

**Paper Name : Western Political Thought**

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### **Unit 4**

#### **4.1 Fredrick Hegel**

- Hegel was a very important political thinker and philosopher
- He hailed from Germany
- He authored the book “The Phenomenology of Spirit”
- He belonged to the political school of Idealism

#### **Synthetic Logic**

- Hegel introduced a new kind of Logic in his philosophy. To arrive at the final truth debates, discussions and assimilation of positives attributes and cancellation of negative attributes are the steps of this Logic.
- Every statement or idea has an assertion which Hegel called as Thesis. It soon develops its own opposition that is called as Anti Thesis.
  - Soon Thesis and Anti Thesis contest each other and as a result Synthesis comes into being.
  - The new idea contains the best positive attributes of both thesis and anti-thesis. It is fusion of the best in Thesis and Anti Thesis.
  - It results in the cancellation and destruction of the negative
  - For example Magic is the thesis and Religion id the Anti-Thesis and Synthesis is the Science

- Philosophically Being and Non-Being react with each other to create the Becoming
- Monarchy is the Thesis, Democracy is the Anti-Thesis and the Constitutional Monarchy is the Synthesis

### Reason is the Sovereign of the World

- Hegel believed that the Spirit is the creator and master of the world
- Reason, Rationality and World Spirit are the names of this creator
- In the beginning the Spirit was the only present. It wanted to know itself. It had the objective of self-realization
- It embarked on the **journey of embodiment**. Initially it went through the process of physical embodiment. It created the inanimate object, animate beings and Man in the order to realize its physical nature.
- It passed through another process of embodiment to realize its social nature.
- Firstly it created the ancient **Greek Society**. Objective Freedom was present.
- Individuals are not important. Only the family is important. **Particular Altruism** governs human life here
- Secondly it created **Roman Society** in its onward journey of self-realization. Here parts are more important than the whole. Individuals are more important than the society. **Universal Competition** governs human life here. Subjective Freedom is available

- Thirdly and ultimately the World Spirit created the **State**. The modern society is the combination of the best aspects of the Ancient Greek Society and the Roman Society. Here both subjective and objective freedom are found
- Reason is the Sovereign of the World as everything in the world whether the inanimate objects or animate beings including Man are created by the World Spirit. Everything in the world is the embodiment and manifestation of the World Spirit.

### Real is Rational and Rational is Real

- Normally we believe that the ideal is different, better and greater than the Real.
- Real however great is always short of the standards of the Real
- But Hegel makes an opposing assertion. Real is Rational and Rational is Real. He articulates that there is no difference between the Real and the Ideal
- Everything in the world is created by the World Spirit. The real world is nothing but the manifestation of the ideal world. All inanimate things, animate beings and human beings, Family, Roman Society and State all are created by the World Spirit. Therefore no difference between the ideal and the real, between the actual and the ideal

### State is the March of God on Earth

- Hegel believes that the state is the product of the final embodiment of the World Spirit
- There will be no more evolution
- State possesses the greatest amount and proportion of the World Spirit
- No difference between the existing states and the ideal state or World Spirit as every state in the world is created by it
- War is the means through which the World Spirit reveals itself. The victors become victors as they have more of World Spirit and the defeated become the defeated as they have less of the World Spirit

- Freedom is obedience to the state and its commands as state has more of the World Spirit than any individual

### Critical Evaluation

- Hegel has been criticized heavily by many philosophers and thinkers. His thoughts promote authoritarianism and despotism. Many comment that Hegelian ideas contributed to the emergence of Nazism in Germany in the inter War period.
- Karl Marx accepted the basics of the Hegelian Dialectics. But he wanted to turn it upside down, Ideas are not the moving force of the world. Matter in motion is the primary force of the world. Nations and wars among them do not move history. Dialectics between classes move the world. Marx replaced the Hegelian Dialectics with Dialectical Materialism

## 4.2 T.H.Green

- Thomas Hill Green was an English Political thinker
- He was identified with the Metaphysical Historicism of Hegel
- He was a strong thinker of Idealism Political Obligation
- “It is intended to include the obligation of the subject towards the sovereign, the obligation of the citizen towards the state, and the obligation of the individual to each other as enforced by a political superior”.

### State Action

- “The state should foster and protect the social, political and economic environments in which individuals will have the best chance of acting according to their consciences. But the state must be careful when deciding which liberties

to curtail and in which ways to curtail them. Over-enthusiastic or clumsy state intervention could easily close down opportunities for conscientious action thereby stifling the moral development of the individual. The state should intervene only where there is a clear, proven and strong tendency of a liberty to enslave the individual. Even when such a hazard had been identified, Green tended to favour action by the affected community itself rather than national state action itself — local councils and municipal authorities tended to produce measures that were more imaginative and better suited to the daily reality of a social problem. Hence he favored the "local option" where local people decided on the issuing of liquor licenses in their area, through their town councils."

### **Positive Liberty**

-Green supported Positive Liberty

- He associated liberty with society, morality, rights and state. He famously stated that **"Human consciousness needs liberty, liberty needs rights and rights need the State.**

'Positive liberty consists in acting according to reason achieving self-realization or self-perfection. T.H Green said that the true liberty or positive freedom of man consists in the act of "Good Will", it is a positive power of doing or enjoying something worth doing or enjoying.'

### **For Further Reading**

- 1. History of Political Theory by Holland Sabine**
- 2. Western Political Thought by C.L.Wayper**
- 3. Western Political Thought by Bookhives Publications**
- 4. Western Political Thought by J.P.Sudha**