

The Concept And Types Of Solipsism

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Introduction

Solipsism is a concept where it is believed that the mind is the only thing that exists, and anything that exists outside of the mind is baseless. This philosophical theory is in favour of the consciousness of an individual. It may seem silly, but it is true when some thought is put into it. It is not possible to verify anything except the consciousness of an individual. In this doctrine, the existence of a person means only his existence and only his mental state. It is related to the events, processes, people, and physical objects present around a person. Key arguments in favour of this concept are discussed below.

Discussion

It is the argument in which the existence of anything is questioned. For a person, the existing things are the only ones that he experiences. Therefore, having a supposition that there are emotions, thoughts, and experiences other than his own is not possible for a solipsist. It is because he can attach no meaning to the thoughts and emotions of others. Even the social class to which a person belongs is a great determinant of his behaviour because his perceptions are based on the material sources available to him (Kraus, Piff, and Mendoza-Denton). This state is mostly experienced by children because, for them, the only existing world is what is around them or what they know. It is commonly known as infant solipsism, where the child does not have an idea that an outside world exists.

Sometimes, this is also referred to as a syndrome where the person suffering from it doubts others' existence. The only thing that person is sure of is his mind. This concept is metaphysical solipsism, where the only reality is the self. Gorgias of Leontini is known as the father of Solipsism, and he describes this concept in various ways. First, nothing exists other than the mind of an individual. Second, even if other things exist, there is no fact about their existence. Third, even if there are facts about its existence, it is not possible to communicate knowledge about its existence. Fourth, even if there is a way to communicate, there is no way that it will be understood in the same manner (Waribugo and Eketu). This shows that the concept of Solipsism is just an assertion. This assertion states that reality is just the self of a person, and there can be nothing outside of the self.

The human mind is the only existing reality, and nothing can exist unless the person is aware of its reality. Three major types of solipsism include epistemological solipsism, metaphysical solipsism, and methodological solipsism. Epistemological solipsism is the concept where reality is approximated, as it is the only mental state of the viewer. Metaphysical solipsism interprets the only source of reality as

an individual, and there is no existence of the outer world. Methodological solipsism views consciousness as the only basis for a reality where mental processes and self are the focus.

The best way of explaining these concepts is through the example of hallucination. Whenever the person is hallucinating, he is convinced to the last extent that it is a reality. It happens because, in his head, he sees those things differently. However, in reality, these claims are not considered true because they are just in his head. Similarly, sensations are simulated in a person's dreams, and this is because what a person perceives are the things different parts of the brain tell him to do. So, the sense of surety can only be provided through the thoughts of a person (Bach). Also, the people who spend their extended time in isolation start doubting the existence of the real world, and they suffer from solipsism syndrome. It shows that the picture of the world is nothing but a mere creation of their mind.

A philosopher, Berkeley has uniquely presented the idea of solipsism. For him, an object exists only if it is observed; otherwise, it is non-existent and meaningless. However, he does not believe in pure solipsism because, for him, there is the mind of God that is all-encompassing (Grey). In a context, solipsism is also categorized as something related to "private." Now, private has two further senses. One is privacy related to knowledge, while another sense of privacy is related to possession. Solipsism is private in the sense that the person is the only individual who can know it. The experiences of a person can only be known to him, and only he can have possession of it. If the pain is taken as an example, other people can know about the feeling of pain, but they cannot have it.

Conclusion

Solipsism is a concept that faces criticism from many disciplines of study. However, it is true that the contents of the mind are the only things that exist for an individual, and they are shaped by the person's own experiences and thoughts. However, there is no logical and conceptual link between the physical and mental states because the mind only perceives what it knows. The privacy of a person is restricted to his experiences and thoughts only. All the arguments discussed above give clear proof that a person can never be sure about anything except the ones that exist in his intelligence.

Works Cited

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