

**Block-3**

**NATURE OF FINITE BEING**

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## BLOCK 3 INTRODUCTION

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Every material being is either an entity or a person. Entity is subsisting, distinct, complete being of certain nature; whereas person is subsisting, distinct, complete being of intellectual nature. Human person as rational animal (being of intellectual nature) is being-present-to-oneself in one's being present-to-another. In so far as one is present-to-oneself one is (being) spirit, and in so far as one is present-to-another, one is in the world. Hence, human person is 'being or spirit in the world' with the capacity to be self-conscious and intelligent. Being self-conscious and intelligent, human recognizes other persons also as self-conscious and intelligent. In intelligence and freedom one is obliged to move from every form of self-centredness to self-transcendence. Self-transcendence could induce committed communion with others who are also free social beings. This Block, which consists of 3 units, studies the metaphysical nature of finite being.

Unit 1 is on "Entity." Entity is subsisting, distinct, complete being of certain nature. Subsisting means existing by an act of existing which it has on its own and by which we can identify it as a being. Distinct means existing as individuals, as beings apart from each other. Complete being implies a being in its totality, with substantial form and accidents, and not a part or principle of a being. Certain nature refers to any given nature by which we can recognize it as belonging to a particular group. Entities are broadly divided into two: conscious or intellectual and non-conscious or non-intellectual.

Unit 2 is on "Person." Person, in classical metaphysics, is subsisting, distinct, complete being of intellectual nature. There is a difference between 'intellectual' and 'rational.' An intellectual being understands things mediately or immediately. Human person, unlike God who is thought to understand things immediately without a medium, understands things only mediately and thus is rational.

Unit 3 is on "Freedom." Freedom is the ability to choose and decide. Freedom presupposes understanding and knowledge. Human rationality (with understanding and knowledge) is the enabling and limiting conditions of freedom. Human rationality enables one to choose and decide since rationality includes within it understanding; at the same time rationality is the limiting condition of freedom, since rational understanding, which is mediate (presupposes a

medium like sense image), is limited by sense image, passions and emotions. Hence, human never enjoys unlimited freedom.

To conclude: As we have already mentioned, every material being is either an entity or a person. Entity is subsisting, distinct, complete being of certain nature; whereas person is subsisting, distinct, complete being of intellectual nature. Intellectuality is the metaphysical basis of human's knowledge and freedom.



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## UNIT 9

## ENTITY\*

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### Structure

9.0 Objectives

9.1 Introduction

9.2 Entity as Supposit

9.3 Entity as Individual

9.4 Entity as Finite

9.5 Entity as Historico-temporal

9.6 Let Us Sum Up

9.7 Key Words

9.8 Further Readings and References

9.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

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### 9.0 OBJECTIVES

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Being, as we have seen, is that which is in some way or something. That which is in some way or something is in its own way in each being. As each being is in its own way, all beings are in their own ways. As all beings are in their own ways, there would be a plurality of beings that are many entities. This unit studies the meaning and implication of:

- a) Entity as supposit
  - b) Entity as individual
  - c) Entity as finite
  - d) Entity as categorial
  - e) Entity as historico-temporal
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### 9.1 INTRODUCTION

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Being is not something like a being. Being is what enables beings as beings, that in terms of which beings are already understood. If we grasp Being we will clarify the meaning of being, or sense of being. It means that in terms of which something becomes intelligible as something. This sense of being precedes any notions of how or in what manner any particular being or beings exist. It is pre-conceptual, non-propositional, and hence pre-scientific. At the same time, there is no access to Being other than via beings

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themselves—hence pursuing the question of Being inevitably means asking about *a* being with regard to its being. A true understanding of Being can only proceed by referring to particular beings or entities.

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## 9.2 ENTITY AS SUPPOSIT

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Accidents belong to their substance and inhere in it. They do not exist completely in themselves. Secondary or universal substances, expressed in species and genus, are communicated to, and predicated of, the individual substances. They do not exist completely in themselves. But *supposit* or '*hypostasis*' is an individual, concrete substance which exists completely in itself, and thus incommunicable to any other being. It does not belong to another; it is the whole containing all the parts; it is the ultimate reality to which all functions, powers, and perfections of that particular being are referred; it is the possessor of its entire nature; it is self-contained and autonomous; it is that which is supposed; it is that to which all actions are referred; it is that which acts; it is the ultimate subject of actions or operations, e.g., this individual tree, this beast, this human, etc. It includes everything that can be predicated of a being. It is distinct from nature as the latter is part of supposit. It also takes in the accidents; whereas the nature does not. In other words, *supposit* or '*hypostasis*' is a subsisting, distinct, complete being of a certain nature. *Subsisting* means existing by an act of existing which it has on its own. It is not derived from another principle. It is that mode of existence in virtue of which a thing is self-contained and autonomous in its operations. *Distinct* means adequately distinct, i.e., not identical with any other. It is incommunicable to any other being as it already exists in act. Such a being can never be assumed by a higher supposit since their union could only be at best an accidental union. However, it is not impossible for an individual nature to be assumed by a higher supposit, and to exist, not by its own proper being, but by the being of the higher supposit. For instance, the human nature of Christ is not a human person as it does not exist by its own proper being, but by the divine being of the Word. *Complete being*: It is not a part or a principle of a being (human soul is not human supposit). It is the whole being. It is a complete individual substance which has subsistence. *Certain nature*: The supposit must be of a certain nature, i.e., it must have a root principle which gives the actions the ultimate unity which they (action) manifest, e.g., mineral, vegetative, animal, human and divine natures. Hence, all supposits are not finite persons; but all finite persons are supposits. The distinction is implicit in the traditional

interpretation of 'person' by Severin Boethius and Aquinas. According to them, '*person is a subsisting, distinct, complete being of an intellectual nature*'. Supposit is of non-intellectual nature; whereas person is of *intellectual nature*. The common characteristic distinctive of God, spirits and human being is *intellectuality*. It is lacking in all beings below the level of human beings. Intellectuality is distinct from 'rationality'. The term 'rational' means 'having reason' or 'having the faculty of reasoning'; hence it cannot be applied to God. God is intellectual but not rational in this sense.

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### 9.3 ENTITY AS INDIVIDUAL

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The specific nature of a being is the result of the union of its proximate genus and specific difference. For instance, the specific nature of human consists of the proximate genus 'animal' and the specific difference 'rational'. The union of the two constitutes the specific nature of human who is a 'rational animal'. The specific nature is alike in all humans; for all humans possess the nature of a rational animal. From this standpoint alone there would be no difference in the concept one human and another. In an existing human this general 'specific human nature' becomes an 'individual human nature'. This is done through the union of the 'specific nature' with 'individuality'. For instance, Napoleon, through his individuality, is not merely a man, *but this man Napoleon*.

Still the question is: What is the principle of absolute individuation which makes an individual to be individual? Is individuality a reality really distinct from the reality of the specific nature? In this case, the principle of absolute individuation would be the entity of the individuality as such, and not the nature at all. Or, are the specific nature and individuality in an existing individual imitatively identical, with merely a distinction in thought between them, so that they form a *metaphysical union*? In that case the formal principle of absolute individuation would be the entity of the individual nature or essence itself, and there would be only a virtual distinction between individuality and specific nature in an individual being. The latter view is preferred and it can be demonstrated in this way: The specific nature in itself must either be a universal or an individual nature. If it is universal, then a universal nature would exist as a universal. However, a universal nature cannot exist in the physical order of things as a universal. Therefore, the specific nature must exist as an individual nature. But if it comes into existence as an individual nature the entity of individuality is entirely superfluous and can no longer make it individual as it is already an individual

nature in itself when it comes into existence. Hence the individuality of an existing nature is not really distinct (but only mentally) from the existing nature itself, and the principle of absolute individuation of an individual is the nature or essence itself. In other words, every specific nature becomes an individuated nature. Therefore, individuality is solely a manner of existence for nature. Then, the distinction between the specific nature and the individuality of an existing individual is a mental or logical distinction. They are distinct in concept because we define them differently. The question is: Is there a ground or reason or foundation in the individuals for making this distinction in concepts? It can be answered in this way: Individuality is the same for all beings. It is that which makes a specific nature to become individuated in this particular individual. But there is a great variety of specific natures among existing beings, each of which is individuated in a large number of existing individuals. Here we have the ground or foundation in the things themselves for our making a mental or logical distinction between the nature and the individuality in them. Now when there is such a foundation for making this distinction, the distinction is not real nor purely mental, but virtual. Therefore, there is a virtual distinction between the nature and its individuality.

The next question is: What is the principle which individuates a specific nature into a number of individuals or individual natures? This is the *principle of relative individuation*. The principle of relative individuation is *matter affected or signated by dimensive quantity*. It can be explained in this way: Since it is the question of plurality of individuals in the same species, the principle of individuation must be a principle of plurality. Plurality implies division and divisibility. The ground of divisibility will also be the ground or principle of plurality. Consequently, the ground or principle of relative individuation must be that ground of divisibility which enables a specific nature to be multiplied into a plurality of individual natures. Now in physical order the principle of divisibility is matter affected by dimensive quantity. When a portion of matter is separated from another, a plurality is effected in it which gives rise to a plurality of individuals of the same species.

**Check your progress I**

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1. Explain briefly the principle of relative individuation.

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## 9.4 ENTITY AS FINITE

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A being is ‘that which is in a particular way.’ The Latin word for being is *ens* which in English is rendered as entity. Everything that we see around us can be termed as beings or entities. The word being assumes different significances according to the situations. In our study of the metaphysics of being it should be taken to mean ...‘anything that exists in the world.’ Being primarily denotes existence. Anything that has no existence can be said to be a non-being.

Something that really exists is said to be a real being. There might be some things which do not have concrete existence, for example, I may imagine an apple tree in my garden. As long the apple tree remains an object of imagination only the being of it is merely an imaginary being. However, everything that has real existence and even the imaginary beings can be termed as beings.

The metaphysical meaning of ‘being’:

We shall now examine the metaphysical sense of the term ‘being’. The most important features of a being are the following:

- a) Being is referred to as something that *is*. This reference to being as something that *is* puts it in contrast to *what is not* or non-being.
- b) In the language of metaphysics, being is said to be an *act*. By *act* we do not mean an action but the primordial basis of action. When we say that a being is an *act* we mean thereby that the being referred to makes its being felt by the fact of its existence. Hence, by *act* we have to understand the very act of being existent.
- c) The notion of being has a primacy over every other knowledge. The first thing that our intellect grasps with regards a thing is that *it is* or *it exists*. Without this primary notion of existence no other knowledge about a thing is possible.
- d) The notion of being is not a notion of a genus. By genus we understand the distinguishing and essential aspect of a thing. For example, man’s rational nature distinguishes him from animals. When we say that the notion of being is not the notion of a genus, we mean that the word ‘being’ encompasses everything; that it

has maximum extension without any specification. Being embraces all realities that are real or imaginable.

Being, in so far as it embraces all realities, is an analogical term. An analogical term is a term which stresses certain similarities of a thing in relation with another object without going into the details of characteristics or perfections of the things compared to. For instance, we may refer to God and human as beings. By this we mean both exist in reality. The term 'being' is analogical because it can refer to the existence of the most supreme entity as well as the most insignificant thing we can imagine.

#### **9.4.1 Finite Being as Categorical**

According to Aristotle, a category is what describes the manner of a being. Substance and accidents are the basic manners of being to which all reality can be reduced. A being may be brought under 10 categories. These categories are the following: substance, quality, quantity, relation, localization, position, possession, time, action, and passion. For example, we may attribute these categories to Peter (substance), who is healthy (quality), of normal weight (quantity), son of Paul (relation), who is in his room (localization), and is seated (position), who has a pen in hand (possession), who is awake at 6 am (time), who is engaged in writing a letter (action), and who is now thirsty (passion). Thus nine accidents and substance together make up 10 categories. The said ten categories are considered to be the ten supreme classes (or genera) of being.

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### **9.5 ENTITY AS HISTORICO-TEMPORAL**

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Heidegger in his most famous work, *Being and Time*, wants to find out what being as such means. He called it a fundamental ontology. He distinguishes between an entity (anything that is) and the being of an entity. He calls this distinction the 'ontological distinction.' Being of an entity is the meaningful presence of that entity within the range of human experience. Among all beings only human being is characterized with the understanding of being.

Heidegger defined 'being' in a different way than most other philosophers did. Traditionally, philosophers have defined being as the ground of essence and existence, that which provides the 'foundation' for a thing. Plato called this foundation as the eternal or universal form of things; Aristotle named it as the real substance; medieval theologians tried to define beings as things taking origin from the most superior being, the infinite. Refusing

to conceive being as a kind of superior entity, an eternal foundation, ground, cause or origin of things, Heidegger argued that for something 'to be' means for it to disclose or to present itself. Being has to do with the "is": what an entity is, how it is, and the fact that it is at all. For this disclosure or self-manifesting of an entity to occur, there must be a clearing, an opening. Human existence constitutes the openness necessary for the disclosure of entities to take place. When such disclosure occurs through openness that I am, I encounter an entity as an entity, that is, I *understand* what it is. Heidegger uses the term "Dasein" to name this peculiar receptivity of human existence for the self-manifesting of being. In German the particle *da* means 'here' or 'there', while *sein* is the German verb 'to be'. By Dasein Heidegger meant the ontological presence of man.

Human entity is distinguished by its awareness of the being of entities, including the being of itself. Heidegger names the human entity 'Dasein' whose being consists in disclosing and understanding being, whether the being of itself or that of other entities. In so far as Dasein's being is a disclosure of its own being, it is called 'existence' or 'ek-sistence'. Heidegger argues that Dasein's own being is intrinsically temporal, not in the usual chronological sense but in a unique existential sense: Dasein ek-sists (stands – out) towards its future. This ek-sistential temporality refers to the fact that Dasein is always and necessarily becoming itself and ultimately becoming its own death. When used of Dasein, the word 'temporality' indicates not chronological succession but Dasein's finitude and mortal becoming.

Heidegger argues that mortality is our defining moment that we are thrown into limited worlds of sense shaped by our being-towards-death, and that finite meaning is all the reality we get. He claims that most of us have forgotten the radical finitude of ourselves and the world we live in. If Dasein's being is thoroughly and radically temporal, then all of human awareness is conditioned by this temporality, including one's understanding of being. For Dasein, being is always known temporally and indeed is temporal. Time is the meaning of all forms of being. The two main theses of *Being and Time* – that Dasein is temporal and that the meaning of being is time – maybe interpreted thus: being is disclosed only finitely within Dasein's radically finite awareness. Since Dasein is radically finite the disclosure is radically finite.

To be human means that one is not a static entity just 'there' among other things. Rather, being human is always a process of becoming oneself, living into possibilities, into one's

future. The ultimate possibility into which one lives is the possibility to end all possibilities: one's death. Human beings are essentially finite and necessarily mortal, and so one's becoming is an anticipation of death. Heidegger calls this mortal becoming 'being-unto-death'. Dasein exists finitely and thus death is essentially and intrinsically inherent in its existence. Thus, Dasein constantly faces the possibility of the impossibility of itself or Dasein.

Authentic existence is born of the experience of inherent finitude, temporality, mortality. Authentic Dasein lives in the constant anticipation of death. This calls for an authentic awareness of one's intrinsic finite nature. Being of Dasein is being-towards death. For the inauthentic Dasein, the past is over and the future has not yet come and he wants to enjoy the present to forget its inherent temporality and finitude i.e. its being-toward-death. The sign of an authentic existence is seen in the awareness of one's essential mortality.

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## 9.6 LET US SUM UP

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Every finite being constitutes a totality, a universe complete and closed in itself; it allows of no one outside, everything can be said in it; yet this very totality is simultaneously marked by an irreducible finitude. The inner tension of a finite totality is attested by a loop that pertains to our basic attitude towards things. Spontaneously, we somehow presuppose that every entity depends on some sort of "external" reality, that it "renders" an independent state of things, yet this "external" reality is always-already disclosed through its own fundamental constitution rooted in Being, in the Being of entities.

### Check your progress II

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1. Explain the various meanings of Being.

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2. What do you understand by authentic existence?

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## 9.7 KEY WORDS

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**Hypostasis:** Hypostasis (Greek) means *that which stands beneath*.

**Ontology:** Ontology (from the Greek *on*, genitive *ontos*: of being and *logia*: science, study, theory) is the philosophical study of the nature of being in general, as well as the basic categories of being and their relations.

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## 9.8 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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## 9.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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### Check your Progress I

1. The principle of relative individuation is *matter affected or signated by dimensive quantity*. It can be explained in this way: Since it is question of the plurality of individuals in the same species, the principle of individuation must be a principle of plurality. Plurality implies division and divisibility. The ground of divisibility will also be the ground or principle of plurality. Consequently, the ground or principle of relative individuation must be that ground of divisibility which enables a specific nature to be multiplied into a plurality of individual natures. Now in physical order the principle of divisibility is matter affected by dimensive quantity. When a portion of matter is separated from another, a plurality is effected in it

which gives rise to a plurality of individuals of the same species.

### Check Your Progress II

1. We shall now examine the metaphysical sense of the term 'being.' The most important features of a being are the following:

- a) Being is referred to as something that *is*. This reference to being as something that *is* places it in contrast to *what is not* or non-being.
- b) In the language of metaphysics, being is said to be an *act*. By *act* we do not mean an action but the primordial basis of action. When we say that a being is an *act* we mean thereby that the being referred to makes its being felt by the fact of its existence. Hence, by *act* we have to understand the very act of being existent.
- c) The notion of being has a primacy over every other knowledge. The first thing that our intellect grasps with regards a thing is that *it is* or *it exists*. Without this primary notion of existence no other knowledge about a thing is possible.
- d) The notion of being is not a notion of a genus. By genus we understand the distinguishing and essential aspect of a thing. For example, man's rational nature distinguishes him from animals. When we say that the notion of being is not the notion of a genus, we mean that the word 'being' encompasses everything; that it has maximum extension without any specification. Being embraces all realities that are real or imaginable.

2. Authentic existence is born of the experience of inherent finitude, temporality, mortality. Authentic Dasein lives in the constant anticipation of death. This calls for an authentic awareness of one's intrinsic finite nature. Being of Dasein is being-towards death. For the inauthentic Dasein, the past is over and the future is not yet and he wants to enjoy the present to forget its inherent temporality and finitude, its being-toward-death. The sign of an authentic existence is seen in the awareness of one's essential mortality.

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## Unit 10 PERSON\*

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### Structure

- 10.0 Objectives
- 10.1 Introduction
- 10.2 Uniqueness of Human Being
- 10.3 Ontological Dimension of Human Person
- 10.4 Psychological Dimension of Human Person
- 10.5 An Integral Concept of Person
- 10.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 10.7 Key Words
- 10.8 Further Reading and References
- 10.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

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### 10.0 OBJECTIVES

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In our day to day communication as well as understanding we use terms such as “Human” and “Person” but for centuries a number of eminent thinkers have differed in their views and theories on the understanding of the concept of “Person.” The objectives of this unit are:

- To develop an understanding of various theories
- Broaden our mental horizon
- And finally lead us into a better understanding of ourselves.

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### 10.1 INTRODUCTION

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We live in an anthropocentric world where human person is considered at the centre and is assumed as measure of everything. The term ‘person’ is not used for plants and animals but it is exclusively reserved to humans. Human is called a person because one is a subject and the term brings out the grandeur, dignity and nobility of person.

The word ‘person’ comes from the Greek word ‘*prosopon*’ meaning mask, to personify in a role, which became the Latin ‘*persona*’. Neither in common usage nor in philosophy has

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there been a univocal concept of person. In common usage ‘person’ refers to any human being in a general way. The person is distinct from a thing or material object. The term ‘person’ generally stands for a living conscious human being.

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## **10.2 UNIQUENESS OF HUMAN BEING**

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All people in the world, believers or non-believers, recognize something unique in man/woman. Philosophers, psychologists and scientists have explained this uniqueness of humans differently. For philosophers, it is the ‘reason’ that makes human beings different from other beings. For scientists, it is consciousness that makes human unique among other creatures. It is precisely because of this unique status that we owe respect to every human person. The human being alone is a person. Human has the dignity of a subject and has intrinsic value.

Human is a unique creation of the forces of nature. As a unique creation, a human being reveals this originality and uniqueness in one’s development as well as in one’s acts. An individual is a being who is one in itself and distinct from all other beings. Many philosophers have stressed the element of uniqueness, singularity and individuality of the human person. Even though human shares with other sub-human beings a number of qualities, one enjoys a life that is qualitatively different from other forms of life. The life of humans is specifically different from that of animals and plants, because one has the unique dignity of an individual, rational and immortal being.

### **10.2.1 Individuality of Human Person**

When a human being goes deeper into oneself, one becomes aware of oneself as a subject and also understands that one is different from the rest of the universe and thus discovers one’s individuality. Being an individual, one is unique, dynamic, rational, free and creative. An individual should never be considered or treated as an object or commodity. We can make use of an object at our will because it has no will and freedom. Since it has no will, we don’t require the consent of the object to use it. But a human person is quite different from an anonymous entity because one is an intelligent and free individual.

### **10.2.2 Rationality of Human Person**

Human beings are different from other animals because they have the power of reason.

Rationality is human's capacity to ask the 'why' of things. It is the capacity to think rationally. To think rationally implies the capacity to distinguish between what is reasonable and not reasonable in the matters we come across in our life. Reason is the natural capacity of human beings to arrive at truth in a holistic way.

Being rational human being is capable of relating oneself with other beings, making them participate in one's life and promote one's true good. In order to become an authentic human person one requires proper reasoning in one's thinking and action. Everything human does when executing human acts must be a manifestation of one's rationality. The power of reason helps human form concepts, pass judgements, organize them in systems and give meaning to reality. Because of one's reasoning power human being emerges superior to other beings on earth. Therefore, as argued by Aristotle, we can rightly describe human being as a rational animal.

### **10.2.3 Immortality of Human Person**

Human beings seem to be unique among other creatures of the earth because they not only are fully aware of the inevitable death but also coupled with this awareness they seem to refuse that death is the end. Human being is a unity of body and soul or matter and spirit. If I was not spirit, death would not exist for me; as there would only be decay of body. Therefore, death is understood as a separation of the soul from the body. For philosophers, like, Plato and Aquinas, human is a unity, one substance composed of body and soul. But human soul being spiritual can subsist without matter. Therefore, the soul, for Plato continues to exist even after death of the body because soul alone is the true reality of human. Etymologically speaking *im* is non and *mortality* is death. So immortality is non-death. It is the continued and perennial existence of the human i.e. the soul. This is a unique nature and feature of human beings.

### **10.2.4 Freedom and Responsibility**

Freedom is the property of will. The object of will is the good. The will is the tendency towards or love of total good. To desire good is a value. To be free means to be able to decide freely for a specific good. It is equally openness to good or that it is implicitly oriented towards an unlimited good, which corresponds to a fundamental openness towards truth. Freedom is the power of decision of a moral object. Freedom of the individual

manifests the way in which a person is made manifest, the way one acts and expresses emotions, the manner in which one is present to others and to the world.

Freedom in the hands of human is a weapon of dual stature. It can be adopted either for good or for evil. It can serve human for the cultivation, the promotion, the elevation and the realization of one's own being. But it can also serve to obtain the opposite effect; to degrade, humiliate and annihilate one's own being. With good use of freedom human can become a hero, a saint, a benefactor of humanity. Meanwhile with its evil use one can become an addict, a terrorist, and a nemesis of humanity.

Therefore, freedom in its true sense implies freedom with responsibility. Human persons are called to live with freedom and responsibility. A human of mature personality takes full responsibility for one's life- thoughts and actions. Human being as a moral agent is responsible and answerable for all what one thinks, speaks and acts. One is responsible for one's life mixed with triumphs and successes, mistakes and failures. We ourselves are responsible for all our actions.

### **10.2.5 Self-Transcendence**

Etymologically 'transcendence' means to go over and beyond a threshold or a boundary (*transscendere*). Self-transcendence has its basis in human's power of never being satisfied with finite, the limited or the imperfect. Human is the spirit and lives one's life in continuous opening towards the Absolute.

#### **10.2.5.1 Different Interpretations of 'Transcendence'**

Transcendence is the movement with which man continually "overtakes" himself. This movement has a direction and points towards a goal, the Absolute. In the history of philosophy there have been philosophers who give *egocentric*, *philanthropic* and *theocentric* meanings to transcendence.

a) *Egocentric Transcendence*: Human is currently in a precarious, alienated and inauthentic state. The emphasis is on human rising above what one is now and reaching a superior state of happiness. Human is in a tension to free oneself from one's misery and needs to find oneself again through a more complete actualisation of one's possibilities. Philosophers in this group include Feuerbach, Nietzsche, and Heidegger among others.

b) *Philanthropic Transcendence*: Human is currently confined in one's individualism. The

emphasis is on the social dimension and advocates the perfection of the human community and an attempt to originate a new humanity freed from social inequality. Philosophers in this group include Marx, Comte, Bloch, Garaudy among others.

c) *Theocentric Transcendence*: Human is constitutionally open towards the Absolute and escapes incessantly from the confines of one's own reality. Human is the absolute opening to being in general, or human is "spirit". The transcendence towards the Absolute Being (*theocentric*) is the only fundamental structure of human. Philosophers in this group include Thomas Aquinas, Blondel, Rahner, Marcel, Lonergan among others.

## 10.2.6 The Opening of Human to the Absolute is the Fundamental

### Constitution of Human

Human being is basically spiritual, that is, one lives one's life in a continuous tension towards the Absolute, in an opening towards it. This is revealed even in the banal actions of everyday life. One is *human* only because one is in that way towards God, whether one knows and expresses it or not, whether one wants it or not. One's opening to God is *intrinsic*. One is the finite being totally open towards the Absolute. One can accept or refute it but not destroy it.

This transcendence attests that the being of human is spiritual and cannot, therefore, be reduced to the material. The spirituality of human is, first of all, positive. One is an "I", a person that exists as a unique subject and opens to a "You", that is a pure person.

However, it is important not to define human being as a negation of material. Human's spirituality does not indicate, in the first place, different properties from those materials. Intelligence and will do not exist of their own account. They are abstractions. What exists is a concrete person who thinks and wills. To think and to will are modes of being (accidental entities) of the personal being. The problem of spirituality is not regarding the immateriality of the intellectual faculties but the subsistence and unity of the person.

### Check your progress I

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1. How is immortality a unique nature of human?

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## 10.3 ONTOLOGICAL DIMENSION OF HUMAN PERSON

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The ontological concept of person gives emphasis to human as an individual endowed with the faculty of will, freedom and autonomy. The uniqueness of ‘human person’ lies in the fact that human person is an individual, unique, original, irrepeatable, irrepresentable being as every human has a unique combination of qualities and talents that no one else has. For Augustine, person means, the single and the individual. To be an individual is to be one, namely being undivided in itself and distinct from all other beings. The uniqueness of person is implied in the concept of individual.

### 10.3.1 Definition of Person as given by Boethius and Aquinas

The merit of giving an adequate first definition of person in the ontological perspective goes to Severin Boethius. He defined person as *rationalis naturae individua substantia* (individual substance of rational nature). This definition of Boethius was revised by Aquinas. Aquinas defines person as *subsistens in rationali nature* (a singular subsistent of a rational nature).

#### 10.3.1.1 Substance

This is the first category of Aristotle, that which is in itself. The person is a being that exists in oneself because one is a complete substance. Person is a substantial and individual unity.

#### 10.3.1.2 Individual Substance

The substance, in the fullest sense of the word is the individual. The universal concept does not exist in reality but only in the individual. In the philosophy of Aquinas these two terms individual and substance are united in the term ‘subsistent’, which means a total autonomy of existence and action. The ‘subsistents’ is an individual substance that forms a complete whole.

#### 10.3.1.3 Rational Nature

While there are individual substances that are not persons, there are no persons that are

not individual substances. Every person is an individual and a human person has a rational nature. The element that distinguishes human from animals and things of this world is one's rationality. To be a person one has to be capable of exercising reason. It is this rational faculty that helps the human person to distinguish between real and unreal, right and wrong and knowledge and opinion. The ontological concept of person gives emphasis to the faculty of will and the autonomy of the person. Human being as a willing being is an autonomous subject who tries to transcend time and space. This means that human is an end in oneself. A person is therefore capable of deciding for oneself and of acting in accordance with one's own decisions in order to arrive at one's ultimate end. A human becomes an authentic person when one acts in a morally upright way taking responsibility for one's actions. One must creatively respond to the challenges with a spirit to change and grow, by relating oneself to God, fellow-beings and nature as free persons.

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## **10.4 PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSION OF HUMAN PERSON**

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Persons are individual human beings capable of mental activities. It was Descartes who proposed a theory of mind and for him, person is not just a material body but person for Descartes is a self, a self-conscious mind which thinks, feels, desires etc. Descartes no longer defines person in relation to the autonomy of being, but in relation to self-consciousness. In his psychological sense of person, Descartes admits firstly, intellectual knowledge and reason as the essential requisite of the person and secondly, self-consciousness as a distinctive mark of human.

### **10.4.1 The Psychological Person**

From the psychological point of view human can be viewed as a being that has self awareness. The person is the 'I'. The discovery of the 'I' means 'becoming aware of my individual existence, separated from that of other beings'. In the psychological understanding of person, human intellect, thinking, reasoning, knowledge and self-consciousness are emphasised.

### **10.4.2 Self-Consciousness**

Human differs from animals as a self-conscious being in the cognitive level. Self-

consciousness and objectivity are the two elements which distinguish human from animals. In fact, animals know objects and know themselves but reach neither self-consciousness nor objectivity, because they do not succeed in separating themselves either from the knowing subject or from the known object. Human has the awareness of the 'I' (subject) and 'non I' (object).

The inter related actions of reason, volition and emotion together constitute the human mind (consciousness). By the existence of these mental functions we become self-conscious that we are subjects and not objects. The person not only acts consciously, but is also aware both of the fact that one acts and of the fact that it is one who acts. Self-consciousness is the awareness by the self of itself. Self-knowledge is the basis of self-consciousness.

### 10.4.3 Human Person as a Subject

A subject is a willing, feeling and thinking entity. Human as a subject is a unique being endowed with intellect, will and heart. Since human is a subject, no human being should be treated as an object, a thing or as a function. As a subject one is a knowing, conscious, free and self-transcending being in the world.

As a thinking being I hold on to my reasonably legitimate ideas and views. As a feeling subject I seek and desire for the emotional satisfaction of my life. And as a willing being I desire to be an autonomous subject and I make myself a free person by responsible exercise of choices.

The human person is a subject and refuses to be an object. In order to become authentic human beings, we need to discover our true self, deepening and widening our consciousness, forming an integral vision, creating open attitudes and having right convictions.

#### Check your progress II

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1. What is a person according to Boethius and St Thomas?

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2. Human differs from animals as a self-conscious being. Explain.  
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#### **10.4.4 Substantial Unity of Human: The Absolute Value and Dignity of the Person**

Human is a substance. In fact, one has all the properties of a substance; constancy, stability, identity, autonomy in being etc. Thus we can say that human or more exactly every single individual of the human species is a substance. The complete substance of the human being is neither the body, nor the soul, but the body and the soul in their profound unity.

##### **10.4.4.1 Person is Open to the Absolute**

In contrast to the purely material, the structure of human as a spiritual being, given intelligence and will, means that one is open to the infinite, tending to supersede every limit. The object of intelligence is being as being. It chooses the finite within the horizon of infinite and has an infinite desire to know, as well as unbounded potential. Similarly, the will is never content with the attained good, but tends towards the greater. Since only God is infinite and unlimited Truth and Good, only God can satisfy the quest of the human person.

##### **10.4.4.2 The Person Open to the Absolute is an End in Oneself**

The human person is not a means to an end but an end in oneself in the sense that one is ordained by the Transcendent. In one sense the person is relative as one is dependent on the Absolute and in another sense, one is an absolute form because one is willed by the Absolute. This is the authentic dignity of human person because one has been caused in such a way as to be able to direct oneself to the absolute.

##### **10.4.4.3 Dialogical concept of person**

Philosophers like Max Scheler (1874-1928), Martin Buber (1878-1965), Gabriel Marcel (1889-1973) describe human as a being-in-relationship, a being-with-others. According to them humans are embodied self-conscious beings who stand in relationality with others and it is to be realized through dialogue. Human is not only an individual, but also a

communion being. In order to lead a meaningful and authentic existence one must establish a loving and mutually reciprocal relationship with other human beings. According to Max Scheler, the human being lives first of all, and principally in others and not in oneself. One lives more in the community than in one's own individual. Therefore, dialogue attaches directly to the persons. In dialogue I enter into relationship with others. Dialogue is conceivable only between persons. For dialogue, I must first recognize in the other persons as independent subject of existence, interiority, a capacity for response, and freedom- in short- subjectivity.

#### **a) Martin Buber's Concept of Person**

According to Buber human existence is essentially related and relational. Human life with all its complexity finds its meaning, richness and happiness in being related to others. For Buber life is relationship with others from birth to death. According to Buber a genuine relationship can take place only in the '*sphere of between*'. The '*sphere of between*' is not something permanent, rather it is ever created whenever two human beings meet. One turns to the other and in order to communicate with each other, must reach out to a sphere beyond one's own, namely, the '*sphere of the between*'.

#### **The Three-fold Relation**

Human has a threefold relationship by virtue of one's very nature and situation. First one is related to the world and to things; second one is related to humans –both to individuals and to many; third one is related to the absolute. Thus we can say that human has got an I-It, I-Thou and I-Eternal Thou relationship. To be a genuine human person, one should relate oneself with the Absolute, fellow beings and nature in mutual selfless love, sharing and co-operation. Absolute is the indispensable foundation and basis for every genuine I- Thou relationship. Without the eternal Thou human's relationship will become sterile and useless. The Absolute is the Absolute Being who makes possible every I-Thou relationship.

#### **b) Gabriel Marcel's Concept of Person**

Marcel's philosophy has been called in the philosophy of communion. He insists that to be genuine in our interpersonal relationships we must be totally and unreservedly available to the other. Marcel identifies selfless love and mutual openness as inter- subjectivity in our relationship with others. One should place oneself at the disposal of others. Marcel calls this capacity '*availability*'.

To become an available person means to be a free person. Because the unavailable person is

tangled within oneself, one is limited to one's own self-created world. When someone leads a 'closed' life and does not make one available to others, he/she leads an inauthentic life. A person leads an authentic existence only when one is making oneself 'open' to others in love and sharing. According to Marcel, "I can become myself only through the other, my friend".

The available person gives oneself without the expectation of receiving back. One is actually at the disposal of others. When one opens up oneself for others, one is open to reality itself. This enables one to grow deeper and deeper in life, whereas the self-centred, unavailable person refuses the call of others and thereby one becomes uncommitted. One is not ready to go beyond the petty circles one creates. One forgets the fact that when one gives one grows and that through self-sacrifice one reaches self-fulfillment. Only a liberated, free, available person can enter into a meaningful and authentic interpersonal communion.

### **The Intersubjective Communion**

Intersubjectivity does not merely mean collective labour or it is not merely being together either. But it calls for an interaction in a deeper level. It means that I must be willing to put myself at the disposal of the other. Here 'the other' is considered and treated not like an object, but as the subject, as the magnetic center of presence. At the root of presence there is a being who takes me into consideration, who is regarded by me as taking me into account. Now by definition an object does not take me into account. I do not exist for it.

Let us take the example of a bus conductor. I often travel in a particular bus. Therefore, I have to deal with this particular conductor often. Now, the conductor is an instrument for me. He /she gives me a ticket and I pay for it. Seeing him /her uneasy one day, I ask, "What is the matter?" Responding to my question he/she comes to me. Here originates the subject - subject relationship. In this way we really become present to each other. In this mutual presence starts the Marcelian inter-subjectivity.

This encounter or meeting or inter-subjectivity is not something accidental or happening by chance. Marcel writes: "To encounter someone is not merely to cross his path but to be, for the moment at least near to or with him. To use a term I have often used before, it means being a co-presence". This meeting or encounter is "not mere interaction between two persons... but a reciprocal intercourse of 'I' and 'Thou' who get to know one another as

persons.” My genuine individuality is found out only in relation with the other. There is no self without communion. By self-enclosure I am actually destroying myself. So, one should get out of one’s own egoistic way of being.

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## **10.5 AN INTEGRAL CONCEPT OF PERSON**

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The ontological, the psychological and the dialogical concepts of person include some good elements. The ontological concept of person gives importance to the will and volatile dimension. It implies that human is an ‘individual substance’ who takes free decisions. Psychological concept of person gives emphasis to intellect and cognitive dimension. It implies that human is a self-conscious being in the world. The dialogical concept stresses the heart and the affective dimension and describes person as a loving and feeling being. All these concepts and dimensions put together we can speak of human as a person who thinks, wills and feels. Human person thus is thinking, willing and feeling entity. Human is precisely a person because one is the master of oneself and one has self-control. The dignity of human too reveals that one is a person with independence, freedom and responsibility.

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## **10.6 LET US SUM UP**

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Human is a mystery. Millions of people have been speculating on the nature of human being for centuries. Various branches of science have attempted to explain the making of human beings. Still human beings remain a mystery. No one has ever succeeded in comprehending the nature of human beings completely. Human is an evolving being possessing the properties of autonomy, self-consciousness, selfless love and self-transcendence. One is a self-transcending being capable of never being satisfied by a given facticity, capable of transcending and projecting oneself beyond space and time. The worth of a human person lies not in what one does or what one knows, but in what one is. Human is an incarnate spirit and is made up of matter and spirit. Since one is an incarnate spirit one has a soul and is spiritual. A spiritual being is essentially intelligent. An intelligent being is essentially able to will. A being, able to will, is necessarily free. A free being is necessarily personal. Human, who is intelligent, free, spiritual and personal by nature, is able to communicate and enter into relationship with the Absolute. Human is an unfinished product. In so far as human is a conscious and free being, one is aware of oneself as a being on the way, who in freedom directs one’s ascent to the fullness of being. Thus,

becoming human is a lifelong human process of learning to transcend our self with love, integrity, fidelity and care. Human being is a possible possibility tending towards the Infinite and one's ultimate destiny consists in being united with the Infinite.

### Check Your Progress III

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1. How does Human being as spiritual being open to the Absolute?

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2. What do you understand by the term "Inter-subjectivity"?

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## 10.7 KEY WORDS

**Person:** The word 'person' comes from the Greek word '*prosopon*' meaning mask, to personify in a role, which became the Latin '*persona*'.

**Transcendence:** To go beyond a limit or range, e.g. of thought or belief or to exist above and apart from the material world.

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## 10.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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### Check Your Progress I

1. Human beings seem to be unique among other creatures of the earth because they not only are fully aware of the inevitable death but also coupled with this awareness they seem to refuse that death is the end. Human, being a unity of body and soul or matter and spirit, death cannot be the end of everything for human. If I was not spirit, death would not exist for me; there would be only decay of my body. Therefore, death is understood as a separation of the soul from the body. For philosophers like Plato and Aquinas, human is a unity, one substance composed of body and soul. But human soul being spiritual can subsist without matter. Therefore, the soul, for Plato continues to exist even after the death of the body because soul alone is the true reality of human. Etymologically speaking *im* is non and *mortality* is death. So immortality is non-death. It is the continued and perennial existence of human, the soul. This is a unique nature and feature of human alone.

### Check Your Progress II

1. The merit of giving an adequate first definition of person in the ontological perspective goes to Severin Boethius. He defined person as *rationalis naturae individua substantia* (individual substance of rational nature). This definition of Boethius was revised by Aquinas. Aquinas defines person as *subsistens in rationali nature* (a singular subsistent of a rational nature).

2. Human differs from animals as a self-conscious being in the cognitive level. Self-consciousness and objectivity are the two elements which distinguish human from animals. In fact, animals know objects and know themselves but reach neither self-consciousness nor objectivity, because they do not succeed in separating themselves either from the knowing subject or from the known object. Human has the awareness of the 'I' (subject) and 'non I' (object).

The inter related actions of reason, volition and emotion together constitute the human mind (consciousness). By the existence of these mental functions we become self-conscious that we are subjects and not objects. The person not only acts consciously, but is also aware both of the fact that one acts and of the fact that it is oneself who acts. Self-consciousness is the awareness by the self of itself. Self-knowledge is the basis of self-consciousness.

### **Check your Progress III**

1. In contrast to the purely material, the structure of human as a spiritual being, given intelligence and will, means that one is open to the infinite, tending to supersede every limit. The object of intelligence is being as being. It chooses the finite within the horizon of infinite and has an infinite desire to know, as well as unbounded potential. Similarly, the will is never content with the attained good, but tends towards the greater. Since only the Absolute is infinite and unlimited Truth and Good, only the Absolute can satisfy the quest of the human person.

2. Inter-subjectivity does not merely mean collective labour or it is not merely being together either. But it calls for an interaction in a deeper level. It means that I must be willing to put myself at the disposal of the other. Here 'the other' is considered and treated not like an object, but as the subject, as the magnetic center of presence. At the root of presence there is a being who takes me into consideration, who is regarded by me as taking me into account. Now by definition an object does not take me into account. I do not exist for it.

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## UNIT 11 FREEDOM\*

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### Structure

- 11.0 Objectives
- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.3 Definition and Kinds of Freedom
- 11.4 Historical Development
- 11.4 The Problem of Free Will
- 11.5 Existence of Freedom
- 11.6 Nature of Freedom
- 11.7 Limits of Freedom
- 11.8 Positive and Negative Freedom
- 11.9 Let us Sum Up
- 11.10 Key words
- 11.11 Further Readings and References
- 11.12 Answers to Check Your Progress

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### 11.0 OBJECTIVES

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In this unit we try to understand the concept of freedom in all its complexities, beginning from the Greek period. The problem of Free will, is the key issue examined and studied in detail, giving special emphasis to deterministic theories and explaining the position of their opponents in detail. By the end of this unit one should be able to:

- Distinguish and explain different kinds of Freedom
- The problem of Free will and various philosophical approaches and theories about it.
- Explain the nature and limits of Freedom
- Describe the difference between positive and Negative Freedom

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### 11.1 INTRODUCTION

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Human being is both intelligent and free. Freedom is another title of human excellence and nobility. It represents a great window for looking into the mystery of human, to acquire a

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\* Dr. Harold Mathias, Pilar Niketan, Nagpur.

more correct, more complete and a more adequate comprehension of human. Both in the practical and theoretical fields freedom has constituted an intricate problem from age old times. In the practical field it was the social, economic, political and cultural chains that often bound human in chains. In the theoretical field the question revolves round the problem of free will. Human distinguishes oneself above the other beings, above all precisely because one is gifted with free will.

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## 11.2 DEFINITION AND KINDS OF FREEDOM

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Freedom is the right to act according to one's will without being held up by the power of others. From a philosophical point of view, it can be defined as the capacity to determine your own choices. It can be defined negatively as an absence of subordination, servitude or constraint.

In general, by freedom we mean absence of constriction. Constriction can be due to various causes and accordingly there can be distinguished various forms of freedom, such as:

**Physical freedom:** immunity from physical constriction.

**Moral freedom:** absence of constrictions through the oppressive forces of moral order such as rewards, punishments, threats, etc.

**Psychological freedom:** it is a human capacity in choosing to do or not to do a thing when all conditions for action are already present. It is a power to make the choice fall in favour of one of various alternative possibilities.

**Political freedom:** Political freedom or personal liberty is the absence of outward restraints, with respect to speech, freedom of thought, religious practice, the press and the freedom to modify one's outward circumstances.

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## 11.3 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS

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It is often said that Greek philosophy was unsuccessful in giving a proper solution or even effectuating a satisfactory enquiry in to the very problem of freedom. There are three principal reasons why they didn't have a deeper enquiry in to this vital problem.

a) because it considers all things as subject to fate, an absolute will, superior to humans and gods, which consciously or unconsciously determines an action.

b) according to Greek-thought human makes up part of nature and is subject to general laws that govern onself, by which one cannot behave differently.

c) human is subject to the strong influence of history, which is conceived in Greek thought as a cyclical movement, in which everything repeats itself within a certain period of time.

The problem of free-will was first definitely stated as a problem of Christian theology. The problem arose, in fact, from a number of different roots in Christian belief. Christianity assertson the one hand that human does freely choose one’s actions, but also on the other hand asserts statements, which are not evidently compatible. For example, God being omniscient knows from all eternity what actions a human will in fact perform. That is why Augustine puts this question, why has God created human being free, knowing that one would abuse this gift? Aquinas asks a different question; how is it possible that human being is free if God is the principle and ultimate cause of everything?

In the modern period there was another shift of perspective from *theocentricism* to anthropocentricism. Freedom is no longer a question of rapport with God but a rapport with other faculties and with the society. During the contemporary period, the phenomenon of socialization and of its consequences brings freedom into consideration above all in the social perspective. Freedom today is no longer compromised by extra-worldly or infra-human forces, but by human and social forces created by humans themselves.

**Check Your Progress I**

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1. Define freedom and explain its various kinds.

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2. Why did Greek thought fail to provide proper solution to the problem of freedom?

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## 11.4 THE PROBLEM OF FREE WILL

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In philosophy, the question of freedom often goes with the question of free will. The French philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau asserted that the condition of freedom was inherent in humanity, with the implication that all social interactions subsequent to birth imply a loss of freedom. He made the famous quote: “Man is born free, but everywhere he is in chains.” Jean Paul Sartre famously claimed that humans are “condemned to be free” – because they always have a choice. But determinism claims that the future is inevitably determined by prior causes and freedom is an illusion. Do we have free will? The history of the discussion of free will is rich and remarkable. David Hume called the problem of free will “the most contentious question of metaphysics, the most contentious science.”

The basic philosophical positions on the problem of free will can be divided in accordance with the answers they provide to two questions. “Are we free agents”?, “Can we be morally responsible for what we do”? Those who say ‘yes’ are the compatibilists, who hold that free will is compatible with determinism, whereas incompatibilists hold that freedom is not compatible with determinism.

- a) **Determinism** is roughly defined as the view that all current and future events are causally necessitated by past events combined with the laws of nature. It holds that everything that happens is necessitated by what has already gone before, in such a way that nothing can happen otherwise than it does. **Causal determinism** is the thesis that future events are necessitated by past and present events are combined with the laws of nature. **Logical determinism** is the notion that all propositions, whether about the past, present or future are either true or false. The problem of free will, in this context, is the problem of how choices can be free, given that what one does in the future is already determined as true or false in the present. **Mythological determinism** negates that man is free for mythological reasons: fate, demons, etc. which impede man from being master of his own actions. **Theological determinism** is the thesis that there is a God who determines all that humans will do, either by knowing their actions in advance, via omniscience or by decreeing their actions in advance. The problem of free will, in this context, is the problem of how our actions can be free, if there is a being who has

determined them for us ahead of time. **Sociological determinism** states that all human actions are determined by the pressure exercised by society on individuals. **Biological determinism** is the idea that all behavior, belief, and desire are fixed by our genetic endowment. **Psychological determinism** affirms that the action of will is entirely determined by the intellect and its knowledge).

- b) **Compatibilism** is the view that the assumption of free will and the existence of a concept of determinism are compatible with each other. They believe that to have free will, to be a freeagent, to be free in choice and action is simply to be free from constraints of certain sorts. Freedom is a matter of not being physically or psychologically forced or compelled to do what one does. Thomas Hobbes claims that a person acts freely only when the person willed the act and the person could have done otherwise, if the person had decided to. He sometimes attributes such compatibilist freedom to the person and not to some abstract notion of will. David Hume writes, “this hypothetical liberty is universally allowed to belong to everyone who is not a prisoner and in chains.”
- c) **Incompatibilism** holds that there is no way to reconcile a belief in a deterministic universe with a belief in a concept of free will beyond that of a perceived existence. Or in simple words determinism and free will can never go together. One of the traditional arguments for incompatibilism is based on an “intuition pump.” If a person is determined in his or her choices of actions, then he or she must be like other mechanical things that are determined in their behavior such as a wind-up toy, a billiard ball, a puppet, or a robot. Because these things have no free will, then people must have no free will, if determinism is true. Another argument of incompatibilists runs along these lines. If determinism is true, then we have no control over the events of the past that determined our present state and no control over the laws of nature. Since we can have no control over these matters, we also can have no control over the consequences of them. Since our present choices and acts, under determinism, are the necessary consequences of the past and the laws of nature, then we have no control over them and hence, no free will.
- d) **Libertarianism** accepts the existence of a concept of free will along with an assumption of indeterminism to some extent. Metaphysical libertarianism is one philosophical view under that of incompatibilism. Libertarianism holds on to a concept of free will

that requires the individual to be able to take more than one possible course of action under a given set of circumstances.

- e) **Free will as a combination of chance and determination:** William James described a two-stage model of free will. In the first stage the mind develops random alternative possibilities for action, in the second an adequately determined will selects one option.

### Check Your Progress II

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1. What is determinism? What are the different types of determinism?

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2. What is the difference between compatibilism and incompatibilism?

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## 11.5 EXISTENCE OF FREEDOM

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To prove the existence of freedom in human action, one can present many argumentations, and along the arc of the history of philosophy many of these have been adopted. Some authors call upon the testimonial of consciousness, others call on the intellectual constitution of human being, and still others point out the disastrous consequences inherent in the negation of freedom. Among the most important texts in favor of the existence of freedom are those of Origen, Thomas Aquinas, Descartes, Kant, Hegel and Sartre.

Origen was one of the first authors to write a treatise on freedom. His famous work *De Principiis* is remarkably profound and systematic work on free will. According to Origen men as well as all other rational creatures are free. Truly man is everywhere in chains, but it is

his own responsibility, for the cause of his enslavement is traceable to that very freedom, which he misused. Free will constitutes the very essence itself of rational creatures, by which none of them can be constrained to act by force.

Origen asserts that Divine Providence allows man's free will full scope in his cooperation with God. He says that if a believer takes away the element of free will from virtue he destroys its essence. This conviction is one of the pillars of Origen's ethics and theology.

Origen harmonized the freedom of the will with the plan of Divine Providence. In doing so, he makes himself the defender of free will. As he expounds his theory, providence envelops free will, impels it in the direction of good conduct, disciplines it, and heals it. The universe is cared for by God in accordance with the condition of the free will of each man, and that as far as possible it is always being led on to be better, and... that the nature of our free will is to admit various possibilities.

After Origen the problem of freedom always remained at the centre of the philosophical reflection of Christian authors. Authors, like, St Augustine has dealt it with original approaches. He says that as the rational soul is characterized by understanding, which is oriented towards knowledge, it is also characterized by will, which is oriented towards free choice. Augustine considers Cicero's reasoning against God's foreknowledge, "If there is free will, all things do not happen according to fate; if all things do not happen according to fate, there is not a certain order of causes; and if there is not a certain order of causes, neither is there a certain order of things foreknown by God." Against this argument, Augustine maintains both human freedom of the will and divine foreknowledge of all future events. Even if there is free will and an absence of any all-encompassing deterministic fate, there can still be "for God a certain order of all causes," among which causes are our freely choosing wills.

Aquinas distinguishes between the free choice of human for us, and the natural instincts of the "brute animal." He says that the "brute animal" does not have any free choice, but in place of free choice the animal has an instinct to do something. For example, when a deer sees a wolf, the deer instinctively runs away from the wolf, not by free choice, but of the natural instinct of fear for the wolf.

Human does not choose of necessity. And this is because that which is possible not to be, is not of necessity. Now for the reason which it is possible not to choose, or to choose, may be gathered from a twofold power in human. For human can will and not will, act and not act. Again one can will this or that and do this or that. The reason for this is seated in the very

power of the reason.

Descartes regards the freedom of the human will or liberty of choice to be so great that it is the respect in which we most resemble divine infinity. His initial analysis of human freedom – as our having the power of choosing to do a thing or choosing not to do it – seems ordinary enough. But then he shows us a more complicated version of his definition, it consists alone in the fact that in order to affirm or deny, pursue or shun those things placed before us by the understanding, we act so that we are unconscious that any outside force constrains us in doing so." He holds that the power of free will is the greatest perfection in human, through the exercise of which we become masters of our actions and thereby merit praise or blame.

Kant argues that we could not prove freedom to be something actual in ourselves and in human nature. We saw merely that we must presuppose it if we want to think of a being as rational. Kant also thinks that there is a sort of circular thinking about the relationship between freedom and morality: we assume that we are free so that we may think of ourselves as subject to moral laws," and we "think of ourselves as subject to moral laws because we have attributed to ourselves freedom of the will. He then ends with: Freedom is, therefore, only an idea of reason whose objective reality is in itself questionable."

Hegel's most renowned discussion of freedom traces the evolution of freedom in three stages of world history. In the world of the ancient Orient, people do not yet know that the Spirit – the human as such – is free. Because they do not know this, they are not free. They know only that one person is free; but for this very reason such freedom is mere arbitrariness, savagery, stupefied passion. It was among the Greeks that the consciousness of freedom first arose, and thanks to that consciousness they were free. But they, and the Romans as well, knew only that some persons are free, not the human as such. To the Romans only citizens were free, and the slaves were not. It was first the Germanic peoples, through Christianity, who came to the awareness that every human is free by virtue of being human, and that the freedom of spirit comprises our most human nature. Therefore, World history is the progress in the consciousness of freedom – a progress that we must come to know in its necessity. Hegel also adds a discussion on the freedom of the human will. He says, 'The will is free, so that freedom is both the substance of right and its goal, while the system of right is the realm of freedom made actual.'

Sartre proposes an interesting view on free will when he says, "either human is wholly

determined (which is inadmissible, especially because a determined consciousness - a consciousness externally motivated – becomes pure exteriority and ceases to be consciousness) or else human is wholly free." This shows us that Sartre believes that human is free to do what one wants. He writes, " I am condemned to always exist beyond my essence, beyond the urgings and motives of my act: I am condemned to being free. This means that it is impossible to find other limits to my freedom than freedom itself or if one prefers, this means that we are not free to cease being free."

Again, after telling us that human is wholly free, he tells us that since we are free we are responsible for our actions. The essential consequence of our earlier remarks is that since human being is condemned to be free he carries the weight of the whole world on one's shoulders; "one is responsible for the world and for oneself as a way of being." He says that even if one does not want to be responsible, one cannot be without being responsible for one's actions, "For I am responsible for my very desire of fleeing responsibilities. To make myself passive in the world, to refuse to act upon things and upon Others is still to choose myself, and suicide is one mode among others of being-in-the-world."

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## **11.6 NATURE OF FREEDOM**

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There are three principal moments in a free act: deliberation, judgment and election. Deliberation is the phase of exploration, research and inquiry about the object or action. Judgment is the phase of evaluation. Election is the phase of decision. The free act requires that, that which is wished to be done is known. It implies an attentive examination. The free act which culminates in election is a complex action, which is the result of a dialogue between the intellect and the will. St. Thomas maintains that the free act belongs substantially to the will, also depending on the intellect. Freedom is the faculty which human being enjoys to determine oneself to an action and to being its cause, after having taken consciousness of the considerations that such an action carries for one's life.

Human will is a faculty parallel to the intellect. While the end of intellect is still truth, not this or that truth, but the truth as such, the absolute truth; so the end of will is good, but not this or that particular good, but rather absolute universal good. It is only in absolute good that will finds its perfect satisfaction and its perfect happiness. But in reality the intellect never proposes to the will a concrete good which has all the charisma of the absolute, universal good, but only particular and limited goods. Therefore these goods are sometimes tend to be

repelled or rejected. Here resides the profound reason by which the human will is free. Human is the author of the free act. The cause of the free act is the person who fulfills it, not God or the angels or demons, stars, nature, society or the socio-political structure. Freedom is a very special gift which only human possesses, while all the other things of this world lack it.

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## **11.7 LIMITS OF FREEDOM**

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Human is free, but not unboundedly free. Freedom does not identify itself with the being of human, but constitutes its fundamental property like living, thinking etc. Therefore, freedom is also subject to certain limits and is controlled by certain conditions. Human is not free from being corporeal, social, sexual etc. One is not free to use language to one's pleasure. Human cannot remove oneself from a certain dependence on the world, society and history. Human freedom is also conditioned by passions. This conditioning has always been seriously taken by the philosophers in all periods of time. In the normal situations the passions exercise a strong influence over us, but at the same time we are not slaves of passions in that we can combat and reject its assaults. The theory of Freud that all human activity is determined by the libido finds fewer and fewer supporters in the recent times. The human affective dimension cannot completely be reduced to libido. The influence of the affective part of human on the rest of human is real and profound. It can sustain or impede, favor or oppose, because there exists opposite affective tendencies for everything which human does: love-hate, joy-sadness, hope-fear etc. Though there is a strong affective pressure, the will in normal conditions remains free and sovereign with respect to all the other faculties of human being. It is only in certain abnormal conditions that human being becomes completely subject to passions.

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## **11.8 POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE FREEDOM**

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The philosopher Isaiah Berlin makes an important distinction between 'freedom from' (negative freedom) and 'freedom to' (positive freedom). The positive one is the realization of one's self in spontaneity, a freedom to develop one's potential. The negative freedom theorists hold that freedom is essentially something negative, namely the absence of restraint or impediment to our actions. It is the freedom from oppression, needs and authority etc. Freedom as the absence of restraint means unwilling to subjugate, lacking submission or without forceful inequality. T.H. Green defines positive freedom as a positive power or

capacity of doing or enjoying something worth doing or enjoying and that too, something that we do or enjoy in common with others. It is more than the mere absence of impediment to our desire i.e. the freedom to be genuine, one should be provided with full opportunity other than the interference of others. A large number of philosophers now reject the view that there are two irreducibly distinct conceptions of freedom, one positive and the other negative. According to MacCallum, there is only one concept of liberty and that is best understood as always one and the same triadic relation between a person, an intended action and a preventing condition. Freedom is always of someone, from something, to do, have or be something. The disagreement between the adherents of positive and negative freedom are often about one or the other aspect of this triad, i.e., what a person is to stand for, what an impediment is and what is to be counted as a wanted or intended action.

### Check Your Progress III

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1. Is freedom limited? If so how?

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## 11.9 LET US SUM UP

The gift of will, a most precious gift is the distinguishing mark of human beings from all other beings. In the past, the Greek mind was unaware of this. The understanding of freedom as indeterminism was foreign to the Greek consciousness. It was a static mindset, without knowing the dynamics of human freedom. The problem of the freedom of will is not a simple issue, but it poses a great network of difficulties. These difficulties are not unrelated with each other; rather they are part of a great network – the center of which is human being as a reflective conscious being and human being as part of physical nature; conditioned by and acted upon by nature. Hence come forward the theories of determinism, indeterminism of various kinds. If freedom of choice is completely arbitrary, as the theory of evolution wishes to do, the real freedom will always remain an illusion. Even if in the practical level every form of oppression and inequality disappears, in the philosophical plane, the freedom of will may always remain a

point of discussion.

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## 11.10 KEY WORDS

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**Determinism:** It is the view that all current and future events are causally necessitated by past events combined with the law of nature.

**Compatibilism:** It is the view that the assumption of free will and the existence of a concept of determinism are compatible with each other.

**Incompatibilism:** It is the view that there is no way to reconcile a belief in a deterministic universe with a concept of free will.

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## 11.11 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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## 11.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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### Check Your Progress I

1. Freedom is the right to act according to one's will without being held up by the power of others. From a philosophical point of view, it can be defined as the capacity to determine your own choices. There are different kinds of freedom such as Physical freedom which is the absence of any physical force or constriction, Moral freedom which is the absence of any constriction through rewards or punishments, psychological freedom which is the capacity to choose to do or not to do an act when all the constituents of an act is present. Political

freedom is that which is assured by the government such as the freedom of speech, religion etc.

2. There are three reasons why the Greeks failed to adequately address the problem of freedom. It had a deterministic view because of which it considered all things as subject to fate, an absolute will superior to men and to gods, which consciously or unconsciously determines an action. Secondly, according to Greek thought human makes up part of nature and is subject to general laws that govern humans, by which human cannot behave differently. Therefore, human is not ultimately responsible for one's action. Thirdly, it is believed that human is subject to the strong influence of history, which is conceived as a cyclical movement, in which everything repeats itself within a certain period of time.

### **Check Your Progress II**

1. Determinism is defined as the view that all current and future events are causally necessitated by past events combined with the laws of nature. It holds that everything that happens is necessitated by what has already gone before, in such a way that nothing can happen otherwise than it does. The different kinds of determinism are: *Mythological determinism*, which states that human is not the controller of one's actions, because they are controlled by stars, devil or one's fate. *Theological determinism* assumes that God determines all that the humans will, either by knowing in advance or by decreeing actions to humans. *Causal determinism* states that the present state is necessitated by the past events according to the laws of nature. *Logical determinism* holds that all propositions about past present or future are either true or false.

2. Compatibilism is the view that the assumption of free will and the existence of a concept of determinism are compatible with each other. But incompatibilism totally disagrees with this idea. Incompatibilism holds that there is no way to reconcile a belief in a deterministic universe with a belief in a concept of free will beyond that of a perceived existence. Or, in simple words, determinism and free will can never go together. If determinism is true then human agent would be like other mechanical things that are determined in their behavior such as a wind-up toy, a billiard ball, a puppet, or a robot.

### **Check your progress III**

1. Human is free, but not unboundedly free. It is not the essence but only the fundamental property of human beings. Human's freedom is limited by a corporeal body, the social environments, sex, etc. Moreover, human freedom is also conditioned by passions. In the normal situations the passions exercise a strong influence over human beings, but at the same time we are not slaves of passions in that we have the power to combat and reject its assaults. All the activity of human beings cannot be reduced to the control of *libido* as Freud puts it. Though the influence of passions on human is real and profound, it is not ultimate. Human beings are souvenir in their own ways, only that the passions do have an influence on human occasionally.



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