

"Who am I?"

Dear colleagues,

In the scope of the series of our educational lectures, I'd like to discuss a problem: what do we know about ourselves?

At first glance each of us can assert that knowledge about himself is an interpretation of knowledge covering a spectrum of physical-biological and psycho-psychological perceptions accumulated by a person during his conscious life, interconnected with experience of previous generations through gene mechanism.

It's a rather abstruse and vague statement, isn't it?

A person can never reach a conclusion about what life is and always looks for the answer to the questions: "Who am I?" and "What am I?"

One of the greatest peculiarities of the process of gaining scientific knowledge is in the fact that "tomorrow can be proved the fallacy of what today is considered to be the truth." Then the science defies entrenched assumptions and the "truths": it moves along the road of progress.

What if this is true in relation to our own life, personal growth and development? Is this an assumption?

No, it's assertion of the truth. When a person goes beyond traditional representations about himself, he internally grows and develops as successfully as strong is his determination to move forward and upward.

Once Einstein said: "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results."

If you have ever tried to determine exactly what is valuable to you and in what you believe, then you already know how difficult it is. You can assume that many of your ideas about the belief in the importance of family, friendship, advantages of morning exercise, etc., and your political and social beliefs are reasonable enough. But there are many unconscious representations which are laid in you since your childhood and confidently control your life.

That conviction like "I can", "I know" or "I am good at this and that" is the principles of your interaction with various people including relatives and friends; it is also the relation to

various phenomena and influence of the world around you. All this is based on the basis of the system of the unconscious beliefs of the whole society in which you were born.

We live, think and act by these representations (beliefs), and these representations (system of representations) are called "paradigm".

Changing personal paradigm can be like sudden awakening. A person suddenly realizes: «Something important has always been inside of him, but he simply didn't understand that».

The change of the paradigm could be called the "change of the accepted reality".

Then a question arises: "What is reality? ".

Our every decision in life is based on assumptions what is real for us. The idea is that our sense organs "collect" for us the world around us, and we believe that the "picture" made by them is the reality.

For the first time in history of mankind the Greek philosopher Democritus has cast a mental eye deep into the matter and said, "Nothing exists except atoms and empty space; everything else – is opinion".

All information about the surrounding world that comes to us through the five channels of sense organs, is mysteriously integrated, filtered and processed in us, as well as is "formed" under the influence of mind. As a result, we have, as E. Kant writes, only a "phenomenon" rather than what really exists. We see and feel not reality itself, but the result of its reconstruction in the brain. The very "thing in oneself" is beyond our perception.

Andrew B. Newberg, Doctor of Medicine, head of the department of radiology and psychiatry at the hospital attached to the University of Pennsylvania, USA, says:

"We can't confidently refute the assumption that we live in a huge hologram. Brain implements the "interpretation" of everything we perceive. We are always within the boundaries of its interpretations of reality. Therefore it's completely logical to assume that everything around us is a hologram, a grand illusion. And we have no opportunity to go beyond it, to find out what and how actually exist."

Returning to the previous concept, we can say that the paradigm is just a common model of what is considered real.

Sense organs perceive the reality within the knowledge and assumptions which is provided by the mind. It is the mind which creates the surrounding world which a person feels. In other words, our mind manages what we "should" know.

Perception is a complex and multifaceted process. It starts when the sensory neurons receive information from the environment and send it to the brain in the form of electronic impulses. Like for any living being the abilities of human sense organs are limited. The volume of information, which the brain receives from the five sense organs, is truly enormous: it's about 400 billion bits per second. Our mind isn't able to manage this volume, and we perceive only its insignificant part (according to researchers only about two thousand bits per second reach the consciousness). So, when the brain (according to Dr. Newberg) "tries to make a picture of the world for us, it has to get rid of most of the incoming data."

Dr. Newberg continues: "The brain has to sift out a huge amount of information unnecessary for us. In this way it averts reactions of the nervous system to non-existent stimuli".

So in fact what we perceive is not reality: we see an image of reality (remember the hologram).

"The brain is what, in the end, perceives reality and creates our interpretation of the world."

On the other hand, the perception of the world by a person is determined not only by his ideas about what is real and what is not, but also by his attitude to the perceived information, namely, by his emotions. Our emotions determine what is worth paying attention to.

Somehow we defined the concept of "reality". It is a product of our perception, which, to some extent, depends on our emotions.

Emotions help to survive. They provide a flash-like signal- response, which allows to make a situational "puzzle" from those scraps of information which we you "have collected".

Emotions provide something more than just survival. They contribute to the development of personality.

Development of personality presupposes that in the course of his development and growth (according to the Indian immaterial mystic, philosopher and spiritual teacher Ramtha, who lived 35 thousand years ago) a person may enter into a higher state of consciousness only after overcoming the first three chakras: sex, survival and power.

"Man creates reality": this idea has been and is the central in spiritual, metaphysical, occult and other doctrines. Still, common sense suggests that reality, to some extent, is created by consciousness.

If consciousness is so important, then why do we know so little about it?

According to the statements of Dr. Nick Herbert (Ph.D., Stanford University):

"I sincerely believe that consciousness is a complex task, and physicist are mainly engaged in simple tasks ... We can find all the power and all particles in the nature. That's what physicists are engaged in - and what then? And then there is no getting away from much more complicated tasks (the nature of mind, the nature of God) and such issues which we even can't formulate yet. "

Each of us has consciousness (right?). We are conscious and sentient beings. Consciousness is the foundation of everything we do. It's a constant which defines our existence.

Dr. Nick Herbert says: "I think that consciousness is an independent and fundamental process, as wide-spread and deeply rooted in nature, as light or electricity".

If we assume that consciousness is a product of the brain, or "the result" of the sum of bioelectric processes taking place in our heads and occurring when simultaneously rather many neurons are stimulated (brain nerve cells) which form a neural networks with the ability to implement difficult calculations, then the brain is just a biological computer. And what makes us different from the computer? So, it's possible to create an artificial intelligence? Will it have free will?

On the other hand, there is an assertion that consciousness is a fundamental component of the Universe, independent of the brain, which can exist outside the body. How do you look upon it?

The historical answer (answers) to this question forms three directions:

- Materialism: matter is primary, consciousness is secondary. Consciousness is simply the result of brain activity.
- Dualism: consciousness and matter are equal phenomena of reality. They are very different from each other and act in a completely different spheres not related to each other: i.e. two completely different substances.
- Idealism: consciousness is the fundamental reality. Everything is a manifestation of consciousness. Consciousness expresses itself through a system of levels or layers - from the "indefinite" to the dense matter.

In the materialistic and dualistic approaches consciousness doesn't exist independently or forever "cut off" from the material world. But in the idealistic approach the matter and consciousness are just two sides of the same coin.

For a real understanding of the problem it would be reasonable to get acquainted with the fundamental principles of quantum mechanics.

The case is difficult, but is worth considering!

Let's assume that we have been convinced consciousness is primary, i.e. mind influences the matter. On the other hand, the matter dominates over consciousness. In the logical chain of causation we have the following: the consciousness dominates over the matter, which dominates over the consciousness, which, in its turn dominates over ... and so on. It's in the spirit of paradox: "What comes first - the chicken or the egg?" There are many dual concepts of "subject-object", "science-spirit", "consciousness-matter", etc.

If you are already familiar (at least verbally) with the concepts of quantum mechanics, according to which the entire material world around us, in the end, has an atomic structure, and atom is the interaction of particles (electrons, protons, neutrons, etc., according to the theory), which have a dual nature - corpuscular and wave, depending on which property the "observer" records, then, in principle, we deal with the energy that "transmits" information.

The logic of identity of different things to the same principle suggests that the matter is information and consciousness is information. It doesn't prove for 100% that matter and consciousness are identical, but doesn't deny it as well. Paradox?

Ultimately, what it gives us? George Bernard Shaw (hope you know who he is) answered this question quite clearly: "Life isn't about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself".

"You want to develop as a person and live consciously? Then try to consciously control your own natural inclinations. This will lead to wisdom!" - Joe Dispenza, a doctor, works in the sphere of neurology, neurophysiology and brain activity, a member of the International Society of Chiropractors.

They say that over the gates of the medieval castle, where wise people periodically gathered for conversation, it was engraved: "Great minds discuss ideas. Average minds discuss events. Small minds discuss people".

I think that this lecture is too full of materials that require reflection. Many judgments and provisions of this chapter are quite controversial to me and are covered in the literature which I used in a new light, contrary to the paradigm in the scope of which I was trained.

While preparing for this lecture, I have mainly used two sources: the book "What's the Bleep? Down the Rabbit Hole" (William Arntz and Batsy Chasse) and a course of lectures on quantum mechanics for "dummies" (quite a difficult course, lecture 61).

In this lecture I deliberately avoided judgments based on the theory of quantum mechanics, because I wanted, first of all (if possible) interest you with the problem itself. The further development of your intelligence is a problem of each of you.

Sincerely,

Levon Nersisyan