

**Philosophy and Critical Thinking**  
**Prof. Gyan Prakash**  
**Department of Humanities & Social Sciences**  
**IIT ISM, Dhanbad**  
**Week- 04**  
**Lecture 17: Hume**

Welcome in lecture 17. Today, we are going to discuss David Hume from Western philosophy. David Hume is another very important philosopher from Western philosophy. And today, we are going to talk about the account of the mind from a Humean perspective. The problem of David Hume was same as Locke. So, again, they wanted to talk about or their main problem was the knowledge and a source of knowledge, where the knowledge is coming from. So, we have been discussing one topic, it is an idea and then experience. So, what comes first? First an object or and we are experiencing the getting idea or there is an idea and this world, there is in a world and that particular object which is a poor copy of this idea. Now, there are argument that idea is first. However, there are many philosophers and what we have discussed in this class is for example, Locke argued that, that no, the experience is the source of all knowledge. So, when we have an idea, that the cause of this idea is our experience. So, we are experiencing and then we are getting idea. Now, we are going to see how David Hume added a more argument in this part. David Hume published many important books, An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding in 1748 and An Inquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals in 1751 and Political Discourses 1752 are the main text, his books. Now, let us talk about how David Hume, what was the problem of the David Hume, philosophical problem of the David Hume. David Hume argued that all sciences have a relation to human nature. So, when he was reading this philosophy of his predecessor and the other sciences, he realized that human nature is an important part, an important thing. And he also argued that all the sciences have a relation to human nature. For example, logic, in first class, we have discussed while discussing about the branches of philosophy, that the metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and logic, if you can recall. So, logic, what David Hume is arguing that also is a relation to human nature. So, even through the logic, what we are learning, what we are getting, the idea of human nature. So, this logic is the principle and operation of reasoning faculty and the nature of our ideas. Basically, we are trying to understand these things. Now, even you take the politics, it studies men as united in society and dependent on each other. Take example of mathematics, natural philosophy, natural religion, all are product of our power and faculties of men. And therefore, what David Hume argued that we ought to study human nature itself. So, for David Hume, the focus was to human nature. Now, what he argued that a science of man is only a solid foundation we can give to the other sciences and must be based on experience and observation. So, he is talking about the methodology. Now, science what he believes in a solid foundation. Now, if you, whatever we have discussed in the last many classes, David Hume was not happy with their philosophical conclusion.

One thing which already we have discussed while discussing Rene Descartes, Spinoza, John Locke, we are always focusing or our main goal is to get certain knowledge. Certain knowledge is a very important. Now, all the philosophers, what they are doing, they are trying to understand that how we can get the genuine knowledge. So, if there is any knowledge, this is genuine or it is not genuine or merely it is an opinion, they have addressed this problem. At the same time, they also have argued that what kind of knowledge is a genuine knowledge. So, their main concern is a genuine knowledge. So, they are going to talk about the certain knowledge. Even the last class, we were discussing the degree of the certainty. In what degree this is a certain. So, had John Locke argued that how intuitive knowledge is a genuine knowledge. However, the demonstrative knowledge is a certain knowledge, but in degree, it is inferior or lesser than the genuine knowledge. So, all the philosopher was concerned about the certain knowledge and that is a very important. So, some philosopher arguing that through reasoning, applied through reason, we can get a certain knowledge. Other philosopher arguing, no, we can get this knowledge through the intuitive knowledge. It is only genuine knowledge or intuitive knowledge is only genuine knowledge. What David Hume is arguing that this science should be based on this experience and observation. Now, the experimental method of reasoning must be introduced into philosophy. So, in previous classes, which we have discussed, all the philosopher, they have not used this method, the experimental method of reasoning. What David Hume arguing that experimental method of reasoning is an important. So, that we will have certain knowledge. He was convinced that the only way to improve philosophy was to make the investigation of human nature central and empirical. So, if you see what we have discussed so far, all the philosophical conclusion is still debatable. So, there is one philosophical conclusion, suppose for example, there is X and the next philosopher is coming and arguing that we cannot argue that there is X, he is arguing that there is a possibility of not X and he is rejecting the idea of or exercise of X. Now, the main concern as even Descartes argued, we want in conclusion like a mathematical conclusion. So, even with Descartes, we discussed that how even Descartes was concerned about certain knowledge. So, what he did that he used this mathematical method, where in philosophy. He realized and he argued that mathematics has a proper conclusion and conclusion which is beyond this doubt or acceptable for everyone because of their method. So, you change the method, you will get the certain knowledge. And this is how Descartes, Spinoza, all of them did. They got lot of idea for the mathematics and then they are trying to apply all this method in philosophy. And even they claim that their philosophy of conclusion is a certain knowledge, they are always talking about the certain knowledge. David Hume, when he was reading all these philosophers, realized that they have made a lot of mistakes. And therefore, he argued that this experimental method is of reasoning is a very important. And he argued that this is the only way to improve the philosophy. He argues the ancient philosopher on whom he had been concentrating, replicated the errors their natural philosophers made. They advanced theories that were entirely hypothetical, depending

more upon invention than experience. He objects that they consulted their imagination in constructing their views about virtue and happiness without regarding human nature upon which every moral conclusion must depend. He argued that the only way to improve the philosophy was to make investigation of human nature central and empirical. Now, David Hume has a question that or query that regarding the science and the philosophy. He is asking one question that why have not philosopher been able to make the spectacular progress in understanding human nature that natural philosophers whom we call scientists have recently achieved in the physical sciences. So, he is basically comparing with the science and then natural scientists or philosophers. Now, see their method. And that is the reason that they are progressing in this area. And what we are doing as a philosopher, we still do not have a proper development or progress in philosophy. When he answered this question is that the while scientists have cured themselves for their passion of hypothesis and system, philosopher have not yet first themselves of this temptation. So, David Hume argued, so we need to reject every system however subtle or engineers which is not founded on fact and observation. Now, he is giving more importance to the observation. So, this is how he is rejecting. Basically, he is an arguing, you need to change the method of the philosophy. So, what we were doing and through that method, we were not getting something a certain knowledge. And therefore, it should go for some other method or method of observation. Now, attempting to go beyond anything, we can possibly experience these metaphysical theories try to penetrate into subjects utterly inaccessible to the understanding. He is also arguing that what we have done, sometime we are going some area which is not accessible. We cannot access those areas. And we are concluding things from there. And if you are going to do that, there is no chance to get a certain knowledge. And therefore, the David Hume is to say this is an airy science. Hume calls them have only the air of science. Hume is proposing an empiricist alternative to traditional apriori metaphysics. Now, what does it mean? If you see our philosophy, whatever we have discussed in this course, you realize that we have discussed that about the apriori metaphysics. We always talking about what comes first. If even you take about either a Lockean idea or another philosopher. Some of them are saying that no, there is an idea and we are coming in this world with this idea. And this world and or let us say the particular object is a poor copy of this idea. John Locke has a different way to understand this everything. They are saying no, we are coming in this world with empty slate. Now, we are experiencing and then getting idea. All of them is engaged where, in apriori metaphysics. The first, the cause of thing. What is the cause of the idea? So he says, no, no, we are coming in this world with the idea. So, when we are saying that we are learning, it is not learning, it is relearning. So, because everything with us, all the ideas. Now, for example, Locke argued, no, the cause of this idea is experience. So, experience is the cause of this idea. So, this philosopher is engaged in where in traditional apriori metaphysics. This is how Hume argued. Hume is arguing that we should not be involved in this and he gave an alternative of empiricist. Empiricist is whatever we are getting through the

experiences. So, he is basically arguing as John Locke has argued. Now, as we have discussed that all the philosopher has one same focus, the origin of knowledge. And if this is an origin, what degree of certainty does it possess? And again, is there any extent or limitation? Is there a limitation of the source? So, suppose we are saying that X is the source of the knowledge. Let us say that experience. So, we are experiencing and we are getting idea. Let us take the human understanding or Locke understanding where we are arguing or the empiricist. So, empiricist are arguing that whatever we have an idea is a product of this experience. Now, if this is the origin and this is the source, then we have to also talk about the degree of certainty. So, our knowledge is in what extent it is a certain and then is there any limitation or we can go beyond that or there is a no limitation. So, these are things Hume wanted to know. Hume holds an empiricist version of the theory because he thinks that everything, we believe is ultimately traceable to experience. Now, Hume arguing that whatever we have in name of idea, we can trace that where in experience. He uses perception to designate any mental content whatsoever and divides perception into two categories, impression and ideas. So, now he arguing that the experience is the only method where we are getting this idea. So, whatever we have, we can trace where in our experiences. Now, experiences means what? We are perceiving, getting an experience. Now, in this perception, he divides this person in two categories. First is impression and second is idea. Now, impressions include sensation, desire, passion and emotions. Ideas, the faint image of this in thinking and reasoning. Like for example, we are perceiving something, tomato, red tomato, apple, table. So, this is a sensation, impression. We are getting that impression of the tomato and our table. But at the same time, there is also an idea. So, impression and then copy of the impression is an idea. And what is the idea? It is a faint image. Now, he also talks about the difference between feeling and thinking. So, it is the difference between feeling the pain of your present sunburn or recalling the last year's sunburn. For example, you got hurt feeling. So, you are in pain. Now, you again recalling the last year's problem or last year when you are again hurt. For example, the sunburn. So, you are sunburn, you are feeling and you also recalling, for example, recalling the last sunburn. So, this is what a difference between feeling and thinking. Now, impression he divides in two. The first is an original impression, the impression of sensation and the secondary impression, impressions of reflections. Impressions of sensation includes the five senses as well as pains and pleasure. He calls them original because trying to determine their ultimate cause would take us beyond anything we can experience. Any intelligible investigation must stop with them. So, he basically is arguing that this is the one the original impression. And we are getting this impression through the five sense organs, some perception from the unknown sources. Now, why he does not want to investigate in those sources? He arguing that if you are going to do that, it is going to beyond anything we can experience. And this kind of investigation must stop. So, basically, David Hume is what he is limiting his experience. I mean, he is saying that look, this is the limit of our experience and we should not go beyond that. So, whatever we are experiencing, we should

talk about that. If you are going that, we are unnecessarily making a statement. Now, impression of reflections includes desire, emotion, passions and sentiments. They are essentially reaction or responses to ideas, which is why we call them secondary. So, for example, as I give an example of sunburn, or you had sunburn in the last year, or you had some other physical injuries right in the last year. And for example, you went for the X board or for anything and he got hurt. Now, you are recalling. So, if I am going to do the same thing again, I will have the same kind of experience. Now, it is emotion. Now, there is a fear. Now, you are going to take precautions. For example, you got sunburned last year. Now, you have this idea that about last year because you are feeling and then you are recalling those. Now, that is because that you are afraid of that or you have fear because if you are going to do the same thing, you will get the same kind of experience. And it was called the secondary. Now, impressions are very strong and vivid perception. So, when we are perceiving an object, we are having a very vivid perception and then idea is a faint image in thinking and reasoning. For Hume, ideas are merely faint image or copies of much more vivid experiences. So, when we are perceiving an object, so we have a very vivid perception, very clear. Now, the ideas are the copies of this perception. So, for example, you are perceiving right, a mobile or then you have very vivid perception. Vivid perception of this object. Now, when this object has an imprint in your memory or faint image of this is called idea. So, last year, I had an experience of, for example, red tomato. So, when I saw, it was very vivid and a strong perception getting this tomato. Now, from today, I am recalling that perception. So, this is an idea which is a faint image of that perception. So, that is become an idea now. So, this is what difference between impression and idea. Impressions is strong and vivid perception and the faint image of thinking and reasoning is an idea. This difference in liveliness is a real difference between weaker state of mind, we call ideas and other perception of mind which Hume proposes to call impressions. Now, David Hume like Locke argued that simple idea cannot be broken down further. However, the complex idea made of the other ideas as Locke argued that if your mind is arranging and rearranging the many simple ideas in different combinations, we are getting the complex idea. Similarly, David Hume also argued that simple idea cannot be broken down further and complex idea is made of many other ideas, simple ideas. Now, once in the mind, idea can be rearranged infinite way. So, we have an idea of different vivid perceptions. Now, this idea can be rearranged in infinite way. This can be done because of our imagination. However, there is an example of dream or high fever when we are getting things without any perceiving. So, we have an idea and for us there is an object. In example, dream or sometime we have fever, high fever, we can see things. What Hume arguing in a dream and high fever, idea may approach the force and velocity of impression, but these are exception that proves the empirical. Now, David Hume arguing that these ideas, we have lot of ideas. Now, ideas are not loose and unconnected. Now, he is explaining this experience. So, when you are experiencing this object and there is an object and you perceived an object or you are perceiving an object, you have many strong vivid perception

of this object. Now, copy of this perception is an idea and that way we have lot of ideas. Now, the question, is this idea is loose? There are lot of ideas, but it is not connected. David Hume says it is not true. There is a bond of union between them and one call upon another. For example, there is a picture of a room and let us say the picture of my last house when I was staying in last year. So, the moment I saw a picture, that naturally leads to many different thoughts. So, there are so many thoughts, there are so many ideas. It is related to the old house and then I saw this picture that is going to lead to a many different thought, many different ideas which I have. So, the David Hume is arguing that this all ideas are connected and this phenomenon called association of ideas. So, there are many ideas, I mean because we are experiencing things and their perception and then we have idea. These ideas are connected to each other. So, for example, I saw last year picture of my birthday party. So, the moment I saw, so there are many ideas related to this idea is coming in mind. Hume is arguing that because they are connected and through this association of ideas, let us come into the coming in your mind. So, therefore, these ideas are not loose or it is not all of them are connected to each other. So, this is what from the David Hume for the today class. Next class also we will be discussing David Hume philosophy. In conclusion, I argued that whatever we are getting idea, it is because of experience. Now, you may argue that okay, even that John Locke has said same thing. Hume has added some more certain knowledge or let us say a clear argument or clarity to this philosophy. Now, Hume is what is saying that you have to first change the method to go for the observation method of reasoning, observation of reasoning. Now, whatever you are experiencing, we should not go beyond that. If we cannot experience that, we are not supposed to discuss or think about that. Something which is beyond this that experience. So, we should not go in that area. Now, coming back to the perception, he is simplifying the perception. So, when you are perceiving what we are getting and what we have. So, when you are perceiving, we have very vivid perception and then it is either a copy of this perception is an idea. So, for example, I saw last time a beautiful place. So, when I was there, this is a vivid perception. Everything is clear and strong. Now, I am recalling those ideas. So, that is my thinking. I am thinking of that my experience. That is an idea, the front image of that perception. Now, this all ideas are connected.

So, we will be discussing more about David Hume in next class and this lecture was based on these two books and again Stanford Encyclopedia. So, thank you so much for your kind attention. Thank you.