

Philosophy and Critical Thinking
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Week-03
Lecture 14: Benedict Spinoza

Welcome in lecture 14. Today we are going to discuss Spinoza. In last class, we have discussed the basic philosophy of Spinoza. We are going to add some more idea from Spinoza point of view. Today we will be discussing the human mind, and the theory of knowledge. In last class, we have discussed how Spinoza has talked about the substance and then mind-body problem. For Spinoza, the God is only one. I mean the sense that God is the substance and what is the God or idea of God for Spinoza is an infinite. It is not finite and body and mind is both thing is in effect of same thing. Now Spinoza is a very important philosopher in western philosophy which is very close to even in the Indian system. In Indian philosophy also we have an idea of this substance or primary cause which is infinite. So, when we discuss about the Sankaran Vedanta philosophy, Advaita Vedanta, they also talk about the Nirguna Brahman, a God without any attributes because human mind there they have a different way to explain. Here the substance is as an infinite attribute. Now human mind for Spinoza can understand only two attributes of the substance that is thought and extension. If you remember the Cartesian idea of body and mind, then it will be easy to understand the Spinoza problem and its philosophy.

In Cartesian in philosophy, the body and mind are two different thing and it is diametrically opposed to each other. Body has extension but mind it does not have any extension or mind is a thinking thing. So, mind is different from body. We cannot locate body; we can locate the body in the space but we cannot locate the mind in the space. So, body is material, mind is immaterial. If you see the Spinoza, Spinoza has a different way to explain. I mean mind and body he has same way but this is the effect of the same thing. If you see the Descartes, Descartes struggle with the problem of interaction. If the mind and body is two different substances, then how the interaction takes place, how the body is interacting with the mind, how mind is interacting with the body. However, the Descartes tries to answer this question saying that there is a place called Pineal gland and this is the place of mind where mind is residing and mind is interacting with the body. So Pineal gland become an important place in the body according to Descartes. However, there are philosopher who rejected the idea of this and then even they argued that interaction will not be possible as we discussed in our class.

Spinoza has a problem of this dualism where he explained this idea or let me say this is a solve this idea saying that since body and mind is a two different thing, therefore they cannot interact. Since this body and mind is an effect of same thing and therefore there is no problem. The problem says God always intervene. Now if you understand the Spinoza idea of God or the Pantheism, it will be easy to understand this Spinoza philosophy. For

Spinoza, this world is in God. God in this world. Now what does it mean? I will give you one example. We have discussed that in previous classes wherein maybe in first week when we have talked about the cause and an effect. So, cause is, there is suppose for example there is in a one cause called X and Y is an effect. For example, smoke, for example, it is curd, it is on a fire, smoke and so on. Now the question is in Indian system, can we talk about the pre-existence of Y in X? If yes, then again, they are saying it is, there is no causation. If they are saying no, then there is no causation because anything can produce anything. Now if you even stand can produce oil. Now it takes it in the same theory in applying this idea of creation that God is the cause and this world is an effect. Now Spinoza is saying that God itself is a world. So here in Spinoza argument, he says that as I have discussed in the last class that sometime what we do we think. I mean if you want to understand in this way that someone is thinking about something and therefore, we are, suppose. However, Spinoza has a different way to argue. Spinoza is saying God is perfect. So, Spinoza does not want anything, does not seek anything. If he is seeking it means there is something which, is he wants and that makes him perfect. But Spinoza says that God does not have any end. Now let us understand how the Spinoza has talked about the human mind. Spinoza argues the human mind exists as a complex mode consisting of its thoughts, feelings, volitions and this state of mind are themselves not effects of body, of body's process. Mind and body do not influence one another. There is no interaction between them. So, there is a body, there is a mind as we have discussed. There is no interaction and body are a different kind and mind is a different kind and therefore they cannot interact. There is no causal relation. So mind is not cause of any change in a body. Now he argues that mind and body are processes of one and same thing and expressed in two different ways. Same thing is in a God. So, this is just a different way to express. So one is in a body, one is a material, one is an immaterial. Human body, Spinoza argues, is very complex as it is made of many parts. Similarly, the human mind is also composed of many ideas. Spinoza calls the mind as the idea of the body and then again idea of the idea. Now what does this mean, idea of the idea? Idea of the idea only means that even God is thinking of this idea. This is called the idea of the idea. Now let us understand the first one, the idea of the body means that thought is never empty. Again Spinoza, there is an argument that it seems that it does not believe in its permanent self which survives body for there and can be no self without any corresponding body. The mind as the idea of body knows the body as its subject. As every mode must exist in God, so human or a mode is in a God. Now this is an idea, whole idea that there is enough God and everything is what where in this is in God. So, the human or a mode is in God, so everything is in God. Now Spinoza argues that God as an infinite intellect must be thinking of everything. So, he must have thought or an idea of human mind itself and human mind therefore mind is an idea of the idea. I hope it is clear that, what Spinoza is arguing that mind is the idea of body. So, suppose this is nothing equal, this is just an idea. Idea of body. So, mind is idea of body. Now even everything since everything mind and body exists in the God, then what does it mean? That even the

God must have thought of this an idea, the idea of this human mind. So again, this is another idea. So let us say this is an idea. What is this one? And then again this is an idea. Therefore, the human mind is an idea of an idea. There is one important thing I would like to mention here that Spinoza used a word is called *Natura-naturata* and he writes that I understand whatever follows from the necessity of God's nature or from any of God's attributes, all the modes of God's attribute is so far as they are considered as things that are in God and can neither be nor be conceived without God. So, for Spinoza everything is in God. So even we have discussed well in detail in last class that how since everything is happening like taking place in God, so nothing is beyond the God in the sense that even the human mind, body there will be no problem in an interaction because the body and mind effect of a same thing and this idea also is going to talk about some more idea. I mean how the Spinoza pantheism leads to some more idea about the human intellect and will that we are going to discuss now. Before that let us talk about the theory of knowledge.

Spinoza distinguishes three principles, levels of cognition. First one is imagination. So obscure and this is an obscure inadequate ideas have their source in the sensation and imagination. This knowledge is an uncritical experience and mere opinion do not yield genuine knowledge. So, Spinoza even believe that this knowledge is not a genuine knowledge. Now second talked about the reason. The peculiar and distinct idea and rational knowledge. So, reason is whenever what we are getting this knowledge that is in a very clear and distinct idea and that is called rational knowledge. When you have an idea and when you have something and you are applying this reason. Remember that the Rene Descartes and Spinoza both have them have talked a lot about the mathematical method and they have applied this method in the philosophical world of this philosophical knowledge. Both of them believe that in philosophy we need a certain knowledge, a distinct idea and if you are going with this in the clear and distinct idea, we will have a mathematical a complete knowledge of thing like in a mathematical conclusion. Spinoza similarly is arguing the regions contemplates things as they really are, knows their necessary connection, conceived them under the form of identity. It comprehends the universal essence of things and understands these in their relation to God's being. So, if you apply the reason or you are getting any clear and distinct idea through reason that that is a rational and genuine knowledge. What Spinoza is arguing that genuine knowledge only you can get through reason. So, reason is a very important part, a very important part not only in Descartes philosophy as well as Spinoza philosophy. Third one is called intuition or intuitive knowledge. Spinoza calls it highest kind of knowledge. Spinoza argues that kind of knowing which proceeds from an adequate idea of the formal essence of certain attributes of God to the adequate knowledge of the essence of things. So, intuition is going to give you a full knowledge, there is a fullness of knowledge. For example, the intuitive knowledge is the concrete thing for through it we know them in their fullness. So intuitive knowledge is what for the Spinoza is the highest knowledge. Now one more idea about intuitive knowledge. Spinoza argues the reason is discursive and indirect. We know

equality of for example of A and C by virtue of their connection with B but intuition is a happy flash of insight. So, when you are applying any reason, so you need to like compare them, and then you will be getting an idea of for example equality of A and C. In last class, we have discussed that how Spinoza has developed his proposition from the simple proposition to the complex proposition. There we have seen how Spinoza has used an argument, how has used in a reason and through reason he is getting knowledge. Spinoza believed that intuitive knowledge is a full knowledge, complete knowledge. Now therefore the intuitive knowledge has the highest place in the Spinoza. Now let us talk about human will and interact. In Spinoza as we have argued, the soul is reduced to ideas and it is an idea of the body as we have discussed. So, the mind is for Spinoza an idea of the body. For Spinoza he does not believe in soul. So, when we are saying that we have an idea of, we also have discussed in Socrates, Plato who believes that soul is an eternal. Eternal says that there is a body X, this is soul and if this is what we are saying this is me and in the biological depth and that this is going where, in another body is called P. Soul is eternal not the body. So, we have like for example mind body, body one and after that this is moving and transmigrating where in the body two. So, there are no soul like this. Spinoza believed that this is mind is just an idea of body. So therefore, this is how we argued. The soul is reduced to ideas and it is an idea of body. For Spinoza knowing, feeling or emotion and willing everything is same. So, he has not talked about this knowing feeling and emotion and willing a different thing. Spinoza argues that intelligence and will are essentially the same. He argues there is no such thing as a free will. As I said that everything is in God and again God does not have any purpose. So, there is God for example, if you want to understand in this way and God what he is doing there is in a world which is inside the God. God is in the world. The world is in God and since there is no purpose of this creation or of this world because if you are going to accept it, it makes God imperfect and that is not. I mean in the sense that then it will not be able to the substance because substance is an infinite, necessarily infinite. Now if it is so that everything is in God it only means that we do not have free will. So, Spinoza does not see anything as, does not see that there is a free will. He argues that everything in nature is determined. Everything follows necessarily from something else and all things are ultimately conditioned by the universal substance. So, whatever is happening, taking place it is obviously it is in by in Spinoza philosophy it is by something else. It is caused by something else and so on and this is an ultimately conditioned by God. Universal substance that is called God and therefore we do not have free will. There is no free will. He argues that everything is like taking place is in a only determined by ultimately by universal substance. It is God. Now this is and that is the reason that even the starting I said that Spinoza is at least a referring point sometime when we are when we discuss the Indian system, Indian philosophy. However, we do not have this idea and then we do not in Indian system, the philosopher they do not argue that this is now world is there is no free will. But again, the idea of the pantheism, idea of the God, it is in a very close where we also talk about the different reality. You take in this way that

if everything is in this God. So, whatever is like moving and motion, rest, thoughts, body, everything is God. Now if anything is taking place, anything like happening like it is in a cause by something and that cause is not an ultimate cause. That is caused by another cause and so on and this chain will stop where? The universal substance, the God. So basically, the cause of everything is God. Even as we discussed in the last class then how the mind and body is in a relation is taking place though God intervenes. Or let us say that since there are two things of effect of same thing and therefore it always going like this. And that is the reason that Spinoza believe that there is no free will. Everything is determined. He argues that human soul is merely a mode of the divine thought and every particular act if will is a mode of thought determined by another mode. So even suppose you are like thinking you have an idea of thoughts like idea. Then you have thought one it is caused by. Thought two, thought three and four, five, six and finally is a universal substance in God. So we will find every event, every act is determined by another mode of finally the universal substance. Man thinks he is free because he is ignorant of the causes of his decision. This is a self-explanatory where he is arguing that we are still going to believe that we are free because we are ignorant. We will be discussing this idea of ignorance in Indian system how even they have talked about cost does not mean this is not wrong. It only means that and I am highlighting this. This is how this in the Indian system also talks a lot about the ignorant or ignorance, the idea of ignorance. Now this is also very important to talk about the emotion because emotion also plays an important role and he argues, Spinoza argues the passion which literally represent the passive side of the human mind are confused and inadequate ideas corresponding to psychological, physiological states. Our ignorance and confusion are due to the passions. So influence of this passion or we are not able to see the main cause of any kind of decision which we are taking day to day life. Now Spinoza has given an detailed explanation of this passions. The passions are all functions of the way in which external things affect our power or capacities. For example, by Joy, I understand the passion by which the mind passes to a greater perfection. Sadness is the passion to a lesser state of perfection, also occasioned by a thing outside us. Love is simply joy accompanied by an awareness of the external cause that brings about the passage to a great perfection. He argues all the human emotion in so far as their passion are constantly directed outwards towards thing and their capacities to affect us one way or another. So passion is only a confused idea and as soon as we frame a clear idea it vanishes. So, when you have a clear idea then you will get an idea, idea of this universal substance, the cause of this idea and then you realize that this passions, this emotions is vanishing. So, you can control this idea, this can control your passion or emotion through clear idea and distant idea. So, reason plays a very important role in Spinoza. So Spinoza philosophy, it is impossible to overcome of this problem. He argues in the last, last in today lecture, the man who lives according to reason will therefore strive to rise above pity and vantage. He will help his neighbors but he will do it from reason not from impulses. He will consider nothing worthy of hatred, mockery or contempt. So, the person who is living his life with

a reason, reason will, I mean when you have clear and distinct idea of this world, this reality. Now if you have this idea, you can see this point number two, passion and emotion is already vanished. Now your action will be very different, different from a person who is still in this problem, who is still in ignore it. Strive to the rise pity and vantigrades. Now this person is helping anyone but not from impulse, from the reason. He is not going to hate anyone, mockery and contempt. So, this is what Spinoza has argued about the human action, human emotion and the body and the mind. Spinoza has a very significant contribution in the western philosophy.

This class was on a very basic level. So, I explained this Spinoza philosophy in basic level and again the focus of this Spinoza philosophy was to connecting from the Cartesian philosophy because so that it will be easy to understand and development of an idea or the idea and its critical comment or argument against his previous philosopher. So, for example, we took Plato and then Aristotle, Descartes and then we also talked about the Ryle who rejected the idea and then we Spinoza. So, thank you for your attention. This talk was based on these two books which we have been following and again after Stanford's Encyclopedia. So, thank you so much for your kind attention. Thank you.