

**Philosophy and Critical Thinking**  
**Prof. Gyan Prakash**  
**Department of Humanities & Social Sciences**  
**IIT (ISM), Dhanbad**  
**Week-01**  
**Lecture 03: Philosophy and other Subjects**

Namaskar to all. Welcome in lecture 3. Today we are going to discuss the philosophy and other subjects. So basically, I am going to explain that how philosophy is different from other subjects. So far, we have discussed what is philosophy and what is the definition of philosophy, what are the main branches of philosophy just to understand about philosophy. Today we are going to discuss little more about philosophy and how this subject is different from other subjects. One thing is common which we are claiming that philosophy is all about the truth. What we do here is we try to understand the truth. Now the question arises that what do you mean by truth? When I am saying truth and we are looking for truth and we are trying to understand the truth, the question is what is truth? And so, the simple way to answer that whatever we are perceiving is the truth, right. This is how we are trained. So, there is an object outside the mind and we believe this is true and for us the object is the truth. But the question arises is this is truth or this is the only truth or is there any other aspect of truth? So not only philosophy, if you take any other discipline for example science, for example social science and so on, they are all of them trying to understand the truth in their own way. Then the question arises how philosophy is different from the other subject. So, we will be discussing that about how philosophy is different. Let us understand that how, what is truth and how philosophy deals with the truth. Now truth when I am saying the truth, then one is very common thing when even you see a small kid, a growing kid, he is to ask so many questions about the common ideas which we have. For example, if you talk about the death, they say what is death is all about? If you ask the life, use the word life, they will ask you what is life? They will ask even you are giving in a reason that they will ask why this curiosity. Philosophy is as I have discussed in the very first class that philosophy is all about asking the question. When you have some views, then you have philosophy. The moment you start asking question that why this and why I am thinking like this, kind of like doing philosophy. Now, even you see this, as I said, when you see the small kid, they are asking about small- small thing that what is this? What is that? What is life? Philosophy also deals with same similar kind of question, but very serious way. I mean, so much more rigorous and serious problem for the philosophy. And they try to answer this question in the proper way. I mean, proper way I mean that they are giving another argument. Obviously, we will talk about the methodology and all, but let us understand first here is that what is truth. Let us take another saying by Sesbai Snegel says that the main concern of philosophy is to question and understand very common ideas that all of us use every day without thinking of them. So we are, as I said, we are trained in particular way and we are taking things as a very normal way, right. For example, the existence of external world. So, we are in this world and we are behaving in particular way and with this belief that there is an object outside of your mind. The question is, is this world is real? Is this world which we are taking as a real world, is it real or is it not real? Now, what does it mean when I am saying it is real or not real? What is real? How to understand? We will be discussing this, we will be addressing this question throughout this course from the different aspect, from different school

of thought. But let us understand this question about the existence of external world. There is a question that is an object which is an outside of your mind is there, is there means a real? Real means the independent existence of your mind. It is not projection, it is not illusion of your mind and it is a true, real. This is the question in Philosophy, meaning not only the western, even the Indian Philosophy, many Indian school of thought they have talked about and they have discussed this. Now, I will give you one example. Once I was walking on a street, right. I went to the village and then I was walking on a street and then suddenly I found, saw that there is a snake on a street and the snake was not moving. So, I tried to use my experience in the sense that I made some sound, I knew something, but I found that the snake is not moving and the size of snake was not long, very short. Then one thing came in my mind, maybe this snake is not real snake, this is just a toy. But with this thought, what I did, I was about to test that object. For me, it was a toy, for others, I do not know, by the time. Someone close me saying, okay, okay, do not touch that, but that is another real snake. If you will touch, then they will move. Not only you touch, not going to move. The idea is, how will I know, I mean, is it any way to understand the world outside of you? This example is not clear. Then take an example of a dream, when we are dreaming. So many times, what we do is we are taking a dream as a real. While dreaming, for us, dream is real. And what we are doing, we are behaving accordingly. For us, it is in a real world. Once your dream is over, then you may say that, Oh, it was a dream. But by dreaming, it is very difficult to talk about. You will not have even a question in your mind whether to doubt or not doubt. I mean, you are not going to doubt that. The question will not come in your mind. Because for you that is real. But after some time, not real? Now let us understand similarly, suppose many times in my dream, I have done this. I have discussed the philosophy. Now again, I am discussing how to understand this dream. How to know, is there any way to understand that whatever is there, an object outside of my mind is real? To, check that, I mean, for you ask me, I have only one way to ask. Suppose there is a friend, if you ask me, check whether your friend is real or not real. What I will do? Maybe I will ask her. Still, I have a doubt what I will do. I just achieve. If you are responding properly, then for me is how we do that. An object, pick the object. If efficiency is there, it is an object. You can any pen and pencil, if I ask anyone, check whether this object is real or not real. I will write. Oh yeah, it is pen, Oh yeah, it is pencil. This is how we do that. But if you try to understand, a dream or example, then you realize that that is not right. That is not only way to check or maybe it is not, there is no way to check whether it is real or not real. Once it is over, then only we can say, oh, it was dream. It was not real. Philosophy deals with this problem, about the reality. Whether there is a world outside, there or not there. That is what we are talking a lot about the idea, not going to talk about your experience and so on. And that is why I have been saying that this course is a very important course because here what we do, we deal with a very basic. You have a very basic belief and what you are going to do, you are going to question that belief, you are going to question that idea, which you have. Philosophy is a very important subject in that sense. And if there is a truth, then what is the nature? I will give you another example. Maybe it will be easy to understand. For example, suppose you like an actor or an actress and this particular actor is playing a different character in a different movie. You like this person, but it is not in his real personality, typically because he is playing a different character. One movie, different character, next movie different character, that obvious our curiosity is, I want to know about his real personality. In our world,

everything is changing. Our mind is always asking us, is there something that is real, something which is real? And what is truth? If this is not, then what is that? And if yes, is there something like that, then what is the nature, right? This is how science and even the philosophy trying to understand this world, the reality. The question arises, is it possible to find a truth?

Now, there is many ways to answer this question. I mean, many ways in the sense that answer yes, we can. But how? There is one way is your reasoning, which we are doing in philosophy. And other ways with, we have nothing. And we are proving that. Philosophy has a different way to find that truth. How it is and what is all about, let us understand.

First, we are going to understand from the Indian perspective. I am just giving you a very general idea. And when I will be discussing this concept well in detail in Indian school of thought. So, in Indian system or Indian philosophical system, they have more or less not all the school of thought.

There are three kinds of three levels of reality. First is, Prātibhāsika Satya. Satya is reality. So Prātibhāsika Satya. So, Prātibhāsika Satya means that in your dream, illusion, for example, what you did, you went to the, you are walking on a street or maybe in the evening you went somewhere and you saw there is a snake. So, you are not going to check whether this is a real snake or not a snake, whether it is a real tiger or not a tiger. So, you saw a tiger, you have to behave accordingly. You saw a snake, you are going to behave accordingly. So you are going to maybe, you are going to call someone or you are going to bring some more light. The moment you got some light, you saw, oh, it is a snake. It is not a snake, it is a rope. But a rope, because of dim light, because of no light, appearing as a snake, for a few moments, for you it is real. And you have to behave accordingly. You cannot go and just check all the time whether it is a real or not real, Prātibhāsika Satya.

Next is Vyavahārika Satya, what we are practical reality, what we are like doing now. I have examinations, so we have to set the question paper. We have examination, have to prepare for the examination, we have to read everything, have to revise, have to write exam and so on. So, this is the practical Vyavahārika.

Third one is Pāramārthika, that is Supreme Reality. Reality which is beyond this change, because in our world everything is changing. Maybe this is not real, real something which is beyond the change, beyond the time person. There is something which is beyond this world. I mean, beyond this world means beyond this ultimate reality. It is ultimately true. Not for today, not for tomorrow, even for the day after tomorrow. It is beyond the time person.

So, philosophy also talks a lot about the ultimate reality. This is the Indian philosophy. They are going to Indian philosophy. They have talked a lot about, they have argued about the ultimate reality. What is it, right? Now, again, we have a question that in for, take an example from the western world that what is the definition of truth, how we are going to do it.

So there are in this session and this class, I am going to talk about three theories of the truth just for your idea. Give an idea that how philosophy deals with and about the world and the reality. Just to give you an idea about how philosophy is in a different from other subjects. The first one is the corresponding theory of truth. This says that if your belief is true and only if it corresponds to a fact, means whatever you have name of belief, if there is something like that in the outer world, then this is true. For example, Devadatta Sings, I have a belief. But if it is not truth, if there is someone who is Devadatta, who I am referring to, and he is not able to sing, so this is called a mirror reality. So, there is in a real world and this is in our belief system also

in the same reality. Now, second one is mirror reality. Now, the problem is we are talking a lot or giving only importance to a substance. First one, I have a belief that there is an X and what I saw, there is an X. Therefore, I am saying, oh, this is real. In reality, I just, I was discussing about whether this world is real, not real. How can we take this as real? Real is real, not real, our perception. Because many times our sense organ is not giving the right information. So, there is another theory of truth is called coherence theory. It says that if a belief is true, if only if it is part of coherent system of beliefs. Suppose you have a belief, if it is true, if it is coherent with other set of beliefs. You have many ideas, many beliefs. Now, if one belief is true, it goes well with all the beliefs. Now, third one is truth says that if truth is only true with only belief system or beliefs is true only if and only if it is useful. So, this is the way how they have talked about the truth and the reality.

Now let us understand as I have said that about the reality, about the truth, science, all of them that they are trying to understand the reality. They are trying to understand the reality. Now, how this different from philosophy? So, one question is, very important question is, methodology. If you understand the methodology, it will be easy to understand and the philosophy and the other subject. So, there are many methodologies we can talk about, not in philosophy, in overall, or you can say popular methodology, methodology that is first in observation. Sometime what we do is use this methodology and we are observing something and we are giving very and we are going to talk about the truth, going to talk about the world, talked about the reality. In other way is experimentation. So, we are doing a lot of things, physically we are involved in something and then we are proving, look, there is an X. So even you have proved a particular way, if someone is asking, I can show him, look, this is how you can, you will get the X and this is how we can say there is X. So, observation, experimentation, this kind of methodology. So you say, you understand in this way, one is in a physical way where we are physically involved and one is like mentally thinking a lot. Analysis, I am not saying that this is the only matter. I am just trying to give an idea of the methodology. So, when we are analyzing something, there is a concept, analyzing the concept, we are giving an argument in support of a claim. So there is a, if I want to argue that there is an X, what I am doing, I am thinking, I am using my reasoning, I am using my arguments and saying, claiming that, so this is, look, there is an X, hence therefore there is an X. Arguments is an important part.

In philosophy, there is no empirical confirmation. Suppose even I am claiming that there is an X, but if you ask me, do you have any proof in philosophy, we are not going to confirm empirically, this is how you can say, Oh, there is an X. So in philosophy, what we do, we think, I mean, there are many different way, maybe you can use a reasoning, an argument, giving an argument in support of claim and proving that, oh, there is an X, there is a not X and so on. For philosophy, argument is everything. The thought process is everything. And that is why in first class, I said in philosophy, you will be learning how to think. Because here we give importance to argument, very important for philosophy is argument. You have a proper argument, your claim is valid. They are going to accept. So even in Western philosophy, as well as in Indian philosophy, we will see that how they have presented an argument for any claim, for example, there is X. Suppose they are going to talk about the mind-body problem. For example, whether we have mind or we do not have. I mean, what I mean is there is a mind and body, the two substances. We will learn later on what is substance and all, but just for your idea, for example,

we used to talk a lot about the soul and the body and on let us say the mind and the body. Is there a two different thing or the same thing, mind-body problem? So, we say that mind is different, body is different, different kind. So, I suppose I proved true argument, proving means I am giving a proper argument. So, I am presenting an argument and trying to prove that, look, there is a body, which is different from mind. So, mind and body is two different kind of substance. So, in philosophy, argument is everything. So, the question is, is philosophy a science? So, if you ask me this question, I say yes, because philosophy as well as science is trying to understand the reality or say the philosophy also and science is splitting the reality. So, philosophy in that sense is science where philosophy, we also as a student of philosophy, we also talk about the reality. For example, what is life? What is death? What is this life and is there a life before this life and so on? Science also is trying to understand this reality and this life, this world. Now, but if you talk about the methodology, philosophy is a different from science. As I said, in philosophy there is no empirical confirmation. So, what we are saying as a student of philosophy, what I am claiming, I have arguments. So, I can present the argument in order to prove that this is one thing, this is real. But I cannot give you an empirical confirmation. I cannot give you proof, empirical proof for my claim. In philosophy, argument is everything. Let us take Indian philosophy or Western philosophy, they have a proper argument, they have a proper explanation of their theory. So one, like for example, Indian philosophical system, Buddhism, Jainism or Vedanta philosophy, Nyāya philosophy, they are going to talk about the reality, Vaisesika philosophy, we will talk about the reality. They have explanation, they have a theory, but if you ask them to prove empirically, it will be next to impossible or it is not possible in that system. Methodologically, philosophy is different from science.

But as I said that as a student of philosophy, I am doing the same thing. Now, take another subject is called psychology. Let me tell you the psychology earlier it was not different from the philosophy. It is split in the 20th century, earlier it was same. So, let us say the Buddhist philosophy, Buddhist psychology, Indian psychology and so on. Now, important question is, is philosophical discussion worthy? If you understand, if you have understood the methodology of philosophy, where we talk a lot about argument or we can say we give only importance to the argument, a question is, is this kind of discussion is worthy? For me, it is a very important discussion. In philosophy, we think and we discuss a lot about the abstract knowledge. And this discussion is an important because here we are trying to understand the one reality from a different aspect. Philosophy discussion is very important not only for a philosopher, not only for the student of philosophy for everyone. Because in philosophy, you will learn that how to argue. So you have an idea or let us say that there is a reality and you see this reality from a very different perspective. Now, you can present your argument in support of your claim. In philosophy, first you need to understand that is not only one way to see the one object. This is what we will be discussing while discussing in a philosophy, I mean philosophical school of theory. In philosophy, if you are discussing or let us say in philosophical discussion, first argument is everything. And this kind of training or this kind of discussion gives you a tool to analyze the concept. And this is a very important in the sense that even you have this kind of training, it will be very easy to handle with any kind of problem, professional problem, professional problem where you can use these tools. So philosophy discussion for me is worthy in many senses. First is even for that is very useful, not only in professional, even the personal life. Second, even in the discipline, what we do, we are trying to understand one reality from the other aspect or from different aspects. So there is

a one reality we are trying to understand from a different perspective. Therefore, philosophical discussion is a very important. I will give you an example then it may like be easy to understand why philosophical discussion is. Suppose you have a question in your mind, whether this life is the only life or is it in life before this life and so on. Let us take our first question, today's question that is this world which is outside of our mind real or it is not outside of mind, it is just on a projection. How to understand this world? How to understand this object which I believe it is in a different form or it is on the outside of my mind? It exists independently from my mind. And if you ask this question in Indian philosophical system, one school of thought will say, this object is there and it is real. So you have an idea of this object because you have experienced this object. Other school of thought may argue that, okay, this object is not outside of your mind, just projection of you. So, there is an object because you have an idea of this object and you are and your mind is projecting this object. Therefore, there is an object in outside of your mind in the real world, external world. Other school of thought may argue that, okay, arguing that this object is not a projection. This object neither projection, not real, just an illusion. So, there is another object and appearing as something. For example, Prātibhāsika Satya, a group appearing as a snake. How we are going to explain this snake idea? So, there is an argument, there is a snake for you even for a moment because you have an idea of snake. You have read somewhere even you have not seen your life, but you have read about that. Otherwise, for you to be difficult to perceive an object, a rope as a snake. So, there is one reality and there are different kind of next. And that is why philosophical discussion is, I would say, philosophical training is very important. In this course, what we will be doing, we will be trying to understand this reality from a different aspect. I mean different aspect I mean, philosophy and their argument. Because for us argument is everything.

For references, this first book by Jadunath Sinha, the outline of Indian philosophy is an important book if you want to understand. And any philosophical concept, Stanford Encyclopedia is online material. And you will get the important explanation or very basic explanation on Stanford Encyclopedia in search of online material. Thank you so much for your attention. Thank you.