

Unit 1: Section A | A1 Sample Answers

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Q.4 Give an account of a myth that attempted to address one of the great questions of life. In doing so, identify the ancient culture from which the myth originated and the questions the myth sought to answer.

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Q1. Identify 3 key moments in the emergence of an independent secular system

Throughout the course of human history people have formulated various responses to the great questions of life that originated from their observance of the universe. Up until the emergence of the Ancient Greek philosophers in the 5th and 6th Century BCE all of these responses were mythically or religiously influenced. In the 5th Century a group of travelling teachers called the Sophists turned away from the common mythological view that was used to answer these complex questions about life and instead attempted to discover new answers that weren't influenced by myths. Following in their path Socrates, Plato and Aristotle did the same and so the basis of Western philosophy was formed. As centuries went on people moved further and further away from their ancestors understanding of the world but still asked some of the same questions such as how did the world begin? Eventually non-religious responses began to emerge such as that of secularism.

Secularism is the opposite of religious and can be defined as a belief system that rejects religion and is based solely on human faculties such as logic, reason or moral intuition. Other such non-religious world views are atheism, reductionism and humanism. Secularisation, the process by which a culture defines itself in a 'this worldly' context led to the development of the world view of secularism. This world view places the person at the centre of everything and values the human ability to reason above all else.

The Renaissance meaning 'to be reborn' refers to a cultural movement in the 15th and 16th Centuries. It began in Italy and spread throughout the rest of Europe. This period is a key moment as the origins of secularism can be traced to this time. The spirit of rebirth during the Renaissance influenced science, painting and architecture. The growth of scientific reasoning

and skills can be linked to the emergence of secular humanism in the Renaissance. Humanism is a philosophy which states there is nothing higher than or other than human existence. The fundamental position of this belief is that people are rational beings. Therefore secularism and humanism go hand in hand as there is the belief that no God exists and therefore the focus is on confidence in humanity's ability. During the 'rebirth' there was a renewed confidence in the intellectual abilities of a person and their capacity to decide on what's right or wrong. Today we can see this emphasis on the individual throughout our society for example the world's largest cosmetic company L'Oréal's advertising slogan is "Because you're worth it". This slogan emphasises that you deserve what you wish because you are human and deserve it.

Another key moment in the development of an independent secular system is the Enlightenment. This was a cultural movement of intellectuals beginning in late 17th Century Europe. Like the Renaissance it was a time when more philosophers began to adopt a nonreligious world view. The motto of this period could be summed up as "have the courage to know". Philosophers throughout England, Ireland, France and Germany responded to the social and political situation, i.e. widespread revolutions, in Europe at the time by breaking free from the typical blind faith people had in the Church and other authorities. This post-reformation era was aware of the Church's abuse of power such as nepotism and rejected to follow the corrupted authorities. This era saw the founding of the 'coffee-house' as a place where people could meet and discuss their various opinions on different subjects. A vital aspect of this period was the breaking down of class barriers which contributed to the emergence of secularism as equality amongst people is an important secularist value. Also from this period the infamous motto of the French Revolution was coined "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity". The idea of Human Rights also emerged during this period. Thomas Paine wrote a document during this era called The Rights of Man which influenced the US Constitution and much of Europe. The first right of a total of 17 is that 'men are born and remain free and remain free and equal in rights'. This is also very similar to the first article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states 'all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights'. We see the continuation of humanist values during the

Enlightenment into the modern world through this emphasis of human life seen in the UN's declaration that reflects Thomas Paine's document. This era combined the idea of 'reason' and 'liberty' and further encouraged people to adopt a non-religious world view by eliminating the fear of questioning God that had previously existed.

Another key moment in the emergence of secularism and its value system happened in the 20th Century when the philosophy of Existentialism emerged. The beginning of the century saw the most catastrophic war in history take place, World War One. Millions died and many were severely injured. One impact of this event was that it disillusioned many people. Instead of looking to the church for meaning, people instead embarked on the journey to discover meaning alone as they believed the formation of the human identity was of the utmost importance. Previously society and the Church heavily influenced an individual's sense of identity, Existentialists strongly emphasised human autonomy and free will thus affecting the people's values as they moved away from religious based values to self-made ones based upon instinct. Jean Paul Sartre was a prominent figure in existentialism who claimed 'man is condemned to be free'. He believed that human life cannot be given any meaning from the 'outside'. He stated that all anyone had was the fact of their existence. This world view is characterised by the complete rejection of all other possible meanings that have been suggested. By emphasising the individual and distrusting any meaning offered by alternate or divine sources it has contributed to modern secular humanism. This impact can be noticed by observing the values of contemporary Western societies as the belief in God or Gods has declined.

The Renaissance, The Enlightenment and Existentialism saw the emergence of a non-religious world view that still has an impact on the modern world. One of the world's superpowers The USA has a secular constitution and France is also recognised as a secularist state. Each era shares the idea that there is nothing higher than human existence. Century after century this belief evolved and still has its place in the world today. Secularism has made such a strong impact that countries such as France where the governance of the country is strictly secular.

The USA is also considered secular and this is reflected in its education system as the theory of evolution is strictly banned from being taught in public schools. Secularist thought also impacted the Feminist movement of the 20th Century.

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Q.2 Factors which block the search for meaning

The human search for meaning can often be hindered by certain influencing factors. Abraham Maslow was an American psychologist born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. He coined the term 'Hierarchy of Needs' in relation to human behaviour. Maslow proposed the idea that people are motivated to achieve certain needs and wanted to understand what motivated them. He came to the conclusion that in order to become the best you can possibly be you must fulfil certain needs. When certain need are met the person can move to the next stage.

The earliest and most common version of 'Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs' can be demonstrated with a 5-stage pyramid diagram. According to Maslow's theory each need is satisfied in order. The first needs are physical needs and include food, water, air and shelter. The next stage is safety needs and they refer to the need for security, protection, freedom, fear and anxiety. The third stage is the need for belonging to a group and the need to give and receive affection and love. The fourth stage is the need for esteem, the need to be respected by others and feeling a sense of achievement. The highest level of need is for self-actualisation. This is the need to achieve a sense of self-fulfilment to feel that we are in the process of becoming the best possible version of ourselves.

According to this theory if a certain level of need is not satisfied a person will have no motivation to satisfy a higher level of need, for example, a person who has not met their physical needs will not concern themselves with finding meaning in their life as the lowest level has yet to be accomplished. The person will have no motivation to achieve self-actualisation, the stage were you explore the meaning of life. As a result a person may never explore or discover meaning in their life. Maslow estimated one in a hundred people achieve self-actualisation.

Apathy and consumerism may also block the search for meaning in a person's life. People who are apathetic tend to have a pessimistic outlook on life. It is common that they have witnessed inhumane acts which could have caused them to lose faith and lack concern or motivation. This is often the case with many soldiers who become indifferent and apathetic after fighting in a war. They believe that there is no meaning in their life as they have seen the darkest horrors of war. This may prevent someone from exploring a religion to discover a spiritual meaning in their life as they do not possess the motivation to do so.

Consumerism may also block a person searching for meaning in their life. Our modern culture is infatuated with shopping and owning the latest goods. Although everyone is a consumer on way or another, it is when people begin buying goods in extreme excess of their basic needs that it may lead to the search for meaning being blocked. Some people begin to believe they must have a good or service in order for their life to have meaning, once they have the next item they will be happy. But the cycle repeats itself again and again. This distracts some people from things life family and friends and gives a greater importance to owning material objects. The search for meaning may be blocked by this obsession and may cause people to isolate things that will truly provide them with long term meaning.

There are many factors which may block a person searching for meaning. According to Maslow certain needs must be met in order to find meaning. Apathy and consumerism may also block one's search for meaning.

Q.3 Outline your understanding of the humanist tradition and the contribution of 3 philosophers to the development of society's understanding of humanism

Humanism is a non-religious response to the complex questions of life that explores the human search for meaning and values using rationalism, reason and empiricism. This view of life emphasises human importance and the idea that there is nothing higher than or other than human existence, therefore opposing the belief that there is a 'sacred' or 'other' dimension to human existence. As humanism is the combined use of reason and science it does not deal with life after death or speculate on the existence of a creator or divine being. Instead it focuses on human needs such as love and human problems such as why bad things happen to good people. Humanism emerged in between the 14th and 16th Centuries during the Renaissance period. This was a time when the traditional ways of learning and thinking were challenged and confidence in the intellectual abilities of the person and their capacity to make moral decisions was renewed. Even though humanism flourished during this period, it is generally accepted that the concept predates this era as far back as Ancient Greece. Initially humanist ideas did not conflict with a belief in the divine, however as it developed the belief in a higher power faded away. The phrase 'Free Thinking' is commonly associated with humanists. Ultimately a humanist hold the belief that it's important to work at being happy and fulfilled and human person possesses everything needed for a good and dignified life.

Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536) was a devout Christian cleric born in Rotterdam during the Renaissance. This was a chaotic period, not only for the Church but for society as a whole. Even

though he was an Augustine priest he was nevertheless a critic of the Church, which had become seriously corrupt at the time due to factors such as nepotism. Erasmus emphasised the importance of education and claimed that it was through education people would improve and excel. He supported scepticism when questioning the issues of his day, however he himself did not question the position of scripture thus contradicting the sceptic view that it is impossible to know the 'truth'. By emphasising the importance of education Erasmus encouraged others to be more open minded about exploring new ideas such as humanism. He contributed to the development of society's understanding of humanism by showing people that you can have both Christian and humanist beliefs. This reassured people who did not want to let go of their traditional beliefs as they could explore and support humanist views without losing their Christian values and morals. It is important to note that at this time humanist thought focused on human potential and dignity.

Karl Marx (1818-1883) was a political theorist born in Traves, Germany. Some of his writings highlight his philosophical views in relation to human nature and the meaning of life. While living in London he learned about the poor working conditions of the labourers. Here he wrote the infamous book 'Das Kapital'. Marx focused on the relationship between the person and the world. He claimed that human labour creates history and that this world or environment is created by the work of humanity, individually and in social groups. Marx claimed that people's desire to work and produce was the only unchanging element of human nature. Through this belief the theory of 'historical materialism' was born. This theory states that the position a person hold in relation to work and production determines their quality of life. This theory also explains that the value placed on human labour and the product that results shows how humanity can be understood solely through economics. Marx claimed that work was the main area in which humans feel they have no sense of ownership or equal participation. He claims that this alienation leads to feelings of powerlessness and not belonging. Marx stated that inequality and suffering exists because only a handful of people control the means of production, these people possess most of the profits while the majority earn little or no wages. Marx's vision that it was possible people would share responsibility and collective ownership could come into existence demonstrates his humanist views as it reveals his respect for a person's dignity and the belief in an egalitarian, peaceful society. Marx again reveals his humanist beliefs by emphasising the importance of human reasoning and consciousness by claiming each person has a need to reach their full potential and a desire to not be a slave to any system. He believed that our struggle for freedom is what makes us human. He

opposed religion as according to him 'religion is the opium of the people'. Marx contributed to the development of society's understanding of humanism by rejecting religion. This rejection contributed to the fading away in the belief of a higher power within humanist thought. Like Erasmus he highlighted the role scepticism plays and the 'Free Thinking' aspect of humanism as he did not hold the traditional beliefs or beliefs which involved faith in a higher power but instead used reason and rationalism to answer questions about the world. This is shown in his 'historical materialism' theory. He contributed to society's understanding by expressing his belief in the possibility of what he saw as a Utopian society.

Another prominent humanist philosopher was the French Algerian Albert Camus (1913-1960). Unlike Erasmus and Marx whose philosophy grew out of travelling, Camus' grew out of his experience of being on the edge and separate due to being from a poor working-class family. Due to his upbringing Camus was quite sensitive to discrimination based on class and religion. Like Erasmus he lived during a turbulent time as he experienced the both of the World Wars in his lifetime. Camus believed the decline of traditional religion which Erasmus and Marx contributed to as the cause of 'despair' in the world. He stated that there was an innate desire to fight against this despair and bring about a transformation. He also developed the philosophy that once the dignity of each individual was recognised and there was a respect for human intelligence then a meaningful society could be achieved. Camus contributed to the development of society's understanding of humanism by expressing his belief that humans have the potential to bring about a transformation in society. By stating that the human desire for dignity is seen in rebellion against oppression, Camus reflects the humanist belief that everything needed for a good and dignified life exists with the person.

Overall Erasmus, Marx and Camus lived in three completely separate generations yet all worked together to contribute to humanism as we know it today. Early humanism during the time of Erasmus maintained that the belief in a higher power was possible, however as time went on Marx and Camus rejected this belief due to their belief of human self-sufficiency. During the time of Erasmus humanist thought focused on human potential and dignity. Marx shifted this focus and instead emphasised the importance of working towards a person being fulfilled and happy and the importance of the happiness of others as his proposed Utopia depicts an equal and fair society. Camus further contributed to the humanist thought by claiming that humans alone

possess the ability to transform society. As I have shown, it is undoubtable that these three men greatly contributed to the development of society's understanding of humanism.

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Q.4 Give an account of a myth that attempted to address one of the great questions of life. In doing so, identify the ancient culture from which the myth originated and the questions the myth sought to answer. (20m)

The myth of Prometheus attempts to address the mystery of the origin of man. This ancient Greek myth told the story of Prometheus and the journey in which he travelled to bring fire to Man. The Goddess Athena crossed her father by telling Prometheus about an unguarded back door to Mount Olympus. Zeus, Athena's father, did not want man kind to have fire because of the success and benefits it would bring. Prometheus covertly entered Mount Olympus and lit a torch from the sun. He took a piece of lighting charcoal then extinguished the fire and carried the coal in a fennel stalk so that they would remain hidden. He journeyed back to earth and gave fire to humanity.

When Zeus discovered what had happened, he sought vengeance. He combined the power of gods and goddesses to create Pandora and her box, which contained all of mankind's horrors. Zeus attempted to disguise this as a gift to Prometheus, however he had the gift of foresight and was able to reject the box as he saw its curse. After some time, Pandora opens the opens the box because she is overcome with curiosity. In doing so she unleashes all of the horrors on mankind such as vice, passion, insanity and labour. However the box also releases hope.

This myth could have been used to answer many mysteries in ancient times, such as the origin of fire. It may also have been used to explain how mankind began as Prometheus crafted clay figures that Athena later breathe life into, thus explaining humanity's origins. The myth also explains that the reason evil exists in the world is because of Pandora and her box.

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Q.5 Outline your understanding of polytheism and explain in relation to 2 examples.

Polytheism is the beliefs that more than one transcendent being exists. The belief thus contradicts the monotheistic recognition of, one 'true' God only. In monotheism this one Divine being is worshipped, unlike polytheism in which there are multiple deities all worthy or worship, but not always worshipped equally. Today the three major world religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam are all monotheistic and account for over 55% of the world's population. However, polytheism remains dominant in the majority of today's world religions. One similarity between monotheism and polytheism is that they both refer to the transcendent within a religion. To transcend is to go beyond or extend the normal boundaries of existence. The transcendent refers to the existence of a divine being outside of the material world, usually referred to as God.

Polytheism emerged long before monotheism and dates as far back as the Ancient Greeks in the 8th Century BCE whom believed that their Gods resembled humans in their physical form but that they were separated by their supernatural powers and immortality.

Hinduism is an example of a polytheistic religion. Hinduism originated in India around 2500 BCE, making it one of the oldest living religions. The religion started out as a collection of different religious beliefs and gradually developed over 4,500 years to become the religion as we know it today. However a huge diversity of cultural groups within the Hindu faith that still exist today. The religion is unique in that its origins cannot be traced back to a particular historical figure. This is unlike Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Buddhism. It has no set structure or creeds either and focuses on an individual's way of living rather than way of thinking. Although there is no sacred text, there are multiple Holy Books written in the ancient language **Sanskrit**. **The Vedas** is one example of a Hindu sacred text. It is a collection of hymns and poems used in special ceremonies today. **The Puranas** and **The Bhagavad Gita** are two other sacred Hindu texts. The former president of India reflected this in saying 'Hinduism is more a culture than a creed'. Emphasis on

way of living is called **Dharma**. Hindus believe that each individual is born millions of times until they become perfect. Our soul known as **atman** takes a different form or incarnation each time a person is born. The process of rebirth is known as **reincarnation** and the continuous cycle of rebirth is called **samsara**. In order to achieve liberation from samsara, Hindus try to live good lives. By doing this they will become closer to **Moksha**. Moksha is freedom from the cycle of birth and rebirth. By achieving Moksha the soul will become peaceful and unified with God.

Brahman is the God-head, the origin of all creation in Hinduism. He is the ultimate source of human existence and he can never be fully understood or known. There are four stages in achieving Moksha called **ashramas**. It begins with the student, who leads a disciplined life. Then the householder who follows a career and takes responsibility for home and family. The third is the retired man who detaches from family concerns, during which one can devote oneself to studying the sacred texts. There is a final optional stage where the man is ascetic, he renounces the pleasures of the world and becomes totally devoted to his religion. These 4 ashramas do not apply to women. In following their Dharma (way of living), Hindus hope to achieve good **Karma**. Each good action takes an individual a step closer to a good rebirth. Ultimately Hindus wish to achieve unity with the Brahman.

Shinto is another example of a polytheistic religion and like Hinduism, has no known founder. It emerged from the life and culture of the ancient Japanese in pre-historic Japan in the 6th Century. Shinto also does not have sacred scriptures or a particular doctrine. It is practiced by many Japanese as a folk religion, often alongside another religion such as Buddhism. **State Shinto** emerged in the 19th and 20th Century in an attempt to rid the religion of its Buddhist influences. In 1945 Shinto lost its status as the religion of the Japanese state. The word Shinto comes from the Chinese words **shen** meaning divine being and **tao** meaning way. There Shinto means the way of the Gods. The Gods or the spirit of Shinto are referred to as **Kami**. Kami are myriad and can be found throughout all of Japan, especially in natural forms like mountains, waterfalls and rocks where they may reside as an invisible force. Some particularly powerful humans can become kami when they die. One Shinto legend claims that the gods that controlled the cosmos came to earth and inhabited any special elements of landscape. **Amaterasu** is the sun goddess and supreme deity of Shinto who has the potential to manifest in a human-like form. Every Japanese person lives within walking distance of a Shinto shrine. Amaterasu is worshipped at **Ise**, one of Japan's major shrines. She is the daughter of the two creator gods **Izanagi** and **Izanami**, who were lovers

as well as siblings. Ritual rather than belief is at the heart of Shinto, members worship their gods at shrines known as **jinja** by using very precise rituals. It is vital that the rituals follow strict conventions of protocol, order and control and should be carried out in a spirit of sincerity, cheerfulness and purity. Religious experts known as shamans ensure that the rituals are being carried out correctly. There are number of distinguishing features of a Shinto shrine.

There is a sacred archway or gate that marks the passage into the holy grounds which are protected from evil influence. Followers of Shinto may request kami for favours during worship or give their blessing. The purpose of Shinto is to discover the wishes of the kami and to carry out these wishes. Everything, including the spiritual is experienced as part of this world, no transcendent world exists in Shinto. Shinto is not a way of exploring the world but rather focuses on rituals that allow humans to communicate with the kami. As an appreciation of being treated properly kami will intervene in our lives to bring benefits such as health. A devout follower of Shinto sees everyday as an opportunity to be of service (**matsumi**) to the kami. Shinto sees human beings as being fundamentally good and has no concept of original sin. This positive view of the human person arises from the Shinto belief that humans and all of nature are children of the kami and as a result must be fundamentally good. Bad spirits cause the earths evils and therefore many Shinto rituals are intended to cleanse the person so that their innate 'goodness' comes through.

Polytheistic religions tend to be more diverse and accepting of other world religions. Perhaps religions such as Hinduism and Shinto have survived through the centuries due to the follower's refusal to accept the restricted way of life offered by monotheism. Polytheistic religions usually don't have a sole founder or a divine text, this is reflected in the Hindu and Shinto faith which both have no known founder or set creed. Hinduism believes that their Gods are transcendent however In Shinto there is the belief that kami are present in the material world and doesn't acknowledge the existence of another world that is divine. However both religions express the belief in one supreme deity i.e. Brahman in Hinduism and Amaterasu in Shinto.

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Q.6 In the case of Socrates present a profile of the man and his main ideas. Why do you think his ideas were important in the development of philosophy?

Socrates was estimated to be born in 470 BCE and was executed in around 399 BCE. At this time Athens was at the height of its civilisation, enjoying great financial wealth, political influence and artistic culture. Socrates was critical of the government as he feared they would become morally corrupt which would then lead to the destruction of Athens and with it democracy. Socrates formed theories by careful reasoning and primarily focused on understanding a person's moral character (ethics). As a young man –he was a distinguished soldier who had immense physical power. He was extremely disciplined and led a highly virtuous life. In his later years he was often described as an unattractive man who had little regard for his appearance. Socrates was married and had a total of three children. It is important to note that everything we know about Socrates comes from Plato's book 'The Republic'.

Socrates hoped to establish a universal definition of justice that would apply to everyone, everywhere at any time and any place. This was deemed impossible by the Sophists as it contradicted their Theory of Relativity which stated that nothing can be claimed as right or wrong, these beliefs come about as a result of habit and circumstance. Socrates felt that this concept would lead to the destruction of the people of Athens. He argued that it was up to society as a whole to establish things which are right and wrong. Once this was accomplished it could be incorporated into people's lives. Even though Socrates spent his whole life trying to establish a universal definition of justice, he never did.

This was not the only issue he had with the Sophists. Their beliefs clashed again when Socrates claimed that they were not true philosophers as they charged money for their work.

Socrates would often debate key ideas in the crowded marketplaces in Athens. He engaged in a series of dialogues with people who were 'experts' on the topic being discussed. He would

humiliate these experts using a technique now referred to as “Socratic Irony”. By adopting the role of an ignorant questioner he was able to expose the weaknesses in other’s arguments.

By asking tactful questions the person would eventually come to a dead end and run out of logical responses. Socrates himself did not answer the questions he posed on others. He claimed he was in fact the wiser individual as he was aware of his own ignorance on these issues.

Socrates claimed that virtue i.e. showing high moral standards, was the most valuable of all possessions as it was the only means of being truly happy and is key to saving the soul. He claimed that “knowing what is good is the same as doing what is good.” He believed that people who do wrong, do not do so willingly and identified ignorance as being the cause of wrongful behaviour. He believed it was the job of the philosopher “to deliver” insight so that ignorant people can reach a place of true understanding which can only come from within.

This role was similar to that of the midwife as the midwife does not give birth to the child but instead helps the mother deliver the baby.

Socrates claimed that is the only means of being truly happy and is key to saving the soul

Socrates also claimed that pleasure and happiness can be achieved by living a moral life. An action can be considered right when it promotes humanity’s true happiness. He argued that alcohol is against humanity’s highest ability, which is reason. He stated that being drunk provided short term pleasure and whatever you are trying to escape will return. He questioned why an individual would willingly harm their body by consuming alcohol as it did not produce long term pleasure and the negative effects such as addiction far outweigh the temporary happiness that it provides.

Socrates preached his belief without accepting any payment. He wanted to save Athens from becoming morally corrupt but his outspoken views on the government landed him into trouble. He was put on trial and was accused of introducing new gods and corrupting the minds of the youth. He was found guilty by a jury of 500. He was then given the choice to go into exile or accept the death penalty, he chose the latter as he valued his clear conscience and truth far too much. He assured the jury that he only acted in the best interests of Athens. Socrates drank hemlock in the company of his friends.

I believe that Socrates ideas were important in the development of philosophy as they forced people to question themselves and second guess what they believed. By engaging in dialogue with ‘experts’ he showed everyone how little knowledge they truly possessed. In return he hoped

people would aim to become more knowledgeable. As a result society would be less morally corrupt as they wouldn't be ignorant and therefore wouldn't act wrongly. Socrates was unique as instead of trying to appear like he accepted that he did not have the answers to all of life's questions. I think that by criticising the government he influenced other people to question traditional beliefs held by a society and to question the legitimacy of authorities. Socrates also taught other great minds like Plato and Aristotle and affected their philosophical teachings.

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Q.7 Outline how the Sophists in Ancient Greece contributed to the development of philosophy.

Philosophy comes from the 2 Greek words Philo meaning love Sophia meaning knowledge/wisdom. To wonder is to philosophise. Everyone philosophises whether consciously or not. Human beings have always wondered about the nature of the universe. Before 5th/6th Century people had a mythical understanding of the reality. The universe, destiny, the physical world and natural disasters made people wonder. Wonder in ancient times led to creation of myths. They answered the mysterious and complex questions of life using myths. During the 5th/6th Century people began to develop a rational understanding of reality. Human beings gradually became aware of the big questions in life and they began to reflect on this awareness instead of accepting the status quo. A number of people began to form rational theories to answer the complex questions of reality. They would ask: Why does the world exist? Why do people behave the way they do? How should we behave? Each philosopher used rationalism to develop their own responses to each question. The natural philosophers: concerned themselves with natural world and the source of everything. Each pre-Socratic philosopher all claimed to have discovered the truth about the origin of things, however they all differed about the nature of this truth. Thales claimed that everything originated from water. Anaximenes claimed that everything originated from air. Heraclitus claimed that everything originate from fire.

In 5th/6th Century BCE Ancient Greece was at the height of its civilisation. Athens became the cultural centre of Greece. It was politically influential, artistically creative and financially wealthy. This development in civilisation led to people looking at the world in a different way. The Sophists were a group of travelling teachers who emerged in Ancient Greece during this era. They focused on people and their place in the world. They were employed by the upper classes during a time when the concept of democracy was dawning in Greece. This emerging democracy in Greece required educated men. The Sophists' new ideas appealed to the younger generations of Greek men who were politically ambitious. People wanted new answers to complex questions about the nature of reality - answers that were not influenced by myth. People in this period were particularly ambitious and desired the skills that Sophists obtained. Law and Politics were the most respected professions during this time and skills related to these professions were highly valued. The Sophists could effectively teach these skills. Their students were taught how to be good

statesmen and generals. They were also taught grammar, rhetoric (persuasion), literature, debating, arguing, public speaking and how to apply logic.

By primarily focusing on understanding a person's place in the world rather than concerning themselves with the natural world (like the pre-Socratic philosophers) they turned away from the common mythological beliefs used to answer complex questions about life and instead attempt to discover new answers to the key questions of life. By encouraging the belief that there are no absolutes they influenced people to question their own personal opinions on what is good and evil or right and wrong. As a result people began reflecting on the traditional beliefs that they held and began philosophising. Therefore Sophists contributed to the development of philosophy by helping it emerge in Ancient Greek society.

Protagoras was a famous Sophist born in 480 BCE. He is widely considered to be one of the first philosophers. He conceptualised the Theory of Relativity. This principle teaching of the Sophists stated that truth is a matter for each individual and each person's position is valid. A vital skill Sophist's taught was being able to argue and win regardless of your personal opinion. According to relativism it is impossible to claim something is right or wrong, good or evil. Truth was a matter for each individual and every individual's position is valid; what is true for you may not be true for me but both positions are valid. The students of the Sophists were taught to win an argument on both sides of a question as a result. Some problems arose as a result of this skill. Instead of prioritising the good of society the ability to argue was emphasised. Another issue was the breakdown of moral order as a result of the Sophists teaching that there were no absolute norms such as good and evil.

By focusing on the person the Sophists concluded that a person's idea of truth and justice was a product of habit and circumstance formulated by those who hold power e.g. the government. Another Sophist, Thrasymachus expressed this belief by stating that "justice is simply the interest of the stronger". The Sophists believed that people in power sought to control others and they formed concepts on what is good and what is evil to suit their own interests. This way they could protect themselves and their power. By questioning authority the Sophists contributed to the emergence of scepticism and existentialism.

In conclusion the Sophists philosophical theories contributed to the development of philosophy by encouraging people to question their beliefs and think about what truth and justice is or if good and evil exists. Their focus on people's place in the world contributed to the improvement of skills such as the art of debating, rhetoric and persuasion. The move from myth to rationalism when answering questions also contributed to the emergence of science as both require logical thought. They also emphasised people and their place in the world contributing to ethical thought. By questioning authority they contributed to scepticism and existentialism in the later centuries. They also contributed to the development of philosophy by encouraging people to formulate their own opinions. Socrates opposition to the Sophists is how many of his great ideas came about, such as his idea that absolutes do exist.