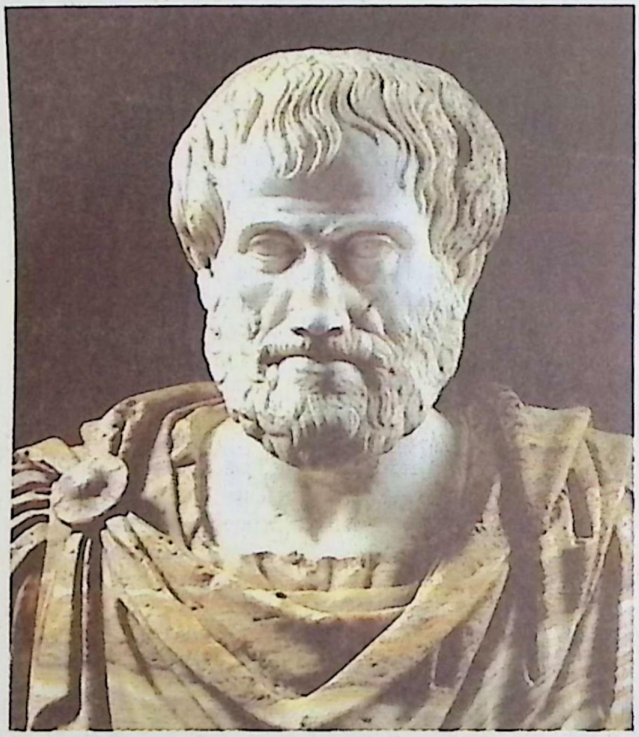


Aristotal



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I dreamed of naming my children 'Aris' after the great Greek philosopher Aristotle. But my dream went awry as both of my children were female. It remains as a pain in my mind. I revere Aristotle as the wisest man of the world -- past and present. He is a great inspiration for knowledge -- a mortal god made up with knowledge from top to bottom. Though I could not attach him to the names of my children, I took a roundabout. I picked up the theme 'knowledge' and chose two Bangla words for them -- 'Progya' and 'Swogya'. Progya means 'wisdom' which comes through the enlightening of intellect and Swogya means 'intuition' the type of divine knowledge revealed through soul. Now I see the sacred shadow of Aristotle reflected in my daughters' names.

I consider Aristotle (384 BC - 322 BC) as the totality of knowledge. He is knowledge incarnate, to my mind. No other human in ancient and modern world devoted himself or herself to the pursuit of knowledge in a fashion he did, attaining the highest order possible. His soul was always burnt was the flame of knowledge and he kept the flame burning throughout his life. He was born in knowledge and died in knowledge. As the son of Nicomachus, a physician of King Amyntas of Macedon, he got his first lesson from his family. He later went to Athens and became a disciple of Plate, with whom he stayed for long twenty years. Throughout his life he learnt and taught, without stop for a moment. He built a tower of knowledge on the surface of earth which kept rising towards the sky till he breathed his last.

There is no area of knowledge which Aristotle did not venture into. He took interest in and contributed to all disciplines available during his time -- physics, metaphysics, poetry, theater, music, logic, rhetoric, politics, government, ethics, biology, zoology, chemistry, geology, meteorology, astronomy, optics, geography, mathematics, aesthetics, economics, psychology, theology, education and foreign customs. Aristotle was the first to classify areas of human knowledge into distinct disciplines, subsumed in science. He says, all science is either practical, poetical or theoretical. By practical science, he means ethics and politics; by poetical science, he means the study of poetry and the other fine arts; by theoretical science, he means physics, mathematics and metaphysics.

Aristotle was a versatile genius who utilised his wits to good purposes -- to break new grounds in intellectual exercise, to present humans the best writings of all times. He wrote a large number of books which were later preserved in the famous Library of Alexandria, though today most of his works are lost. His writings had amazing power and Cicero compared them with 'a river of gold'. Aristotle is said to have written about 200 scholarly treatises, which created the tradition of serious academic discussion. His most important treatises include *Physics, Metaphysics, Nicomachean Ethics, Politics, De Anima* and *Poetics*.

Aristotle's contribution to philosophy is immeasurable. Nobody in the western world is as original as Aristotle in philosophical thoughts. Only his guru Plato could be compared with him in philosophical accomplishments. But Aristotle's contentions sounded more cogent than Plato's. The former challenged the latter's view on the nature of knowledge and world. Plato argued that all things have a universal form, detached from existing things. But according to Aristotle, there are no universals unattached to existing things; rather all universals are instantiated through particulars. Plato initiated the rationalist tradition in