

Q: Three school of thought Ibn-e Khaldoon,  
August Comte and Spencer are staunch  
advocates of evolutionary perspective.

What is the gist of law of three  
stages proposed by August Comte?

## Introduction :

Three school of thought in sociology  
Ibn-e-Khaldoon, August Comte and Herbert  
Spencer are very famous philosophers  
or sociologists. Ibn-e-Khaldoon was the  
father of sociology. He gave the  
concept of Alasabiya. August Comte  
was the founding father of  
sociology he gave the concept  
of positivism. Herbert Spencer he  
gave the theory of social darwinism  
Comte gave the three stages  
of law.

Ibn-e-Khaldoon, August Comte and  
Herbert Spencer evolutionary pers)

Ans: Auguste Comte - Main work ~~Complete philosophy~~  
Stages - The Theological stage - law of Three  
stage and the positive stage - The Metaphysic  
social Organisation and progress. - stages in  
views regarding sociology.

Biographic sketch of Auguste Comte:  
Auguste Comte :- The French philosopher  
Auguste Comte (1798 - 1857) It was he  
who laid the foundation of sociology  
and is acclaimed as the "father  
of sociology". He coined the term  
sociology from the Latin socius  
("social being with others") and  
the Greek logos ("study of") to describe  
a new science that would engage  
in the study of society.

Comte's theory that societies contain  
social statics (forces for social  
order and stability) and social  
dynamics (forces for conflict and  
change) continues to be used,

although not in these exact terms in contemporary sociology.

## Main work of Comte:

1- "The prospectus of the scientific work required for the reorganisation of society", 1822 - A joint work of Comte and Saint Simon.

2- "positive philosophy", 1830 - 1842 - in six volumes.

3- "positive polity", 1851-54 in four volumes.

## Comte's philosophy:

Comte's philosophy known as positivism - a belief that the world can best be understood through scientific inquiry.

## Meaning of positivism:

Positivism refers to "the doctrine formulated by Comte which asserts that the only true knowledge in scientific knowledge, that is, knowledge that which describes and

explains the co-existence and succession  
of observable phenomena including  
both physical and social phenomena.

**Nature of Comte's Positivism:**

Comte's positivism had two dimensions. 1- Methodological 2- Social and political.

**1- Methodological:**

The application of scientific knowledge to both physical and social phenomena.

**2- Social and political:**

The use of such knowledge to predict the likely results of different policies so that the best one could be chosen.

Of particular importance is Comte's idea that the nature of human thinking and knowledge passed through several stages as societies evolved from simple to more complex.

Comte described how the idea systems and their corresponding social structure arrangements changed in what he termed the law of three stages.

### Law of Three Stages:

The Theory "The Law of Three Stages" constitutes one of the main contributions of Comte to the field of sociological thought. The three stages are as follows.

**First stage:** Theological or Fictitious stage

**Second stage:** Metaphysical or Abstract stage

**Third stage:** Positive or scientific stage

**Theological stage:** explanations were based on religion and the

super natural. The primitive person everywhere tend to think in

supernatural beings". They believe

in all kinds of fetishes in

which spirits of supernatural

beings live. Hence, "fetishism"

as a form of religion started  
and it admitted of no priesthood,  
because its gods are individuals,  
each residing in fixed objects.  
When the mind of primitive man became  
better organised fetishism became  
too many fetishes became cumbersome  
Hence, they started believing in several  
gods. Thus arose polytheism. They created  
the class of priests to get the good  
will and the blessing of these gods. The  
presence of too many gods also  
created for them mental contradictions.  
Hence, they arranged the gods, in the  
form of hierarchy. Finally they  
developed the idea of one god  
Slowly feeling and imagination  
started giving place to thinking and  
rationality. Monotheism is the climax of  
August Comte and his thoughts. The  
Theological stage of thinking. This kind

## Scientific way of Thinking

"In the final, As Comte stated, the mind has given positive stages, vain search over the the origin and Absolute notions, universe, and the destination of the and applies it self causes phenomena, of their laws - that is, their invariable relations of Succession and resemblance."

Comte developed his concept of positivism which is a purely intellectual way of looking at the world. He stressed the need for observation and classification of phenomena. He even said that it is futile to try to determine cause.

"We can observe uniformities, or laws, but it is mere speculation to assign cause to these Uniformities."