

**Philosophy and Critical Thinking**  
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**Lecture 18: Hume**

Welcome in lecture 18. Today, we are going to discuss again David Hume. Today, we will be discussing the causation and the notion of self from David Hume's perspective. In last class, we have seen that how Hume talked about methodology and the philosophy conclusion. He argued that we have a philosophical conclusion which is not certain and we need to work on that in the sense that he compared the philosophy with science or natural scientist and then realized and argued that we have to concentrate on empirical observation. Now, David Hume also argued that the philosopher has made many mistakes. Now, you need to understand that David Hume is basically asking even you are going for an empiricism or experiences. We have to understand that we are supposed to discuss only those things which is accessible. Now, for example, we are talking about the knowledge and arguing that this knowledge is product of experiences. So, we are experiencing and we are getting knowledge. So, whatever we have knowledge, the cause of this knowledge or product of this knowledge is experience. So, we are experiencing something and getting some idea. So, we are forming an idea, so impression and then idea. Hume what he is doing, limiting his inquiry to experience not going beyond that. If you are going to discuss something which is beyond our experience that makes uncertain knowledge. And therefore, we have this philosophy conclusion, but that is not beyond the doubt or there are lot of argument against that claim. So, still there is an scope for a discussion. In natural science, if you see a natural scientist, they have progressed in their area a lot because of their method. And therefore, what David Hume argued that this method we should adopt or imply were in the philosophical world. And this is what he did. Now, David Hume has a same argument as Locke argued. What he is basically doing, he is limiting to the experience. So, to experience whatever we can understand, we can know those things are important. So, you take it in this way that Locke and Hume are an empiricist and when they are saying empiricist, it only means that they are also arguing that the knowledge is product of experience. So, this is what we call empiricism. Locke and Hume have a difference. Locke has talked about many other things, rejected. Many idea. David Hume has a different way to do that. David Hume is only focusing on observation or through this observation, he is talking about the different concept. Now, in the last class, we also have discussed how Hume has distinguished between the impression and an idea. So, you have like for example, take the same example of sunburn. So, now you have sunburn, they are very clear and vivid perception. And now, you are recalling thinking of the last year's sunburn. So, this is how Hume has used this experience, empiricism as a method or empiricism as an source of the knowledge. Today, we will discuss that what how the David

Hume has argued for the causation. How he has talked about the causation. Locke had rejected this idea of substance and causation saying that is a complex idea. This is not a simple idea.

Let us see how David Hume has talked about the causation and the notion of self. Now, David Hume is arguing that all the objects of human reason or inquiry can be divided into two exclusive and exhaustive categories, relation of ideas and matters of fact. So, whatever we have the limitation of our inquiry that can be divided in two part, two different categories, relation of ideas and matter of fact. Propositions concerning the relation of the ideas are incredibly or demonstratively certain. They are known apriori, discoverable independently of experience by the mere operation of thought. So, the truth does not depend on anything actually existing. So, what the relation of idea if you remember when we are talking about in the last class the difference between the impression and the idea. And he also has argued that how this idea is connected. So, when you have saw a picture of a room or for example your old house then there are many different ideas coming which is connected to this house. So, this is how he has argued. Now, he said that this is an intuitively or demonstratively certain. Because for Hume idea is faint image of your vivid perception. So, when you are perceiving an object. For example, you saw a tomato or you saw an apple. Now, you have an impression. Redness of this or this all quality of this apple. Now, this is a very vivid perception of this apple or tomato. Now, the faint image of this vivid perception is where in idea. So, when idea means you have idea of this tomato now. So, this is what we talked about. Now, there are so many ideas. And these ideas are interconnected. And they are certain in the sense that are intuitively or demonstratively certain. Because if you see when we are perceiving things we have impression. And then impression is obviously certain. So, because the experience is the source of our knowledge. So, the impression is certain. Now, idea is also certain. So, these ideas are an intuitively or demonstratively certain. The truth of proposition concerning matter of facts depends on the way the world is. Now, he is dividing the two things. First is relation of idea. You have perceived things, you have idea, and relation of idea. Second thing is the matter of fact. Now, matter of fact is what? It depends on the way the world is. Now, all our reasoning concerning matter of fact are based on relation to cause and effect. So, when we are talking about this world, so there is a reasoning and we are talking about this relation in terms of this cause and effect. So, this is cause, this is effect and so on. So, there is a smoke. So, there is a cause of smoke is fire. So, we see that there are smoke and fire relation is some cause-and-effect relation. Now, we always seek a connection between present fact and what we infer from them. So, this is like looking for a connection. So, there is one event for over two years, another event. X and Y, then we are looking for a connection. Is there a connection between X and Y? Suppose Y is always coming or after X, then this is our natural way to understand that connection. We always seek the connection. Is there a connection between X and Y? Now, the problem is, what is this connection and how is it established? This is the whole problem is now. Problem is what Hume is arguing that when

there is a two event like happening. For example, X and Y, smoke and fire. Now, if we saw a two event, then we need to first understand that we are basically looking for a relation between X and Y. Now, we establish this relation, this relation between X and Y. So, we saw there is a fire and then there is a smoke. So, one event and then another event, one thing and another thing. So, milk and then curd. Cause and effect. So, X and then Y, cause and then effect, milk and then curd. Now, what we are doing? We are trying to understand that connection. Now, how to the problem is what is this connection? This is the main question of Hume. And if there is an any connection, how are you going to establish the relation between this cause and effect? Or how to establish relation between X and Y? Later on, we are naming it like cause and effect, but how you are going to establish this relation? This is X and this is Y and this is the relation between X and Y. Now, the relation of cause and effect is not based on apriori reasoning. For example, suppose you landed in this world with your mature mind, let us say, or let us say that the reasoning capacity. And first time you saw then smoke and fire, or let us say the fire and then smoke. Now, first time the moment you saw that this is a fire and a smoke, you may not be able to talk about this relation that there is a relation between fire and smoke. So, for example, first time you came and you have like feeling one problem that is called headache. And you also have one, for example, there is one tablet, aspirin tablet. You may not be able to understand the relation that if I am going to take it this tablet, I can remove or get away from this problem, headache. First time when you are here, first time when I am saying it only means that lately you are coming to this world as an adult with you are capable of applying your thought and reasoning. So, you do not have any experience. Now, first time you saw there is a milk and then curd. You may not be able to or it is difficult to establish a relation between this milk and curd. This is how David Hume is arguing that, that this relation of this cause and effect, it is not based on apriori reasoning. So, we cannot establish this relation. If the connection is established by an operation of reason or the understanding, it must concern the relation of idea or matter of fact. Mind cannot deduct this effect from the supposed cause. So, suppose you saw the first time there is a seed. So, looking at seed or looking at this milk, you cannot deduct this idea that this can produce something, milk can produce something. So, what this Hume is arguing that looking at any object, you cannot say that this can produce or you cannot say that this is a product of X. The effect is totally different from the cause and can never be discovered in it. You remember when we are discussing about the philosophy and the different idea relating to the philosophy, we also have talked about the cause and effect in Indian philosophy. So, in Indian philosophy has an argument about the same thing. So, they are like talking about the cause and effect. For example, the milk and curd. So, what we are saying this is cause, this is effect. Now, in Indian philosophy, not in Hume, in Indian philosophy, what they are asking, they are asking that can we talk about the pre-existence of C in M? Basically, the question is this is enough cause and effect, milk and curd. Before this causation, where the C was? Can we argue that C was in M and therefore M can produce C? So, before the smoke, before this causation,

fire and smoke, where is the smoke was? Smoke was in fire or not? So, can we talk about the pre-existence of effect in cause. Saying that this effect was already there in cause and therefore this cause is able to or this cause can produce S. Now, in Indian system, there are many ways to like answer this question. Some of them saying yes, it was there. Someone saying no, it was not there. Something is new. And someone saying that no, it was not there, but the atoms of F is an a capable of producing S, therefore only F can produce S. For example, you are saying no, the C was not in M. What does it mean? That M whatever produced C, something is new and if the C was not in M and M can produce C, what does it mean? That anything can produce anything. And therefore, there is another argument saying that no, it was not there, but what M did and the atoms of M is capable of producing the C and therefore we are talking about, we are saying this is a cause and effect. So, there are many ways to answer this question in Indian system. But however, they have a same question about the cause and effect.

How to establish the relation between the cause and effect? How to understand. What is this cause and effect, and so on. Now, he arguing that the effect is totally different from the cause and can never be discovered in it. The same thing if you take the Hume argument, so there is a milk and curd, if you take this example, then what he is arguing that look at this cause and effect. You also need to understand that whatever Hume is arguing, he is arguing in terms of experience. So, when we are arguing that this is totally different, so we are like trying to understand this idea through experience. Hume argued if causal inference does not involve apriori reasoning about relation of ideas, they must concern matter of fact and experience. When we have had many experiences of one kind of event, constantly cosine with another, we begin to think of them as a cause and effect and infer the one from the other. So, what we do basically, we saw the first time this fire and smoke. Now, as Hume argued that first time, I mean when like you came this world as a adult. Person who is capable of reasoning, I can apply this reason, arguments and so on. Now, first time you saw this fire and smoke relation, it is not difficult to talk about their relation, this is a cause and effect. Now, what you did, you experienced this relation many times. One time, two times, three times, you have seen that this is in the fire, then smoke. So, whenever there is a fire and then it is smoke. So, fire is coming first, then smoke second, 500 times, 1000 times. So, what we are doing, we are taking as an, this is a cause, this is an effect. Milk and then curd, 1000 times we have seen. Milk and then curd Since we have seen many times, we are saying we are taking this M is a cause and C is an effect. So, this is what he is arguing, he is then we are thinking that if there is if, then this will occur or if this is this, yes and then it means there is no if. Like for example, you are in the classroom or in your room and from window you saw a smoke or you think there is a smoke. Your immediate knowledge is, oh there is fire, inferring. You have seen this fire, you cannot experience from your room that there is a fire. So, what you saw, you saw just the smoke and you are inferring, oh there is a fire. Because you have seen many times the smoke and fire relation and therefore, you are arguing the moment you saw experience the smoke, you are saying

this fire. The mind is led by habit or custom to believe that the two objects in question are connected, that they will always go together. So, this is when we are saying that we have seen this fire and smoke relation 1000 times, many times this is a habit to see two things together, fire and smoke. Now, when we saw this smoke, then there are fire. When we saw the fire, there is a smoke. So, this is a habit to believe that these two objects what is connected. We always presume when we see like sensible qualities that they have secret power and accept the effects similar to those we have experienced will follow from them. But our past experience only gives us information about objects as they were when we experience them and our present experience only tell us about object we are experiencing now. He arguing that whenever we have like experience for example, smoke and fire. So, when we were like experiencing, we have only either experienced this fire and there is smoke. We presume that fire has some secret power, it can produce smoke. Milk has some secret power; it can produce curd. So, if you check your experiences, how it was in past and now what you are experiencing, when you examine your inquiry your experience, you realize that whenever we are trying to experience and experiencing, we only experience this M or C, milk or curd, the smoke and then fire. Now, so whenever you check our past experience, it only gives us information about the object as they are. So, this is what is smoke, what is fire, this is what we can come to the experience. And even in the present, if you check the fire and smoke only can tell you about what is the fire and the smoke, this is what we can know about through our experiences. Our experience of constant conjunction of object in other words, produces a belief in their connection. So, our experience we have seen like these two events together many times, thousand times. So, this produces a belief that this is your belief that there is a connection between S and F, there is a connection between M and C. So, since we have seen many times in our life, the milk and curd, so what we are doing, we are believing it, we have this experience producing a belief that there is a relation between M and C, there is a relation between milk and curd. He argued that custom of habit in the cause of the particular propensity you from after your repeated experiences of the constant conjunctions of smoke and fire. He concluded that custom alone makes us expect for future a similar train of event with those which we have appeared in the past. And this is what he called uniformity principle. The belief that the future will be like the past. So, we have seen many times this for example, the thousand times this smoke fire or the fire smoke. So, there is a fire and then the smoke. So, if there is a smoke, there is a fire. These two relations I have seen many times, milk curd example. Now, since we have seen many times, so we are concluding that or we have believed that there is a relation between this M and C, there is a relation between milk and curd. And we also expect that the similar type of event will occur even in future. So, whatever we have seen in past, it also will be going to repeat in future. And therefore, since we have seen thousand times about the smoke fire relation, the moment we saw there is a smoke, we are saying that there is a fire, there is a cause. The moment we saw there is an X, we are expecting that Y will come, we are consuming. So, this belief is an operation of mind as

unavoidable as feeling the passion of love when we receive benefits. So, I suppose there is an accent and we receive any benefit. So, this is what is the feeling of the passion of love. So, we do influence the organ, the body by volition. Now, he is talking about the cause and effect in terms of the body and mind. Let me conclude that about the cause and effect. How David Hume has argued about any cause and effect, cause and effect. So, this is what he is saying that this is a cause and this is an effect. Since we have seen thousand times, so there is now a habit to see two things together, the cause and effect. Interestingly, I also would like to bring one argument from the Indian perspective. In Indian philosophy, there is a philosopher called Charvaka and this Charvaka also has rejected and argued about this causation. He basically who Charvaka rejected, he said this relation is not possible. The cause-and-effect relation will not establish. It cannot establish relation between the cause and effect. Now, he has very simple argument. Let me put it in a very simple way. You see for example, you are establishing a relationship between this cause and effect. Since you have seen thousand times like smoke and fire relation, milk and curd relation. Now, if you want to establish a relation, you have to make sure that this fire is always going to produce a smoke and milk, curd. So, for that what we have to do, you have to check all the units of past, present and future to make sure that in all the examples, this cause, particular cause is going to produce particular effect. So, you are basically we are going to start with the relation between the smoke and fire. We are going to establish relation between this curd and milk. Now, before this establishing this relation between these two, what we have to do, we have to check all the units. Then only we can claim that okay, in the always this is fire is going to produce smoke, milk is going to produce curd. And for that we have to check all the past present and future events. And that is not possible. We cannot check all the past events, all events in the past, all event present and future. And therefore, the relation between this cause and effect is not possible to establish. You cannot establish relation between these two. This is very interesting from the Indian perspective how he has argued. Hume arguing that when we are talking about this cause and effect, basically it is our belief saying that he is arguing that there is a cause and there is an effect since we have seen this many times, this is our experience in past, many times we have seen and therefore, our belief that our experience is producing a belief that this is always coming together. So, when we see, we will expect that he will come. Now, this idea is also bringing where in this body and mind. If you can recall the Rene Descartian idea of body and mind. So, you think there is something called mind which is in a different type and body is a different type. And there is a causal relation between this body and mind. So, there is a mind and then a thought who can change in the body. Change in the sense that you can put in like for example in motion. So, this is what the Descartes argument was. What Hume is arguing that the one thing is true and we can understand through our experience is that this mind is influenced the organ of the body by volition. But the entire relation between this mind and body is mysterious. This mysterious means that through experience it is difficult to know. Remember the Hume is not going in an area where we cannot access through our

experiences. So this is how he argued that there is no way to conceive the tie that binds together volition and bodily movement. So, through experience, we cannot conceive this idea, and therefore, he is saying this is mysterious. They are cojoined but never connected. David Hume argued that the objects are not necessarily connected but the ideas are connected in our mind of association, in mind by association. The association is the result of repetition of custom and habit. So, when we establish this relation, this is not a product of or because of the experience, repeated experience. So, this is the result of repeated experience. Repeat experience means the many times we have seen. So, the idea of substance again is entirely different from a perception. Now let us talk about when we are talking about the substance. So, when we are talking about the substance, David Hume has argued that the idea of substance is very different and through perception we cannot talk about the substance. So, the idea of substance, a collection of simple ideas united by imagination which we have a common name assigned to it. So, this is how he defines the idea of substance. We have many simple ideas and when we are talking about the substance, this is just a collection of these simple ideas.

Now let us talk about the David Hume, how he has argued about the self. He writes that I always stumble on some particular perception or other of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain and pleasure. I never catch myself at any time without a perception and never can observe anything but the perception. Now through observation as David Hume has used as a method, he is trying to understand himself. Himself means the self. So now whenever I am like trying to understand myself, what I am doing, I am always looking at the perception. Looking at the perception means always whenever trying I am looking at myself. So always I find that I am this, I am that, I am fat, I am tall and so on. But all these things are just a perception. So, whenever I am trying to catch myself through experience, what we are getting just the perception. So, when we talk about self or substance, we must have an idea annex to these terms, otherwise they are altogether unintelligible. Every idea is derived from preceding impressions and we have no impression of self or substance as something simple and individual. We have therefore no idea of them in that sense. David Hume argues the idea of substance is meaningless, whether applied to matter or mind. So, when we are talking about the substance, we cannot catch, we can understand through our experiences and therefore this idea is meaningless. Even if it takes terms of matter or terms of self. He writes, the mind is a bundle or collection of different perceptions. So, this is how he concluding about self. The mind is a bundle or collection of different perceptions. We succeed one another with inconceivable rapidity and are in the perpetual flux and movement. The mind is a kind of theater where several perceptions successfully make their appearance pass, re-pass, glide away and mingle in an infinite variety of post-surreal situation. There is no simplicity in it one time or identity indifferent.

The same way, in similar way, David Hume argues that we cannot demonstrate anything concerning the nature of God. He argued about the idea of God because he is talking about

the substance. So, he said, first is that whenever I am trying to understand myself or catch myself, that we are just enough, we are catching or able to catch only the perception. So, for example, I am trying to understand myself. So, through experience obviously, then whenever I am trying to understand myself, always I am getting the idea of the perception. Perception means when I am talking about, okay, who am I? For example, I am X, I am fat, I am tall, sore, right, so on. So, this all are perception. Now this is what Hume argued that look the self is not more than the perception. So, when we are talking about the substance in terms of self, in terms of matter, is meaningless. Now he is talking about another idea that is called God. So, we cannot demonstrate anything concerning the nature of God. Demonstrating in the sense that we are through experience. Now however, there is an argument he gave from a design and the empirical proof of God's existence and the nature. For example, if you saw a very beautiful house, everything is arranged properly. So obviously, one thing comes in mind, the person who has done that, a designer who had designed this thing. So therefore, this world, this nature is in this beautiful way, it means there is someone who has done that. And this is how we can talk about the existence of God. Hume declares it hardly seems possible that anyone of good understanding should reject the idea of God, when once it is suggested to him. A purpose and intention and design are evident in everything, and when our comprehension is so far enlarged as to contemplate the first rise of this visible system. We must adopt with the strongest conviction, the idea of some intelligent cause or author. So, this is how Hume has talked about that he has accepted the idea of God. And when he is talking about the idea of self, he said that the self, if you try to understand the self, self is just a bundle of perception, not more than that. And talking about the God, he accepted the idea of God, but through perception or through experience, we may not be able to demonstrate. The idea of substance, he talked about that is meaningless. So, this is what in the conclusion, Hume has argued about the substance, the self, the self is just a bundle of perception.

So, thank you. This talk was based on these two books and the Stanford Encyclopedia online material. Thank you so much for your kind attention. Thank you.