motion on the basis that the argument is based on uncertain premise that whatever is moved is moved by another. He argues that certain things move themselves. Suarez argues that even if that argument could demonstrate a first mover, it does not show that there is only one first mover or that this first mover is an immaterial being.

Suarez rather developed his own version of the argument from the premise by stating that whatever is made is made by another.

According to Suarez, a being is either made or not made, but all beings in reality cannot be made. Therefore, there must be a Necessary being that is not made that must be responsible for other made beings. This is because if one being is made by another and the one that made this being is itself made by another and in turn, this one is made by another, then we cannot continue ad infinitum in an infinite regress. Therefore, there must be a being which itself is not made by any other being. This being is a Necessary being which is God, therefore, God exists.

God according to Suarez is One. The oneness of God is shown by the uniformity, order and the harmony of nature. This trio character of nature show that the universe is the product of only one intelligence called God. The oneness of God is also shown by the fact that God is a Necessary being and by definition a necessary being is defined by its individuality. If the Necessary being were to be more than one, then their essence will be distinct from their individualities. Therefore, there is only one Necessary being and this is God. "He is infinite, simple, pure act, eternal, omnipresent, immutable, free, indivisible, incomprehensible, living, intelligent and self-sufficient" (Omoregbe, 1997:177-178). Suarez sees the distinction between essence and existence as a mental distinction and not a real distinction whereas the distinction between matter and form is a real distinction. The distinction between matter and form applies only to material beings, whereas essence and existence applies to all finite beings both material and spiritual. However, there are philosophers who are opposed to the view of Suarez by insisting that the distinction between essence and existence is a real one because the essence of a being defines and limits its existence. The existence of a being is limited by its essence which serves as a potential and limiting element of the existence of that being. A being can only exist within the limitation of its essence. However, Suarez thinks this distinction is unwarranted and unnecessary to explain the limitation of finite beings. According to Suarez, "the existence of being is limited by itself" (Omoregbe, 1997: 178).

Part of Suarez metaphysics, is his identification of two kinds of relations namely - the predicamental relation and the transcendental relation. Predicamental relation is accidental in that the existence of the being is not dependent on this relation. For instance the relation between two things that are white. Their relation is just accidental because the existence of one is not

dependent on the existence of the other. Whereas, in transcendental relation, the existence of one being is essential to the existence of the other being related to it. A good example is the relation of matter and form. this is because none can exist without the other. Another good example is the relation between the creature and God. This kind of relation is one of total dependence because without God, the creature cannot exist (Omoregbe, 1997).

3.3   Suarez' Philosophy of Law

Suarez develops and advances St. Thomas Aquinas' idea of law. Suarez defines law as 'certain rule and measure, according to which one is induced to act or restrained from acting'. He again defines law as 'a common, just and stable precept which has been sufficiently promulgated'. Every law is meant for the common good and must be just otherwise, its seen as an unjust law and thus loses its validity and its binding force. The acid test of any law is that it must be just and intend that which is conducive for the good of the community. A law is made for the good of the community just as the natural law is made for the community of mankind. For a law to be just according to Suarez, it must fulfil three conditions which are, 1) it must be made for the common good of the community and not for private interest. 2) It must emanate from a legitimate authority and must be intended for those under his jurisdiction. 3) It must not prescribe disproportionate burden for the people, and what it commands must be practicable. The law from which every positive law derives its validity is the Eternal law. Following St. Aquinas, Suarez conceives the Eternal law as the law by which God governs all creatures. God is the author of Eternal law. It is decreed by God from eternity. It is called eternal because it has always existed in the mind of God from eternity. All human laws called positive laws emanate from the eternal law and owe their validity to it (Omoregbe, 1997).

According to Suarez, the natural law is the dictate of right reason. He rejected two extreme ideas of the natural law which sees the natural law as not a prescriptive law but a demonstrative law which simply shows what is evil, without any imperative involved or implied. Suarez also rejected William of Ockham's view of the natural law which avers that the goodness or badness of actions derive from the fact that they have been commanded or prohibited by God and not from the nature of the actions themselves. The natural law is not only descriptive; it is also prescriptive. Beside describing what is right or wrong, it also commands what is right and prohibits what is wrong. God is the author of natural law and obliges all men to follow the

dictates of right reason. Suarez distinguishes between three categories of the natural law principles. 1) is the general and fundamental moral principle which says that good should be done and evil should be avoided. 2) specific principle that enjoin the worship of God and the practice of self-control. 3) the third category talks about the precepts deducible from the first two and thus not self-evident (Omoregbe, 1997:180).

Suarez further recognizes that no one can be ignorant of the natural law because its principles are self-evident. He equally states that the natural law does not oblige men to do all that is good but that men must refrain from doing all that is bad. Suarez further made a distinction between the natural law and what he calls the law of nations. The natural law prohibits everything that is intrinsically evil and commands to be done things that are good. On the other hand, the law of nations does not prohibit things that are evil in themselves and it also does not prescribe things that are good in themselves, it rather prohibits and prescribes what the customs of nations have considered wise to prescribe or prohibit. You should note that by the laws of nations, Suarez does not mean the laws of particular states nor civil laws, rather by the law of nations he means unwritten laws established by the customs of all nations. Examples of such laws are laws regulating international relations etc.

3.4   Suarez' Political Thoughts

Suarez recognizes that man is a political animal and as it were must live in a political community. Civil or political community is therefore natural to man. Men must congregate as social and political animals in a community for the advancement of their collective good. In such a community, men are free to adopt the system of government by which they order and organize their lives and properties, however, such government or the authority to rule must be bestowed on the ruler by the people. This means that Suarez favours the government of the people for the interest of the people. The sovereign who is the representative of God for the good of the people attracts the people's obligation to obey him. Be that as it may, the people reserve the right to depose the sovereign if he/she becomes a tyrant. There are two types of tyrant identified by Suarez, one, is the person who usurps the throne and two, is a ruler who rules tyrannically. A ruler who rules tyrannically cannot be killed by a private individual otherwise the person will be guilty of murder. But in the case of a usurper of legitimate authority, he/she can be killed by a private individual to save the state from greater evil (Omoregbe, 1997:182).

4.0   Conclusion

In this unit, you were exposed to the philosophy of Suarez. Worthy of note in this conclusion is Suarez' thoughts on the distinction between essence and existence. Suarez sees the distinction between essence and existence as a mental distinction and not a real distinction whereas the distinction between matter and form is a real distinction. This view of Suarez however runs contrary to the popular view which sees the distinction between essence and existence as a real one because the essence of a being defines and limits its existence. Suarez' idea of law is germane for good governance when adhered to. He provided us conditions upon which a law can be unjust. These conditions must be avoided for a better humanity.

5.0   Summary

The following are the summary of what you have learnt in this unit:

- That Suarez believes that the distinction between essence and existence is not a real one.
- That man is a political animal and as were must live in a political community with a system of government most conducive for the achievement of good life for all.
- That it is the natural law that determines the validity of positive law.

Self-assessment Exercise

Why did Suarez oppose the cosmological argument on God's existence put forward by Aquinas?

Note: the answer is found on pages 91-92

6.0   References/Further Readings

Omoregbe, Joseph (1997) *A Simplified History of Western Philosophy: Ancient and Medieval Philosophy.* Vol. 1. Lagos: Joja Educational Research.

Tutor Marked Assignment

What is the definition of law according to Suarez?

Answer: Suarez defines law as 'certain rule and measure, according to which one is induced to act or restrained from acting'. He again defines law as 'a common, just and stable

precept which has been sufficiently promulgated'. Every law is meant for the common good and must be just otherwise, its seen as an unjust law and thus loses its validity and its binding force. The acid test of any law is that it must be just and intend that which is conducive for the good of the community. A law is made for the good of the community just as the natural law is made for the community of mankind. For a law to be just according to Suarez, it must fulfil three conditions which are, 1) it must be made for the common good of the community and not for private interest. 2) It must emanate from a legitimate authority and must be intended for those under his jurisdiction. 3) It must not prescribe disproportionate burden for the people, and what it commands must be practicable. The law from which every positive law derives its validity is the Eternal law. Following St. Aquinas, Suarez conceives the Eternal law as the law by which God governs all creatures. God is the author of Eternal law. It is decreed by God from eternity. It is called eternal because it has always existed in the mind of God from eternity. All human laws called positive laws emanate from the eternal law and owe their validity to it.

MODULE 4

Unit 1   The Philosophy of Al-Farabi

Unit 2   The Philosophy of Avicenna

Unit 3   The Philosophy of Averroes

Unit 4   The Philosophy of Moses Maimonides

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AL-FARABI

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MODULE 4: Unit 1   **THE PHILOSOPHY OF AL-FARABI**

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Contents

1.0   Introduction

In this unit, you shall be exposed to the philosophical thoughts of Al-Farabi. This shall include his metaphysics, political philosophy and ethics. Al-Farabi believes that the rational faculty constitutes the very essence of the human person. In fact for him, God created the universe through the exercise of his rational faculty. To this end therefore, he posited that reason is superior to revelation which means that philosophy is superior to religion. In this unit, you will also learn about the two arguments employed by Al-Farabi to prove the existence of God.

2.0   Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain why Al-Farabi exalts reason above revelation.
- Understand and explain Al-Farabi's two arguments for God's existence.
- Understand and explain why Al-Farabi thinks that the Philosopher is the best person suited for the leadership of the state.

3.0   Main Content

3.1   Al-Farabi's Short Biography

Al-Farabi was a Muslim philosopher, one of the prominent thinkers of medieval Islam. He was also called Abu Na Al-Farabi, in Latin Alpharabius also spelled Alfarabius. He was born in the year 878 in Turkistan. Not much was recorded about his life. He moved from Central Asia

to Baghdad where most of his works were written. In 942 he resided with prince Sayf Al-Dawlah where he remained in Syria until the time of his death in 950 in Damascus. Having studied Greek philosophy in Iran, Al-Farabi was one of the earliest Islamic thinkers to bring to Arab world the works of Plato and Aristotle, hence exerting great influence on later philosophers like Avicenna and Averroes. Alfarabi wrote copiously on variety of issues of which many have been lost. Among his works preserved are "Book of Religion", "Perfect State", "Political Regime", "Enumeration of the Sciences" and so on.

3.2   Al-Farabi's Metaphysics

Influenced by the views of Aristotle and Plotinus, Al-Farabi posited a Supreme Being who had created the world through exercising his rational intelligence. He believed that this rational faculty constitutes the very essence of the human person. He avers that the paramount human goal is the development of the rational faculty of man . To attain this goal, he insists on human collaboration. Al-Farabi concludes that 'the human reason is superior to revelation. This is because Islam as a religion was not sufficient for the needs of a philosopher; religion provided truth in a symbolic form to non-philosophers who were not able to understand it in its pure forms'.

To the question; does God exist? Alfarabi employed two arguments to prove that God exist. His first argument is from motion in the world. Just like Plato and Aristotle, he maintains that everything that moves by another which is in turn moved by another till ad infinitum. A continuous trace of the cause of the motion will lead us to the first mover or the unmoved mover which is God (Omoregbe 73).

His second argument is from the contingency of being. A contingent being is a being whose essence is independent of existence, hence, its nature derives its existence outside of itself, therefore, does not carry with it sufficient reason for its existence and not responsible for it. It owes its existence to another being. Since every being in the universe are of this nature it suffices to say that they are all contingent being. It then follows that there must be a necessary being who is solely responsible for the existence of the contingent beings in the universe. A necessary being whose essence involves existence but does not owe its existence to any other being. This necessary being is God. He cannot but exist (Omoregbe, 74).

3.3   Al-Farabi's Political Philosophy

The major part of Alfarabi's philosophy is directed to the problem of the correct ordering of the state. He maintained that, just as God rules the universe, the philosopher stands as the most perfect kind of man to rule the state (Encyclopedia Britannica). To Alfarabi, the smallest unit to be called a perfect state is a city. Smaller associations like houses, streets, villages, etc are for him imperfect except ones like nations and even union of all the societies in the world are to be termed perfect (https://plato.stanford.edu). This notion of the perfect state by Alfarabi and the nature of the human person can be traced to Plato's doctrine on the tripartite nature of the state and of the human soul.

3.4   Al-Farabi's Moral Philosophy

Al-Farabi adopted the Aristotelian doctrine of happiness and his teleological approach. Happiness is what every human being aims to achieve says Alfarabi. This happiness is the ultimate happiness as different from earthly one. This is achieved through the development of man's rational faculty which is impossible without collaboration. For him, 'human beings are born with the natural obligation to perfect their rational faculty and once man reaches such state of perfection, he acquires the state of ultimate happiness (https://plato.stanford.edu). He did not agree with Aristotle's notion of eudemonia totally but made a shift by holding that happiness is a state associated with the afterlife.

4.0   Conclusion

In this unit, our presentation of Al-Farabi shows that he stands as the first Islamic thinker who enthroned reason over revelation. His intention was to universalize Islamic theology providing answers to the perturbing questions which Muslims were faced with during his time. Hence, he was also faced with the task of reconciling faith and reason, proving the existence of God and other issues such as the purpose of human life, the soul, the society, the ultimate happiness, and so on. To properly separate his philosophy from religion will not be a success without running into misinterpretations or misrepresentations and the like; raising more dust.

5.0   Summary
The following are the summary of what you have learnt in this unit:

- that Al-Farabi exalted reason above revelation as means of understanding the universe
- that Al-Farabi employed two arguments to prove God's existence namely, argument based on motion in the world and the argument based on the contingency of beings in the world.
- that ultimate happiness is the ultimate goal of every human being.

Self-assessment Exercise

Mention and explain the two arguments employed by Al-Farabi to prove the existence of God.

6.0   References/Further Readings

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"Al-Farabi" Microsoft Encarta. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation, 2008.

Omoregbe, Joseph (1993) *A Philosophical Look at Religion*. Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers Limited.

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Tutor Marked Assignment

According to Al-Farabi, how can ultimate happiness be achieved?

Answer: according to Al-Farabi, ultimate happiness is different from earthly one. Ultimate happiness is achieved through the development of man's rational faculty which is impossible without collaboration. For him, 'human beings are born with the natural obligation to perfect their rational faculty and once man reaches such state of perfection, he acquires the state of ultimate happiness. He did not agree with Aristotle's notion of eudemonia totally but made a shift by holding that happiness is a state associated with the afterlife.
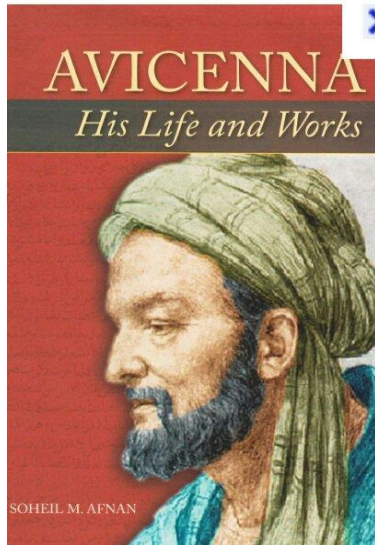
AVICENNA

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MODULE 4 UNIT 2   **The Philosophy of Avicenna**

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Contents

1.0   Introduction

In this unit, you shall be exposed to the philosophy of Avicenna especially his metaphysics and his epistemology. In his metaphysics, concerning the existence of God,

Avicenna argues from a cosmological point of view, that the existence of a necessary being shows that God exists and that God is that Necessary Being. Avicenna's metaphysics and epistemology are interwoven such that in his theory of creation by emanation, he has an idea of the gradation of beings through which he makes a distinction between the active intellect and the passive intellect. These and other issues will engage our attention in this unit.

2.0   Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Articulate and explain Avicenna's arguments for the existence of God.
- Understand and explain Avicenna's epistemology especially his gradation of beings through which he made the distinction between the active and passive intellects.

3.0   Main Contents

3.1   Avicenna's Short Biography

Avicenna commonly known as Ibn Sina was born in Persia in 980AD in Afsana, a village near Bukhara, a Persian dynasty in Central Asia and Greater Khorasan. Given his rich background, Avicenna was carefully educated at Bukhara by his father who was the then Governor in one of the Samanid Nuh Ibn Mansur's estates at the time of Avicenna's birth. Given his sturdy educational background, Avicenna was a prolific scholar and writer. He studied Arabic literature, geometry, jurisprudence, logic, theology, physics, mathematics and medicine which he practiced at an early age of sixteen except philosophy which he studied later. Given his extra ordinary intelligence and memory, Avicenna at the age of fourteen overtook his teachers. Avicenna confidently said in his autobiography that there was nothing he had not learned when he was eighteen. Avicenna was exposed to the metaphysics of Aristotle as a teenager though he did not quite understand it even after reading it for about forty times until he read Alfarabi's commentary on Aristotle's metaphysics, a small book which he bought at a bookstall for just a little amount of three dirhams. As quoted in Ogabo, Heschel (1982:128) writes that Avicenna was so much joyed by the discovery he made through this small book by alfarabi, which he earlier expected will be full of mysteries, that he had to return to the mosque to give thanks to God and to bestow alms to the poor.

As a prolific writer, Avicenna wrote over 450 works on a wide range of subjects. Out of this number of works, about 240 continued to be read. O'Connor and Robertson wrote that 150 of his surviving work centered on philosophy while about 40 of them focused on medicine. Avicenna's most famous works are The Book of Healing which is a vast philosophical and scientific encyclopadea. The second one is The Canon of Medicine, which was a standard medical text in most medieval universities including Montpeller and Leuven. Gutas (1999) regards Avicenna as the most famous and influential polymath of the Islamic Golden Age. Ogabo (2018) notes that it was also in this age (the Golden Age) that the translations of Greco Roman, Persian and Indian texts were studied extensively.

3.2   Avicenna's Metaphysics

Avicenna believes and argues for the existence of a Necessary Being. His proof for the existence of a Necessary Being is based on the argument from causality. For him the Necessary Being is the uncaused cause of all other beings called the possible or contingent beings. You have earlier studied argument from causality when we treated St. Aquinas' argument for God's existence. In the world you do observe that one thing causes another and this thing that caused the other is itself caused by another thing, just as we considered above in Aquinas' argument from motion, the series of causes cannot continue ad infinitum. There must be a beginning of the series of causes. That beginning is what people call God – the Uncaused Cause. Therefore, God exists. Since this being is uncaused, it could not have received its existence from outside itself. What this means is that its essence is identical with its existence and so it cannot but exist. This shows that there must be a necessary Being and that is God.

Therefore, for Avicenna the term 'being' is primarily predicated of the Necessary Being who is being par excellence. It is only by analogy that the term 'being' is predicated of possible or contingent beings. Avicenna sees God as a being at the peak of other beings. God has no beginning because he is a necessary being. Avicenna also supposed that God's necessity implies that all his attributes are necessary and without beginning. To this end, Avicenna thinks that creation is both eternal and necessary. What this means is that God was under necessity to create; that the world and everything in it emanates from God out of rational necessity. Thus creation and the world is eternal. However, this is contradictory to the account of creation stated in the Bible. St. Bonaventure noted this when he states that, according to the Bible, creation is a

product of God's goodness and freewill and not of necessity. Also according to Bonaventure, there is nothing eternal about creation; that creation is a product of time. The account of creation in Genesis chapter 1 shows that creation is time-bound, that is, creation occurred at a point in time. Aquinas' account is however a departure of the position of Bonaventure and Avicenna. According to Aquinas, the understanding of creation is a matter of faith and not of a philosophical reasoning as to whether it is eternal or time-bound. As part of Avicenna's metaphysics, following Aristotle, Avicenna says that God is Pure Act without potency or imperfection and that his attributes are identical with his essence. So when we say that God is good, he is not just good but goodness itself, God is not only just but justice itself; God is not only perfect but perfection itself; God does not only have beauty but is beauty itself. However, since these attributes of God tend to diffuse themselves, God does diffuse himself through creation. Explaining this, Omoregbe says that "this self-diffusion of God through creation takes the form of emanation. Thus, the world emanates from the necessity of divine nature. Be that as it may, for Avicenna, material things did not emanate immediately and directed from God" (1997:122).

3.3 Avicenna's Epistemology

Avicenna's metaphysics and epistemology are interwoven. In his theory of creation by emanation, Avicenna has an idea of the gradation of beings through which he makes a distinction between the active intellect and the passive intellect. There are ten intelligences from which the first beings emanated. This means that the material beings are not directly from God and that between God and the material beings are these intelligences. Beings are graded according to how close they are to God. "The tenth intelligence is the source of the material world and it is this intelligence that gives form to material things. The tenth intelligence, which is also the active intelligence, is also responsible for illuminating the passive intelligence and makes it possible to grasp universal truth" (Omoregbe, 1997:122). While the passive intellect is a possible intellect potentially endowed to receive truth. On the other hand, the active intellect or what he also calls the agent intellect is identical with the tenth intelligence. This agent intellect is responsible for the creation of the four elements of the world and the soul of men. The agent intellect also plays the role of radiating the forms to the created minds. There is a difference between essence and existence in Avicenna's metaphysics cum epistemology. Essences are not automatically fulfilled

neither does it give existence to itself. It is of the essence of the human mind to comprehend but it does not always know or comprehend. For instance, the essence of the intellect is to know but its knowing is only a possibility. Umotong (2006) explains that the intellect is created without any knowledge but with the potentiality or possibility for knowledge. Knowledge exists in the human intellect through two possible means 1) through the bodily senses by which we perceive sensible objects in the material world and by which we retain the images of the objects so perceived. 2) through the power of abstraction by which we grasp the essences of individual things. Abstraction is however made possible by the active or the agent intellect by illuminating the passive, that is the human intellect. Wolfson (95) attributes to Avicenna the doctrine that there are in man's mind five internal senses namely: common sense, estimation, imagination, thought, and memory.

Ogabo (2014) notes quite clearly that Avicenna had significant influence on Jewish thought and philosophy of the medieval era. According to him, this influence got to its peak after 1150 with the philosophical works of Abraham Ibn Daud especially the Exalted Faith. Avicenna's influence was far reaching to the extent that his doctrines about the distinction between essence and existence, between necessary and contingent beings, his argument for God's existence greatly influenced Moses Maimonides. Ogabo reports that even the translator of Maimonide's Guide, Samuel Ibn Tibbon, directly referred to Avicenna's doctrines and affirmations about meterology both in his Hebrew translation of Aristotle's Metereology, and in his work Treatise on Waters Did Gather (2014, 461). More philosophers who were influenced by Avicenna are Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera who used Avicenna's works as a basis for his expositions of Maimonides' and Aristotle's thoughts. Solomon Ben Moses of Melgueli was also influenced by Avicenna (Glasner, 1995:96). Ogabo notes further that 'in the 14th century, some aspects of Avicenna's philosophy were employed in favour of the Jewish religious tradition and against the Aristotelean philosophical tradition as represented by Averroes' rationalism'. According to Ogabo (2018), 'the aim was to arrive at a substantial agreement between Jewish religion and philosophy. It is evident that many late medieval Jewish philosophers seem to have known Avicenna's philosophy; in reality, some of them might have known it not directly, but mostly through al-Ghazali – as might have happened even in the case of Maimonides too'

4.0   Conclusion

The proof for the existence of God was a topical issue that engaged the minds of medieval philosophers and Avicenna was not an exception. His arguments for God's existence were examples of a cosmological argument and his argument was based on the idea of a Necessary Being which is God. Avicenna also talked about the active and the passive intellects which is a product of his idea of the gradation of being.

5.0   Summary

The following are the summary of what you have learnt in this unit:

- That Avicenna's argument for God's existence is cosmological in nature and was based on the existence of a Necessary Being which is God.
- That for Avicenna the term 'being' is primarily predicated of the Necessary Being who is being par excellence and that it is only by analogy that the term 'being' is predicated of possible or contingent beings.
- That beings are in grades according to how they are close to God.

Self-assessment Exercise

Explain what Avicenna means by the gradation of beings.

6.0   References/Further Readings

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Tutor Marked Assignment

What role does the agent intellect play in the acquisition of knowledge according to Avicenna?

Answer: *According to Avicenna, the active intellect or what he also calls the agent intellect is identical with the tenth intelligence. This agent intellect is responsible for the creation of the four elements of the world and the soul of men. The agent intellect also plays the role of radiating the forms to the created minds.*

AVERROES

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MODULE 4, UNIT 3   -   AVERROES

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1.0   Introduction

In this unit, you shall be exposed to the philosophy of Averroes. Averroes was an Aristotelian. In fact, he regarded Aristotle as a model of human perfection and held him in high

esteem. He was officially the most highly reputed commentator of Aristotelian logic. Averroes' philosophy was more or less a restatement of Avicenna's thoughts, however he disagrees with Avicenna on certain issues. Avicenna agreed with Aristotle on the denial of the immortality of the soul. These and other issues will be discussed in this unit.

2.0   Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand and explain how Averroes attempted to reconcile Aristotle's philosophy with Islam.
- Understand and explain Averroes' arguments for the denial of the immortality of the soul.

3.1   Averroes: Short Biography

Averroes was born in Cordoba, Spain in 1126 to a family with a long and well respected tradition of legal and public service. Averroes studied philosophy, mathematics, jurisprudence, medicine, linguistics and scholastic theology. Like his father, Averroes served as a judge, however, he later became a physician. Averroes was a prolific writer who wrote on many subjects but especially and extensively on philosophy and religion. His writings on the origin of the universe, attributes of God, metaphysics and psychology are classical. He exalted philosophy above religion and made religion a subordination to philosophy which means to him philosophy is the judge of religion and theology. Omoregbe (1997) records that this move by Averroes did not go down well with the Islamic community. The Caliph of Spain took exception to it and exiled him from Spain and ordered all books on philosophy to be burnt. Averroes fled to Morocco where he sojourned until his date in 1198AD. In response to the perceived damage done to religion by Averroes, a pious Moslem Algazel wrote a book against the philosophers which he entitled Destruction of the Philosophers. In this book, he showed "how philosophers always contradicted themselves, and argued that all necessary truths are contained in the Koran. God according to him, has revealed all necessary truths to mankind, and they are to be found in the Koran. Philosophical speculations are therefore unnecessary" (Omoregbe,1997:124). To this thoughts of Algazel, Averroes replied with a counter-book entitled Destruction of the Destruction of Philosophers where he countered all that Algazel said against philosophy.

3.2   Averroes' Metaphysics

Avicenna who was regarded as the greatest Islamic philosopher of the Middle Ages had already laid a solid foundation and to an extent, Averroes philosophy was not different from that of Avicenna, however he differed from Avicenna on certain issues. Averroes was an Aristotelian. In fact, he regarded Aristotle as a model of human perfection. He held Aristotle in high esteem. He was officially the most highly reputed commentator of Aristotelian logic. Averroes is opined to be the one who closes the philosophical era of the Arabs and usually regarded to have been the major "master" of Islamic philosophy among Jews in the late Middle Ages. The boldness of Averroes aroused the full venom of the orthodox, who in their zeal, attacked all philosophers indiscriminately and had their philosophical books and works burnt completely (Ogabo, 2014).

As we said earlier, Averroes was very much like Avicenna in his thoughts, however, he differed from Avicenna in some respects. For instance, while Avicenna believes that creation was eternal and necessary, Averroes denies this and rather argues that such doctrine is alien to philosophy but that such doctrine can only be found in religion. In the philosophical doctrine of essence and existence, Averroes disagrees with Avicenna. For Averroes, there is no real distinction between essence and existence and that the only distinction that exists between the two can be found in logical distinction for the purpose of analysis.

Following Aristotle, Averroes denied the immortality of the soul and the creation of matter. but the Koran believes in the immortality of the soul and the creation of matter. Aristotle equally denies divine providence and divine knowledge of the world. That is, that God does not know the world and has nothing to do with it. On the other hand, Koran says that God created the world, that He knows the world and has everything to do with the world. God did not abandon the world but cares for it, that is, that the world is guided by divine providence. The question now is, which of these account is true and should be accepted? According to Averroes, both accounts are true, each in its own way; that the same truth formulated in scientific and technical terms in philosophy for the sophisticated minds are expressed allegorically in theology for the simple minded people.

Averroes extended the tradition of Greek philosophy in the Islamic world and removed the Neoplatonic bias of his predecessors through his commentaries. He criticized Alfarabi's attempt to merge Plato and Aristotle's ideas and argued that Aristotle differs from Plato in many

respects (Hayman, 2010).

The philosophical influence of Averroes was so intense that between 1230 and 1315, almost all his philosophical works had been translated from Arabic into Hebrew. Quoting Zonta (2006), Ogabo avers that "almost all of Averroes' works were quoted, summarised, paraphrased, annotated and commentated on by a number of philosophers. philosophers during the 14th and 15th centuries" (Ogabo, 2014:465). Further on this, Ogabo quoting Stenschneider, 1893, states that "some of these texts are preserved only through these translations, due to the loss of their original versions, and their success among Jewish philosophes was surely wider than the success they gained among Arabic thinkers" (Ogabo, 2014:465).

3.3   Averroes Epistemology

As a commentator on Aristotle's works, Averroes endeavored to reconcile Aristotle's system of thought with Islam. Averroes avers that there is no conflict between religion and philosophy; that the two are different but complimentary ways of accessing truth. He attempted this reconciliation trough his famous 'Double Truth Theory' There are two ways of accessing truth, one is through religion and the other is through philosophy. Truth by religion is based on faith and as it were is not open to laboratory test of experimentation and as such it does not require any special training to understand and comprehend. On the other hand, the truth of philosophy is reserved for the few elites who are intellectually sophisticated and matured.

Still on the question of truth, Averroes avers that demonstrative truth cannot conflict with scripture (Qur'an). This is because Islam is the ultimate truth and philosophy is the search for truth. According to Averroes, if Scripture conflicts with demonstrative truth, then such conflict must only be apparent. If and when there is a conflict between scripture and philosophy on the existence of any particular being, in such case, scripture should be interpreted allegorically. Averroes opines that allegorical interpretation of scripture is common among the lawyers, theologians and the philosophers and that this has been accepted by all Muslims. The only point at which the Muslims disagree is the propriety of its use. Averroes avers that scripture is written in allegorical style to appeal to the emotions and imagination of the uneducated. According to Averroes, the scriptures have various meanings, both apparent and hidden to inspire study and suit diverse intelligences. Therefore, there is no much difference between theologians and philosophers for one to label the other irreligious. The allegorical interpretation of the scripture

by the theologian should not be seen as being infallible. The same applies to the apparent interpretation of scripture by the philosophers (Ogabo, 2014:463-464). However, Averroes placed philosophy over religion. Averroes is of the opinion that the philosopher must strip away the surface meaning to uncover the true or inner meaning of religious or scriptural truths. He further states that where the conclusions of philosophical reasoning conflict with religious tradition, such conflict is only a conflict with the apparent meaning of the scriptures. Be that as it may, Averroes believes that truth cannot conflict with truth. Thus the best of philosophy is consistent with the hidden meaning of the Koran (Lawhead, 2002:163).

Apart from being misunderstood and misinterpreted by his fellow Muslims, Averroes was equally misinterpreted by thirteenth-century Christians who opposed him as well as by those who admired him. These crop of Christians thought Averroes meant that some proposition X could be literary true in philosophy and at the same time its contradiction not X equally true in religion. This certainly, for them, makes the issue of truth problematic. According to Lawhead,

> the faculty at the newly founded University of Paris seemed to enthusiastically endorse this mistaken interpretation in their attempts to adopt Averroes' explication of Aristotle. This group, known as the "Latin Averroists" was headed by Siger of Brabant. To embrace many Aristotelian doctrines that were contrary to Church teachings, they tended to shuffle philosophy and theology into separate conpartments without any attempt to relate the two. As opposed to this extreme double-truth theory Averroes was actually saying the truth could be expressed at different levels and in different ways, figuratively in religion and literary in philosophy. Apart from the misinterpretation imposed on him, what is revolutionary about Averroes is that this method of interpretation implies that the theology yields its authority to philosophy. The philosopher decided how revelation should be interpreted to make it consistent with philosophical reason (Lawhead, 2002:165).

4.0   Conclusion

Averroes' attempt to reconcile Aristotle's philosophy with Islam brought him into fierce opposition by Islamic theologians. His attempt to place philosophy above religion was also fiercely opposed. However, Averroes tried to escape this opposition by maintaining that the truths of philosophy and the truths of religion can be reconciled. This he tried by his use of his famous double truth theory. Your understanding of the thoughts of Averroes will help you to appreciate his enormous contributions to the development of Islamic philosophy in the medieval period.

5.0   Summary

The following are the summary of what you have learnt in this unit:

- That Averroes placed philosophy over and above religion and this earned him serious opposition from Islamic theologians and adherents.
- That Averroes tried to reconcile the truths of philosophy and the truths of religion through his double truth theory.

Self-assessment Exercise

Articulate and explain the differences between Avicenna and the Koran's idea of the immortality of the soul and the creation of matter.

6.0   References/Further Readings

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Tutor Marked assignment

Explain the Double Truth Theory of Averroes.

Answer*: in his idea of the double truth theory, Averroes avers that there is no conflict between religion and philosophy; that the two are different but complimentary ways of accessing truth. He attempted this reconciliation trough his famous 'Double Truth Theory'. This theory means that there are two ways of accessing truth, one is through religion and the other is through philosophy. Truth by religion is based on faith and as it were is not open to labouratory test of experimentation and as such it does not require any special training to understand and comprehend. On the other hand, the truth of philosophy is reserved for the few elites who are intellectually sophisticated and matured.*

MOSES MAIMONIDES

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MODULE 4: UNIT 4   **MOSES MAIMONIDES**

Contents

1.0   **Introduction**

Maimonides as a medieval philosopher also contributed his quota to the two basic philosophical discussions of the medieval period which are (a) The attempt to reconcile "faith" and "reason" and (b) The efforts to rationally prove the existence of God. However, one may find it difficult if not impossible to understand the thought pattern of Maimonides without a background knowledge of Aristotle and Avicenna. In this unit therefore, you shall be exposed to the philosophical thoughts of Moses Maimonides.

2.0   Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand and explain Maimonides' reason for thinking that there is really no conflict between philosophy and religion.
- Understand and explain Maimonides' arguments for the existence of God which are Aristotelian in nature

3.0   Main Contents
3.1   Maimonides' Short Biography

Maimonides was a Jewish jurist, philosopher and physician who was born into a distinguished family on 30th March, 1135 in Cordoba, Spain and a contemporary of Averroes who was also born there. He was also known as Rabbi Moses been Maimon. Due to persecution, Maimonides was forced to leave, first, to morocco in 1159, second to Palestine in 1165 and lastly to Egypt in the same year. During these times, he studied his Rabbinics, Greek philosophy and medicine. At the time he was pressed by economic necessity, he took advantage of his medical studies and became a practicing physician and his fame as a physician spread rapidly. Maimonides married late in life and had a son, Abraham. He died December 13, 1204 in Egypt at the age of sixty- nine. The contributions of Maimonides to the development of Judaism earned him the title "Second Moses" (Encarta). His works were numerous almond which the earliest at them was his "Treatise on Logical Terminology".

Another is his 'Essay on the Calendar". His greatest work in the field of Jewish law is titled "The Torah Reviewed". He wrote two other works in Jewish law titled "Book of Precepts" and "laws of Jerusalem". Another groundbreaking work which ascribed him the name "philosopher"; "The Guide for the Perplexed". Maimonides also wrote a number of minor works

most of which dealt with the current challenges facing the Jewish community at that time and maintained good relationship with other scholars, students and community leaders.

3.2   Maimonides' Epistemology

Maimonides' principal work is his "Guide for the Perplexed" in which he set out to prove that "the teachings of Judaism harmonize with philosophic thought and… that Biblical thought offered certain insights that reason alone cannot discover" (Stumpf, 1994: 173). By this he concedes that there is no basic conflict between faith and reason. Grounded in the metaphysics and physics of Aristotle, Maimonides utilized Aristotle as a rational foundation for his Jewish theology. Holding that there is no conflict between theology, philosophy and science, he asserts that they are distinct forms of knowledge which have different range and content. For this reason, not every religious doctrine can be accorded a philosophical explanation (Stumpf, 1994:173.)

3.3   Maimonides' Metaphysics

On the nature of God and creation, Maimonides does not subscribe to the position of Aristotle who suggests that there was no creation in time, he rather points out that this matter is not decisive philosophically. In other words, the argument for and against the doctrine of creation weigh the same, though he added that the religious view must prevail since it is in no conflict with rational thought.

On the cause of the conflict between faith and reason, Maimonides believed that it is due to the human language of religion and the inappropriate methodology utilized by man who is a limited being. By this, he is of the view that language and methods constitute the problem. To solve this problem, he holds that one must follow the systematic process which proceeds from mathematics, the natural sciences, to the study of law, and then to metaphysics. Again one must also be trained in the categories of scientific and philosophical concepts (Stumpf, 1994).

In discussing the structure of human nature, Maimonides is in consonance with Avicenna holding that it is the Agent intellect that constitutes the source of a person's substantive knowledge. Also, that at death, the soul perishes and the only surviving element is the active intellectual ingredient that proceeds from the Agent intellect. The goal of human life he says is "to attain humanity's appropriate protection such as the perfection of possession, of bodily

constitution and shape, of moral virtues and lastly of the acquisition of the rational virtues" (Stumpf, 1994). Rational virtue here is the minds ability to perceive the intelligible which enables him understand divine realities.

Maimonides also proved the existence of God by proving the existence of prime mover, the existence of a necessary being and the existence of a primary cause using Aristotle's metaphysics and physics. Unlike Aquinas he rejected the idea of ascribing positive attributes to god and upholds the negative attributes; what God is not.

4.0   Conclusion

As a Jewish philosopher, Maimonides exerted great influence to the development of the 13th century scholastic philosophy. His advanced views attracted critics during his life and death. His epoch-making influence on Judaism extended also to the larger world. This is seen in Thomas Aquinas, G. W. Leibniz and Benedict Spinoza. He was later acknowledged as a pillar of the traditional faith of the orthodox church and as the greatest of the Jewish philosophers.

5.0   **Summary**

The following are the summary of what you have learnt in this unit:

- That Maimonides believes that the conflict between faith and reason is due to the problem of religious language and inappropriate methodology used by man as a limited being.
- That in order to solve the problem of religious language and method, one must employ the systematic processes of mathematics and science.
- That Maimonides' argument for God's existence is based on Aristotle's metaphysics and Physics.

Self-assessment Exercise

What according to Maimonides is the cause of the conflict between faith and reason?

Note: the answer is found on page 129, in the second paragraph.

6.0   References/Further Readings

Stumpf, S. (1994) Philosophy, History and Problems. USA: McGraw-Hill.

Tutor Marked Assignment

What is the goal of human life according to Maimonides?

Answer: The goal of human life according to Maimonides is "to attain humanity's appropriate protection such as the perfection of possession, of bodily constitution and shape, of moral virtues and lastly of the acquisition of the rational virtues". Rational virtue here is the minds ability to perceive the intelligible which enables him understand divine realities.

IBN GABIROL

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MODULE 4: UNIT 5   SOLOMON BEN YEHUDA IBN GABIROL

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Contents

1.0   Introduction

Ibn Gabiro's original and influential contribution to philosophy finds its fullest expression in his most comprehensive philosophical work titled *Fountain of Life.* This work

takes the form of a dialogue between a teacher and his disciple. The work is regarded by many as Universal Hylemorphism. Arising from this work, you will be exposed to the philosophy of Ibn Gabirol.

2.0   Intended Learning Outcome (ILOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand and explain Ibn Gabirol's Universal Hylemorphism in which he posited that all substances are made up of matter and form in a hierarchical order ranging from the highest general spiritual matter to the lowest prime matter.
- Understand and explain Gabirol's doctrine of the mean as a guide to actions.

3.0   Main Contents

3.1   Solomon Ibn Gabirol's Short Biography

Solomon ben Yehuda Ibn Gabirol was a Spanish Jewish Philosopher and poet, born in Malage, at about 1022. He lived during the height of the Islamic reign in southern Spain and was educated in Saragoza. He is also known by his Latin name Avicebron and an important Neoplatonic Philosopher. 'It was only in 1859 that it was discovered that the man known to the Jewish tradition only as Solomom Ibn Gabirol who composed hundreds of secular and liturgical poems, was the thinker known to the Christian tradition as Avicebron, supposed to be a Muslim philosopher' (McGrade 2006, 131). 'The tone of some of Ibn Gabirol's secular songs which are gloomy and bitter is sometimes considered an indication of his unhappiness. He was orphaned at an early age, poor, and ostracized by many of his contemporaries because of his hot temper and unorthodox philosophy. He did find some favour with Yequtiel ben Ishaq ibn Hasan, a veritable Maecenas, at the court in Saragossa, and later with his patron, Samuel Ibn Nagrella, at the court of Zirid in Granada. Most, if not all, of this patronage seems to have resulted from his reputation as the greatest Jewish poet of his time in the West' (Borchert 2006, 545). He was involved in a strife and when emancipated, provided the orthodox with heresies such as denouncing the world, Neoplatonism, recommending childlessness, and so on. He had to flee to Saragossa. Despite the warnings from his patrom Yekutiel, Ibn Gabirol still made his philosophy platonic. At the death of his patron in1039, he secured a position with a statesman Samuel ha-Nagid as a court poet (Encyclopedia Britannica).

He wrote so many works some of which are *Fountain of Life*; a Neoplatonic dialogue known to medieval European scholastic philosophers in its Latin translation, *Fons Vitae.* It was considered the work of a Christian philosopher, and as such its theory of the universality of matter was powerfully upheld by the Scottish philosopher and theologian John Duns Scotus, but severely attacked by the Italian philosopher and theologian Thomas Aquinas. It had little influence on Jewish philosophy. His deeply felt religious poetry, the best-known work is *Keter malkhut* (Royal Crown); it concludes with a confession of sin. Ibn Gabirol's secular poetry deals with nature and love and gives a description of his own life. He also wrote a well-regarded treatise on ethics, *The Improvement of Moral Qualities (Microsoft Encarta).*

As a poet, Gabirol wrote many religious poems which were included in Jewish prayer books throughout the world (Encyclopedia Britannica). He died in about 1058, in the kingdom of Valencia. Of his philosophical works, only two stand out which are the *Fountain of Life* and *Improvement of Moral Qualities*. It is in his *Fountain of Life* which is written in the form of a dialogue between a teacher and his disciple that Gabirol's learnedness was epitomized (McGrade 2006, 126). Ibn Gabirol's philosophy also reflected in his epic Hebrew poem "The Royal Crown" which combines personal and religious feelings of the poet with a verse which summed up his metaphysical and astronomical positions (Audi, 1999: 410).

3.2   Ibn Gabirol's Metaphysics

Ibn Gabiro's original and influential contribution to philosophy finds its fullest expression in his most comprehensive philosophical work titled *Fountain of Life* known in Latin translation as "Fons Vitae," in Arabic as "Maqor Hayyim." According to Popkin, *Fountain of Life* is unique when compared with Jewish medieval works due to the fact that it lacks Jewish content; sources and its form is that of a dialogue between a teacher and his disciple reflecting the style popular in Islamic philosophical literature of the period. This is different from Platonic dialogue because the student does not contribute to the philosophical integrity of the argument rather functions as a literary device without much philosophical input. The work comprises of five books of equal length with the third as the most comprehensive; having over three hundred pages in the Latin edition (Popkin, 1893: 174). This treatise is classified by many scholars as "Universal Hylemorphism". This is because in this work he posited that 'all substances are made up of matter and form in a hierarchical order ranging from the highest general spiritual matter to

the lowest prime matter' (McGrade, 2006: 127). (Frank & Leaman, 2003:94) provided us with the hierarchical order as follows:

1.   First Essence, Creator, Being Only (Esse Tantum)

2.   Will

3.   Universal Matter, Universal Form

4.   Universal Intellect (First Created Being)

5.   World: Rational Soul

6.   World: Animal / Sensitive Soul

7.   World: Nutritive Soul

8.   Sphere / Nature

Popkin arranges it thus:

a.   General spiritual matter

b.   General corporeal matter

c.   General celestial matter

d.   General natural matter

e.   Particular general matter (prime matter) (Popkin, 1893: 175).

McGrade recorded that although Ibn Gabirol's account of the relationship between matter and form is not consistent, it is evident that by "simple substance" he never meant something indivisible, lacking all composition. He sees creation as timeless and upheld two emanationist account asserting in one that matter came from the essence of God, whereas form came from his divine will. In another account holds that both matter and form originate from the divine will (McGrade, 2006: 127).

Ibn Gabirol's universal hylemorphism is purely a metaphysical treatise which according to Popkin presents a rigorously defined Neoplatonic cosmology influenced by the Islamic school of Neoplatonism. This is shown in Gabirol's placement of "spiritual matter" as the first of the five substances. He provided some certain themes as regards cosmology and purification of the soul. First is that knowledge or science is the ultimate aim of human life. Second, that knowledge of oneself "the microcosm" contains the science of everything "the macrocosm." Third, that the world is created by and is dependent upon divine will. Again, the human soul is placed in this existential world of nature and will return to the world of spirit before which the soul must purify itself from the pollutions of this world which is its base. Lastly, that the overall purpose of

human existence is the knowledge of the being that comprises of matter, form, God, and will (Popkin 1893, 174-175). While Thomas Aquinas criticized Ibn Gabirol's theory of spiritual matter, some Francsican scholars such as John Duns Scotus and St. Bonaventure accepted a number of his views.

3.3   Ibn Gabirol's Ethics

Ibn Gabirol's major contribution to ethics is found in his work *Tikkun Middot HaNefesh* (The Improvement of Moral Qualities) written in 1045 in Saragossa. His ethics is a treatise on practical morality based on 'contemporary theories of the human temperaments. It contains chapters on meekness, pride, modesty, impudence, love, hate, compassion, and cruelty, which are linked to the human senses' (Encyclopedia Britannica). His ethics also deals with qualities and defects of the soul with particular emphasis on the Aristotelian doctrine of the mean. Gabirol supported this mean with biblical backups and quotations from Greek philosophers and Arab Poets. He describes humans as the pinnacle of creation and maintains that the sole purpose of human existence is perfection. To achieve this end, man must overcome their passions and detach themselves from this world in order to acquire felicity of the soul (Popkin 1893, 174).

Ibn Gabirol's ethical theory is interesting because of its attempt to systematize the basic principles of medieval Jewish ethics without involving religious dogma, ritual or belief. The force of the human soul and how they can be trained to virtue or allowed to fall into vice are explained in relation to the five external senses, which are in turn explained by the four-element, or simple-body, theory of Aristotle. He emphasized the virtuous order that can be achieved in the external senses under the direction of the rational soul (Borchert 2006, 545).

4.0   Conclusion

As you have been exposed to the philosophy of Ibn Gabirol in this unit, it is important you note that Ibn Gabirol is also known as Avicebron and that his Universal Hylemorphism is rigorously Neoplatonic in that, out of his five substances, he considers 'spiritual matter' as first among the five substances. It is also important for you to note that his ethics is a treatise on practical morality devoid of religious dogma. A good understanding of this will help you to appreciate his contribution to medieval thought.

5.0   Summary

The following are the summary of what you have learnt in this unit:

- That Ibn Gabirol's ethics is a classic example of practical morality devoid of religious dogma.
- That his universal hylemorphism is rigorously and uniquely Neoplatonic.
- That according to Gabirol, the human soul is capable of being trained for virtue or being allowed to slip into vice.

Self-assessment Exercise

Explain Ibn Gabirol's idea of Universal Hylemorphism.

6.0   References/Further Readings

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Tutor Marked Assignment

Ibn Gabirol claims that all substances are made up of matter and form in a hierarchical order. Mention them according to their order.

Answer: 1.First Essence, Creator, Being Only (Esse Tantum)

2.   Will

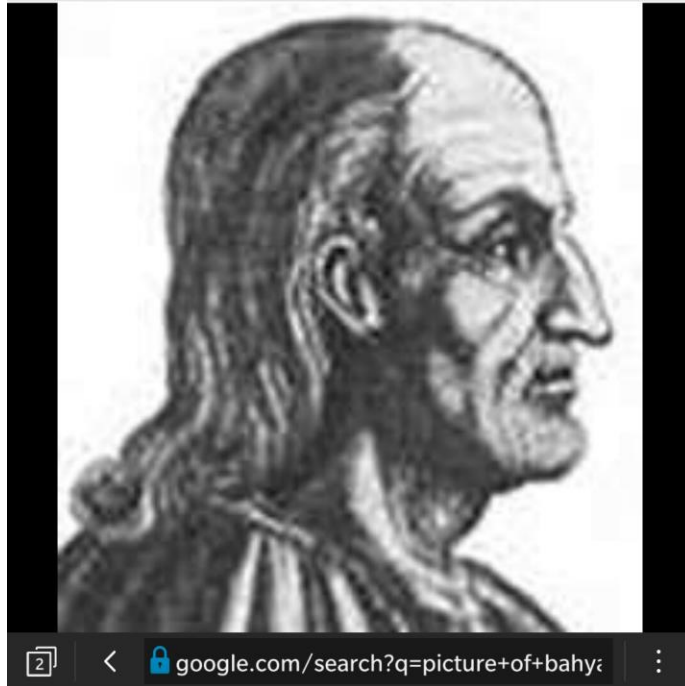*3.   Universal Matter, Universal Form*

4.   Universal Intellect (First Created Being)

5.   World: Rational Soul

6.   World: Animal / Sensitive Soul

7.   World: Nutritive Soul

8.   Sphere / Nature

BAHYA BEN JOSEPH IBN PAQUDA

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MODULE 5: UNIT 1   BAHYA BEN JOSEPH IBN PAQUDA

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Contents

1.0 Introduction

In this unit you shall be exposed to the philosophical ideas of Ibn Paquda. His philosophical ideas are contained in his book titled *Duties of the Heart.* Paquda's ethical ideas are very instructive such that if well adhered to will help man live a good life. One of such steps to take in order to live a good life is to cultivate the virtues that will help us resist our desires and this will show in our attitudes toward others. These issues shall be made more explicit in our discussions in this unit.

2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand and explain Paquda's distinction between loving God in the heart and loving God through the intellect and why he prefers the former to the later.
- Explain why Paquda is opposed to the doctrine of anthropomorphism.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Ibn Paquda's Short Biography

Bahya Ben Joseph Ibn Paquda, a Jewish Neoplatonist lived during the 11th century. He was a Spanish Jewish philosopher and jurist. Bahya lived in Saragossa, Spain, where he was a Judge of a rabbinical court. He wrote a number of liturgical poems during his life, and first systematic philosophic work on ethics in Jewish tradition titled *Duties of the Heart,* written in about 1040. It was written in Arabic before it was translated into Hebrew in the 12th century by a physician and translator Judah ben Saul ibn Tibbon. This translator was well-known by the name Hovot Ha-levavot.

3.2 Ibn Paquda's Philosophical Ideas

Paquda's philosophical work is contained in his book titled *Duties of the Heart.* It is his Ethical theory which deals with the fundamentals of Judaism and attempts to systematize Jewish ethical values. For instance, 'through his obedience to the categories of "Sufism" (Muslim Mystic) in his quest for the source of human motivation, he was able to find a social justification for different aspects of Judaism. One of the virtues he talked about is the need to resist our desires. Paquda argues that we can pursue this socially through our attitudes towards other people' (Borchert 2006, 458). "He claims that the essence of all spirituality is the recognition of

God as the designer of all things. Bahya considered it more important for a man to love God in his heart than to seek to know God through his intellect" (Encarta). He also opposed the doctrine of anthropomorphism; a philosophical doctrine that is derived from two Greek words "anthropos" meaning "human being" and "morphe" meaning "shape" hence; it could be defined as the attribution of human qualities to an inanimate object. In religion, as regards this course, anthropomorphism refers to the depiction of God in a human image; the bodily form and emotions inclusive. Paquda's theory of the essence of all spirituality led him to make a sharp distinction between the human person loving God in his heart and loving God through his intellect (it can as well be seen as the private and public aspect or a distinction between outward and inward obligation). For Paquda 'our private/ personal moral rules which we adopt to draw us closer to God have significant public elements. He agrees that love of God is the highest virtue but holds that we must practice personal asceticism to attain it, with justice and good manners' (Borchert 2006 458). The public element here is our attitude towards others in the society.

Paquda's work has many quotations from the works of non-Jewish moral philosophers, revealing his comprehensive knowledge of Arabic scientific and philosophical literature. The aim of his book on Ethics is to show that Judaism is not only about external actions but has an inner spiritual dimension as well. He did not go to the extreme of denying the significance of law and prayer or society and religion. On the contrary, he argues that the private and the public aspects of religion complement each other. His book also provides a detailed account of how that works in the case of Judaism (Borchert 2006, 458).

4.0 Conclusion

We said in this unit that Paquda's philosophy is contained in his book entitled The Duties of the Heart in which he discussed his ethical theory. Man can live a good life when he practices a life of asceticism and this easily shows in his attitude towards others. Certainly, if you adhere to the moral teachings of Paquda, it will help you live a good life.

5.0   Summary

The following are the summary of what you have learnt in this unit:

- That Ibn Paquda's philosophical ideas are contained in his work titled The Duties of the Heart.

- That his ethical theory recommends a life of asceticism as a basis for living a good life

Self-assessment Exercise

What does Paquda mean when he recommends that we should live a life of asceticism in order to live a good life?

6.0   References/Further Readings

Borchert, Donald Ed. (2006) *Encyclopedia of Philosophy.* (2nd ed). Vol. 1. USA: Thomson Gale.

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Tutor Marked Assignment

What did Paquda consider to be the essence of all spirituality?

Answer: Paquda claims that the essence of all spirituality is the recognition of God as the designer of all things. He considers it more important for a man to love God in his heart than to seek to know God through his intellect. He also opposes the doctrine of anthropomorphism; a philosophical doctrine that is derived from two Greek words "anthropos" meaning "human being" and "morphe" meaning "shape" hence; it could be defined as the attribution of human qualities to an inanimate object. In religion, as regards this course, anthropomorphism refers to the depiction of God in a human image; the bodily form and emotions inclusive. Paquda's theory of the essence of all spirituality led him to make a sharp distinction between the human person loving God in his heart and loving God through his intellect (it can as well be seen as the private and public aspect or a distinction between outward and inward obligation).

ALBO JOSEPH

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MODULE 5: UNIT 2   -   ALBO JOSEPH

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Contents

1.0   Introduction

In this unit, you shall be exposed to the philosophical ideas of Albo Joseph. He was a Jewish theologian. The little that is known about him is from his theological work *The Book of Roots* which is also called *Book of Principles*.   In this book, Albo deals with questions such as the existence of God, divine revelation and divine retribution as they relate to Judaism. A clear understanding of these issues will help you to appreciate the contributions of Albo to the development of medieval philosophy.

2.0   Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand and explain Albo Joseph's three essential dogmas of Judaism which are the existence of God, revelation, and reward and punishment.
- Understand Albo's philosophical idea about the concept of Time.

3.0 Main Contents

3.1   Albo Joseph's Short Biography

Joseph Albo was a Spanish Jewish theologian and philosopher who happened to be the last major figure during the medieval Jewish tradition. Not much is known about him. He was born in 1380 in Monreal, Kingdom of Aragon, Spain. Albi is known for his participation as 'one of the principal apologists for the Jews at the colloquim of Tortosa which took place from February 7, 1413 to November 3, 1414 (Borchert 2006, 102). It was a strong confrontation between Spanish Jew and Christians. Albo distinguished himself during this crisis by his ability to explain Jewish scriptures. Albo has often been classified as an eclectic due to his failure to let his readers know his stand. It is hard to pinpoint out of Hasdai Crescas, Sa'adia, Maimonides and Averroes where Albo's influence came from. In one occasion he asserted that Hasdai Crescas was his teacher though he differs from Crescas and to some extent resembles Maimonides due to his similar interest in political theory (Encyclopedia Britannica).

Borchert writes that Albo was accused of plagiarism in his time due to his inability to acknowledge the intellectual properties of other scholars. Borchert also insists that we must try to

recognize that Albo's intent was to systematize and defend the dogmas of Judaism rather than to produce an original philosophical work. Albo's methodology of systematization, organization, and style of presentation have made his work; *The Book of Roots* one of the most popular works in medieval literature. As one of the earliest printed Hebrew books, the first edition having been introduced at Soncino, Italy, in 1485, Albo's continuous use of medical materials to elucidate his ideas has led some scholars to believe that Albo may have been trained as a physician. Albo died in 1444 (Borchert 2006, 102).

3.2   Albo Joseph's Philosophical Ideas

The Jewish theologian Joseph Albo is known mainly for his theological work; *The Book of Roots* also called *Book of Principles.* In this book Albo deals with questions such as the existence of God, divine revelation, divine retribution as they relate to Judaism. Most of his ideas are extracts from Simon Zemach and the influences of the Jewish and Islamic philosophers Maimonides and Averroes respectively were also found in his writing (Microsoft Encarta, 2008). Albo's investigation into the above listed theories of Jewish religious dogmas led him to reduce to three, the thirteen dogmas or principles that were earlier set by Moses Maimonides. It is here that Albo made his principal contribution to the evolution of Jewish doctrines (Encyclopedia Britannica). Albo holds that there are three essential dogmas of Judaism: the existence of God, revelation, and reward and punishment. From these three seven secondary principles were derived. The existence of God yields four: his unity, his incorporeality, his timelessness, and his perfection. From that of revelation, he derived two secondary principles which are; the prophets were the medium of revelation, and the Mosaic law will have binding force until another law is proclaimed with equal publicity; that is, before 600,000 men. God's providential knowledge in the matter of retribution was, for Albo, the sole secondary derivative from the doctrine of reward and punishment. Beyond these primary and secondary principles are other logically derived "branches" that every professing Jew must believe or be guilty of heresy, among them is the doctrine of the Messiah (Borchert 2006, 102).

Albo also discussed the concept of "time." This concept is a scientific issue and as well a philosophical problem. It has been subjected to detailed analysis by philosophers and scientists before Joseph Albo. Albo's contribution to the concept of time is more of a definition. He says "time is independent of motion" (Borchert 2006, 103). This means that the issue of time is just a

duration imagined. Borchert still comments that Albo took his teacher's (Crescas) stand and that it was Harvey who argues that the first person to state that time is an imagined duration rather than intellectually cognized is Albo. He used it as a basic foundation for his derived principle which holds that God is independent of time (Borchert 2006, 103).

4.0 Conclusion

Albo remains one of the philosophers of the medieval period who is not studied as such. This is because his works are in parts and his main work is more of apologetic than philosophical in nature. Hence, he is a subject of scattered articles on diverse topics. It is his systematic work on dogma in Judaism that generally aroused some measures of philosophical interest in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

5.0   Summary

The following are the summary of what you have learnt in this unit:

- That Albo Joseph reduced the thirteen dogmas of Judaism earlier developed by Maimonides to three which are existence of God, revelation, and reward and punishment.
- That Albo Joseph sees time as an imagined duration rather than an intellectually cognized concept.

Self-assessment Exercise
Mention and explain the three dogmas or principles of Judaism as identified by Albo Joseph.

6.0   References/Further Readings

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Tutor Marked assignment

What is the definition of time according to Albo?

Answer: Albo's contribution to the concept of time is more of a definition. He says "time is independent of motion". This means that the issue of time is just a duration imagined. Borchert still comments that Albo took his teacher's (Crescas) stand and that it was Harvey who argues that the first person to state that time is an imagined duration rather than intellectually cognized is Albo. He used it as a basic foundation for his derived principle which holds that God is independent of time.
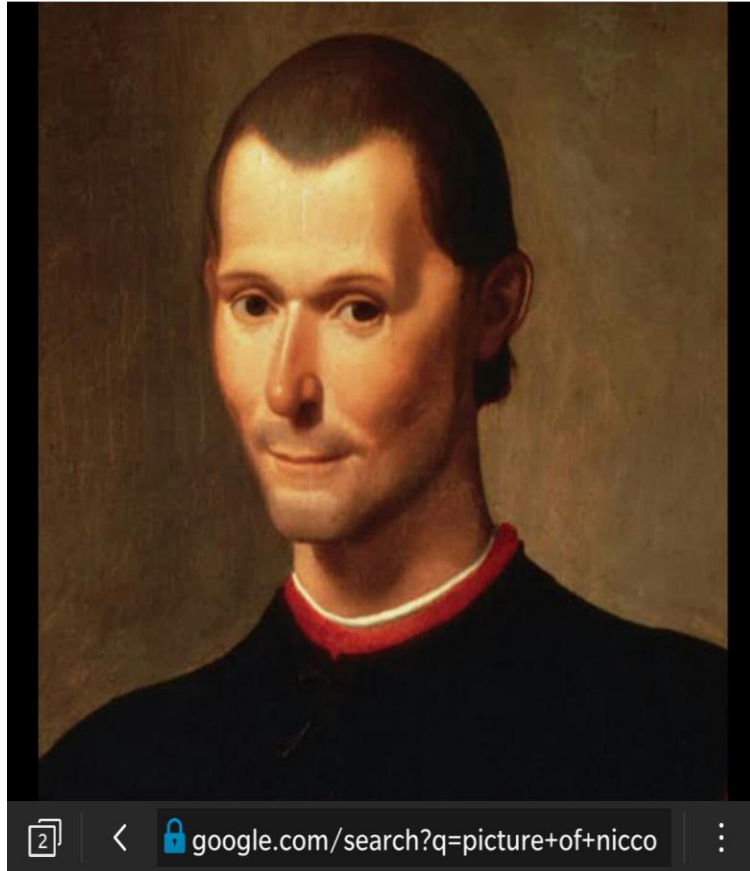
NOCCOLO MACHIAVELLI

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MODULE 5: UNIT 3   NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI

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1.0   Introduction

In this unit, you shall be exposed to the political thoughts of Niccolo Machiavelli as contained in his book, The Prince. Although this work is not a rigorous philosophical work in that it lacks style and argumentation definitive of a philosophical piece. However, the personality of Machiavelli through The Prince made important changes in the politics of late fifteenth century and which has continued to shaped the politics of the modern world. Although there are many controversies and criticisms against his thoughts, however, your understanding of his ideas about politics will help you to take advantages of its strengths and avoid the consequences of its weaknesses.

2.0   Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand and explain Niccolo Machiavelli's Political thoughts
- Understand the reason for Machiavelli's separation of morality from politics.

3.0   Main Contents

3.1   Niccolo Machiavelli's Short Biography

Machiavelli was born in Florence in 1469 to the family of Bernardo and Bartolomea. He started the school of Paolo da Ronciglione with his brother Totto in the year 1481 in which period he attended lecture by Marcello Virgilio Adriani who reputed to be one of the most influential teachers of the time. This period coincided with the period of active preaching in Florence by Girolamo Savonarola whose years of domination in Florentine politics coincided with the beginning of Machiavelli's mature life. According to Uduma, in May 1498, Savonarola was executed publicly for heresy while in the June of that same year, Machiavelli was confirmed the second chancellor of the Republic by the Great Council and was also elected the secretary of the Ten of War by July and sent on his first diplomatic mission to Piombino on behalf of the Ten of War in November. Like Machiavelli, Savonarola cherished classical ideals and believed that

the Romans had created, if not a perfect, at least, an exemplary republic. Savonarola experienced political realities at their most brutal form. He knew the tactics and psychologies of Italy's tyrants as well as the local traditions of Florentine Republic, as the portrait of the tyrannical ruler shows. Worse still, he knew what it meant to lose support of those who meant most to him. when his challenge to the Roman Pope brought the interdict on his fellow Florentines, endangering their property and commercial ventures, many turned against him. This life of Savonarola as presented so far played a major role in influencing the political thoughts of Niccolo Machiavelli (2014:587). Given his position as the second Chancellor and the secretary of the Ten of War, Machiavelli had the opportunity to travel to many places on diplomatic assignment to represent Florence Republic. These positions offered him the rare opportunity to know the strengths and weaknesses of many republics outside his own.

Omoregbe avers that Italy in Machiavelli's time was a weak and divided country with city states, while cities like Milan - Naples, Venice,.Florence, Milian werew sovereign states, Rome and Central Italy were under the control of the Pope. Machiavelli accused the Catholic church of being responsible for the political weakness of Italy and the moral decadence and corruption that characterised Italian societies. Omoregbe quotes Machiavelli as saying:

> We Italians, owe to the Church of Rome and her priests our
> having become irreligious and bad; but we owe her a still greater
> debt, and one that will be the cause of our ruin, namely, that the
> church has kept and still keeps our country divided (1997:187).

The two best known books of Machiavelli are The Prince and the Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livius. however, it is The Prince that made him famous or, as Omoregbe avers, notorious because it was in this book that the boldly expresses his immoral views which have now come to be known as Machiavellism.

3.2   Machiavelli's Political Thoughts

Before Machiavelli, philosophers have always linked politics with morality. This has been the tradition from Plato's Republic to even modern views expressed by John Rawls in his Theory of Justice. Earlier treatises assumed that a prince (the ruler) needed above all to be good, to pursue virtue in the traditional sense. Whitefield states that writers like Bartolomeo Platinma

and Francesco Patrai offered, in essence, long lists of the virtues that a prince should cultivate and the vices he should avoid, each supported with ample anecdotes from classical sources (1979:88). In this prevailing tradition, morality is seen as the yardstick for measuring good politics and political actions. It is used to checkmate the activities of rulers or leaders. However, in The Prince, Machiavelli went completely against this tradition by separating morality from politics. For him, politics should be devoid of moral restraint or control. He advises the Prince (the ruler) to ignore morality if he wants to succeed as a ruler. Machiavelli avers that a successful ruler is one who can do anything or employ any means (fair or foul) to perpetuate himself in power. He avers that the ultimate goal of politics is to grab power by all means and to retain it and that any means moral or immoral can be used to achieve this. He characterises a successful ruler as someone who is prudent, shrewd, practical and swift in his actions. Whatever he employs, cruelty or brutality is justified provided he succeeds. However, he should be ruthless and fast so as to end the cruelty or brutality within the shortest period of time.

He cautions the Prince not to bother himself with moral uprightness, religious virtues, honesty, compassion or humanistic niceties, although he must pretend to be all these and in fact should employ them only where and when they work in his favour to achieve his goal. He must be vigilant and clever and should know when to use moral or immoral means to achieve his purpose. He should be smart to tell the people what they want to hear and then do what he wants to do. Omoregbe quotes Machiavelli as saying,

> A prince therefore who desires to maintain himself must learn not to
> be always good, but to be so or not as necessity may require. It is
> well that when the act accuses him, the result should excuse him and
> when the results is good, it will always absolve him from blame...
> nor need he care about ensuring censure for such vices without
> which the preservation of his state may be difficult (1997:191).

What does Machiavelli mean by the result of the act excusing him and absolving him from blame? By this Machiavelli means that the end, that is the result, justifies the means. For Machiavelli, provided the end is good, any means (cruelty, brutality, dishonesty, lies, cunning) employed to achieve it, is justified. Machiavelli avers that whatever means employed by the ruler to keep himself in power and to secure the state, is acceptable and justified. He warns the Prince

not to commit himself to moral principles for that is capable of leading to his ruin. Machiavelli writes:

> ...and again, he need not make himself uneasy at incurring a reproach for those vices without which the state can only be saved with difficulty, for if everything is considered carefully, it will be found that something which looks like virtue, if followed, would be his ruin; whilst something else, which looks like vice, yet followed brings him security and prosperity (The Prince, Ch. 15).

Machiavelli also warns the prince not to encourage such Christian virtues as patience, meekness, mercy, humility, self-denial, compassion, forgiveness. He calls them negative virtues and avers that these negative virtues will only turn his subjects into weaklings and his state into a weak state. He rather encourages the prince to possess such virtues as vitality, energy, strength of character, ambition, thirst for power, ability to achieve one's aims, desire for fame etc. Machiavelli defended his immoral political views by insisting that his views are more realistic way of living than needless abstractions and utopia that are never real and never can be real in human history. He claims that his views are in consonance with how successful men in history actually lived and acted. He warns that what is, is actually different from what ought to be and that what ought to be done is different from what is actually done. Machiavelli drew the strength of his defence from great men in history who have achieved greatness. One of such his admirers and role model is Cesare Borgia - the illegitimate son of Pope Alenxander VI who was a ruthless tyrant.

Machiavelli lists four ways by which a person can gain political power. 1) through his abilities or qualities. 2) by inheritance. 3) by violence and crime. 4) by election. it is to be noted that all these four ways are acceptable to Machiavelli provided any of them is successful in helping one gain political power. He gives an example of Agathocles who rose to power through crimes in ancient Sicily. Agathocles killed the rich men and the senators of Syracuse and rose to political power. To the extent that he grabbed political power despite the means he used, to that extent, he was justified (Omoregbe, 1997:191). A ruler who wants to succeed must not always be mindful to keep his promises. If keeping his promises will help him achieve his goal, then its allowed but if not, he should not hesitate to break them. Deception with good result is better than

honesty without result. For Machiavelli, the ruler is at all times above the law or morality. Omoregbe quotes him in the *Discourses* thus:

> for where the very safety of the country depends upon the resolution to be taken, no considerations of justice or injustice, humanity or cruelty, nor of glory or of shame, should be allowed to prevail. but putting all other considerations aside, the question should be, what course will save the life and liberty of the country (1997:191).

As we close this unit, it is instructive to note that a careful reading of the *Discourses* which is the second book by Machiavelli, reveals that Machiavelli is a democrat. He only supports tyranny as the best system of government in a corrupt society. Democracy remains the best system of government but only in a normal society. Italy at the time of Machiavelli was a very corrupt society and so Machiavelli wrote The Prince as a recommendation or practical advice for Lorenzo de Medici on how to successfully rule Italy. However, Omoregbe is of the view that it was not just an advice alone, but also was written to win some favour from Lorenzo so as to give him political appointment. Machiavelli has been a civil servant for long in Italy but with the collapse of Democracy to Tyrannical Rule under the rulership of Lorenzo, Machiavelli lost his civil service job and therefore was looking for a political appointment from Lorenzo, thus the writing of The Prince which was a direct praise to Lorenzo the tyrant. Omoregbe writes,

> With the collapse of democracy, Machiavelli lost his civil service job and made efforts to win the favour of the Medici. Part of this effort was the writing of The Prince and addressing it to Lorenzo de Medici. The Prince can therefore be seen as a book in praise of tyranny and addressed to a tyrant with a view to winning his favour. The strategy did not work. The Medici who were enemies of democracy, had no confidence in anybody who so closely associated with the preceding democratic government as Machiavelli was. Machiavelli could not win their favour nor was he able to get any appointment from them in spite of his glorification of tyranny in The Prince (1997:192).

4.0   Conclusion

Machiavelli made the dictates of necessity the guiding principle for the actions and inactions of the ruler and not the dictates of conventional morality. Much has been said in this unit, and your understanding of them will help you to access the success or the failure of The Prince as a handbook of political engineering in our present time. Machiavelli, due to his ulterior motives, we may say, may not have envisaged the consequences of his political thoughts on our polity today.

5.0   Summary

The following are the summary of what you have learnt in this unit:

- That Machiavelli's two best known book are The Prince and the Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livius and that his political thoughts are spelt out in these books.
- That Machiavelli separated politics from morality contrary to the prevailing tradition before him which saw morality as a check to bad politics.
- That Machiavelli made the dictates of necessity the guiding principle for the actions and inactions of the ruler and not the dictates of conventional morality.

Self-assessment Exercise

Explain why Niccolo Machiavelli separated politics from morality.

6.0   References/ Further Reading

Machiavelli, N. (1999) The Prince. Trans. George Bull. England: Clays Ltd.

Omoregbe, Joseph (1997) A Simplified History of Western Philosophy. Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers Limited.

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Tutor Marked Assignment

Why did Machiavelli warn the Prince not to encourage Christian virtues among his subjects?

Answer: Machiavelli also warns the prince not to encourage such Christian virtues as patience, meekness, mercy, humility, self-denial, compassion, forgiveness. He calls them negative virtues and avers that these negative virtues will only turn his subjects into weaklings and his state into a weak state. He rather encourages the prince to possess such virtues as vitality, energy, strength of character, ambition, thirst for power, ability to achieve one's aims, desire for fame etc.