

Chapter 1 : The First Philosophers of Ancient Greece

Philosophy has shaped the world. From science to politics, the great philosophers challenged the ways that we see things. And while you probably know many famous Greek philosophers, the list of philosophers is much longer than that.

Renowned philosophers like Aristotle used rationality to come to scientific knowledge of the world around us. Throughout centuries the world has witnessed several renowned and significant philosophers who continue to influence and appeal to the intellectuality of thinkers. Today we check out some of such greatest philosophers that the world has witnessed so far: Swami Vivekananda Man-making is my mission A true gentleman, brimming with youthful vibes, deep and true understanding of Hindu philosophy – all these aspects aptly describe Narendranath Dutta, who went on to become one of the most famous and significant philosophers of India, Swami Vivekananda. Vivekananda was born and raised into an elite Bengali family in Kolkata, amidst a sound cultural and educational environment. He went on to become one of the chief disciples of Sri Ramkrishna Paramhansa, the 19th century mystic from Bengal, marking his journey on the path of philosophy. He remains a key figure of the growing nationalism of 19th and 20th century. He is credited for being a youth leader bringing forth a new wave of teachings and philosophy which revolves around religion yet remains rational. In his views, religion is more of a realization of the best and strongest powers within oneself than mere doctrine or a theory. A firm believer in individual development Vivekananda heavily stressed on the significance of will power. He gave the example of Britishers in this context that it is the will power only of the 40 million British people that have enabled them to rule over 3, million Indians. Rejecting all the norms that discriminate human from his fellow human being, such as caste system, or gender difference, Swami Vivekananda conducted hundreds of public and private lectures disseminating the essence of Hindu philosophy in its true self in England, United States and Europe. He is also credited with raising interfaith awareness and revival of Hinduism, bringing it up as one of the major religions of the world. He never consented to the European idea of nobility enabling only a few to acquire land through lineage while the majority remained poor. He also offered the theory of mind to the world where he states that knowledge is something you are not born with, but learn and experience. In his most important work, the Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Locke offers an analysis of human mind and its acquisition of knowledge. The mind examines, compares and combines the ideas in numerous different ways that it gains through experiences. In addition to all these, he is also known for providing powerful arguments in favor of religious toleration. He is known for the development in the system of Christian theology which was later called as Calvinism, that include the doctrine of predestination and absolute sovereignty of God in salvation of the human soul from eternal damnation. Calvin was tremendously popular in the Protestant world. He is also credited with being the spiritual father of Presbyterianism and Reformed churches. In his views, the thoughts of philosophers act as aids in the training of the mind, and therefore, pastors or doctors of church should not be ignorant of philosophy. Thomas Hobbes Best known for his work Leviathan , Thomas Hobbes was an English philosopher of 17th century. He is also known for his strong political views on society and on how humans could thrive in harmony despite being living amidst the perils and fear of societal conflicts. In most of his writings he never definitively points out what exact form of government he prefers, yet he makes it quite clear in Leviathan that monarchy is the only right form of government. In his views governments were created to protect people from their own selfish reasons and evils. Therefore, the best government was the one with great deal of power in its hand, like a king. Hobbes believed in the authority and rule of a king as he felt a country needs an authoritative figure, a leader to provide and guide the direction of its people. Jean-Jacques Rousseau The world of reality has its limits; the world of imagination is boundless. Rousseau remains an important and significant figure not only because of his contributions in the field of philosophy but because he influenced a lot of thinkers in the later period. He is known for his contributions to moral and political philosophy. To find a way of preserving human freedom in a world where humans are increasingly dependent on one another for satisfaction of their needs, is what dominates as an idea in his philosophical theory. His belief of achieving the co-existence of human beings in relations of equality and freedom is what gets majorly reflected in all of his

works. In addition to his contributions to philosophy Rousseau was also known to be an active composer, and a music theorist, a novelist and a botanist. Further, his stress on the importance of emotion and feeling was greatly reflected on the works of Romantics, especially the first generation of them like William Wordsworth. The Social Contract, his most important political treatise was a political matrix and a symbol of wider shift in ideas about the nature of reality, the self and the politics in Western society. There is also unanimous agreement to the fact that Nagarjuna is the most original and influential thinkers in the history of Indian philosophy. The great Prajnparamita sutras are also being credited to Nagarjuna having them recovered from the Nagas or the snake-people. He is also believed to have written several treatises on rasayana as he served his term as Head in Nalanda, the ancient and prestigious educational seat of India. With the spread of Buddhism to China, Tibet, Japan and other Asian countries Nagarjuna became an indispensable point of reference in philosophical enquires. Further, he was also instrumental in the development of two truths doctrine that says that there are two levels of truth in Buddhist teachings: Immanuel Kant Immanuel Kant was a German philosopher and is known to be one of the most influential philosophers in the history of Western philosophy. He is also being considered as a central figure of modern philosophy. He is best known for his argument that human mind structure the human experiences, and that reason is the source of morality. Further, Kant aimed at resolving disputes between empirical and rationalist approaches. He argued that using reason without applying it to experience only leads to theoretical illusions. His theories and ideas influenced many thinkers in Germany and across the globe. He is credited for moving philosophy beyond the debate between rationalist and empiricists. One of his major works in this context is the Critique of Pure Reason through which he is considered to have synthesized the two early modern traditions in his thought. Friedrich Nietzsche A German philosopher of late 19th century, Friedrich Nietzsche remains one of the most influential philosophers of all time. Nietzsche started his career as classical philologist and went on to become the youngest occupant of the Chair of Classical Philology at the University of Basel, when he was only 24 years old. Nietzsche is being often referred to as one of the first existentialist, along with Soren Kierkegaard, and is best known for challenging the foundations of Christianity and traditional morality. He was keenly interested in the enhancement of individual and cultural health, creativity, power and the realities of life rather than what lies beyond it. A rather popular image of Nietzsche as a philosopher was being reflected greatly during 20th century, especially in Continental Europe. His thought was particularly attractive to the artists of relatively new but strongly emerging avant-garde genre. In the last years of his life he became a helpless victim of extreme physical pain as his overall health deteriorated. Yet, the fact that he continued to write and express his philosophical takes on life and society proves his spectacular mental capacities and willpower, with which he continues to influence all. A renowned philosopher influencing the present world as well, Plato was a student of Socrates. Most of the ideas and preaching of Western philosophy can be traced back to Socrates, who never penned down anything. One of the most famous quotes of Plato, he makes it clear through it that any person in charge of a state or any leader must be wise, else they are ineffectual rulers. It is only through philosophy that the world can be free of evils. One of the founders of Western philosophy Socrates has always remained THE most influential philosophers of all time. What we know about his philosophy is only through the documented versions of some of his chief students including Plato, Xenophon, Antisthenis and Aristippus. Among all of his students, it is Plato to a great extent who has successfully documented his words keeping their essence intact. Over the time Socrates has become renowned for his contribution to the field of ethics and epistemology. Platonic Socrates, as he is also known as, is widely used as a theoretical tool where conversations and discussions take place to encourage fundamental insight to any issue at hand and draw answers from such intellectually enriching discussions. A strong critique of democracy, especially the then Athenian democracy which was more of hegemony and experienced a defeat at the hands of Sparta, the trial and eventual death of Socrates is often perceived as an expression of political fighting in order to achieve perhaps a better form of democracy. His major contribution to philosophy is perhaps the dialectic method of inquiry, i. So in the end it can be surely said that philosophy is one of the oldest disciplines in history that initiated the love of wisdom in mankind. The list of greatest philosophers can surely never be restricted to the above mentioned list. The works of these great men always reminds us that humanity, equality and perpetual

peace should always stand on the forefront and are above everything else.

Chapter 2 : Top 10 Greatest Philosophers in History - Listverse

It should be noted, first and foremost, that philosophy in its traditional sense was science - philosophers (like Aristotle) used rationality to come to scientific knowledge of the world around us. It was not until relatively modern times that philosophy was considered to be separate from the physical sciences.

There are many ideas about philosophers and what they do. Some have even considered the field to be a science that deals with logic and reason. Either way, many famous philosophers have made their contributions known to the world through their writings and their students. Below is a list of the greatest thinkers of all time along with their most important theories about human nature and other ponderings of the world.

Karl Marx Famous For: In addition to espousing his own philosophies, he was also a sociologist, economist, journalist, and historian.

Voltaire Famous For: He is better known under his pseudonym, Voltaire. Voltaire was an advocate of some of the most basic freedoms, he believed in the freedom of expression, religion and voiced this through his witty writing. One of his favorite targets was the Catholic church.

The field of ethics was the specialty of Socrates and introduced a concept that has been dubbed as elenchus, or the Socratic method. He contributed much to the field of logic and epistemology. He also excelled in mathematics, logic, ethics, rhetoric, and religion. He founded the Academy in Athens.

John Locke Famous For: His part on the idea of the social contract theory was one he shared with Sir Francis Bacon. The likes of Rousseau, Voltaire, even American revolutionaries have been influenced by his writings. He also offered the theory of mind wherein he states that knowledge is something you are not born with, but learn and experience.

Simone de Beauvoir Famous For: Jean-Jacques Rousseau Famous For: General Will and the moral simplicity of humanity The political philosophy of Rousseau became the basis of the French Revolution. His ideas not only influenced nations, his work is reflected in the modern thinking in regards to education, political, and sociological matters. Two of his books, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* and *On the Social Contract* have had its effect on social and political thinking.

Adam Smith Famous For: His ideas in the areas of moral philosophy and economics have been studied throughout the years, and still is.

Aristotle BC Famous For: He was a student of Plato and teacher to Alexander the great. *Nicomachean Ethics* is one of the treatises that Aristotle wrote. He believed that ethics should be applied practically, not merely theorizing it.

Francis Bacon Famous For: In addition to being a philosopher, Bacon was likewise an author, jurist, statesman, orator, and scientist.

Gottfried Leibniz Famous For: Law of Continuity, Monads, and the Transcendental Law of Homogeneity

Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz holds a special place in the annals of philosophy and mathematics. As a mathematician, he refined the use of infinitesimal calculus. He also presented the Law of Continuity.

Confucius BC Famous For: He was a voracious writer for which includes the Five Classics in Chinese literature. He believed that proper moral behavior is best practiced, than morality being made a rule. His book *Meditations of First Philosophy* is still being used. The influence of these ideas is evident in present day thinking on the subject of ethics, epistemology, aesthetics, politics, and metaphysics.

Albert Camus Famous For: Lewis Famous For: Lewis was an academic scholar and Christian apologist. Tolkien were friends and part of the English department at Oxford.

Hannah Arendt Famous For: Thomas Hobbes Famous For: This English philosopher wrote in the mid 17th century, *Leviathan*, which laid the groundwork for the introduction of the social contract theory. One of his essays has been labeled as the ideal of philosophy, the essay is entitled *On Denoting*. The British wanted to go against idealism, Russell was their leader.

Jean-Paul Sartre Famous For: He applied his ideals on other areas of his life.

Blaise Pascal Famous For: Michel Foucault Famous For: Structuralism and Genealogy What does it take to make another man do your bidding? This was the goal of Michel Foucault. He believed that civilization had cast aside its foundation in ethics.

David Hume Famous For: He wrote several treatises that covered philosophical theology, exegesis of the bible and textual criticism. He was influenced in his thinking by both Plato and Aristotle. In his discussions and writings, he always alluded to scripture, which he believed is divinely inspired by God.

Thomas Paine Famous For: A pamphlet he wrote in , entitled *Common Sense* was instrumental in igniting the fires of freedom and a reason to revolt during the American Revolution. Years later, he wrote *Rights of Man* that justified the French Revolution.

Henry David Thoreau Famous For: Because of another book he wrote, Civil Disobedience, he had been viewed as an anarchist. John Dewey Famous For: John Stuart Mill Famous For: Mainly, he was a defender of political philosophy and he comes from the school of utilitarianism. More importantly was his application of that school of thought on the philosophy of religion. He also attempted to explain why, if we see a snake, we fear the snake and run. In his theory of emotion, James contends that we see a snake, we run; therefore, we fear the snake. Erich Fromm Famous For: His main contributions include political philosophy and realism. His book, The Prince has been viewed as a masterpiece that deals with political philosophy. John Calvin Famous For: The Congregational, Presbyterian, and Reformed church base their tenets on the teaching of John Calvin. Soren Kierkegaard Famous For: Most of his ideas revolve on the issue on how a person lives as an individual. Leo Tolstoy Famous For: He helped shape the idea of Christian anarchist thinking and even pushed the idea of anarcho pacifism. Eleatic school of philosophy Parmenides founded the Eleatic school of philosophy sometime in the 5th century BC. Mohism Chinese philosopher Mozi was the moving force in the establishment of the school of Mohism. Mozi was a proponent of moral philosophy and ethics. His teaching encouraged self-reflection and being real, not just obedience and ceremony. Thomas Aquinas Famous For: Thomism and Summa Theologica Even though he was a priest, Thomas Aquinas and his philosophy have influenced modern philosophy. He was the father of Thomism, he believed that the truth is true regardless of the source. His work in Summa Theologica and Summa con Gentiles are important sources of discourse that continue to be used today. Mary Wollstonecraft Famous For: She is considered as the earliest of feminist philosophers. Her book A Vinidication of the Rights of Woman speaks of women not being inferior to men. Auguste Comte Famous For: Historians view him as the first of the scientific philosophers. He also conceived the word altruism, a doctrine that says people have an obligation to help or serve others. The Book of Healing Persian philosopher Avicenna was a proponent of Islamic philosophy on which the Avicennian philosophy is based. The Book of Healing is his most famous work that has become an encyclopedia on philosophy and science. In that book he discusses the philosophy of science. Emma Goldman Famous For: She was a vocal supporter of womens rights and other social issues.

Chapter 3 : Top 10 Greatest Philosophers in History | Amazing Beautiful World

One of the first Greek thinkers and Greek philosophers, Socrates was known for being one of the first philosophers of the Western world. He is best known for the Socratic Method. He is best known for the Socratic Method.

Aside from all these changes, one thing that remains constant would be the ancient beliefs that we hold on to. All the ideals we have stem from ancient philosophical practices. From the way our countries are governed to how the law is implemented in each country all have its foundation in philosophy. Many just think that philosophy is an outdated branch of the academic world. But if one would really get down to the core of philosophy, one would see how our current lives are closely intertwined with philosophical principles and how we have imbibed these standards and made it part of our daily lives. With this, here is a list of the top 10 greatest philosophers in the world: John Locke Photo Source: His ideas were focused on principles that dealt with humanism and individual freedom. He was the proponent behind equal rights. Part of his theory was that there are three rights which are natural and innate to all human beings. These would be the right to life, right to liberty and right to estate. He was not in agreement to the ways of the European nobility as he felt that the poor people were not given equal rights as compared to those who were of noble descent. Niccolo Machiavelli Photo Source: Being a statesman and a political theorist in Italy, he constantly looked at the realistic side of things. He wrote the Prince in which contained his hypothesis on how one can use absolute power in order to be able to achieve political strength. One of the more salient assumptions that made Machiavelli very popular would be his belief that the end justifies the means. He believed that the ways one would choose to go about to attain a certain goal is not important. What matters would be the actualization of the goal in mind. Jean-Paul Sartre Photo Source: The plays he wrote were targeted to the general public and not to the elite, like his other contemporaries. Having a choice or making choices are not a privilege but rather a responsibility. Michel Foucault Photo Source: He would constantly have questions about the nature of things and why things turn out the way they do. He was deeply interested in the nature of human beings and refused to accept the common beliefs as to why human beings will choose to behave in certain ways. He focused his study on the interaction between humans and science as seen in society. In order to formulate theories, he used ideas seen in sociology and history to understand the interaction of humans in ancient philosophy. He believed that there is not just one clear cut reason as to why something would happen. As he worked closely with the government, he had a lot of assumptions on politics and even ethics. Many would say that the idea behind democracy was a product of the Western world. He is best known for the Socratic Method. The Socratic Method teaches one to ask for the definitions of concepts that are abstract in nature. Once one would get the answer, one needs to look for any contradictions to these answers. Jean-Jacques Rousseau Photo Source: He believed that men are inherently good when they are born. However due to the society they live in, they tend to eventually become corrupted. This became an integral part in Philosophy of Education because of the contribution that he had shared in the history. Friedrich Nietzsche Photo Source: His works were used widely by the Nazis when they created their own doctrines that also changed the history of philosophy. According to him, abstractions which are immaterial are the highest form of reality in this world. As things in our material world changes, so does the human perception of these material things. Because of that, we are lesser beings as compared to a greater being who created the Universe. He was also the first person who started arguing that the Universe follows a hierarchy. He believed that there are purposes for every being in this Universe as seen in the Animal Kingdom, Plant Kingdom and as seen among humans. His way of thinking is really amazing that will drive men to ponder deeply his thoughts.

Chapter 4 : Top 10 Greatest and Famous Philosophers of History - Listovative

The World's Great Philosophers provides an introduction to and overview of some of the most profound and influential thinkers in the history of philosophy. Presents an introduction to and overview of some of the most profound and influential thinkers in the history of philosophy.

In this system, heavy bodies in steady fall indeed travel faster than light ones whether friction is ignored, or not [48] , and they do fall more slowly in a denser medium. Four causes Aristotle argued by analogy with woodwork that a thing takes its form from four causes: His term *aitia* is traditionally translated as "cause", but it does not always refer to temporal sequence; it might be better translated as "explanation", but the traditional rendering will be employed here. Thus the material cause of a table is wood. It is not about action. It does not mean that one domino knocks over another domino. It tells us what a thing is, that a thing is determined by the definition, form, pattern, essence, whole, synthesis or archetype. It embraces the account of causes in terms of fundamental principles or general laws, as the whole *i*. Plainly put, the formal cause is the idea in the mind of the sculptor that brings the sculpture into being. A simple example of the formal cause is the mental image or idea that allows an artist, architect, or engineer to create a drawing. Representing the current understanding of causality as the relation of cause and effect, this covers the modern definitions of "cause" as either the agent or agency or particular events or states of affairs. In the case of two dominoes, when the first is knocked over it causes the second also to fall over. The final cause is the purpose or function that something is supposed to serve. This covers modern ideas of motivating causes, such as volition. History of optics Aristotle describes experiments in optics using a camera obscura in *Problems* , book The apparatus consisted of a dark chamber with a small aperture that let light in. He also noted that increasing the distance between the aperture and the image surface magnified the image. Accident philosophy According to Aristotle, spontaneity and chance are causes of some things, distinguishable from other types of cause such as simple necessity. Chance as an incidental cause lies in the realm of accidental things , "from what is spontaneous". History of geology Aristotle was one of the first people to record any geological observations. Empirical research Aristotle was the first person to study biology systematically, [61] and biology forms a large part of his writings. He spent two years observing and describing the zoology of Lesbos and the surrounding seas, including in particular the Pyrrha lagoon in the centre of Lesbos. He describes the catfish , electric ray , and frogfish in detail, as well as cephalopods such as the octopus and paper nautilus. His description of the hectocotyl arm of cephalopods, used in sexual reproduction, was widely disbelieved until the 19th century. For Aristotle, accidents, like heat waves in winter, must be considered distinct from natural causes. He was correct in these predictions, at least for mammals: Aristotle did not do experiments in the modern sense. It does not result in the same certainty as experimental science, but it sets out testable hypotheses and constructs a narrative explanation of what is observed. Among these correct predictions are the following. Brood size decreases with adult body mass, so that an elephant has fewer young usually just one per brood than a mouse. Lifespan increases with gestation period , and also with body mass, so that elephants live longer than mice, have a longer period of gestation, and are heavier. As a final example, fecundity decreases with lifespan, so long-lived kinds like elephants have fewer young in total than short-lived kinds like mice. Scala naturae Aristotle recorded that the embryo of a dogfish was attached by a cord to a kind of placenta the yolk sac , like a higher animal; this formed an exception to the linear scale from highest to lowest. His system had eleven grades of animal, from highest potential to lowest, expressed in their form at birth: Animals came above plants , and these in turn were above minerals. Those with blood were divided into the live-bearing mammals , and the egg-laying birds , reptiles , fish. Those without blood were insects, crustacea non-shelled " cephalopods, and shelled and the hard-shelled molluscs bivalves and gastropods. He recognised that animals did not exactly fit into a linear scale, and noted various exceptions, such as that sharks had a placenta like the tetrapods. To a modern biologist, the explanation, not available to Aristotle, is convergent evolution.

Chapter 5 : Famous Philosophers - List of World Famous Philosophers & Their Biographies

A comprehensive directory of world famous philosophers, including their biography, philosophies and work. Plato once said 'Wonder is the feeling of the philosopher, and philosophy begins in wonder'.

It should be noted, first and foremost, that philosophy in its traditional sense was science – philosophers like Aristotle used rationality to come to scientific knowledge of the world around us. It was not until relatively modern times that philosophy was considered to be separate from the physical sciences. It is said that liberalism proper, the belief in equal rights under the law, begins with Locke. Locke is the man responsible, through Jefferson primarily, for the absence of nobility in America. Although nobility and birthrights still exist in Europe, especially among the few kings and queens left, the practice has all but vanished. He was soundly criticized by a lot of Christian polemicists those who make war against all thought but Christian thought, especially during the Middle Ages, because he was thought to be an atheist, whose principles for a happy life were passed down to this famous set of statements: Such intangible things he considered preconceived notions, which can be manipulated. Stoicism is based on the idea that anything which causes us to suffer in life is actually an error in our judgment, and that we should always have absolute control over our emotions. Put another way, the world is what we make of it. Epicureanism is the usual school of thought considered the opposite of Stoicism, but today many people mistake one for the other or combine them. Epicureanism argues that displeasures do exist in life and must be avoided, in order to enter a state of perfect mental peace ataraxia, in Greek. Stoicism argues that mental peace must be acquired out of your own will not to let anything upset you. Death is a necessity, so why feel depressed when someone dies? Why get enraged over something? The rage will not result in anything good. Of importance is to shun desire: He lived in the Persian Empire from c. The Dark Ages were not so dark. His two most well known works today are The Book of Healing which has nothing to do with physical medicine and The Canon of Medicine, which was his compilation of all known medical knowledge at that time. Influenced primarily by 1, his Book of Healing deals with everything from logic, to math, to music, to science. He proposed in it that Venus is closer than the Sun to Earth. Imagine not knowing that for a fact. The Sun looks a lot closer than Venus, but he got it right. He rejected astrology as a true science, since everything in it is based on conjecture, not evidence. As a matter of fact, the petrification of the bodies of plants and animals is not more extraordinary than the transformation of waters. Petrification can occur in any organic material, and involves the material, most notably wood, being impregnated by silica deposits, gradually changing from its original materials into stone. Avicenna is the first to describe the five classical senses: It would take too long to explain them in this list, but they are all forms of syllogisms, and every philosopher and student of philosophy is familiar with them from the beginning of education in the subject. Thomas founded everything he postulated firmly in Christianity, and for this reason, he is not universally popular, today. Even Christians consider that, since he derived all his ethical teachings from the Bible, Thomas is not independently authoritative of any of those teachings. But his job, in teaching the common people around him, was to get them to understand ethics without all the abstract philosophy. He was able to reach the masses with this simple, four-part instruction. He made five famous arguments for the existence of God, which are still discussed hotly on both sides: He has essence and existence, and these two qualities cannot be separated. He espoused significant principles of ethics and politics, in a time when the Greeks were espousing the same things. This may sound obvious to us today, but he wrote it in the early s to late s BC. It is the same principle of democracy that the Greeks argued for and developed: The emperor must be honest and his subjects must respect him, but he must also deserve that respect. If he makes a mistake, his subjects must offer suggestions to correct him, and he must consider them. Any ruler who acted contrary to these principles was a tyrant, and thus a thief more than a ruler. Confucius also devised his own, independent version of the Golden Rule, which had existed for at least a century in Greece before him. His phrasing was almost identical, but then furthered the idea: The second statement is much more important, constituting an active desire to help others. The only other philosopher of antiquity to advocate the Golden Rule in the positive form is Jesus of Nazareth. Smart is the new sexy! Analytical geometry is the study of geometry using

algebra and the Cartesian coordinate system. He discovered the laws of refraction and reflection. He also invented the superscript notation still used today to indicate the powers of exponents. He advocated dualism, which is very basically defined as the power of the mind over the body: He rejected perception as unreliable, and considered deduction the only reliable method for examining, proving and disproving anything. He also adhered to the Ontological Argument for the Existence of a Christian God, stating that, because God is benevolent, Descartes can have some faith in the account of reality his senses provide him, for God has provided him with a working mind and sensory system and does not desire to deceive him. From this supposition, however, Descartes finally establishes the possibility of acquiring knowledge about the world based on deduction and perception. In terms of the study of knowledge therefore, he can be said to have contributed such ideas as a rigorous conception of foundationalism basic beliefs and the possibility that reason is the only reliable method of attaining knowledge. Paul accomplished more with the few letters we have of his, to various churches in Asia Minor, Israel and Rome, than any other mortal person in the Bible, except Jesus himself. But without Paul, the religion would have died in a few hundred years at best, or remained too insular to invite the entire world into its faith, as Jesus wanted. Paul had more than one falling out with Peter, primarily among the other Disciples. Peter insisted that at least one or two of the Jewish traditions remain as requirements, along with faith in Jesus, for one to be counted as Christian. Paul insisted that faith in Jesus is all that is required, and neither circumcision, refusal of certain foods or any other Jewish custom was necessary, because the world was now, and forevermore, under a state of Grace in Jesus, not a state of Law according to Moses. He is especially impressive to have systematized these principles flawlessly, having never met Jesus in person, and in direct opposition to Peter and several other Disciples. Many theologians and experts on Christianity and its history even call Paul, and not Jesus, the founder of Christianity. That may be going a bit too far, but keep in mind that the Disciples intended to keep Christianity for themselves, as the proper form of Judaism, to which only Jews could convert. Anyone could symbolically become a Jew by circumcision and obedience of the Mosaic Laws every one of them, not just the Big Ten. Paul argued against this, stating that as Christ was the absolute greatest good that the world would ever see, and Almighty because he and the Father are one, then the grace of Christ is sufficiently powerful to save anyone from his or her sin, whether Jewish, Gentile or anything else. If Socrates wrote anything down, it has not survived directly. Plato and Xenophon, another of his students, recounted a lot of his teachings, as did the playwright Aristophanes. It is only through philosophy that the world can be free of evils. He argued against democracy proper, rule by the people themselves, since in his view, a democracy had murdered his teacher, Socrates. All things of the material world can change, and our perception of them also, which means that the reality of the material world is weaker, less defined than that of the immaterial abstractions. Plato argued that something must have created the Universe. Whatever it is, the Universe is its offspring, and we, living on Earth, our bodies and everything that we see and hear and touch around us, are less real than the creator of the Universe, and the Universe itself. This is a foundation on which 4 based his understanding of existentialism. But consider that Aristotle is the first to have written systems by which to understand and criticize everything from pure logic to ethics, politics, literature, even science. Aristotle is also the first person in Western history to argue that there is a hierarchy to all life in the Universe; that because Nature never did anything unnecessary as he observed, then in the same way, this animal is in charge of that animal, and likewise with plants and animals together. The Medieval Christian theorists ran with this idea, extrapolating it to the hierarchy of God with Man, including angels. Thus, the angelic hierarchy of Catholicism, usually thought as a purely Catholic notion, stems from Aristotle, who lived and died before Jesus was born. Aristotle was, in fact, at the very heart of the classical education system used through the Medieval western world. His principles of ethics were founded on the concept of doing good, rather than merely being good. A person may be kind, merciful, charitable, etc. We could go on about Aristotle, of course, but this list has gone on long enough. Honorable mentions are very many, so list them as you like.

Chapter 6 : Famous Quotes - General - The Basics of Philosophy

Are History's "Greatest Philosophers" All That Great? by Gregory Lewis Introduction In the canon of western philosophy, generally those regarded as the 'greatest' philosophers tend to live far in the past.

These days, philosophers are pretty much a dying breed, but, in ancient times there were loads of philosophers, spread all across the world. These guys were largely responsible for spreading ideas, teachings, and ways of life to their followers. Philosophers encouraged rational inquiry and critical thinking on a number of topics, including the meaning of life, and things like aesthetics, logic, physics, mathematics, art, history, and psychology. There are so many philosophies and ways of thinking that we maintain today that are taken from some of the best philosophers throughout history. Plato is one of the philosophers we know the most these days, and his works are studied in higher education institutions throughout the modern world. The majority of his theories concerned politics, namely that rulers and leaders must be wise or they are ineffectual rulers. Of course, this is still a philosophy that applies today. He also felt that, through philosophy, the world could reach a higher level of enlightenment, and eradicate evil. Socrates Considered the Grandfather of modern philosophy, Socrates influenced a lot of other famed philosophers, most notably Plato. His principal teachings seem to surround the encouragement of debate to increase understanding of certain issues and topics. He also championed the format we use now of solving a problem by breaking it down into a series of questions. His impact and influence can be felt across the world. Friedrich Nietzsche German philosopher Nietzsche is one of the most respected and revered philosophers of all time. He is often considered to be one of the first well-known existentialists and challenged the foundations of Christianity. He looked for ways of enhancing individual creativity, health, and life. He attracted a lot of social criticism, but also inspired a lot of people with his teachings on power and anti-religion. Confucius Confucius was viewed as one of the oldest and most important philosophers in the Eastern world. The Chinese philosopher lived between around 500 BC and had significant philosophies about politics and ethics. He supported the idea of an emperor but also wanted limitations on the powers of the individual. Using many of the philosophies and ideals practiced in Ancient Greece, Confucius had a marked effect on the Chinese Empire and has inspired modern philosophy as well.

Chapter 7 : The Top Ten Greatest Philosophers in History | TheRichest

The 50 Most Influential Living Philosophers. We can thank philosophers, both past and present, for a number of our deeply held beliefs. These beliefs dictate how we understand and involve ourselves in the world.

This activity seemed striking enough to the people of that time and place to warrant the invention of this new name; that is, they felt that this activity did not fit the description of any of the other activities people tended to be involved in. In other words, while there were some similarities, philosophia was significantly different from epic poetry, lyric poetry, comic or tragic drama, crafts farming, pottery, weaving, homemaking, etc. Rather, what was so unusual about philosophia was that the people who engaged in it desired wisdom - or at least desired understanding - so much that they wondered whether the things they had been told to believe really constituted wisdom. That is, they wondered whether the things they had been taught to believe really gave them an understanding of the universe or of people or of how best to live. These early philosophers practitioners of philosophia wondered whether they could gain knowledge that went beyond traditional beliefs, and knowledge that went beyond the ideas about the world that were used in crafts and government. While other people were content to think that learning traditional beliefs and craft skills gave one all the wisdom one could get or at least all that one could get if the gods did not choose to reveal more, philosophers wondered whether traditional beliefs and skills told us all we could know. Philosophers tried to see whether we could gain more understanding by some other means - and they were not afraid to ask whether the traditional beliefs and the teachings of the crafts were really accurate. People in the Greek-speaking world reacted to philosophia and philosophers in a variety of different ways. Some people found philosophia strange but did not think it was particularly important. Others felt that philosophia and philosophers were strange and amusing. Many thought that philosophia was weird, that the ideas developed by the philosophers were scary, and that therefore philosophers should be looked on with suspicion. Quite a few people in the ancient Greek-speaking world thought that philosophia was threatening or dangerous in one way or another, and some of these tried to rid their cities of philosophia and philosophers. But enough people were interested in philosophia for it to continue to develop, and within a couple of centuries it had spread around the Mediterranean Sea to the Greek-speaking cities of Asia Minor, the area we now call the Middle East, northern Africa, Italy, and the Greek mainland.

Thales The earliest person who is cited by ancient sources as a philosopher is Thales, who lived in the city of Miletus in Asia Minor around the late 7th or early 6th century BCE. Some ancient reports suggest that Thales visited Egypt and learned mathematics from the scholars there, who were much more knowledgeable than Greek mathematicians of the time. Other reports suggest that Thales was largely self-taught. In any case, he does seem to have learned mathematical principles that were known to the Egyptians. But he went on to take this knowledge in new directions: That is, he tried to find out what made those mathematical principles true. Greek mathematics before Thales seems not to have tried that. We have no indication that Egyptian mathematicians were interested in formal proofs of their principles. Thales is best-known for having proposed that - water "stands under" everything as a source; - the cosmos ordered universe is "ensouled"; - the cosmos is full of divinities. Thales, it is reported, did not claim to have learned this from contact with the gods. Ancient reports suggest that he came up with it as a result of some sort of investigation. This suggests that he was asking questions and seeking understanding in another way. What relevant questions do they seem to leave open?

Anaximander Anaximander was born around the turn of the 6th century BCE and died in the mid-6th century, so he was slightly younger than Thales. They both lived in the same city, namely Miletus in Ionia, western Asia Minor - modern Turkey, so there is a good chance that they had some contact with each other. A hallmark of early philosophia was a concern with the nature of the universe as a whole. This was also a concern of the developers of myths, of course. But the early philosophers differed from the developers of myth in that the early philosophers tried to find out whether the universe had any fundamental features that we could identify and study further in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the universe. This hallmark of early philosophia can be seen in Thales, but Anaximander provides some even more striking examples. For one thing, Anaximander seems to have

discovered how to make fairly precise hour-markings on a sundial, and how to determine exactly where on the horizon the sun will rise each day. Anaximander is also credited with having been the first person in the Mediterranean area who even tried to produce a map of the world. That is, Anaximander drew a map that attempted to show the spatial relationships among all the places known to him. Those places seem to have included the Mediterranean Sea, southern Europe, the Middle East, Turkey, northern and northeastern Africa, and probably the southern Black Sea area. There had been maps before - the Egyptians had made maps of their own territory. But it does not seem that anyone before Anaximander had tried to make a map of "everything", a map that attempted to comprehend the spatial relationships of the whole of the known world. Anaximander may also have developed a sort of three-dimensional model of the cosmos the universe, seen as an ordered whole. This apparently was a way of illustrating and studying his revolutionary new conception of what the cosmos was like. The traditional Greek views held that the earth was either disc-shaped or perhaps shaped like a round pillow a sort of convex disc ; that the sky formed a sort of dome to which stars which were either gods or bits of fire or both were attached; that the sun and moon were either gods or fires or both; and that the movements of sun, moon, and stars were due to repeated efforts by gods. Anaximander proposed instead that the earth was cylindrical or drum-shaped, with the inhabited part on the top surface. Strikingly, Anaximander is reported to have chosen this shape because he thought that this explained how the earth could stay in one place without outside support. It is especially noteworthy that Anaximander thought he had to find a way to explain this stability of the earth, a way that used the principles that were thought at the time to explain the properties of everyday objects. Even more remarkably, Anaximander thought that the cylindrical shape of the earth could account for the earth staying aloft in air. He explained the sun, moon, and stars as being effects of rings of fire surrounding the earth. These rings were covered with a dark material that had holes at certain points. The sun, moon, and stars, Anaximander said, were what we see when the fire shines through the holes. The various paths that these heavenly bodies seem to follow in the sky he explained by conjecturing that the rings of fire had different diameters and possibly revolved at different speeds, so that the holes appeared to move in different paths and at different rates from each other. He even tried to figure out what the relative diameters of these rings were. But what kept the whole thing going? What accounted for the regularities of the seasons and of the movements of the heavenly bodies; what accounted for the cycles of birth and death among living things? Anaximander proposed that the basic form in the cosmos is something he referred to as the apeiron, which means something unlimited or indeterminate or indefinite: From this indefinite entity, "opposites" such as hot and cold split off, and these opposites mix together in various ways to form everyday things. Anaximander may have held that some sort of evolutionary process was involved. After some unspecified time, the opposites "pay penalty and restitution to each other for their injustice, according to the assessment of time" and perish into the apeiron the indefinite or unlimited , to start the cycle again. In other words, the regulatory force of the cosmos for Anaximander was a cosmic justice or order or balance the word he used can mean all three. And this justice was not something laid down arbitrarily by gods, but rather something inherent in and integral to the cosmos itself. Anaximander did not deny the existence of gods, but perhaps had an alternative way of understanding the workings of the cosmos and its connections with the gods. Is there anything that modern scientific theories if you have learned any explain or try to explain, that Anaximander apparently did not address? Is there anything that Anaximander addresses that modern theories do not? Do these address issues that Anaximander does not? Does Anaximander address questions about justice that modern social scientists do not? Anaximenes Another philosopher from Miletus was Anaximenes, who was slightly younger than Anaximander. Anaximenes held that the source of all familiar things, indeed the ultimate source or nature of the cosmos, was aer air or mist. Aer, claimed Anaximenes, was constantly in motion. When aer became less dense when the movement led to one area being less densely packed with aer than others , the aer became either bright fiery air, as on a clear summer day ; when it became even less dense, it became fire. As aer condensed, according to Anaximenes, it became clouds; further condensation led to the formation of water, ice, earth, and finally rock. All other things, Anaximenes seems to have felt, were mixtures of bits of these. He believed that aer held the cosmos together and that aer was divine or was the source of divine beings. He believed that aer held the cosmos together the way the human soul which the Greeks

associated with breath or warm moist air held the human body together: What if anything does Anaximenes explain, or try to explain, that Anaximander does not? What if anything does Anaximander explain, or try to explain, that Anaximenes does not? What similarities or connections does Anaximenes imply exist between humans and divinities gods or divine things? Pythagoras The philosopher and mathematician Pythagoras was born on the island of Samos just off the west coast of Ionia in the early 6th century BCE. He traveled to southern Italy, where he founded the communities of Croton and Tarentum. These were places where people went to study mathematics, astronomy, music, and philosophy; but also places where people attempted to come up with and to follow new ways of living, new social standards, and so on. Pythagoras is best known for the Pythagorean Theorem in geometry, the theorem that says that in a triangle that has a right angle, the length of the longest side, squared, is equal to the sum of the squares of the lengths of the other two sides. Pythagoras may well have learned the theorem from the Egyptians. But he did discover a formal proof of the theorem, something the Egyptians did not seem as far as we know to have sought. Pythagoras or his followers discovered a number of other theorems of geometry, and emphasized the search for proofs. In other words, he discovered that musical harmonies can be described and related numerically. He found too that the paths and motions of stars and planets can be expressed numerically, so that the order or harmony the rhythmic pattern of seasonal change as associated with star movements could be expressed mathematically. Possibly because of these discoveries, Pythagoras proposed that numbers were intimately related to the rest of the universe. He may have said that the things that exist are all ultimately number, or that numbers and other things that exist have a common source or nature. Note that this would be to say that the source or nature of the universe is not something we can see or touch or taste such as air or water or aer. All of the early philosophers discussed in these notes seem to have tried to find some stable underlying feature of the universe that could account for or be the source of all that we deal with every day. He identifies the stable underlying feature as number and mathematical relationships, and number is not something that we can see, touch, hear, taste, or smell. It is more like a meaning or an aspect that links these three examples. We will see in Plato and in Aristotle some investigation and debate concerning the search for fundamental features of the universe that account for the way things are both in the universe in general and in human societies in particular. What might suggest that numbers have something in common with some observable things? Is there something one of these philosophers seems to be better at explaining or starting to explain than the others seem to be? Is there something none of them seem to address? There you will also find links to other exciting web sites pertaining to the ancient Mediterranean world. The ancient Greek religion said that there were multiple gods, multiple divine beings. You have probably heard of some of them: Zeus, god of thunder and lightning, ruler of the other gods; Hera, goddess of air and marriage and motherhood, wife of Zeus; Ares, god of war; Athena, goddess of wisdom and skill; Apollo, god of wisdom and skill; Aphrodite, goddess of love and desire; Eros, god of love and desire. There are many more. For more information, see the following books:

Chapter 8 : Aristotle - Wikipedia

The top philosophers, therefore, are the ones who have placed the greatest influence and impact on humans worldwide. These intellectual geniuses basically embraced rational thinking when studying the world around us, even beyond, into space.

His poems and thoughts always seemed to have a significant influence from Xanophanes, leading to most of the historians contemplating that he must have been his pupil. Among the pre-Socratic philosophers those who went into the limelight before the time-period of Socrates, he is placed among one of the most significant ones. If truth be told, his attempt at deciphering this philosophical mystery and a rhetorical one, some might say leads to a rather paradoxical statement rather than a satisfying answer. And in turn, it becomes a paradox because it is impossible to think of what is not, and again, it is also impossible to think of something that cannot be thought of. The subsequent philosophers that succeeded him would work on to simply these philosophical impossibilities. His philosophical views much revolved around the nature itself. As it was the case with most of the philosophers in ancient Greece, his ideas contrasted and collided with the contemporary ideologies and beliefs that led him to face life-threatening consequences. Anaxagoras is credited for being the first to establish a philosophy in its entirety in Athens, a place where it would go on to reach its peak, and continue to have an impact on the society for hundreds of years to come. He believed that in the physical world, everything contains a portion of everything else. He is credited for being the first known writer on philosophy – given that he is the only known philosopher to have authored the first surviving lines of western philosophy. He is also a known figure in early of biology and geography. Moreover, he created the first world image of an open universe, diverting from the-then notion of closed universe and making him the first speculative astronomer in the human history. This source acted as the prime point of differentiation for polar opposites like hot and cold, light and dark and so on. Much of his work may remain truncated, especially at the hands of subsequent generations of philosophers. But he was indeed one of the greatest minds in the ancient Greece. One of his philosophical landmarks has been his assertion of four element theory of matter. It states that all matter is basically composed of four primary elements – earth, air, fire and water. This became one of the earliest theories to have been postulated on particle physics, although some historians see it as a hassled effort to negate the no-dualism theory of Parmenides. He simply rejected the presence of any void or an empty space, thus contradicting the philosophical ideology of Parmenides through and through. He put forth the idea of opposite motive forces involved in building of the world – namely, love as the cause of union and strife as the cause of separation. He also went on to become the first person to give an evolutionary account on the development of species. It is worth noticing he tried to lay a detailed explanation to contradicting conclusions present in the physical world in days much before the development of logic. Zeno further expanded and defended the philosophical ideologies established by Parmenides, which were facing much opposition from common opinion at that time. He propounded multiple paradoxes himself, which became as debated among later generations of philosophers. A majority of contemporary arguments on his paradoxes used to lead to dividing time and space infinitely – such as if there is a distance; there also is half of that distance and so on. Zeno was first in the philosophical history of mankind to show the concept of infinity exists. In fact, he is best known for the theorem in geometry that is named after him. He is one of the most familiar names from pre-Socratic society, but yet, what we know about him surprisingly less. He is credited with founding a philosophical school that amassed him a number of followers. It was at this school that Pythagoras tried to find a mutual harmony between real life and the practical aspects of philosophy. He regarded the world as perfect harmony and aimed his teaching on how to lead a harmonious life. He openly diverted from the relentless physical speculations prior philosophers were so busy interpreting and assimilating, and attempted to establish an ethical system that would be based on human reasoning rather than various and often widely debated theological doctrines. Instead of regurgitating ideas solely based on his individual interpretations, he would question people relentlessly on their beliefs, and try to find definitions of virtues by conversing with anyone who would proclaim to possess such qualities. Socrates became a key

figure amassing numerous followers, but he also made many enemies. Eventually, his beliefs and realistic approach in philosophy led to his execution. But one might argue that his philosophical martyrdom, more than anything else, turned him into the iconic figure that he is today. But while Socrates was relentlessly occupied with interpreting philosophy based solely on human reasoning, Plato indulged himself in combining the two major approaches – pre-Socratic metaphysics and nature theology with Socratic ethical theology. In physics, he agreed with much of the views of Pythagoreans. His interpretation of things were more based on facts learnt from experience one would gain in their lives, an approach that differed from that of his master who preferred a perspective that was beyond the accessibility of physical senses. He proved to be an imaginative writer and equally creative polymath, gradually re-writing pre-established concepts in almost all areas of knowledge that he touched. At a time when the expertise of human knowledge remained far too generalized, he broke down the overall knowledge assimilation into distinct categories such as ethics, biology, mathematics and physics – a classification pattern still used today. Aristotle is truly a key figure in the ancient Greek philosophy whose influence went on to have an impact way beyond the bounds of ancient Greece, and much further in time. He is reputed among historians as the Father of Ancient Greek Philosophy. Thales is also said to be the founder of school of natural philosophy. As a philosopher, Thales rarely confined his research to a limited area among available knowledge and was actively indulged in understanding various aspects of knowledge such as philosophy, mathematics, science, geography and what not. He is also said to have developed a well-defined standard to theorize why changes occur in things. He proposed water as the basic underlying component of the world. Thales was highly esteemed among ancient Greeks and his hypotheses usually added meaning and girth into already existing ideas on nature. Final Conclusion The emergence of entire western philosophical tradition can be traced back to era of ancient Greek philosophy. The evolution of philosophical concerns and critical thinking among the philosophers in ancient Greece that started somewhere around the 6th century BCE arguably played a pivotal role in the subsequent development of knowledge as we know it today. They practiced varying approaches in their philosophical journey, seeking answers to known paradoxes, and creating countless more on the way. It started with the first attempt by Thales at perceiving the world from a methodical perspective. The succeeding cohort of critical thinkers went on diversify this approach into natural science, metaphysics and, eventually, ethical theology – leading to the evolution of philosophy as we know it today.

Chapter 9 : Are History's "Greatest Philosophers" All That Great? (guest post by Gregory Lewis) - Daily No

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