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Lecture 5. The problem of consciousness in philosophy

PLAN

1. The problem of consciousness in philosophy
2. The origin of consciousness. Forms and levels of reflection
3. The structure of consciousness. Self-consciousness

1. The study of the history of philosophy once again proves that the problem of consciousness is the most difficult and the most mysterious. The world stands before the eyes of a person, numerous objects, their properties, events and processes. People learn the secrets of the world, explain the reasons for their excitement when they encounter beauty and sometimes ugliness, search for the source of their ideas etc. But all these - moods, feelings and thoughts reach us through what is called consciousness. Consciousness is a person's companion in mastering the world. In order to enter the world of consciousness, it is not enough to simply think, be excited, feel, perceive; for this, some kind of additional acts are necessary, with the help of which I simply think, "I must think that I am excited", I do not simply know something, but "I know that I know" etc.

Consciousness is a special condition unique to a person, with which the world and at the same time the person himself is understandable. Consciousness - instantly connects what a person sees, hears, feels, thinks and experiences. Many philosophers define consciousness as the wonder of wonders of the world, the greatest and divine gift revealed to man. It is presented to itself as "I" only through consciousness. "I" is the one who rises to the highest peak of spiritual existence. Here is suffering and love, friendship, joy, etc. feelings play an important role. Consciousness is not only a wonder of the world, but also a pain and torture.

In the history of philosophical ideas, the problem of consciousness has two levels of its solution. The first concerns the description of the ways in which things are brought to consciousness and exist there. In philosophical language, this consciousness is the description of the phenomenon. Second, it aims to explain the possibility of consciousness itself, or more precisely, the phenomenon itself. The levels indicated in ancient and modern philosophy were not distinguished, so it was considered that if the methods of existence of things in consciousness were described, then the question of the nature of consciousness was solved. In the 20th century, philosophers began to emphasize the possibility of the independence of consciousness. Since consciousness does not exist as a separate object or thing, it is very difficult to understand, describe and define it. Everything is given to us thanks to consciousness. It connects all our perceptions, feelings, thoughts in an instant, and it does all this independently of us, outside of our

control, without our consent. Consciousness cannot be excluded from the wealth of these connections, because they cannot exist without consciousness. Therefore, until the 20th century, philosophy was concerned with describing the ways in which things exist in the mind. In the 20th century, the situation changed. Scientists asked more questions about consciousness and answered them in different ways.

It should be noted that what is the consciousness of each period? - answered the question according to his ideas. As a result, what was called consciousness in one era was not called consciousness in other eras. Conceptions of consciousness have been closely related to the rules of the prevailing world view. It is not accidental that ancient cosmocentrism, theocentrism of the Middle Ages and anthropocentrism of the New Age formed different meanings of consciousness. In turn, how people of this or that period understand consciousness, their world images, how they understand spirituality, politics, art etc. was dependent. Because consciousness is always confused with the language of real life. **Consciousness is immaterial. Consciousness is extremely difficult to describe. His reality becomes hidden, slippery and elusive.**

In the history of philosophy, there have been many different positions and concepts regarding consciousness. **The materialist concept** believed that consciousness is the result of the long-term evolution of matter. Matter, nature has always existed, and man appeared later. Consciousness is a property and product of the highly developed manifestation of matter, the human brain.

Materialist philosophers of ancient philosophy: **Democritus, Epicurus, Lucretius Kar**, etc. claimed that consciousness depends on the human body. It "soul, consciousness" is formed when a person is born. If the child's hearing and feeling are weak, and there are no thoughts, these are all due to the improvement and development of the body. It gradually arises and develops in relation to thinking. If the body is weak, the consciousness weakens as it decays, disappears. According to Democritus and Epicurus, there is a thin layer of atoms under the surface of the body, which receives the external signal and converts it into consciousness. The bearers of the consciousness (soul) are those material "images", "a soul without a body is an empty word, it is useless".

Ancient Greek philosopher **Heraclitus' doctrine** of "logos", words, ideas, thoughts, etc. it forms the essence of all material things. **Sophists**, especially **Socrates**, for the first time in the history of philosophy put forward the idea of distinguishing material and ideal, things and ideas. **Plato**, on the other hand, set the special "World of Ideas" against the "Material World" and considered the first to be decisive.

Objective and subjective idealism put consciousness (soul), regardless of its form ("World spirit", "Absolute idea", human consciousness, etc.) as the basis of material reality, and considered it a determining and primary substance compared to matter. From **Plato to Hegel**, Fichte, **Schelling, Berkeley** and others have tried to justify in various ways that reality depends on consciousness. J. Berkley justified the determination of

consciousness ("soul") by its activity. Although Hegel called consciousness "subjective spirit", he eventually equated it with "objective spirit". In the philosophy of the new era, especially in the XVII-XVIII works, certain changes have taken place in relation to consciousness. **R. Descartes** argued that consciousness (soul) determines the existence of reality. He said that if I object to the existence of a certain event and process, then "I think". But you can only think about what exists. Therefore, "if I think, I exist." "If I stop thinking, then I don't exist." According to him, only "thinking thing - spirit, intelligence, consciousness - is the basis of existence". "Soul, consciousness thinks, soul, body moves, lives". Consciousness, thinking is the activity of the "thinking substance", it exists independently, it does not depend on the body, the material. Matter is also independent of "thinking substance". Descartes thus tried to combine the positions of materialism and idealism in relation to consciousness, but he preferred intelligence and understanding, not faith.

Some philosophers belonging to the materialism of the 18th century (**B. Spinoza, D. Diderot, etc.**) called consciousness an attribute of matter, its eternal property inherent in all forms and types of its manifestation. They believed that not only living beings, not the brain, but all material world objects are conscious, they have the ability to get dirty. This view is called "hylozaism" in the history of philosophy ("hilo" is object, substance, and "zoil" means life, consciousness in Greek).

19th century, the position of vulgar materialism related to the name of physiologists-naturalists such as K. Vogt, L. Büchner and **Y. Molescott was also spread**. Supporters of that view considered consciousness to be material, like the brain and materialized and equated both of them. They said that the brain secretes consciousness just as the liver secretes bile. The idea of identifying the brain with consciousness is materialist philosopher **I. Disgen** (1828 - 1898) seriously criticized it. He showed that if the soul does not differ from the table, and the color does not differ from the voice, then how do these things differ from each other? Some philosophers have called vulgar materialists "brainless philosophers" and have noted that calling thought material is a false step towards confusing materialism with idealism.

20th century, the founders of **empiriocriticism (criticism of experience)**, **E. Max** and **R. Avenarius**, did not accept the idea that consciousness and emotion are products of the brain. However, they fell into idealism by considering both "me" and the environment as consisting of "emotional complexes". According to them, in one case, all objects are "emotional complexes", then the brain is also an object, therefore, it is an "emotional complex". Putting "emotional complexes" at the basis of everything is "pure idealism".

There are two interrelated methods for studying consciousness. The first **objective method** is called. This method determines the content of a person's mental processes based on his real actions and behavior. **The second method called introspection (self-**

organization, self-observation) is based on the control of a person's consciousness. In a general philosophical sense, the following four patterns are manifested in the mutual relations between consciousness and matter; **historical, ontological, epistemological and praxeological (related to practical activity)**. The **historical perspective implies** that matter existed long before consciousness. Consciousness arose at a later stage of the evolution of matter. Its history is only 2.5-3 million years. From the **ontological point** of view, it should be shown that matter is primary in relation to consciousness. Consciousness is derived from it. Consciousness is a property of highly structured matter, that is, the human brain. According to the **epistemological approach**, consciousness is a subjective image of the objective world that exists outside of us. The process of its occurrence is related to human senses and thinking. Finally, the **praxeological approach** means that consciousness is the regulator of the relationship between man and the environment. All practical activities of a person are possible thanks to his consciousness.

It is impossible to explore the social nature and essence of consciousness outside the **concept of soul**. However, for many years, this concept has not been paid enough attention. The soul is the central concept that expresses the spiritual world of man. It shows the inner integrity of the human psyche. At the same time, the inner content of the soul consists of a number of events. These are mind, will, character, temperament, memory, emotion and others. The concept of soul was removed from the theory in the philosophy of the Soviet era. It was considered a religious idealistic concept. Science used the concepts of psyche and consciousness instead. When talking about the soul, it should be pointed out that the soul of each person is a purely individual phenomenon. It organizes and expresses the unique characteristics of that personality. According to ancient concepts, the soul does not arise. He exists forever. The soul itself is completely free from the external world and the human body. It has its own independent life. The soul is the bearer and cause of a person's thoughts, feelings and desires. However, such an explanation of the soul is not enough. Because no matter how magical it is, the soul is formed and developed in connection with the natural abilities of a person, upbringing, education, place in society and general culture. In this sense, the soul of each person expresses the character, temperament, manner of behavior that belongs to him. Its content includes thoughts, desires and wishes, voluntary qualities. In addition to this uniqueness, the soul is a quality inherent in all human beings. Therefore, it is possible to talk about the human soul as a whole. The soul is inseparably connected with the body. Therefore, the life of the body is the life of the soul, and vice versa, no living body can exist without a soul.

The development of science and numerous observations prove that the **human soul is a function of consciousness and brain**. It is in the process of the development of the brain that the soul and consciousness of a person develops. Their inseparable connection can also be seen from the fact that when a person corrupts his brain by consuming alcohol

and drugs, his spirit, consciousness and spirituality as a whole decline. For a long time, ideas about the parallel activity of consciousness and the brain prevailed in science. Consciousness was shown to be located in the upper part of the brain or in the spaces inside the brain. According to this idea, consciousness is located in the brain just as fog is located on the ground and honey is located in a beehive. It is sometimes thought that consciousness is an active entity. It uses the brain as a tool to accomplish its purpose. Thus, consciousness is described as another person existing in a kind of person.

What is the relationship between consciousness and soul? Consciousness is one of the manifestations of the soul. It is also a very important and profound form. In life, the concepts of consciousness and soul are often used in the same sense. In fact, the soul has a wider content. For example, feelings are certain states of mind. But they cannot be equated with consciousness. At this point, it seems that the synonym of the word soul is not consciousness, but a broader concept of psyche. Based on the above, consciousness can be defined as follows: **Consciousness is the highest function of the brain that belongs only to humans and is related to language.** This function includes the generalized and purposeful perception of reality, the premeditation of actions and the foresight of their consequences, the intelligent regulation of human behavior, and self-control.

2. Consciousness did not appear suddenly ready-made. It is the result of a long evolution. The separation of man from the animal world and labor play an important role in the creation of consciousness. There are a number of complex issues regarding the origin of consciousness. The first of them is how consciousness arises from matter. After all, as it was said above, consciousness appeared at a certain stage of the development of matter. It is appropriate to start the explanation of this process from the concept of reflection. **What is reflection? reflections is revealed in the interaction of objects. The ability of any object to retain the traces of another object affecting it is called reflection.** In a general sense, three main forms of **reflection** are distinguished from each other: **reflection in inanimate nature, reflection in the organic world and social reflection.** Inanimate nature is formed as a result of the interaction of various material systems. It acts in the form of mechanical deformation of objects, disintegration, electromagnetic forces, chemical changes and other forms. An example of inanimation in inanimate nature is the heating of the surface of a stone by the influence of the Sun. This form of **reflection** is mainly characterized by being passive. Because physico-chemical processes prevail here. The further development of **reflection** was related to the global evolutionary process taking place in the universe. The origin of life on our planet was a very important qualitative stage in the evolution of the universe. He also introduced a fundamentally new form of research - **biological research (organic world).** This is a more complex form and goes through certain stages in its development; **irritation, sensation and psyche.** In the process of the evolution of **reflection**, historical forms are

created that prepare the emergence of consciousness. The first of them is called **irritation**. **Irritability means such a vital property of the body that it reflects the effects of the internal and external environment in the form of irritations and response reactions.** This quality means of controlling and regulating the activity (behavior) of the body adapting to the environment. Therefore, irritation is present in all living things and expresses their response to the external environment. This form is manifested starting from plants, which are the most primitive level of the living world. For example, plants open their leaves under the influence of light and close them under the influence of darkness. With the emergence of the central nervous system in organisms, a new, relatively high form of consciousness **appears**. It constitutes the next stage in the development of consciousness: **Sensation means the body's ability to feel the properties of objects affecting it.** Emotions belong only to animals and humans. As the name suggests, this form is related to the activity of sense organs. Finally, as a result of the formation of vertebrates, the highest level of evolution of organism, the highest form of **reflection** – psyche arises. **Psyche manifests itself as a function of the nervous system, beginning with animals.** The further development of the psyche occurs in connection with the development of the nervous system. In vertebrate animals, the brain acts as a direct carrier of the psyche. In this way, the ability of organisms to understand becomes more advanced and complex. So, unlike other organs, the work of the brain is not limited to small-scale tasks (digesting food, pumping blood into the veins, cleaning the body of harmful substances, etc.). Its main activity is to control the relationship of the organism as a whole with the environment under certain conditions.

The highest level of reflection is social reflection. It forms all forms of social consciousness, as well as a new area of the human psyche of **reflection**, individual **reflection** related to the activity of consciousness, abstract thinking.

When explaining the historical forms of the emergence of consciousness, attention should also be paid to **instincts**. **Instinct means a certain ring of unconditioned reflexes, a sequence of reflex movements.** What precedes them acts as a driving point for what follows, and to know what instincts are, it is necessary to distinguish two types of movement in animals. One of them is innate actions (feeding, self-protection, reproduction etc.). The second type of actions is based on the experience gained by each animal during its individual development. Instincts are complex in nature. The first implication seems to be that they are actions based on intelligence. In fact, it is not like that. Because instinct is justified only in unchanging conditions. As the circumstances change, it is revealed that he is unconscious. The second type of movement of animals carries a relatively high level, they can even be considered elementary thinking. For example, long-distance birds orient themselves to the sun during the day and to the stars at night. This has been gained in them based on the experience of many generations. Chimpanzees and dolphins are considered to be relatively highly intelligent among

animals. Observations show that chimpanzees are able to change the shape of objects and use them as tools. They act according to the properties of objects while building a nest for themselves. These and other facts prove that there are elements of mental actions in the behavior of higher animals.

3. In a general sense, four important aspects can be shown in the structure of consciousness:

1) **Object consciousness** - that is, understanding of objects and processes of the external world.

2) **Experience (sensation)** - expressing a certain attitude to the content of the object being viewed.

3) **Self-consciousness** - self-consciousness occupies a very important place in consciousness. It is sometimes suggested that self-consciousness exists alongside consciousness, outside of it. In fact, self-consciousness acts as its higher level within consciousness. Self-awareness refers to the study of one's own thoughts and feelings, interests and goals. In other words, in this case, the inner world of a person acts as an object of consciousness. Thus, self-awareness is a person's understanding of his actions, feelings and thoughts, behavioral motives, interests, and his place in society. Self-awareness and self-reflection are only human qualities. Indeed, in the "I" of every person, at least three images can be distinguished: **a) how a person perceives himself in the current situation; b) how he imagines the ideal of his "I"; s) how his "I" looks in the eyes of others.** Self-awareness is related to a person's ability to look at himself from the outside. It gives a person the opportunity to critically approach his acts of consciousness. This means that the subject compares everything that belongs to his inner world with what comes from the outside, differentiates them from them, and thus studies his inner self more deeply. Animals also have certain elementary knowledge (of course, in a relative sense) about the events around them. But unlike them, a person has knowledge about his own knowledge. That is, a person finally he knows what he knows. In addition to all this, a person also knows that there is a whole ocean beyond his knowledge, that is, that he does not know. The fact that a person has knowledge about himself, his measuring his actions, helps to organize his activities and communication with others correctly. The formation and development of self-consciousness is a social nature. This means that the self-consciousness of each person is formed in communication with others, in an inseparable relationship with the evaluative attitudes they give. Self-awareness is closely related to the concept of reflection. Reflection is the self-reflection that an individual acquires by looking into the magical depths of his inner spiritual life. It helps a person to understand the processes taking place in his soul, in his inner spiritual world. It is thanks to him that a person can reach the richness of his inner world. As an intelligent being, man constantly measures his actions. After doing them, he analyzes the obtained results, summarizes them and takes a certain lesson. Self-awareness is historically variable and

dynamic. In each period, it has a complex structure. The following three levels can be mentioned here. **The first level** is relatively simple and expresses how a person feels and what kind of mood he has. At this level, self-consciousness takes on a purely personal dimension, it is directed to the individual's own situation. In this case, the relation to the material reality goes into the background. **The second stage (step)** is the understanding that a person belongs to this or that society, culture, social group and form of ethnic unity. As you can see, this is a very high level. Its main content is the understanding of mutual relations with the above-mentioned forms of unity to which a person belongs, to what extent he follows the norms and requirements put forward by them. **The third, highest level of self-consciousness represents the emergence of a person's perfect, exhausted I**". At this stage, the individual realizes that his "I" has similar aspects to the "I" of other people. However, his "I" is unique. At this stage, a person considers freedom to be the meaning of life, freely chooses his own actions and behavior. He values them and understands that he is responsible for them to other people and society as a whole. This level of self-awareness is the ability of a person to deeply observe himself, analyze himself and when necessary, he has qualities such as self-judgment (conscience), self-reflection and self-discipline.

4) Non-conscious processes - unconscious (subconscious) means a set of mental events, situations and actions that are not expressed in consciousness, are located outside of intelligence, are not taken into account and are not controlled for that moment. The doctrine of the unconscious sphere, its place and role in human behavior was created by the famous **Austrian psychiatrist Z. Freud** (1856-1939). He wrote about it that I brought people to the top of the volcano and forced them to look into the raging crater of the unconscious. Freud's teaching is called psychoanalysis. It is based on the observation and study of the subconscious states of the psyche. Freud divided the human psyche into three levels. **The lowest level** is called "he". This layer is beyond the limits of consciousness. There are past experiences, various kinds of biological desires and passions, and unrealized emotions. Above this vast base of unconsciousness rises a **second, not so great level**. Freud called it the "I". Finally, the third and final stage is considered **the "super self"**. It includes the ideal of society, social norms and prohibitions. According to Freud, the unconscious plays a primary and controlling role in this hierarchy. According to him, spiritual activity is like an iceberg. Its main part is hidden under water and driven by underwater currents. There are very dark, unrealized elements and instincts here. They are suppressed and hidden by intelligence and social norms. These elements of the unconscious sphere are looking for an opportunity to show their power. Such an opportunity arises when the body is weak, sick, and in moments of fear. Freud considered passions and desires to be the determining factor of a person's life activity. According to him, these wishes require their own payment. According to Freud, when a person is in a normal state, the soul censors and oppresses the unconscious. Therefore, the latter

manifests itself in an abnormal state (dreaming, neurosis, psychosis, etc.). Thus, there is an eternal conflict between consciousness and unconsciousness. Freud greatly exaggerated the role of the unconscious sphere in human behavior and actions. This, as a result, lowers the social essence of man, his importance as an intelligent being. At the same time, selecting the unconscious sphere and analyzing it professionally is considered Freud's service. The role of the **Swiss psychologist and psychiatrist K. Jung** (1875-1961) in understanding the nature of the unconscious should also be mentioned. Unlike Freud, he focused on the collective rather than the personal side of the unconscious. According to him, the unconscious acts as an older, archaic layer created by the psyche in the distant past. This he called archetypes. According to Jung, this "collective unconscious form" is related to the joint activity of people, the life of the tribe. They occupy a place in the psyche of people and the inheritance is passed from generation to generation. Archetypes can appear as devils, demons, people and events, as well as in mythological form. The archetype invades the human psyche with its muscular force and forces it to go beyond human limits. Generally speaking, consciousness and unconsciousness are two relatively independent aspects of a single mental activity. They interact, however, conflicts and contradictions also appear between them.