



THE ESSENCE OF IDEAS IN PLATO'S PHILOSOPHY AND THEIR ROLE IN HUMAN KNOWLEDGE

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Abstract

The article analyzes the philosophical views of the ancient Greek philosopher Plato, in particular, the essence of ideas and their role in the process of human cognition. Plato's theory of knowledge, the idea of anamnesis (remembering), as well as the moral and social significance of ideas are scientifically examined.

Keywords: Plato, idea, knowledge, anamnesis, intuition, mind, epistemology, ontology.

Introduction

Ancient Greek philosophy is an intellectual heritage that has left a deep mark on the history of world thought. The philosophy of this period had a great influence not only on the socio-political life of Greek society, but also on the spiritual development of all mankind. The cosmological, ontological, epistemological and ethical views put forward by Greek philosophers served as an important methodological source in the development of Eastern and Western philosophy in subsequent centuries. One of the greatest representatives of this period, Plato (427–347 BC), is distinguished by his rich philosophical heritage. He was a direct student of Socrates and a teacher of Aristotle. Thus, Plato stands at the center of one of the most important intellectual schools in ancient Greek philosophy. His philosophical views were reflected not only in antiquity, but also in the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and modern philosophy.

The most central concept in Plato's philosophy is the world of ideas. In the philosopher's opinion, the material world is only a shadow or copy of the world of ideas. Real existence is pure, eternal and unchanging ideas. Since the material world is temporary and changeable, it cannot be a source of true knowledge. Therefore, the



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highest task of human knowledge is to rise above the senses and perceive ideas through pure reason.

This teaching of Plato has acquired revolutionary significance in the history of human thought. Because he created the foundation for subsequent metaphysical views by dividing existence into two parts - the material and ideal worlds. In particular, his theory of "anamnesis" (remembering) and his views on the "idea of virtue" formed a deep philosophical approach to knowledge, morality and social life. In this regard, Plato's teaching about the world of ideas remains one of the most relevant issues in philosophy not only in ancient times, but also today. Plato, Democritus, Aristotle and other ancient Greek philosophers also made philosophical observations about existence based on their time, which resulted in the expansion of the content and essence of philosophy. During this period, the Sophists (Sophistry means wisdom) also expressed their thoughts. Protagoras (490-420 BC) and George (480-380 BC) are considered to be their major representatives. The Sophists connected their teachings more with human life. They paid attention to the formation of moral, legal, and political relations. They raised the problem of knowledge. In particular, Socrates (470-399) followed in the footsteps of the Sophists, but later criticized them. He began to evaluate the human mind. In his opinion, a person should know himself, his identity. He says that this should be the object of study of philosophy. Thus, the stages of development in the formation of the science of philosophy are diverse.

The essence of ideas in Plato's teachings. One of the most important aspects of Plato's philosophy is his doctrine of ideas. According to the philosopher's theory, existence is divided into two levels:

The material world is a world of things and phenomena that are perceived through the senses, are constantly changing, and are dependent on time and space. Since this world is relative and transient, it cannot be a source of true knowledge.

The world of ideas is a world of eternal, unchanging, pure essences. This world has an existence superior to and independent of the material world. As Plato noted, the material forms of things are only a shadow or copy of ideas.

For example, we can see beautiful things of different shapes, but they are all expressions of the single and perfect idea of Beauty. Also, although concepts such



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as "Justice", "Goodness", and "Truth" appear in various forms in the material world, their perfect and unchanging essence exists only in the world of ideas.

Plato's epistemology - that is, the theory of knowledge - is also directly related to the world of ideas. The philosopher divides knowledge into two levels:

1. Knowledge through the senses - is limited to the perception of the external appearance of things. Such knowledge is relative, transient and changeable. Because intuition covers the ever-changing material world.

2. Knowledge through reason - leads to true knowledge. This knowledge is formed through the understanding of ideas. Because ideas are eternal and unchanging.

Plato's theory of anamnesis (remembering) also plays an important role in the process of knowledge. According to him, the human soul existed in the world of ideas before birth and embodied all knowledge. When a person is born, he forgets this knowledge, but through reason and thought he “remembers” it again. Therefore, knowledge is not learning, but re-understanding of previous knowledge.

The role of ideas in knowledge. In Plato's teachings, ideas are the most important support of human knowledge. Their role is manifested in the following aspects:

- As a source of truth - while the world of sensations is false and fleeting, ideas are truly true.
- As a criterion for guiding knowledge - ideas direct human thinking in the right direction, provide the logical basis of knowledge.
- As a criterion for striving for perfection - the essence of any scientific research, art or moral activity is to approach ideas.

In Plato's philosophy, ideas are the main criterion not only of knowledge, but also of moral and social life. According to the philosopher, the highest of all ideas is the Idea of Goodness. This idea determines the main goal not only of knowledge, but also of moral activity.

The highest task of a person in life is to strive for the idea of goodness. Also, the perfection of society and the state is ensured only when they are built on the basis of the "Idea of Justice". In this sense, the views put forward in Plato's "Republic" are considered as a guide to the application of the theory of ideas in social life.

Plato's doctrine of ideas had a strong influence on subsequent philosophical schools. Although his student Aristotle criticized the theory of ideas, he was also inspired by



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Plato's views in explaining the essence of existence. Neoplatonists (Plotinus, Proclus) further developed Plato's views on ideas. In the East, great thinkers such as Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Al-Ghazali effectively used Plato's legacy, combining it with the foundations of Islamic philosophy.

Conclusion

Plato's philosophy marked a completely new stage in the history of ancient Greek thought. His doctrine of the world of ideas is of profound scientific significance not only on the ontological, but also on the epistemological and ethical levels. By distinguishing between the material world and the world of ideas, Plato divided existence into two poles, thereby creating the theoretical foundation for subsequent metaphysical thought. According to the philosopher, true knowledge is intellectual knowledge, which is achieved only through the comprehension of ideas. Knowledge obtained through the senses is transient and relative. Therefore, human thought should be directed to the perception of pure essence. The theory of anamnesis put forward by Plato also fundamentally reinterpreted the process of cognition - the idea that knowledge is inherent in the human soul from the beginning and can be recalled with the help of reason left a deep philosophical imprint on human thought. Plato also sees the theory of ideas in harmony with moral and social life. The interpretation of the "idea of goodness" as the highest of all ideas made his philosophy not only theoretically but also practically important. The issues of human striving for perfection, the construction of a just society, and the achievement of moral perfection find their philosophical basis in Plato's views. Plato's doctrine of ideas was widely developed in subsequent philosophical traditions - Aristotle, Neoplatonists, as well as Muslim Eastern thinkers and philosophers of the European Renaissance. This confirms the universality of Plato's views and their constant relevance as a philosophical heritage. In general, Plato's theory of the world of ideas is a profound philosophical concept about the essence of human knowledge, its moral and spiritual direction, and its role in the development of society, and remains an important source for philosophical research today.



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