

**Lecture 7.**  
**Philosophical meaning of human**

**PLAN**

1. Philosophy about human nature
2. Unity of social and biological aspects in man
3. The meaning of life, death, immortality

Issues related to man, his existence, origin, meaning of life, death and immortality are covered in a special section of philosophy. **This section is called philosophical anthropology (meaning the study of man).** M. Scheler, the founder of anthropology, showed that all the central problems of philosophy can essentially be reduced to the human problem. The current increasing attention to the human problem is explained by the **following reasons. First of all**, the role of man in modern social development is constantly increasing. It has a strong influence on social processes and the course of the world as a whole. **On the other hand**, in terms of the results of modern scientific and technical progress, it is required to approach the relationship between man and technology in a new way. **Finally**, the global problems facing humanity now threaten human existence. Therefore, their solution is closely related to people. Unlike specific sciences (sociology, psychology, medicine, biology) that study man, philosophy treats him as a whole. The 18th century French philosopher Helvetius pointed out the necessity of a holistic and comprehensive approach to man and wrote, "The science of man in its full sense is limitless, studying it is a long and difficult task. Man is like a model of various artists put on display for viewing. Everyone looks at one aspect of it, but no one has yet been able to cover it in its entirety. "What is a person? At first glance, it may seem that this is not such a serious question. Because it seems to everyone, regardless of who they are, that they can answer this question (at least in a normal conversational sense). In fact, it is very difficult to give a scientific answer to this question. Man is one of the most complex and mysterious objects. Many issues still remain undiscovered in the explanation of its essence. The essence of man is as mysterious as the universe. In this sense, its study cannot be considered finished. As science penetrates its depths, it becomes more clear that there are many layers that have not been revealed. Therefore, one lifetime is not enough to fully learn a person. But this is a very honorable job. There is nothing more interesting to a person than to learn about himself. One of the sages said: "If you have spent your whole life studying people, then you can say that your life has not been wasted." Therefore, since ancient times, mankind has tried to approach man as a whole from a philosophical point of view. Philosophical approach to man involves discovering his essence, determining the specific historical determination of his activity, revealing various forms of historical existence. Philosophical anthropology was created as an official science in Germany by M. Scheler and G. Plesner at the beginning of the

last century. However, this does not mean that teachings about man did not exist before then. The first ideas about man were expressed in ancient Indian and Chinese philosophical teachings. For example, in the Vedas and Upanishads were shown the spirituality of man and ways to free him from passions. Here, the union of the individual soul (atman) with the world soul, the universal principle (brahman) took the main place. In the teachings of Confucianism and Taoism, which were widespread in ancient China, human moral behavior was connected with nature and the universe, and issues of upbringing were in the center of attention. In general, the humanistic attitude to the natural and social world of man, and the improvement of his inner world, took the main place in the thought of the Ancient East. In the early period of ancient Greek philosophy, certain interesting ideas about man were put forward. But the true turn towards man was made by the sophists and Socrates. Protagoras, a prominent representative of the Sophists, wrote; "Man is the measure of all existences." Socrates paid special attention to the inner world of man. In his principle of ethical rationalism, he showed that goodness is inextricably linked with knowledge. According to him, moral improvement means the understanding of truth. In the teaching of Democritus, man is a part of nature, made up of atoms. The human soul is made up of atoms, and as soon as the body dies, it also dies. Plato, unlike him, emphasized the soul in man. He showed that it is precisely because of the soul that man exists. The body is matter that is the enemy of the soul. In Aristotle's concept, man has a social essence. In his opinion, another important quality of man is having reason and intelligence. In a word, in ancient philosophy, man was taken as a microcosm subject to the supreme beginning - destiny. In medieval philosophy, man was described as an existence created by God. Christianity clearly showed that, he is "the image and likeness of God". Azifa is to be reunited with God and to be punished for one's sins on the Day of Judgment. In contrast to the Middle Ages, in the philosophical thought of the Renaissance, man is somehow brought down from heaven to earth. The humanism and personality of a person are brought to the fore. It is considered necessary to have qualities such as benevolence, happiness and harmony. In the philosophy of the new age, on the one hand, the individual interests of a person, sociological and ethical individualism are brought to the fore. For example, according to Hobbes, man is the enemy of man. The struggle of all against all was considered the natural state of society. There is constant competition between people. On the other hand, during that period, anthropological rationalism (which means seeing the true essence of man in thinking and intelligence) appears. For example, R. Descartes believed that thinking is the only accurate indicator of human existence. For the French materialists of the 18th century, a mechanical view of man, showing him as a machine and a product of nature is characteristic. Treating a person as a machine has taken a central place in Lametri's teaching. Holbach, Helvetius and Diderot considered man to be a product of nature. According to their position, human activity is determined strictly by the laws of nature. He cannot go beyond nature even in thought. In classical German philosophy, the subject of man has been widely discussed. I. Kant, the founder of this philosophy, said: "What is man?" question is the main issue of philosophy, and man himself is "the main subject in the whole world". Kant noted that man is a natural being on the one hand, and a moral being on the other hand. It also showed that the second side was superior. Kant wanted to see man as independent and free in his activities. This action must be based on a definite

imperative (a demand that comes from within a person and expresses his perfection as a person). It should never be a means to an end. Hegel's human teaching is based on rationalism. He further developed the anthropological rationalism founded by Descartes. Hegel showed that the difference between a person and an animal is that, above all, he has thinking. It is this quality that reveals his humanity to mankind. In Feuerbach's teaching, the spiritual activity of a person is turned to the physical side. He believed that Hegel's idea of the absolute soul was a mystical expression of the true essence of man. Feuerbach's anthropological materialism is that he brings the essence of man to the fore. He showed that studying man is the only, universal and supreme subject of philosophy. But Feuerbach understood the essence of man as an abstract individual. He treated it as a purely biological existence. A characteristic aspect of Feuerbach's philosophy is his attitude to religion. He saw religion as the alienation of human properties; it is as if a person is divided and observes his own essence in the face of God. The non-classical philosophical teachings of the 19th century saw the main quality of man in the will and feelings. In this sense, the thoughts of the German philosopher N. Schopenhauer about man attract attention. A person has the ability to make different decisions. This possibility turns a person into a battle ground between motives. Each person reacts to these motives according to his character. He preached a pessimistic view of man. According to Schopenhauer, happiness is always negative. Because it saves a person from suffering only temporarily. After that, new suffering awaits him. Thus, suffering is inseparable from human life, it is permanent. Optimism is therefore a foolish view. It is nothing more than a mockery of the unspeakable suffering of mankind. F. Nietzsche also considered a person to be a participant in the game of life forces and passions. According to him, human behavior expresses the will to aspire to power. The issue of anthropology has occupied a large place in the history of social and artistic thought of Azerbaijan. Since the distant past - Dede Gorgud and A. Bahmanyar, many prominent thinkers have put forward valuable ideas about man and his essence. For example, N. Ganjavi showed that because a person is born honorable, he should be a traveler of great deeds with a rich spirituality, and a person is the master of the earth according to his skills and abilities. Everything in the world serves him. In life, a person is selected for being intelligent, knowledgeable, skillful, hardworking, truthful and other admirable qualities. The great thinker of the 13th century, Nasiruddin Tusi, noted that man needs food to live, but man's food does not consist of grass and water like that of animals, and is not provided ready-made by nature. Tusi considered it impossible for a person, who is a social being, to exist outside of public life - society. The outstanding Azerbaijani poet I. Nasimi gave not only an ontological, but also a humanistic and ethical meaning to the concept of man. He called man a "small world" and showed that he is higher than material things due to his perfection. The issues related to man, his essence and perception have taken a large place in Fuzuli's work. He associated the essence of man with his cognitive ability and perfection. According to Fuzuli, a rational person should think about his nature, investigate the essence of his existence, understand his beginning and end. MFAkhundov, who continued the materialistic traditions of Eastern philosophical thought, also paid great attention to people. In the works he wrote in the last period of his life, he proposed interesting ideas about man, his life, and ways to achieve freedom.

The different views on the understanding of man as a whole can be grouped into three backgrounds as follows: **the first position** shows that man is a unique being. He is the self-creator, the measure of all things in the world. According to the **second view**, man is a miracle created by God. **The third point of view** believes that the creation of man is a mistake of nature. It is an unfortunate derivative with an infinite number of faults. Therefore, man has no future. Human nature is multidimensional because it is complex. **Then the following four types can be distinguished; biological, psychic, social and cosmic.** **The first type is expressed in** the anatomical and physiological properties of a person, genetic signs, brain-nerve processes occurring in his body, physical and electrochemical changes. In other words, this position teaches man as a biological organism. **Mental state refers** to the spiritual world of a person. Here we are talking about conscious and unconscious processes in a person, his will, feelings, memory, character, temperament and other mental characteristics. **Social** order is particularly important and examines the social nature of people. The following issues are in the focus of his attention; the place of a person in the system of social relations, the nature of his activity, the forms of organization of his life, his spiritual world, culture, etc. Finally, the **fourth layer**, which has been intensively discussed in recent times, covers a whole system of mutual relations between man and space, the universe. It should be noted that each of these sprinkles is very important in itself. However, none of them, taken separately, can reveal the complex human phenomenon. Therefore, in order to have a comprehensive knowledge of a person, it is necessary to take them all in mutual influence and unity.

### *The nature and origin of man*

In philosophy, there are several concepts about the origin of man. **The first of them comes from a naturalistic position.** As the name suggests, this view considers the creation of man as the result of natural evolution. It is based on the theory of evolution created by Darwin in the second half of the 19th century. According to that theory, man evolved from a highly developed species of animal - monkey. This approach has many supporters. However, his opponents are not few. For example, K. Jaspers shows that it is more reasonable to say that the monkey came from the man than that the man came from the monkey. **The famous German philosopher Hegel is at the head of the second point of view (anthropological rationalism).** He does not deny the human connection with the animal world. But he notes that his standing is the service of the awakening soul. Nature has no part in this. He wrote that in the image of a living being, nature completes its development and rises to a higher level. Thus, the soul is derived from nature. Then nature immolates itself like the Simurgh bird, so that from its ashes it emerges renewed as a spirit. The third line, which explains the origin of man, **approaches it from a socio-practical point of view.** According to him, man and society were created together. Practical activity is the main way of this process. The mentioned view raises the origin of man above the provisions of labor theory. This teaching teaches that man and society arose from apes as a result of long evolution, in the process of labor. **Since the second half of the 19th century, the view that considers man as a product of biological evolution has spread widely.** In this regard, attention has been paid to the study of the differences between humans and animals. Of course, there are many different signs that distinguish people from animals (religion, language, walking upright, consciousness,

morals, etc.). However, the main issue is to scientifically determine the reasons for the transition from the animal world to human society. **The labor theory of the origin of man is** quite widespread. There is much controversy and conjecture in this theory. Undoubtedly, the future development of science will reveal new precise points here.

Language played a very important role in the process of anthroposociogenesis. The creation of labor tools and the need for their improvement shows that man is conscious. Indeed, if man makes a tool, it is due to his need and understanding of his social importance. This reflects the usefulness of the foreign subject for human life, even if the knowledge-skills and work habits are not so high. In this way, external factors become the inside of a person, his work habits and emotional images. The latter exist along with work habits and are related to the purposeful settings of a person. This means that the ancient man already had a highly complex system of sign structures (language, tool system, prohibitions and norms).

**Tayyar de Chardin** (1881-1955), a prominent representative of modern religious philosophy, about the origin of man is also interesting. It relies on the "human phenomenon" in understanding the evolution of the universe. According to him, evolution towards the future takes place through the conscious activity of people. By changing matter, man joins the creative process of evolution and is responsible for the success of this evolution. Religion creates the morality of evolution, so religion must merge with science, renew its explanation of its principles, and become a functioning religion. Thus, he accepts that man emerged from the animal world in the process of evolution. However, he exaggerated the role of human consciousness, intelligence and self-awareness in this process. He showed that the transition from the animal world to man does not cause such serious changes in human morphology. This transition occurs mostly in the inner world of a person. During the development of human-like beings, their external life activity gradually takes an internal, subjective direction. According to him, the central phenomenon that expresses the superiority of man over animals is reflection. By reflection he understood the self-awareness of the human mind. According to Chardin, it was reflection that changed the condition of anthropoid monkeys and brought their inner life closer to humans.

### *Unconsciousness and consciousness in man*

In philosophical anthropology, along with the issues of essence and existence, the problem of the relationship between unconsciousness and consciousness occupies an important place. For a long time, anthropological rationalism prevailed in philosophy. According to this principle, a person's existence and behavior is only an expression of his conscious life. In such an approach, man is imagined only as an intelligent being. However, some later philosophers (Kant, Leibniz, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Gartmann and others) who explained the human problem brought the unconscious problem to the fore. They emphasized the important role and importance of mental processes beyond human intelligence. Z.Freud's psychoanalysis training, which is widely discussed in the previous topic, is typical in this regard. The opinions of the American social psychologist and sociologist E. Fromm about the nature of the human unconscious are also interesting. He did not accept the sociological approach to man. Thus, Fromm puts forward a new point of view that is neither biological nor social, as he says. According to him, the most important factor in human development is the contradiction called "existential

dichotomy". This contradiction arises from the dual nature of man (being a part of nature on the one hand, and being a social being on the other). He showed that man does not have the strong instincts that help animals live. Therefore, he acts on the basis of his consciousness. But according to Fromm, such actions do not always have positive results. This causes anxiety and excitement in a person. Thus, a person's conscious action costs him, that is, it creates distrust in him. In a general sense, the uniqueness of a person is manifested in a number of his unusual properties. A person reflects an infinite number of colors of the environment in his mind. It creates a rich and diverse cultural world. In a person, extremely different qualities are mixed with each other in an unusual way. In short, man is a complex and inexhaustible existence.

### ***Biological and social aspects in man***

Man is not only a social being, but also a part of nature, a biological being. Therefore, the regularities characteristic of other biological species are also manifested in humans. For example, heredity and variability, growth, reproduction, decay and so on. A person's childhood, adulthood and old age are also determined biologically. Its nutrition and the inheritance of some of its characteristics are closely related to biology. From what has been said, it is clear that every person has a biological side and social qualities in a chaotic manner. The fact that a person simultaneously enters both the biological world and social life causes a number of difficulties. It is about determining the ratio of biological and social factors in a person. Which side plays a leading role in the formation of human abilities, feelings, behavior and actions is one of the most confused issues in philosophical thought. Another difficulty is to determine how the biological and the social interact in humans. Views about the ratio of biological and social aspects in a person, despite their diversity, are mainly expressed in two directions. **The first of these is the concept that biologizes man, that is, exaggerates the role of natural, biological aspects in his essence. The second is crude sociological theories.** The latter ignore the biological qualities of a person and make his social essence absolute. Examples of theories of the first type are social-Darwinism and racism, which were widespread at the end of the 19th century. Their supporters tried to explain the relations between people and social events with Darwin's laws of natural selection and evolution. Racism discriminates people based on their skin color, facial structure, hair, etc. distinguishes according to concepts that attempt to biologize the human essence. The **so-called sociobiology** (M.Ruse, M.Midgme, E.Wilson and others) is of this type. One of its founders, the American scientist E. Wilson, suggests that the history of man should be viewed from the point of view of a zoologist who came from another planet to compile a catalog of animals on earth. In this case, all humanities and social sciences should be considered separate specialized divisions of biological science.

How does the unity of biological and social aspects manifest in a person? As soon as the child is born, this unity is established in him. In other words, it has not only anatomical and physiological qualities. It also contains the germs of genetically transmitted human characteristics. Therefore, the heredity mechanism that determines the biological nature of a person also includes his social essence. This is expressed in the fact that as a result of heredity, the child has a number of instincts. For example, he imitates adults, their movements and voices, and begins to show interest in everything. He can be sad, afraid, happy and laugh. Thus, the child comes into the world as a social essence.

True, he is not yet a person in the full sense of the word. Figuratively speaking, he is still a candidate for humanity.

Correctly determining the ratio of biological and social aspects in a person is not such an easy task. Approaching people from a purely cultural point of view or from a narrow biological point of view inevitably leads to a simplistic explanation of the relationship between the biological and the social. Errors such as exaggeration of the biological aspects of a person (panbiologism) or absolutization of social factors (pansociologism) appear on this basis. Those who rely on it explain the social defects of man in terms of his irresistible biological qualities. The unity of the social and the biological in a person should be considered an important condition for a comprehensive and complex approach to it in a general sense.

### *The meaning of life. Death and immortality.*

Every person, regardless of who they are, thinks that their life is temporary. Of all living things, only man understands that his life will come to an end. This feeling leaves a strong emotional impact on him, causing great regret in the depths of his inner world. However, a normal person does not lose himself or despair because he is afraid that he will die someday. On the contrary, he tries to live meaningfully the life given to him. The outstanding psychologist of our time V. Frankl shows that the life of a person can be compared with the activity of a sculptor. Imagine that he is given a certain amount of time to complete his piece. However, he does not know about the end of that time and when the work will be finished. Therefore, he does not know when to stop his work. He simply makes the most of the time allotted to him, so that the work does not fall by the wayside. However, even if the given time runs out before the work is completed, it does not reduce the price of the work done. The fragmentary nature of life does not diminish its meaning. Based on the length of life, we can never tell how meaningful it is. From what has been said, it is clear that the meaning of human life, immortality is earned by him. Religion sees a person's life in following holy teachings, performing religious rites and ceremonies, and believing in God and the afterlife through faith. Philosophy, while solving this issue, approaches it from the point of view of the unity of individual, personal and universal indicators. This represents the ideal of real philosophical humanism. In that ideal man, death and immortality, eternal and temporal are taken in a dialectical relationship. Although human life is physically transitory, it can acquire immortality from a spiritual point of view. The immortality of a person is in the spiritual heritage, creativity and good deeds he left behind. Therefore, the immortality of a person is embodied in the power and humanism of his intelligence.

Currently, along with the right to live, the right to die is of great interest. In this regard, two issues are more controversial: The first is that a person commits suicide. It should be noted that even in religion this action is condemned and it is shown that it is a sin to bury a person who commits suicide in a general cemetery. The second issue is connected to speed up his death by interfering with the life of a person who has been ill for a long time and is suffering during the illness (euthanasia). It is no coincidence that currently the problem of euthanasia (meaning to die without pain, without suffering) is widely discussed.

Philosophical thoughts about life and death in modern times are not only practical. It is also necessary for specific sciences that study man. Philosophy teaches that a person

should approach these issues with courage. One should accept untimely death as a part of one's life and not be afraid of it. Epicurus once showed that there is no need to fear death. Because as long as we live, there is no death. And when death comes, we will not be there.