
UNIT 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF HUMAN PERSON

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit tries to introduce philosophy of human person (also called philosophical anthropology) to the students. It tries to evoke some basic issues in the philosophy of the human person.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

“Philosophical anthropology” is not a recognizable sub-discipline within contemporary Anglo-American philosophy. But the label “philosophical anthropology” might also be apt to describe “the study of human nature” that comes down to us through the Thomistic traditions of philosophical reflection. Somewhat in contrast to emphases in analytic philosophy of mind, “philosophical anthropology” tends to emphasize questions of social context, inter-subjectivity, and embodiment, and is focused on what Heidegger would describe as “being-in-the-world.” The philosophy of the human person could be roughly defined as that branch of philosophy which busies itself with trying to respond to those deepest and perennial questions about human beings – questions that have plagued us ever since history began. Note, we have spoken of ‘responding’ to such issues, not ‘answering’ them. That is because the word ‘answer’ seems to imply a more or less complete and thorough rejoinder to the matter, an exhaustive conclusion ‘once-and-for-all’.

Indeed, there are many people who expect philosophy to provide them with just that sort of thing and not a few philosophers who behave as if they can furnish us with precisely that. Such sophistry and their sophisms are well received by immature, insecure minds who cannot bear to think that there are mysteries in life and that much of our existence is based upon the apparent will-o’-the wisp of ‘reasonable (or calculated) risk’. The human being, let us remember, is a mystery – in the Marcelian sense. That is why we cannot, in all fairness, demand of philosophy that type of authoritative, conclusive answers that we can – given enough time and equipment – wrest from the world of problems. We should also be in a position, by now, to see all this as

constituting the grandiose adventure of philosophy in general, and of human persons in particular, rather than lament it as a weakness.

1.2 OTHER NAMES

Old manuals of scholastic philosophy traditionally entitled this treatise *Psychologia Superior* (Superior Psychology), to distinguish it from *Psychologia Inferior* (which means what it looks like). The former was so called because it was concerned with the study of the superior type of psyche, or soul, that is proper to the human person. The latter studied the activities of sub-human life – ‘inferior’ souls, the life of animals (sentient activity) and plants (vegetative activity). Of course, in as much as human beings also share in these ‘inferior’ activities, the findings and conclusion of ‘Inferior Psychology’ had also a certain relevance for humans as well. We abandon this nomenclature because – among other reasons – it already pre-supposes a certain understanding of life in general and of human life in particular: namely, that human life is ‘superior’ to other forms of life because there is in human being a ‘soul’ which is essentially and radically distinct from that of an animal or a plant. This may or may not be the case. But we should not make such presuppositions at the onset of our reflections. It has also been called Rational Psychology and here the title is chosen not so much to insist that it is the study of the psyche that is capable of rational activity but to contrast it with Experimental Psychology, which is what is normally understood by the term ‘psychology’ in the most popular sense. The two adjectives aptly bring out the difference in method in the two disciplines. Whereas experimental psychology tries to understand the human person in terms of readings, measurements, behaviour-patterns etc., obtained from experiential observations, rational psychology tries to delve deeper into the human psyche by rational reflections on the implications of her/his activity. Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* suggests one possible dissatisfaction with this approach when the Prince of Denmark tells his friend:

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy. (I, v, 1. 166.)

The ‘philosophy’ that *Hamlet* seems to be so critical of would seem to be that overly rational discipline which, because of its narrow rationalism, is unable to attain and understand many realities which are beyond the slender pale of reason. We are all aware of the (too) oft-quoted dictum of the seventeenth century French philosopher, Blaise Pascal, “The heart has its reasons which the reason does not know.” (*Pensées*, 4, 277) The human person, after all, is much more than pure reason and so an exclusively – or even exaggeratedly – rational approach to the human person results in the encounter with a truncated person or a monster.

We are thus left with the ‘more open’ titles Philosophical Anthropology (from the Greek *anthropos*, human being, and *logos*, science) and Philosophy of Human Person (which is more straight-forwardly Anglo-Saxon and so easily comprehensible). As regards the first, the epithet ‘philosophical’ serves to distinguish it from other scientific approaches to Anthropology that are more commonly studied in Universities.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1. Human being is a mystery in the Marcelian sense. What is its implication?

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2. What are some earlier names for the philosophy of the human person?

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1.3 THE INDIAN SITUATION

The first records we have of the origins of Indian philosophy are to be found in the Vedas, Brahmanas and Aranyakas (ca. 1,500 BC). These writings are religious in character and are directly concerned with the ritual of Vedic sacrifice, the gods and the various myths (especially concerning the origin and end of the world and human beings) that are linked up with each aspect of the sacrificial action. These speculations are deepened in the Upanisads (800 BC). This group of treatises is also known as the Vedanta (literally, the end of the Vedas), either because they were written after the Vedas or because they are seen to contain the essence or the mysteries of the former. Many scholars see in them the dawn of Indian philosophy, as such. Finally, we have the famous *darsanas*, or systems – the various ‘schools’ of Indian thought – which developed the speculations of the Upanisads – often very polemically – along conflicting and frequently contradictory lines.

Indian thought is characteristically holistic and did not elaborate an isolated treatise on human beings or ‘psychology’. However, there is an implicit understanding of human person in the Vedas and, more markedly, in the Upanisads. A confusing variety of names were given to *prana* (originally, breath or wind; later on, vital breath and the principle of life). Closely related to *prana* is *atman* – from which the German *Atmen* (breathing) derives. This word, too meant the breathing principle in human being. The meaning slowly evolved to the trunk of the body, the

innermost kernel of human person's existence, the self-conscious aspect of the individual and, eventually, the highest being and Supreme Reality. Then there is *purusha* – the current word for human person – which was taken to refer to the soul or *atman* that dwells in every person. Finally, there is *jiva* (from the root *jiv*, to live), which frequently stands for the soul and the living principle of things.

1.4 OUR APPROACH

We shall focus our attention on the mystery that is the human person from the double stand-points of phenomenology and critical hermeneutics. That is, we shall begin with observing the data or facts that are manifest concerning the human person – as an individual and also in society. We recognize that this approach cannot but imply a 'point of view' and that our culture, religion, vocabulary and so on will inevitably colour it. An elaborately neutral and 'objective' view-point is quite impossible. At the heart of the phenomenological "method" is description, which requires attention, which in turns requires "bracketing" certain sorts of interests and involvements in order to attend to experience—especially "mundane" experience.

That is why we involve the moment of critical hermeneutics. We shall try to keep ourselves aware of the various factors that enter into our interpretation of these facts as well as have an interpretative role to play in the very viewing of these facts themselves. Particularly we shall be 'on the alert' for anything that smacks of an oppressive notion or point of view. We shall ever be seeking to purify our presuppositions and basic concepts to ensure that ours is nearer to an authentically liberative vision of human being, that is a way of understanding the human person that would inspire us and to action that builds up a person more "fully human, fully alive." Just what all this means, in practice, will become evident right from the section on "What is the human person?"

1.5 PHILOSOPHY IS ANTHROPOLOGY

It may be noted along with Paul Ricoeur that "every understanding is self-understanding." He was referring to human quest for knowledge and understanding. Every time a human person acquires more knowledge and understands something deeper, one is also improving one's own self-understanding. In this sense understanding others (persons and things) add to one's own self-understanding. Seen thus, everything we study, particularly in philosophy, contributes to my self-understanding. Seen from this perspective, the whole philosophy is an attempt to answer the basic philosophical question: "Who am I"? In this sense we can claim that philosophy is basically anthropology.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1. Briefly state Indian way of understanding human person.

2. "Every understanding is self-understanding." Comment.

1.6 CONTENT OF THE TREATISE

We begin by taking up the most basic question of all in the Philosophy of the Human Person, "What is the human person?" "Who am I?" At first it may appear that we have bitten off more than we can chew. How can a human being detach one's 'self' from oneself so as to work out anything near to a satisfactory answer to that question of 'who am I'? Well, let us remind ourselves that we are not so naive as to imagine that we can elaborate an exhaustive answer to that question which involves a full-fledged mystery (of Gabriel Marcel once again). We but try to throw a little more light on the issues involved, nothing more. After all, we shall pass along some of the popular as well as more 'meritorious-of-study' understandings of human being and view them critically to see whether they imply an oppressive or a liberative conception of 'the human reality', to use Jaspers' phrase. It's important to be critically aware of our implicit pre-understanding of the human being for it will underlie all that we shall say or do about human person, whether we notice it or not and will thereby prejudice our later studies and conclusions. From there we pass on to a reflection on the basic tension in the human being between her/his individual and communitarian dimensions.

At times we feel within ourselves the need to be 'true to ourselves' which may conflict with the demands and expectations of the society we live in. To which of these two should we give priority and when? Linked to the issue of the 'dependence-independence' dialectic is yet a further question, "Are we really free?" Given the findings of contemporary psychology (especially the research of Freud and Skinner as also becoming more aware as to how the media and the State can – and do – manipulate us, can we assert our freedom of thought and action with as much assurance as in the past?) Here we could make a short excursus into Axiology, the Philosophy of Values, and analyse critically the implicit value systems open to humans as well try to discover what are the concrete values upon which contemporary society is based. We will

not go much into issues of which free acts of the human person are morally wrong and which are morally right (the famous issue of ‘the criteria of morality’) for this will be gone into more thoroughly in the treatise on Ethics. But we shall speak a little bit at length on the option of violence and non-violence as possible alternative means to building up a just society – an extremely relevant topic today, especially in the Third World. Then we see how love constitutes one unique human phenomenon, enabling a human being to divest himself or herself so as to attain full self realisation. We also see the existential significance of love for our world. Finally we will come self-seeking to grips with another perennial human question and which seems to be gathering intensity in our ‘frantic and frenetic age’, “Is there life after life?” As serious students of philosophy we must, in this connection, begin with the more basic question as to why we die at all. ... What is life? What is death?

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1. What are some of the basic questions in philosophy of the human person?

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2. Give a brief outline of this course.

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1.7 LET US SUM UP

Human being is a mystery in the Marcellian sense. That is why we cannot, in all fairness, demand of philosophy that type of authoritative, conclusive answers that we can – given enough time and equipment – wrest from the world of problems. We can see this as constituting the grandiose adventure of philosophy in general, and of human persons in particular, rather than lament it as a

weakness. There are some earlier names for the philosophy of the human person; they are *Psychologia Superior*, Rational Psychology, Philosophical Anthropology. The basic questions in philosophy of the human person are “What is the human person?” “Who am I?” “Am I really free?” “What can I expect after death?” The focus of our attention is on the mystery that is the human person from the double stand-points of phenomenology and critical hermeneutics. Paul Ricoeur said that “every understanding is self-understanding.” He was referring to human quest for knowledge and understanding. Every time a human person acquires more knowledge and understands something deeper, one is also improving one’s own self-understanding. In this sense understanding others (persons and things) add to one’s own self-understanding.

1.8 KEY WORDS

Phenomenology: A philosophy or method of inquiry based on the premise that reality consists of objects and events as they are perceived or understood in human consciousness and not of anything independent of human consciousness. It bases itself firstly on reality as given.

1.9 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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UNIT 2 PHILOSOPHY OF HUMAN PERSON AND OTHER PHILOSOPHICAL DISCIPLINES

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- 2.6 Philosophical Anthropology and other Philosophical disciplines
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- 2.12 Key Words
- 2.13 Further Readings and References

2.0 OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this unit is to introduce the students to philosophy of human person, particularly in the context of India. It also tries to relate philosophy of human person to other disciplines in philosophy and to anthropology in general. Finally we want to affirm the uniqueness of this study as part of human quest to understand themselves.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Who am I? What can I really hope for? How can I know? Some of these fundamental questions are seriously taken up in philosophy of human person. In this unit we want to study the relationship of philosophy of human person (also called philosophical anthropology) to other disciplines in philosophy. Finally we shall see what is general anthropology and how it is related to philosophical anthropology.

2.2 POSING THE QUESTION BEFORE US

In this part an attempt is made to situate this course in the Indian context. For that purpose let us get our sights straight. Let's get our perspective clear from the start. The question we have posed ourselves in this opening chapter is a "mystery-question", not a "problem-question" (according to Gabriel Marcel). Hence it would be most naive, not to say foolish and unreasonable on our

part, to aim at anything like an authoritative and exhaustive definition of the human person, something like a chemical formula that nails the issue once and for all. Because we are part of the question and so cannot detach ourselves from it, it is unsuceptible to cold scientific investigation and analysis. Instead of speaking about finding an “answer” to this question (“answer” is a very definitive-sounding word), let us rather aim at a *response*: a humble, rough framework attempt to come to grips with its challenge, one that will ever remain open to further elucidation and clarification. When faced with a mystery, we can only hope (at best) to be able to throw a little more light on the matter and progress but one step further along the road to an “answer.” We can never arrive at our destination fully: ours is a pilgrimage towards an ever-receding horizon. For some people this is bad news, something offensive to the autonomy and power of human reason. For others, this is what makes philosophy – and life. – more exciting

And so our discussions are not mere academic issues. Understandably, many of us might question the procedure of beginning our study of such a vital issue as the Philosophy of Human Person with such an abstract sounding theme: What is Human Being? After all, are there not many more existential and burning matters that fly in our face? Leaving aside vital social themes like hunger and poverty, are there not more urgent philosophical queries to delve into – like human freedom and life after death? Why not plunge into these straight off? Well, the answer is simple enough. It is precisely in order to enable us to make an in-depth study (and one that, hopefully, full furnish guide-lines for action) that we begin with a reflection on what it means to be a human person. For it is in terms of how we understand ‘the human reality’ (as some phenomenologists like to put it) that we approach (consciously or not) all other issues, even the most action-oriented matters. As G.K. Chesterton put it so rightly, “Nothing is more practical than a good theory.” A hasty rushing into action while one brushes aside uncritically his/her possible prejudiced pre-concepts will just add one more doomed project to schemes and pseudo-revolutions that have only brought new and worse forms of repression and suffering for the “little ones”. The import of what is being said now should become more evident as we proceed with this chapter.

2.3 OPPRESSIVE AND LIBERATIVE UNDERSTANDINGS OF HUMAN PERSON

“An error is an exaggerated truth.” This old adage is especially true when we are busy with such a many-faceted and rich reality as the human person. It is all too easy to seize one dimension of dear old *anthropo*, get so mesmerised and enamoured of it, that one forgets about other dimensions. Thus some people speak as if human being were merely an individual and nothing more, forgetting her/his social responsibilities. Others approach the matter vice versa. Some are so taken up by humans’ spiritual and mystical aspects that they (like Plotinus of old) regret that we have flesh and blood bodies too, alas. Still others, in order to right this imbalance, canonise the body and its needs and pooh-pooh any talk of man’s trans-physical goals, desires and aspirations. Each of these one-sided emphases begins with something that’s very true and must not be overlooked in elaborating any sane and sound vision of human being. But inasmuch as they overstress that element and ignore or deny the others, they end up with a truncated and thereby oppressive vision of the human being ... which will be carried over into all their schemes of action. An authentically liberative philosophy of the human person is one which affirms all the various complementary and/or contrasting traits in this mysterious being and seeks to promote

them *all*. It may not ever or always be possible to attain this equilibrium. But we can always have it as our constant goal and seek to evaluate all that we and others say and do in this vital area. Such will be the approach we will adopt in our study

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1. How is a 'response' different from an 'answer'? What do we seek in philosophical anthropology?

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2. "Nothing is more practical than a good theory." - Elucidate.

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2.4 HUMAN BEING TODAY IS HUNGRY AND POOR

The human person which we are going to study in this treatise is not an abstraction but a wonderful creature that is spread all over the face of the globe, living out a multiplicity of cultures, religions and even differing in physical and physiognomical detail. What are the adjectives that we could cite which could be used to point out some of the characteristics and qualities that are most common to all human beings? It is a sad and ghastly fact that among these we would have to include *hungry* and *impoverished* (not the innocuous word "poor"). More than 500 million people (an eighth of the world) suffer from malnutrition, 15 million infants die each year from hunger and related causes, while approximately half the entire population of the earth goes to bed not having had enough to eat. Our reflections on the *Philosophy of Human Person* cannot overlook this, the "human condition on mad planet earth" – very specially since we are not studying this topic as more effete academic hair-splitters.

This is true specially in India. We are living in a land of the very poor. Of the 1200 million inhabitants of India today, some 40% millions live on or just above the so-called “poverty line” (which the Central Government Pay Commission defined as “the minimum required for moderate activity” – whatever that means) – at the Government’s own admission. Almost the same number live just above it, so that some 70% of our people are undernourished, lacking not only the special kinds of foods (vitamins and proteins) for healthy growth and functioning but lacking the minimal 1500-2000 calories a day which are necessary. All this is unnecessary. For we have either enough food in our country to feed all our people, or the know-how or money to obtain it. It’s just that we have other priorities in mind. It’s not lack of food or money that is the problem – just lack of caring and sharing.

2.5 A SHORTAGE OF JUSTICE, NOT FOOD

The most devastating truth about starvation in Ethiopia or malnutrition in India is that there is no need for it to happen. The world is not suffering from lack of food production. On the contrary, world food supplies are at record levels. The trouble is that food is being grown in the wrong places and at prices that the poor cannot afford. Statistics reveal that enough food is produced on earth to feed 10% more than the entire population of the earth. But that food remains out of the reach of the poor. If Henry Kissinger could claim in the mid-seventies that “for the first time we have the technological capacity to save mankind from the scourge of hunger,” the fact is within that same space of time the number of hungry people has doubled, world-wide. It is not food that is in short supply, as an Oxfam report so tellingly puts it, but justice.

The rich nations, which comprise 25% of the world’s population, consume over 87% of global wealth produced each year. In addition, they dominate international organisations (UNO, UNESCO, The World Bank), control international trade which is heavily weighted in their favour and exercise unchallenged military supremacy, often using force to attain their ends. As for the Indian elite, they account for 12% of the population, own 60% of our urban and rural property and consume over 30% of our annual production. At the same time they supply 80% of Indian administrative and police cadres (IAS, IPS, IFS). Thus both the national and international elite use their power to maintain their privileged position and assure a steady drain of resources from the masses who produce them to the rich minority.

Therefore what we have is a crisis of values. What has gone wrong? Our creeping consumer-society-mentality and its inter-related “built-in-obsolescence” values have taught us that “to have more” (power, wealth, influence) is far more important than “to be more” (human). Success, maturity, dignity – all these are measured solely in terms of what one has been able to accumulate, either by her/his own (questionable?) efforts or by inheritance. If I can have more money/power/influence by being less human – fine go ahead. And so the rich get richer and the poor get poorer and all sorts of nice “sociological” arguments are churned out to keep elite consciences clear. After all, it is argued, the poor are lazy and do hardly any work (but let one of those critics see how much work he’d be able to do with the “nourishment” and living conditions of the poor). Again it is asked: “Why upset them when they’re happy with their lot?” Resigned would be a better word: it is the resignation that has been borne out of black despair and

helplessness in the face of a bureaucracy that's bigger and stronger than any. Maybe it's a bit clearer now as to why we should focus a bit on what it means to be human, right at the start of this enterprise.

2.6 PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY AND OTHER PHILOSOPHICAL DISCIPLINES

How is philosophy of human being related to other disciplines in philosophy? How is our “philosophical anthropology” related to anthropology in general? These are issues that we shall consider next. We know that the quest to understand oneself is the basic human and philosophical quest. Therefore the most fundamental philosophical question, “Who am I?” is an anthropological one. In that sense we can paraphrase Karl Rahner and claim that “philosophy is anthropology.” Therefore it is understandable all the treatise that we do in philosophy are intimately connected to anthropology. For example epistemology speaks of human being as the knower, while hermeneutics relates to human being as one who understands and makes sense of reality. Logic deals with the human capacity to think with precision and coherence. Metaphysics is a human attempt to make sense of the larger world in which we live. Ethics, of course, deals with the right actions of human being. Philosophy of God, including theodicy, is not an empty enquiry into God as such, but it is a human enquiry into God as humans understand it progressively and creatively. In general the history of ideas is a human way of understating themselves as part of a larger, social phenomenon. Further, aesthetics studies the human ability to admire and create beauty.

Seen thus all philosophical disciplines may have their own distinct identities, but they are all connected to philosophical anthropology.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

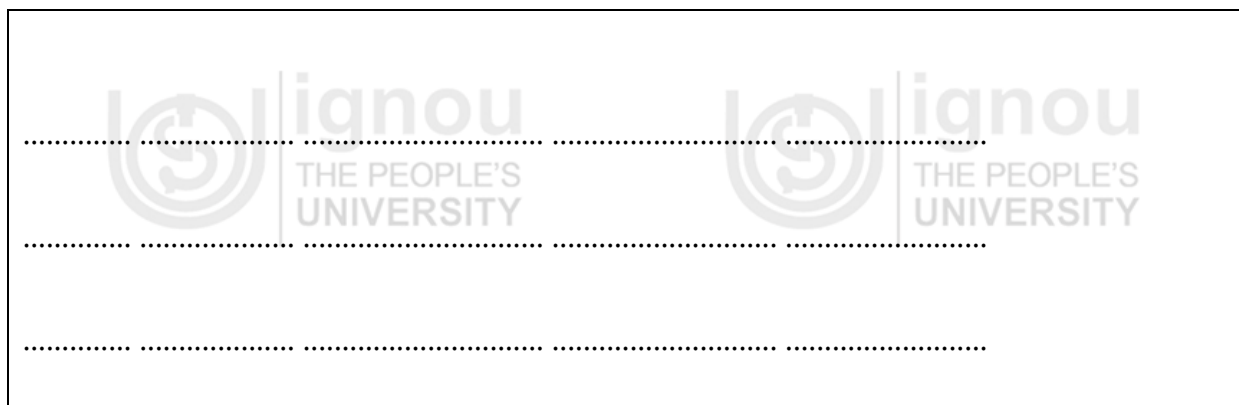
1. “It is not food that is in short supply, but justice.” Give your philosophical response.

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2. How are other philosophical disciplines linked to philosophical anthropology?



2.7 ANTHROPOLOGY IN GENERAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY IN PARTICULAR

In this section we want to make a distinction between philosophical anthropology that we are busy with in this course and the other anthropology, called cultural anthropology. Succinctly we may define general anthropology or cultural anthropology as “The scientific study of the origin, the behaviour, and the physical, social, and cultural development of humans.” Thus it is the study of humanity. Anthropology has origins in the natural sciences, the humanities, and the social sciences. The term "anthropology", was first used in 1501 by German philosopher *Magnus Hundt*.

The basic questions that anthropology poses are: "What defines Homo sapiens?", "Who are the ancestors of modern Homo sapiens?" "What are humans' physical traits?", "How do humans behave?", "Why are there variations and differences among different groups of humans?", "How has the evolutionary past of Homo sapiens influenced its social organization and culture?" and so forth.

In the United States, contemporary anthropology is typically divided into four sub-fields: cultural anthropology (also called "social anthropology"), archaeology, linguistic anthropology, and physical (or biological) anthropology. The four-field approach to anthropology is reflected in many undergraduate textbooks as well as anthropology programs. At universities in the United Kingdom, and much of Europe, these "sub-fields" are frequently housed in separate departments and are seen as distinct disciplines.

The social and cultural sub-field has been heavily influenced by structuralist and post-modern theories, as well as a shift toward the analysis of modern societies (an arena more typically in the remit of sociologists). During the 1970s and 1980s there was an epistemological shift away from the positivist traditions that had largely shaped and influenced the discipline. During this shift, enduring questions about the nature and production of knowledge came to occupy a central place in cultural and social anthropology. In contrast, archaeology, biological anthropology, and linguistic anthropology remained largely positivist. Due to this difference in epistemology, anthropology as a discipline has lacked cohesion over the last several decades. This has even led to departments diverging, for example in the late 1990's at some universities, where the

"scientists" and "non-scientists" divided into two departments: anthropological sciences and cultural and social anthropology, which were fortunately later reunified.

2.8 DIVISIONS IN GENERAL ANTHROPOLOGY

As already indicated, anthropology is traditionally divided into four sub-fields, each with its own further branches: biological or physical anthropology, social anthropology or cultural anthropology, archaeology and anthropological linguistics. These fields frequently overlap, but tend to use different methodologies and techniques.

Biological anthropology, or physical anthropology, focuses on the study of human populations using an evolutionary framework. Biological anthropologists have theorized about how the globe has become populated with humans (e.g. the "Out Of Africa" and "multi-regional evolution" theories), as well as tried to explain geographical human variation and race. Many biological anthropologists studying modern human populations identify their fields as human ecology, itself linked to socio-biology. Human ecology uses evolutionary theories to better understand phenomena among contemporary human populations. Another large sector of biological anthropology is primatology, where anthropologists focus on understanding other primate populations. Methodologically, primatologists borrow heavily from field biology and ecology in their research.

Cultural anthropology is also called socio-cultural anthropology or social anthropology especially in the United Kingdom. It is the detailed study of culture, and is mainly based on ethnography. Ethnography can refer to both a methodology and a product of research, namely a monograph or book. Ethnography is a grounded, inductive method that heavily relies on participant-observation. Ethnology involves the systematic comparison of different cultures. The process of participant-observation can be especially helpful to understanding a culture from an insider's point of view; which would otherwise be unattainable by simply reading from a book. In some European countries, all cultural anthropology is known as ethnology, which is a term coined in 1783 by Adam F. Kollár.

The study of kinship and social organization is a central focus of cultural anthropology, as kinship is a human universal. Cultural anthropology also covers economic and political organization, law and conflict resolution, patterns of consumption and exchange, material culture, technology, infrastructure, gender relations, ethnicity, childrearing and socialization, religion, myth, symbols, values, etiquette, worldview, sports, music, nutrition, recreation, games, food, festivals, and language (which is also the object of study in linguistic anthropology).

Archaeology is the study of human material culture from artefacts (older pieces of human culture) carefully gathered as museum pieces. Archaeologists work closely with biological anthropologists, art historians, physics laboratories (for dating), and museums. They are charged with preserving the results of their excavations and are often found in museums. Typically, archaeologists are associated with "digs," or excavation of layers of ancient sites. Archaeologists subdivide time into cultural periods based on long-lasting artefacts: the Paleolithic, the Neolithic,

the Bronze Age, which are further subdivided according to artefact traditions and culture region, such as the Oldowan or the Gravettian. In this way, archaeologists provide a vast frame of reference for the places human beings have travelled, their ways of making a living, and their demographics. Archaeologists also investigate nutrition, symbolization, art, systems of writing, and other physical remnants of human cultural activity.

Linguistic anthropology (also called anthropological linguistics) seeks to understand the processes of human communications, verbal and non-verbal, variation in language across time and space, the social uses of language, and the relationship between language and culture. It is the branch of anthropology that brings linguistic methods to bear on anthropological problems, linking the analysis of linguistic forms and processes to the interpretation of sociocultural processes. Linguistic anthropologists often draw on related fields including sociolinguistics, pragmatics, cognitive linguistics, semiotics, discourse analysis, and narrative analysis. Linguistic anthropology is further divided into its own sub-fields: descriptive linguistics the construction of grammars and lexicons for unstudied languages; historical linguistics, including the reconstruction of past languages, from which our current languages have descended; ethno-linguistics, the study of the relationship between language and culture, and sociolinguistics, the study of the social functions of language. Anthropological linguistics is also concerned with the evolution of the parts of the brain that deal with language.

Anthropology developed from so many different enterprises, including but not limited to fossil-hunting, exploring, documentary film-making, palaeontology, primatology, antiquity dealings and curatorship, philology, etymology, genetics, regional analysis, ethnology, history, philosophy and religious studies today. Precisely because of this it led to instability in many anthropology departments, resulting in the division or reorganization of sub-fields. However, seen in a positive light, anthropology is one of the few places in many universities where humanities, social, and natural sciences are forced to confront one another. In this sense anthropology has become an inter or trans-disciplinary study. As such, anthropology has also been central in the development of several new (late 20th century) interdisciplinary fields including cognitive science, global studies, human-computer interaction, and various ethnic studies.

2.9 BASIC TRENDS IN GENERAL ANTHROPOLOGY

There are several characteristics that tend to unite anthropological work. One of the central characteristics is that anthropology tends to provide a comparatively more holistic account of phenomena and tends to be highly empirical. The quest for holism leads most anthropologists to study a particular place or thing in detail, using a variety of methods, over a more extensive period than normal in many parts of academia. The specific focus of social and cultural anthropology has significantly changed. Initially the sub-field was focused on the study of cultures around the world.

In the 1990s and 2000s, calls for clarification of what constitutes a culture, of how an observer knows where his or her own culture ends and another begins, and other crucial topics in writing anthropology were heard. It is possible to view all human cultures as part of one large, evolving

global culture. These dynamic relationships, between what can be observed on the ground, as opposed to what can be observed by compiling many local observations remain fundamental in any kind of anthropology, whether cultural, biological, linguistic or archaeological.

Biological anthropologists are interested in both human variation and in the possibility of human universals (behaviors, ideas or concepts shared by virtually all human cultures). They use many different methods of study, but modern population genetics, participant observation and other techniques often take anthropologists "into the field" which means travelling to a community in its own setting, to do something called "fieldwork." On the biological or physical side, human measurements, genetic samples, nutritional data may be gathered and published as articles or monographs. Due to the interest in variation, anthropologists are drawn to the study of human extremes, aberrations and other unusual circumstances, such as headhunting, whirling dervishes, whether there were real Hobbit people, snake handling, and *glossolalia* (speaking in tongues), just to list a few, as noted in Wikipedia.

At the same time, anthropologists urge, as part of their quest for scientific objectivity and cultural relativism, which has an influence on all the sub-fields of this discipline. This is the notion that particular cultures should not be judged by one culture's values or viewpoints, but that all cultures should be viewed as relative to each other. There should be no notions, in good anthropology, of one culture being superior or inferior to another culture. Ethical commitments in anthropology include noticing and documenting genocide, infanticide, racism, mutilation including circumcision and *subincision*, and torture. Topics like racism, slavery or human sacrifice, therefore, attract anthropological attention and theories ranging from nutritional deficiencies to genes to acculturation have been proposed, not to mention theories of colonialism and many others as root causes of Man's inhumanity to man. To illustrate the depth of an anthropological approach, one can take just one of these topics, such as "racism" and find thousands of anthropological references, stretching across all the major and minor sub-fields.

Along with dividing up their project by theoretical emphasis, anthropologists typically divide the world up into relevant time periods and geographic regions. Human time on earth is divided up into relevant cultural traditions based on material, such as the Paleolithic and the Neolithic, of particular use in archaeology. Anthropologists and geographers share approaches to culture regions as well, since mapping cultures is central to both sciences. By making comparisons across cultural traditions (time-based) and cultural regions (space-based), anthropologists have developed various kinds of comparative method, a central part of their science.

As such the main difference between general anthropology and philosophical anthropology is the method employed. In philosophical anthropology we do not usually do any empirical study. No field study is undertaken. No experiments are carried out. Instead, based on the evidence suggested by other disciplines, philosophers analyse human condition theoretically. So philosophical anthropology is a critical and creative reflection on the human being, using primarily the human reason as its focus. Thus many of the central themes of philosophical

anthropology – identity, freedom, love, life after death, etc. – are unique to philosophical anthropology.

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1. What are some of the basic questions of anthropology?

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2. How do you differentiate general anthropology to philosophical anthropology?

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2.10 SOME QUOTES

*Placed on this isthmus of a middle state,
A Being darkly wise, and rudely great:
With too much weakness for the Stoic's pride,
With too much knowledge for the Sceptic side,
He hangs between; in doubt to act, or rest;
In doubt to deem himself a God, or Beast;
In doubt his Mind or Body to prefer;*

*Born but to die, and reas'ning but to err;
 Alike in ignorance, his reason such,
 Whether he thinks too little or too much:
 Chaos of thought and passion, all confused;
 Still by himself abused, or disabused;
 Created half to rise, and half to fall;
 Great Lord of all things, yet a prey to all;
 Sole Judge of Truth, in endless Error hurled:
 The Glory, the Jest, and riddle of the World. (Alexander Pope , Essay on Man)*

*Behold, we know not anything;
 I can but trust that good shall fall
 At last – far off – at last, to all,
 And every winter change to spring.
 So runs my dream: but what am I?
 An infant crying in the night:
 An infant crying for the light:
 And with no language to cry.*

(Alfred Tennyson, in Memoriam)

*When I look at the heavens, the work of thy fingers,
 The moons and the stars which thou hast established;
 What is man that thou art mindful of him,
 And the son of man that thou dost care for him?
 Yet thou hast made him little less than God,
 And dost crown him with glory and honour.
 Thou hast given him dominion over the works of thy hands;
 Thou hast put all things under his feet. ...
 (Psalm 8:23-6: RSV translation)*

Man is the only animal who can blush ... or needs to. (W. Rogers)

2.11 LET US SUM UP

We have seen how philosophical anthropology is a uniquely human discipline. After seeing some of the fundamental issues raised in this discipline, we have also seen how it is intimately related to other areas in philosophy and in general anthropology. Because we are part of the question of who human beings are and so cannot detach ourselves from it, it is unsuceptible to cold scientific investigation and analysis. Instead of speaking about finding an “answer” to this question (“answer” is a very definitive-sounding word), we aim at a *response*: a humble, rough framework attempt to come to grips with its challenge, one that will ever remain open to further elucidation and clarification. When faced with a mystery, we can only hope (at best) to be able to throw a little more light on the matter and progress but one step further along the road to an “answer.” We can never arrive at our destination fully. So philosophical anthropology attempts at response and not answer.

Today in India this statement what is lacking is justice not food, is really true. What we lack is not basic material necessities. What keeps India poor is our short supply of values. Human values are lacking in India. We do not care for justice, specially for the other. This is more a philosophical or ethical issue rather than a material or financial one. The treatise that we do in philosophy is intimately connected to anthropology. For example epistemology speaks of human being as the knower, while hermeneutics relates to human being as one who understands and makes sense of reality. Logic deals with the human capacity to think with precision and coherence. Metaphysics is a human attempt to make sense of the larger world in which we live. Ethics, of course, deals with the right actions of human being. Philosophy of God, including theodicy, is not an empty enquiry into God as such, but it is a human enquiry into God as humans understand it progressively and creatively. In general the history of ideas is a human way of understating themselves as part of a larger, social phenomenon. Further, aesthetics studies the human ability to admire and create beauty.

The basic questions that anthropology poses are: "What defines Homo sapiens?", "Who are the ancestors of modern Homo sapiens?" "What are humans' physical traits?", "How do humans behave?", "Why are there variations and differences among different groups of humans?", "How has the evolutionary past of Homo sapiens influenced its social organization and culture?" The main difference between general anthropology and philosophical anthropology is the method employed. In philosophical anthropology we do not usually do any empirical study. No field study is undertaken. No experiments are carried out. Instead, based on the evidence suggested by other disciplines, philosophers analyse human condition theoretically. So philosophical anthropology is a critical and creative reflection on the human being, using primarily the human reason as its focus. Thus many of the central themes of philosophical anthropology – identity, freedom, love, life after death, etc. – are unique to philosophical anthropology.

2.12 KEY WORDS

Anthropology: “The scientific study of the origin, the behavior, and the physical, social, and cultural development of humans.”

Homo sapiens Human Beings

2.13 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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UNIT 3 WESTERN PHILOSOPHICAL VIEWS ON HUMAN PERSON

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3.0 OBJECTIVES

After having understood what philosophical anthropology is, in this unit we have the general objective of generally introducing the students to philosophical anthropology in Western Philosophy. In spite of some generalizations we want to see how we understand human person from a Western perspective. We also want to study in detail Marechal's understanding of human person as openness to the unlimited.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

What we shall be busy with, in this section, is to take a brief critical look at some views on what human being is, as presented by various thinkers. We shall note what seems to be of value in their ideas and will particularly dwell upon the liberative and oppressive dimensions of their conceptions. This will pave the way for the final section where, in the form of concluding remarks based mainly on Joseph Marechal.

3.2 PLATO AND COMPANY

We remember Plato's philosophical anthropology from Ancient Western philosophy. For him, the human being is primarily a spirit or a soul. The body was nothing but a prison-house into which her/his real self has been locked on account of some crime committed in the fore-life. In his imagery of the two steeds and the cave, he denounced the "body". He calls for the human being to ever rise above the limitations and the oppressiveness of the body and try, as far, as possible to be those pure spirits that they were meant to be. They were to learn how to rise from mere "opinions" about changeable things of this world to the contemplation of the perfect and unchanging ideal forms in that world shining with light, our true home and natural state which we had forfeited due to that original fault. It should be clear that St. Augustine's understanding

of original sin and Adam's fall derives much inspiration from Plato, consciously or not. So, too, that "despising of the things of this world and the loving of the things of heaven" was, thanks to him, to become so characteristic a principle in traditional spirituality. St. Augustine, admittedly, did improve things somewhat by making the body not so much the prison-house of the soul, but its instrument (he preferred the word "mind" to the more traditional soul – which is significant enough in itself.) The great advantage of the Platonic dichotomy (revived in modern times by Descartes, and with a vengeance) is that it provided an easy demonstration of the after-life. Death was seen as nothing more than the moment when the soul was finally set free from the body-prison (there is a play on words in the Greek *soma-sema*). After-life, for the Greeks, was a question of the immortality of the soul, a natural quality or attribute of the spiritual soul of human being. However, there would be no such things as a resurrection of the body – that would be quite ridiculous. Why drag the prison-house back into the whole process of liberation? Whatever, in this conception, the human person is primarily a soul which has a body – somehow like the way "I" wear a shirt. If these people were not quite clear as to exactly how the "body" and "soul/mind" were actually united or were able to inter-act, they seemed pretty clear that they were as distant and opposed to each other as chalk and cheese (more so: after all, both chalk and cheese are material things).

3.3 ARISTOTLE AND COMPANY

According to this rival school, "body" and "soul" are not to be conceived as two complete beings in conflict with each other, but as two principles of being complementing each other. In fact, as we have mentioned already, the human person is a composite not of "body" and "soul" but of prime matter and the human soul which, as substantial form, "informs" the former. Hence we have the traditional scholastic definition of the human person as an "animal rationale" (a rational animal, a neat and clear cut definition according to genus and specific differences): the human being (*homo*) is an animal but what characterizes her/him from other animals of the same genus is the fact that s/he and s/he alone can reason, is endowed with the faculty of abstract thought. Compared to the Platonic conception, this is a much balanced understanding of human being. The material, the bodily is not passed over in embarrassment and regret but is assigned a positive role in human life and activity.

3.4 THE HEGELIAN AND MARXIAN VIEW

For the German philosopher, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770 –1831), the absolute idealist, the state is the only true individual. "It has supreme right over the individual whose supreme duty it is to be a member of the state". Those individuals whose will fails to identify with the larger will of the state become alienated and alienation of individuals breaks up the organic unity of the state. There are individuals who appear to have imposed their individuality on the course of history. They have been able to do so only because their will to personal liberty has been consonant with the larger historical movements of the time. Hegel distinguishes between what he terms formal freedom and substantial freedom. Formal freedom, the sort of freedom of the individual and is negative. It merely expresses the will of rebellious individuals against oppressive authority. What is needed is a positive sense of freedom. This is only possible within a social context and when the individual is part of the larger life of the Mind or Spirit of the People. The moral system of the state is rational because Mind's dialectic has led history to this

point. The choice to follow this moral system thus corresponds with reason and is a greater freedom than choice making based on individual whim.

When Marx prefers to speak of human being as “a worker” he is, in effect, underscoring in an even more vivid manner (in my opinion) this essential integration that there is in the human person. For Marx, the human being is the human being not just when s/he reasons, but when s/he incarnates her/his reasoning capacity in some productive output, in some creative self-expression (work). If it is true that Marx was to err on the other side of the coin (he was to overvalue the manual work as against intellectual, artistic or organisational work), this way of speaking does bring out more vividly the essential link between thought and action, spirit and matter. The true human being, for Marx, is not the armchair philosopher, busily rationalising her/his animality in abstract thought, but the worker who applies her/his reasoning ability to some concrete project.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1. How does Plato understand the human person in relation to body and soul?

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2. How does Marx view the human being?

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3.5 KANT AND NEO-THOMISM

Under this section we deal with the understanding of human beings in Karl Rahner, Teilhard de Chardin and Joseph Marechal, who are all neo-scholastics or neo-Thomists. Before going to study them a brief understanding of Human Person according to Immanuel Kant (1724 –1804) may be called for, since the neo-Thomistic Philosophers refer to Kant indirectly.

Kant's Transcendental Self: philosophy is forced to accept that there is a level of self that is *noumenon*, a thing-in-itself, that is a precondition of perception and understanding but itself beyond perception and understanding. This is the transcendental self. This is a level of self awareness that is over and above the categories of normal philosophies. It is similar to "I" in Descartes' "I think". Kant's "*practical reason*" relies on the transcendental self. Since the laws of nature are by his definition predetermined, man subjected exclusively to the laws of nature would have no freedom. So Kant postulates a transcendental freedom, an idea that the inner self is not bound by the laws of nature.

Kant's Critical Philosophy asserts that anthropological notions like morality, freedom and immortality are not accessible to pure reason. They are not therefore a valid basis for morality. This does not mean that moral action is beyond definition. Kant still seeks an objective and universal basis for ethics through practical reason. Practical reason assists in identifying what best to do, not what is. Actions are determined by imperatives which take into consideration the means and the end of the action. Some actions are based on hypothetical imperatives: "If I do this, in this way, then these will be the consequences..." But Kant also postulates that there is a higher, universally applicable imperative which should be the basis of truly moral action, the categorical imperative.

Kant had already established that everything in nature works according to predetermined laws. Rational beings alone have a will and have free choice of action. For Kant, the only good action is that which is done out of pure reverence for universal law. One form of his categorical imperative of duty is expressed as follows: "Act as if the maxim of your action were to become by your will a Universal Law of Nature." To act morally is always a struggle between duty and desire.

Karl Rahner

One of the greatest theologians and thinkers of this age, the German thinker has two major philosophical works to his credit. The titles of each of these studies may be taken as two separate and complimentary definitions of the human being: *Spirit in the World* and *Hearers of the Word*. Human being, for Rahner, is Spirit – but not spirit in the usual understanding as the contrary (if not contradictory) of matter, but in the sense of that which is able to transcend the World and to make metaphysics. Human being, then, is Spirit but Spirit of such nature that it is meant to be in the World. The World is defined as Spirit, s/he is that mysterious Spirit that must be involved with the World in order to be that unique type of Spirit that s/he is. This would seem to be a very well balanced understanding of the human condition. Not only are “matter” and “spirit” not seen as the absolute antithesis of each other, but their inter-dependence in the human person is brought out. From this it follows that the human being is also (or called to be, rather) Hearer of the Word. As we shall see later, by courtesy of Maréchal (one of Rahner's major mentors), there is in the human person a dynamic drive, an unquenchable longing for the Unlimited Being (God). But, precisely because we are not “pure spirit” but “spirit in the world”, the world becomes necessarily the “locus of the theological event”, that is, if God freely decides to speak to human being, s/he must do so in the context of the world, in history. Hence, the human being

must be on the alert to listen to a possible word spoken to her/him by God in the world. This is how her/his relentless dynamism unto God is to be existentially lived out. And, if God freely decides not to speak to human beings any word, then human beings would attain the fullest self-realisation by listening to God's silence. No doubt we are reminded of Marcel's observation that "I" am incarnate in the world through my body: the stress is not so much on how two principles come together in the make-up of human person but how integrated s/he is into the reality of the world around her/him.

Teilhard de Chardin

The poet-mystic-philosopher-theologian-scientist, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, reads a thought-clinching and fine summary "definition" of human being from his study of the human phenomenon, down the ages: "Man in evolution becomes conscious of itself." Whereas in its first phase, when the level of complexity was not sufficient enough to enable consciousness to emerge, evolution was directed by cosmic forces and natural laws (ultimately ordained by the Creator), once the goal of that phase had been attained (hominisation), the emergence of human being, an essentially different type of dynamism entered the picture. Now as human being (and thereby consciousness) came on the scene, the path of evolution would be traced out by conscious decision and commitment. Here is another conception of human being which well integrates the two dimensions of her/his being while, at the same time underscoring her/his dignity and responsibility in this world. It may be useful to recall here that, for Teilhard, matter was but "solidified spirit". True, the Frenchman often expressed himself in poetic language, but even a random perusal of his writings should make it clear to us that he intended a very literal core to this image. He never subscribed to the traditional unbreachable abyss between unconscious-matter and conscious-spirit. For him, it is all a question of complexity. Once matter attains a certain threshold of complexity, consciousness emerges. He feels no need for a separate ingredient (be it soul or whatever) to enter the composition to make such consciousness possible.

To sum up so far: Modern European languages are built on ideas and roots taken from ancient Greek and so it is inevitable that some of the slants and biases of the Hellenistic world should have entered into our everyday life through our usage of such words. When we use the word "man", we are, in effect, saying that what is most characteristic of human reality is that s/he has a mind (Latin *mens* – of the Sanskrit *manas*, whence our own *manushya* and its derivatives). The incarnate dimension of this "mind" is by-passed. So also, when we talk of "spirituality", are we not implying that what matters in human development is the cultivation of her/his "spirit"? On the other hand, the world human suggests a more integrated insight: it reminds us that we are *humus* (Latin), earth plus *mens* – earthy minds. This is a conception that comes very close to Rahner's "Spirit in the World".

In the next section we study in detail the position of Joseph Marechal regarding the human person.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1. How does Karl Rahner see human being?

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2. How does Teilhard view the relation between matter and spirit?

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In the next section we study in detail the position of Joseph Marechal regarding the human person.

Joseph Marechal “The human race has passed from a rather static concept of reality to a more dynamic, evolutionary one.” (Desbruslais 1997) It is a comment that we should keep in mind whenever we set about elaborating any theory or world-view. Why, as the same document goes on to say, governments must take a “dynamic” concept of the common good as their norm and goal? In other words, our conception of the human person and his/her condition should envision both not as static, finished products but as dynamic, active beings. In fact, this conviction has led some contemporary thinkers to suggest that we use the word “becomings” rather than “beings” to refer to reality. Somehow, rightly or wrongly, the former word has a too static connotation.

Another important consideration to be kept in mind (also upheld and underscored – more or less – in the same document) is to ensure that one’s understanding of reality (especially the human reality) is such that a recognition of God and of human being’s eternal vocation should in no way lead to a neglect of our responsibilities to this world. Our vision of human being should be one which brings out clearly that though we are not meant to have a lasting home on this earth, there is an inherent and integral link between religion as well as the hope of eternal life and our responsibilities to society, to the building up of structures that contribute to making all people more fully human, more fully alive.

All this is nothing but a more explicit spelling out of what the previous section has been leading us to. Our convictions on this issue, which owe much to the inspiration of the Belgian philosopher, Joseph Maréchal, eminently fulfill these requirements. We have made good use of Maréchal in these reflections. I am going to fall back on this insightful thinker here too. His *Le point de départ de la métaphysique* (cahier V) has been a shot in the arm of neo-Thomistic thinkers and has had repercussions far beyond that school or its interests. The “transcendental philosophy” of people like Karl Rahner, Emerich Coreth and Bernard Lonergan owe their inspiration to him and echoes of Maréchal can be picked up in many contemporary philosophical writings.

Joseph Maréchal (1878-1944), a Belgian professor of philosophy at Louvain from 1919 to 1935, continued along these lines, taking up where Kant had ended. (The sub-title of the famous fifth cahier is “Thomism in Confrontation with the Critical Philosophy”, i.e., of Kant). In effect Maréchal’s contention was that Kant’s philosophical perspectives – brilliant and revolutionary thought they might have been in his time – were seriously hampered by his rather static understanding of the process of human knowing. Had he been able to glimpse our “intellectual dynamism”, the great sage of Königsberg would have realised how the great concerns of philosophy need not be banished from metaphysics.

3.6 MARÉCHAL’S ANALYSIS OF INTELLECTUAL DYNAMISM

Our method – retracing Maréchal’s approach of the fifth cahier in our own words – will be to follow through, to its utmost consequences, the journey which our intellect drives us by its inner dynamism. We will discover that it is relentlessly driving us far beyond the immediate data of our senses, far beyond the things it seems to be solely interested in, to a final goal which is the ultimate and implicit goal of our intellectual, volitional and personal strivings. At the end we shall see that, since it is a quest for this goal which is the most basic drive in us, we could attempt an inspiring, insightful and dynamic definition of the human reality in terms of this goal. The starting-point of the whole process of transcendental analysis will be the intellectual activity of the Direct Judgement – the immediate affirmation or denial that something directly perceived exists – for this is the most basic of all intellectual acts (Desbruslais 1997).

Direct Judgement as a Metaphysical Fact

By Direct Judgement is meant, as we have just said, the immediate affirmation or denial that something exists – in which case it is always concerned about something observable that we have experienced through the senses. For instance, “This is a table”, “This is not a horse”, are Direct Judgements. But “God exists” or “There is no such thing as a soul” are not Direct Judgements for they are not immediate affirmations or denials. Rather, they are conclusions from other more immediate affirmations or experiences. Now, no one can deny that Direct Judgement exists for, to do so, one would have to make a Direct Judgement. “There is no such thing as a Direct Judgement” is an immediate denial that something exists (viz. Direct Judgement). Direct Judgement, then, is an undeniable, existential fact – we are forced to admit that it exists. Direct Judgement, in scholastic terminology, is a metaphysical fact (i.e. absolutely certain and undeniable).

Direct Judgement as a Movement, a Dynamic Process

A little deep reflection on our experience of knowing should make this clear. We want to know. We are not indifferent to knowing or not knowing. Avidya, ignorance, is a state repugnant to human being. We want to get out of it. We know full well that it is not always an easy thing to attain truth, to get to know. But that doesn't bother us. We are prepared to struggle, to strive, to argue in our attempt to know. Knowledge is not just something that "happens to" us, that drops into our indifferent laps. Every bit of knowledge we come by is the result of a definite wish, a real conquest, a conscious effort on our part. Knowledge is a sure but determined process, a dynamic movement whereby we advance from ignorance, through various stages, towards certainty. My intellect, therefore, is dynamic.

The Affirmation in Direct Judgement Experiences a Limit

Every Direct Judgement is couched in the form, "This is X", or "This is not X". In other words, in every Direct Judgement we say two kinds of things about something: WHAT it is (its essence, its "this-ness") and THAT it is (its existence). Furthermore, again a little reflection should make it clear that I don't recognise these two elements merely juxtaposed side by side. Rather, I experience that the "is" element is actually limited by the "this" element (i.e. I experience the limitation of existence by essence). After all, "this-ness" (what a thing is, its essence) is, by its very nature, a kind of limitation. To be this means not to be that. For example, to be a cow means to be just a cow and not a non-cow (and there are millions of things that are excluded by this restriction). Essence is, then, a limiting in itself. But "to be" (the "is" element, existence) does not imply any limitation by itself: "to be" means just to be and the only thing it opposes itself to, or cuts itself off from, is "not to be", i.e., nothing. When I make an existential judgement and say This is, I am expressing, in effect, that the unlimitedness of "to be" is, in this situation, restricted to being the "to be" of just this particular essence. In other words, the dynamic movement of my intellect experiences a limit, a check to its movement.

Intellect as Tending towards the Unlimited Being

What is important, here, is to be aware of just where and how I experience this limit. It is not that I am feeling dissatisfied with being confronted, here and now, with a limited essence, with finding just much of a particular essence (quantitatively and qualitatively) and therefore am "reaching out" towards the discovery of a "bigger and better" cow or table or whatever. No, what I am experiencing is the limitation of existence, of "to be". Thus I am tending towards the unlimited existence. Recognition of a limit means a tendency to go beyond that limit. Now we have seen that existence does not imply any limitation in itself. If existence is limited, it is limited by something other than, outside of, itself – essence, as we have seen. In other words, I am tending towards pure existence, absolute and unlimited existence, unrestrained by any essence (Desbruslais 1997).

The Unlimited Existence, Ultimate End of My Intellectual Dynamics, Really Exists

We cannot argue, from the mere fact that we are tending towards or reaching out to something, that this thing actually exists. How, then do we establish that the Unlimited Being, final and ultimate goal of my intellectual dynamism really exists? We attempt at one solution.

By starting from the reality of the observable world: Either we accept that the world around us, and concerning which we make our Direct Judgements, is real (as scholastic realists do) or we hold ourselves back from our natural inclination to do so (as Kantians and others of their ilk do).

If we accept its reality (because, for instance, we find no valid reason enough to doubt our spontaneous and natural tendency to “take it” as real, or because we find the objective reality of the external worlds is the only reasonable explanation to account for the “intentional” nature of our affirmations), then there is no problem in proceeding to our conclusion. For the Unlimited Being has emerged as the ultimate end of my intellectual activity and the limited beings of my daily experience are only proximate ends, stepping stones, on my way to the Unlimited. Now, if the proximate, intermediary ends of my intellectual dynamism are real, all the more reason that the Ultimate End should be real for intermediary, proximate ends derive their meaning and force from the Ultimate and Final End. On the other hand, if we are dealing with Kantian agnostics, then – according to Maréchal – we could reason as follows. Such people accept the immanent objects as the proximate end of my intellectual activity but do not go so far as to admit the real status of an exterior world nor go so far as to grant that our knowing can reach them as they are “in themselves”. But, if one is willing to accept, categorically enough, that the immanent object is real, one must – logically and honestly – accept the reality of the Unlimited Being inasmuch as it is one of the constitutive conditions of our proximate object.

3.7 TOWARDS A DYNAMIC “DEFINITION” OF HUMAN PERSON

A “dynamic” definition of human being would be one which attempts to “define” (let’s not forget that we’re dealing with a mystery and so a full-fledged “definition” ever evades us) the human reality in terms of our basic anthropological drive. Many eminent personages of various professions have tried to do this. For instance, Freud has seen a “will to pleasure” as fundamental in human being, whereas Nietzsche would situate it rather in the “will to power.” Joseph Donceel derives from a perusal of Maréchal the following view, which suggests an alternative understanding of human dynamism. “Man”, he writes, “is an embodied loving affirmation of God.” It should be clear how this follows from the metaphysical analysis of human activity that we have just made. And, if we remember that “the will follows the intellect”, as per the experience-proven old scholastic adage, there is in us not only an intellectual dynamism for God the Unlimited Being (and this spurs on all our intellectual activity), there follows hard on the heels of this, a volitional dynamics, (i.e. of the will) which hungers after God the Unlimited Good (which, in turn, triggers off all our volitional activity). Furthermore, our intellect and will, inasmuch as they are embodied, can only attain their ultimate goal (in this life at any rate) in and through limited, material and created realities. There is, then, a total human dynamism for God as a result of which all else becomes infinitely precious but relative (precisely because they derive their meaning and status from Her/him and are our only real and actual means of encountering God here and now). Herein lies the metaphysical basis for the Augustinian dictum, “We are made for you, O God, and, oh, how weary we are till we rest in you,” as we have already remarked. This is equally the metaphysical ground for Ignatius Loyola’s “indifference” as also the ideal of “finding God in all things”, so dear to the mystics. Maréchal, among other others, show us how to give a solid basis to many sayings and aphorisms which would otherwise be but nice pious platitudes.

3.8 HUMAN SEARCH FOR MEANING

It is the unanimous opinion of many an observer of the human reality today that it is the “will to meaning” that is at the heart of our psyche – an idea that meshes well with Maréchal’s findings.

Human being, the hermeneutical animal (i.e. the meaning-seeking animal), seeks to draw from reality some overall and underlying direction, some vision of how all things hold together and when s/he cannot do this, s/he becomes prey to all that anxiety, stress and neurosis that seem to be so characteristic of the hectic life in today's world (this is more true of the West, but "it is coming to India, too", as the oft-repeated refrain has it). Rollo May confirms this comment of ours by drawing attention to the deep-seated sense of futility and despair that many people in the West feel (especially youth). He concludes that "the principle problem of [mental] patients today is emptiness" and goes on to elaborate:

The human being cannot live in a condition of emptiness for long; if s/he is not growing toward something, s/he does not merely stagnate; the pent-up potentialities turn into morbidity and despair, and eventually into destructive activities ... A human being is not empty in the static sense ... The experience of emptiness ... gradually comes from people feeling that they are powerless to do anything effective about their lives or the world they live in. Maréchal not only shows us wither we are growing toward in the depths of our being. He also indicates, implicitly, how action in the world can be effectively harnessed to the attaining of precisely that self-same end.

Finally, we may adduce the testimony of Victor Frankl in his writings on his horrific experiences in a Nazi death camp. We can summarise Frankl's views in two main theses, as expressed in Gordon Allort's preface to the former's *Man's Search for Meaning*: (i) several forms of neurosis can be traced to "the failure of the sufferer to find meaning and a sense of responsibility in his existence", (ii) "to live is to suffer and to survive is to find meaning in suffering." Perhaps the last point somewhat overstates the issue, but we can let it pass. Frankl frequently alludes to what he calls "the last of the human freedoms" which no one can ever take away from us – "the freedom to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstance, to choose one's way." And Frankl never seems to wary of quoting Nietzsche's inspiring phrase: "He who has found a Why to live for, can cope with any How."

3.9 HUMAN BEING IN THE EXISTENTIALIST PHILOSOPHY

Existentialism in the broader sense is a 20th century philosophy that is centered upon the analysis of existence and of the way humans find themselves existing in the world. The notion is that humans exist first and then each individual spends a lifetime changing their essence or nature. In simpler terms, existentialism is a philosophy concerned with finding self and the meaning of life through free will, choice, and personal responsibility. The belief is that people are searching to find out who and what they are throughout life as they make choices based on their experiences, beliefs, and outlook. And personal choices become unique without the necessity of an objective form of truth. An existentialist believes that a person should be forced to choose and be responsible without the help of laws, ethnic rules, or traditions. Existentialism takes into consideration some of these basic concepts like: Human free will; Human nature is chosen through life choices; A person is best when struggling against their individual nature, fighting for life; Decisions are not without stress and consequences; There are aspects of life that are not rational and Personal responsibility and discipline is crucial.

In Existentialist thinkers, the traditional distinction between soul and body is completely eliminated; thus the body is a lived-through experience that is an integral part of man's existence in its relationship with the world. According to Jean Paul Sartre, "In each project of the For-itself, in each perception the body is there; it is the immediate Past in so far as it still touches on the Present which flees it." As such, however, the body is not reduced to a datum of consciousness, to subjective representation. Consciousness, according to Sartre, is constant openness toward the world, a transcendent relationship with other beings and thereby with the in-itself. Consciousness is existence itself, or, as Karl Jaspers says, it is "the manifestation of being." In order to avoid any subjectivistic equivocation, Martin Heidegger went so far as to renounce the use of the term consciousness, preferring the term *Dasein*, which is more appropriate for designating human reality in its totality. For the same reasons, the traditional opposition between subject and object, or between the self and the nonself, loses all sense in his existentialist understanding of human person. *Dasein* is always particular and individual. It is always a self; but it is also always a project of the world that includes the self, determining or conditioning its modes of being (For details see the Unit 2.2).

All of the Existentialists are in agreement on the difficulty of communication; i.e., of well-grounded intersubjective relationships. Karl Jaspers has perhaps been the one to insist most on the relationship between truth and communication. Truths are and can be different from existence. But if fanaticism and dogmatism (which absolutize a historical truth) are avoided on the one hand while relativism and skepticism (which affirm the equivalence of all truths) are avoided on the other, then the only other way is a constant confrontation between the different truths through an always more extended and deepened intersubjective communication.

Jean Paul Sartre, however, denies that there is authentic communication. According to him, consciousness is not only the nullification of things but also the nullification of the other person as other. To look at another person is to make of him a thing. This is the profound meaning of the myth of Medusa. Sexuality itself, which Sartre holds to be an essential aspect of existence, fluctuates between sadism and masochism, in which either the other person or oneself is merely a thing. On this basis, the intersubjective relationship is obviously impossible. In this context we can understand Sartre's claim that human being is "a useless passion" and "Hell is other people" (From his novel, "No Exit")

Gabriel Marcel, another existentialist, refers to problem and mystery and for him, human being is basically a mystery (Unit 3.3). Marcel makes a clear distinction between "being" and "having." He then relates it to our human body. "My body, insofar as it is my body, is both something that I have and something that I am, and cannot be adequately accounted for using either of these descriptions alone. I can look at my body in a disassociated manner and see it instrumentally. However, in doing so, in distancing myself from it in order to grasp it qua object, qua something I have, it ceases to be "my" body. I can have "a" body, but not "my" body.

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1. What is the starting point of transcendental analysis of Marechal?

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2. How does Marechal show that the final goal of our intellect, the Unlimited Existence really exist?

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3.10 LET US SUM UP

We have analysed numerous views on the human person from the main Western philosophical perspectives and elaborately studied that of Joseph Marechal, which sees human being as an essential openness to the Ultimate.

3.11 KEY WORDS

Logotherapy: Victor Frankl's method of treating patients by which one discovers the meaning of one's suffering, enabling one to cope with life and its pain better.

Transcendental analysis: Marechal's intellectual analysis starting with direct judgement indicating the existence of the Unlimited existence.

Dialectic: A process of arriving at truth through the conflict of opposing forces. The process especially associated with Hegel of arriving at the truth by stating a thesis, developing a contradictory antithesis, and combining and resolving them into a coherent synthesis.

Noumenon: In the philosophy of Kant, an object as it is in itself independent of the mind, as opposed to a phenomenon.

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UNIT 4 INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL VIEWS ON HUMAN PERSON

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 - 4.1 Introduction
 - 4.2 The Self in Indian Philosophy
 - 4.3 Existence of the Self
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 - 4.6 The Goal of Life: *Purusarthas*
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4.0 OBJECTIVES

- The objective of this unit is to make the students familiar to the general Indian understanding of the human person.
 - To enable the students to appreciate some of the profound notions of Indian philosophy, especially with respect to the human being.
-

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we can attempt no more than a very schematic outline of Indian thought and comment here. After all, is there one monolithic Indian thought about human being and her/his make-up? Still, we can point out some general lines of thought and trust that the reader will be able to make a more detailed critical reflection for himself (or herself) in particular cases. In the first place, any understanding of reincarnation (and this doctrine is pretty widespread in India) implies a rather dualistic understanding of the human person and one where the body is seen as a replaceable, discardable appendage to the real “me”. The essential self remains unchanged through a variety of rebirths in different “bodies”. Platonism with a vengeance and the deck is stacked heavily in favour of the spirit. And if it is true that the doctrine of *maya* can be read in terms of not so much world-negating (the more traditional interpretation) but as world-relativising (with reference to the Absolute), this too is frequently vitiated by the popular understanding of *Moksha* wherein liberation is a process of finally severing all links of the authentic self from the world of matter. Once again, matter is very readily handled. A passing thought. Was Carvaka (leaving aside the discussion whether the school was actually founded by a person of that name – or was it a nick-name, a term of contempt, given to them by their critics?) really so rabidly materialistic and irreligious in intent? Or was it more of a reaction against the dominant other-worldly, pro-Spirit type of teachings so favoured by the Brahmins – and later on provoked or even maligned into statements of gross hedonism by its powerful adversaries who, after all, have also dominated early critical remarks on the school. It would be

refreshing (to be, at any rate) to recognise that early Indian thought didn't suffer gladly the anti-matter prejudices of the ancients.

Thus we first begin with the understanding of self in Indian philosophy, which leads us to appreciate the goal of human life. Finally we propose a materialistic critique of Indian philosophy.

4.2 THE SELF IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

The Brahminical or orthodox (*astika*) schools of Indian philosophy, especially the Vedantins and the Nyaya-Vaisesika argue that the self or *Atman* is a substantial but non-material entity. The *Katha* and *Chandogya* Upanishads, for example, define the Brahminical conception of the self as follows: The light of the *Atman*, the spirit is invisible, concealed in all beings. It is seen by the seers of the subtle, when their vision is keen and clear. The *Atman* is beyond sound and form, without touch and taste and perfume. It is eternal, unchangeable, and without beginning or end: indeed above reasoning. The Upanishads put it succinctly: "An invisible and subtle essence is the Spirit of the whole universe. That is Reality. That is Truth. THOU ART THAT."

As Peter Pravos (2010) indicates, the Brahminical view on the nature of the self as portrayed in the Upanishads can be summarised as four major theses:

1. The self exists;
2. The self is immortal and without beginning or end;
3. The self is essentially non-material and;
4. The self is identical with Brahman, the highest reality.

The heterodox (*nastika*) schools in Indian philosophy, such as the Carvaka materialists and the Buddhists, question the Brahminical arguments for a substantial, persistent and non-material self on metaphysical, moral and political grounds. The Buddhists and the Carvaka oppose the Hindu caste system and believe that the Vedas are full of falsehoods, self-contradictions and tautologies. The Carvaka accuse the Brahmins of being impostors who abuse the words of the Vedas and interpret them to suit their own egoistic needs. The Vedas are in their opinion nothing but a means of livelihood for the Brahmins who are lazy, lacking in intellect, energy, self respect and sense (Pravos 2010). The views on the self by the Carvaka and the Buddhists are illustrated by the following two quotes: "The soul is but the body characterised by the attributes signified in the expressions, 'I am stout', 'I am youthful', 'I am grown up', 'I am old', etc. It is not something other than that." "A sentient being does exist, you think, O Mara? You are misled by a false conception. This bundle of elements is void of Self, in it there is no sentient being. Just as a set of wooden parts receives the name of carriage, so do we give to elements the name of fancied being." (Parfit 1984)

4.3 EXISTENCE OF THE SELF

Advaita (non-duality) is the Vedanta school associated with the philosopher Sankara (c. 788–820 AD) who is acknowledged as the leader of the Hindu revival after the Buddhist period in India. Sankara's metaphysics are based on the criterion that the real is that whose negation is

impossible. From this criterion it follows that the self is real, because no one will say 'I am not'. Sankara writes clearly and succinctly: 'Just because it is the Self, it is impossible for us to entertain the idea even of its being capable of refutation.' (Prevos 2010) Further, the Nyaya-Vaisesika subscribe to the conception of the self put forward in the Vedas as a substantial, persistent and non-material entity. They agree with the Vedantins that the self cannot be perceived, but only inferred. The later Nyaya school however rejected the idea that the self can only be known by inference and asserted that the existence of the self can be directly perceived. The idea that the self can be directly perceived is put forward mostly in polemical works against the Buddhists. The Nyaya argument for the existence of the self through the notion of agency: 'From the actions of the mind towards the contact of the sense-organ apprehending desirable objects, we infer the existence of the self'. An analogy offered by the Nyaya is that from the action of regular breathing we infer the existence of the agent who would act like a blower of the wind-pipe. The Nyaya are clearly referring to intelligent actions and not merely mechanical actions like that of a robot for example.

The Carvaka argue that the self is nothing but the body as characterised by consciousness. The Carvaka denial of a substantial self is based on the epistemological position that perception is the only valid source of knowledge. The Carvaka deny the validity of inference and other sources of knowledge (*darsanas*) usually accepted in classical Indian philosophy. From this position and the Brahminical assertion that the self can not be perceived they infer that the self can not exist because only that which can be perceived exists. This last premise is however not a fair representation of the Brahminical position because the Mimamsa and the later Naiyayikas insist that the self as the subject is directly cognised in every experience. In the available texts there is however no detailed discussion whether the Carvaka had any arguments to deal with the Mimamsaka and the later Naiyayikas.

The Buddhist reply to the Brahminical view of the self would be that there is no such entity. This view is illustrated by the debate between king Milinda and the Buddhist monk Nagasena. King Milinda is not convinced of the theory of the no-self for, "if there were no person, there could be no merit and no demerit . . . " (Conze 1959). Nagasena affirms that the theory of the not-self to the king by comparing a human being with a chariot. None of the individual parts of the chariot (the pole, the axel, the wheels etc.), are the chariot. Nor the combination of the parts is the chariot. Nagasena continues that he can not discover a chariot at all, only the word that denotes the idea of the chariot. The denomination chariot — or self — takes place in dependence of the individual parts. In ultimate reality, the person can not be apprehended. Sankara takes issue with this theory, on the grounds that it provides nothing to hold together the various ingredients either at any one time or through progression in time (Prevos 2010).

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1. Give a brief Brahminical view on the nature of the self.

.....

2. What is the Buddhist reply to the Brahminical view of the self?

1.4 PROPERTIES OF THE SELF

In fact, the discussion on the existence of the self cannot be separated from a description of the nature of the self. The Scriptures mention three properties of the self. The self is eternal, non-material and is identical with *Brahman*: the ultimate reality. Here we shall concentrate on the first two properties since there is not much argument on the last property in classical Indian philosophy. The eternality of the self follows according to Sankara from the essential irrefutability of its nature. Sankara is claiming here that since the self is not an effect, it has no beginning or end and is therefore eternal. The Buddhist would dispute this argument because they believe that anything that is uncaused, does not exist. Sankara argues for the immateriality of the self by stating that the existence of an eternal, immaterial self, distinct from the body is a necessary presupposition for the achievement of liberation. The Scriptures would otherwise make no sense, which is an unacceptable conclusion for the Vedantins. This argument is of course not acceptable to the heterodox schools because they do not accept the Scriptures as a source of valid knowledge.

The Naiyayika uses an argument from language to ascertain that the self is distinct from the body. The Nyaya argument from language encompasses that since the word *I* is used in the Vedas and ordinary talk and since everything in the Vedas is true, the word *I* must refer to an existing entity. They hold that the word *I* must refer to a non-physical entity because: 'If the notion *I* referred to the body, then just as another man's body being as perceptible as our own body . . . the other man's body would also be capable of being spoken of as *I*'. No perceptible property and thus no physical property of an individual can be used to identify a person uniquely and the referent *I* must therefore be something non-physical (Prevos 2010). The persistence of the self is induced by the Naiyayika through the argument from memory. We have desires for objects that have been experienced in the past as being pleasant. One cannot desire a thing one

does not remember and one cannot remember someone else's experiences. They argue that there must therefore be a continuously existing self who had the experience in the past and who is desiring it in the present.

The materialists only accept the four elements air, water, fire and earth as the basic building blocks of reality and ultimate facts of the universe. The body is to the Carvaka a unique combination of these elements and the self emerges from these elements. They thus account for the higher principle of mind by the lower one of matter (Hiriyanna 1985). The views of the Carvaka have been fervently opposed by the other schools of thought (*darsana*) in classical Indian philosophy. It is clear from the materials at our disposal that Carvaka philosophy was viewed with far greater disrespect than any other *darsana*. Phil Hari Singh argues that there appears to be an underlying hostility towards the Carvaka that is not fully borne out by the analysis of their doctrines (Prevos 2010)

To the Buddhists a person is not a single substance existing continuously through time, but a series of physical and mental states also called 'person states'. The Buddhist term for an individual, a term which is intended to suggest the difference between the Buddhist view and other theories, is *santana*, which means stream (Parfit 1984). Each person state consists of various psychological and physiological factors, the *skandhas*. These *skandhas* are not persistent in time but last only for one infinitesimal short period. The person states fleet away and give rise to new person states in an endless cycle of cause and effect. Because every single person state only exist for an infinitesimal short period of time, there cannot be a persistent self. The instantaneous succession of *skandhas* gives the impression of continuity, like the succession of twenty four still images per second gives the illusion of a moving image. Sankara's criticism against the Buddhist theory of momentary person states is that in the absence of a permanent self throughout the successive *skandhas*, what sense can we make of memory and recognition? Sankara writes: 'Remembrance means recalling to mind something after its perception, and that can happen only when the agent of perception and memory is the same . . . ' (Carr and Mahalingam, 1997).

4.5 CONTEMPORARY DISCOURSE ON THE SELF

The contemporary discourse on the self is predominantly physicalist in character, as noted by Prevos (2010). Physicalism in philosophy of mind is the view that consciousness and the self can be described and explained by the laws of physics. In this section I will evaluate the above described Indian views on the self in light of the physicalist philosophy of mind. C. Ram-Prasad offered some suggestions on how classical Indian philosophical material may contribute to current discussions in consciousness studies. Ram-Prasad proposes to bracket out the transcendental elements of the philosophy through 'interpretative compromise'. The role he sees for Brahminical philosophy in contemporary consciousness studies is a deep critique of the dominant aims. The main critique that the Brahminical philosophy offers to the physicalist consciousness studies is the circularity of the physicalist studies: only when we know what it is that is to be studied can we study in it, but the purpose of the study is precisely to know what it is. The self of the Carvakas can be viewed an epiphenomenon, an incidental product of physical

processes that has no effect of its own. The Carvaka theory of the self seems elegant but does not offer a satisfactory explanation of the self. The study of the Carvaka philosophy is however particularly difficult. We are left with only a few fragmentary survivals of the Carvaka, but all these are preserved in the writings of those who wanted only to refute and ridicule it. Carvaka philosophy thus remains to be saved from the essentially hostile atmosphere surrounding it.

Derek Parfit identifies two contemporary theories of the self: the Ego Theory and the Bundle Theory (Prevos 2010). On the *Ego Theory*, a person's continued existence cannot be explained except as the continued existence of a particular ego or subject of experiences. The ego theory explains the self like the Brahminical theories as a spiritual enduring substance. The rival view is the *Bundle Theory* according to which we cannot explain the unity of consciousness at any time by referring to a person. Instead we must claim that there are long series of different mental states and events. In Bundle Theory the self is only a fact of our grammar. Therefore, Parfit rightly calls Buddha the first Bundle Theorist and he states that given the advances in psychology and neurophysiology, the Bundle Theory and thus the Buddhist theory of the self may now seem to be obviously true.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1. What is Sankara's criticism against Buddhist theory of momentary person?

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2. What is Carvaka's theory of the self?

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1.6 THE GOAL OF LIFE: PURUSARTHAS

The idea of *Purusartha*, or the goal of life, has played a very vital role in the history of Indian thought. The term '*Purusartha*' literally signifies "what is sought by men", so that it may be taken as equivalent to a human end or purpose. We know that a man, like other living beings, act

instinctively; but he can also do so deliberately. This means he can consciously set before himself ends, and work for them. It is this conscious pursuit that transforms them into *Purusarthas*. Thus even the ends which man shares with other animal, like food and rest, may become *Purusartha* provided they are sought knowingly. We may thus define a *Purusartha* as an end which is consciously sought to be accomplished either for its own sake or for the sake of utilizing it as a means to the accomplishment of further end or goal. The word '*Purusartha*' consists of two words, viz, '*purusa*' meaning person and '*artha*' meaning aim or end. Hence, as defined earlier, *Purusartha* means aim or goal of human life. The *Purusarthas* that have been recognized in India from very early times are four: *Dharma* (duty), *Artha* (wealth), *Kama* (pleasure), and *Moksa* (liberation). Of the four, dharma and moksa are the one that man ought to seek but ordinarily does not; while *artha* and kama are the one that man is naturally inclined to seek (Sneha 2010).

The *Purusarthas* serve as pointers in the life of a human being. They are based on the vision of God which is evident in the creation He manifested and which can be followed by man to be part of that vision and in harmony with His aims. His worlds are established on the principles of dharma. They are filled with the abundance of material and spiritual beings and energies, who seek fulfillment by achieving their desires and liberation. Since man is God in his microcosmic aspect, he too should emulate God and manifest the same reality in his own little world. He should pursue the same aims, experience life in its fullness and be an instrument of God by serving the purpose for which he has been created.

Artha : In one of the old Sanskrit lexicons, '*artha*' is understood as meaning, money, a thing, and possessions. *Artha* also implies attainment of riches and worldly prosperity, advantage, profit and wealth. *Artha*, is a powerful urge in human nature. Acquisition of means for the material well-being, therefore, is a legitimate social and moral purpose. Today everyone is running after money. People need money to meet their basic necessities, for higher education, for luxuries of life, for name, fame, etc. However, if the urge to seek money or possessions is not restricted then it will lead to self-indulgence or greed and will bar the way to highest good i.e., *moksa*. It is given in one of the Pali texts, that "one who enjoys his wealth and does meritorious deeds with it, experiences pleasure and happiness". It has therefore to be coupled with charity, also to Kautilya "wealth and wealth alone is important in as much as charity and desire depend on wealth for their realization." *Artha* helps in the attainment of *Kama*. Further, Prof. Hiriyanna affirms that *artha* is ordinarily acquired for *kama* (Sneha 2010).

Kama: *Kama* is ordinarily termed as pleasure. The definition of pleasure in Kamasutra is the following: "*Kama* is the enjoyment of the appropriate objects by the five senses of hearing, feeling, seeing, tasting and smelling, assisted by the mind together with the soul." The urge to enjoy pleasures and satisfy desires, is the most powerful one serving as an incentive to individual progress, most effective. It is said, "All that man does is inspired by *kama*." As Manu regarded *kama* as desire, one can say, it is a desire for pleasure. It can be sensuous pleasure, mental pleasure getting through satisfaction of the work, urge for sexual pleasure, etc. Everyone is seeking that, which gives them pleasure and luxuries of life. Nobody wants to stay at the bottom level. People feel money is the important factor in the attainment of the pleasures of life by

fulfilling our desires. So one may put *artha*, as a means to *kama*, as an goal. But now, is that all? Is the purpose of human life fulfilled? How is this *artha* acquired? How well it is utilized in our life? To answer these questions, what one need to do is, to follow his dharma, which is the next *Purusartha*.

Dharma: The Indian expression of right activities is dharma. In Mahabharata it is mentioned as an ethical concept, defined as that which is right and good. In Mimamsa, *dharma* is a means to the attainment of certain ends. This means that, ends like *artha* and *kama* should be acquired through righteousness, honesty and straightforwardness. One may, in fact, possess *artha* through stealing and can become rich and through it can get all pleasures of life. But is this the *dharma* of a person? In Mahabharata, *dharma* is stated as that which upholds the society. *Dharma* is duty. It is the higher good to achieve the highest i.e., *moksa*. In all stages of a man's life either as a student or as a householder, as a forest dweller or an ascetic, dharma has to be accepted as paramount. An IAS officer has got lots of riches, money and pleasures in his life, but these are to be acquired by doing his duty with sincerity and honesty, and not with bribery, corruption or other mal-practices; only then it will add meaning to his life, otherwise *artha* and *kama* without dharma would be meaningless. *Dharma* is the most important urge and should be developed to regulate both *artha* and *kama*. If *dharma* is the common regulator, *moksa* or liberation, is the common aim, though difficult to attain. Under the wise regulation of *dharma*, desire has to be satisfied and wealth has to be produced and well used. But all the three urges have to be so adjusted and regulated as to lead a man to self- fulfillment in his search for the highest good. *Dharma* also refers to *Varnashrama* Dharma i.e., choice of duty on the basis of one's aptitudes and stage in life (Sneha 2010).

Moksa: Etymologically the meaning of *moksa* is to 'rid off' or 'release'. Also it is commonly understood as liberation. In Bhagavad-Gita, *moksa* is mentioned as the supreme tranquility and the highest bliss. It is delight in the self, contentment with the self, self- satisfaction and self- fulfillment. It is the highest end of life, attainable only by the individual himself, with the help and guidance of dharma. *Moksa* as the last end of human life signifies that its attainment is impossible without first fulfilling the obligations of the other three. It is a state of non-action. It is not that on death *moksa* is attained. Being the ultimate value of man's social existence, the *Purusartha* of *moksa* is an end in itself. Beyond that, human being has nothing to attain. It is the stage where human cravings cease and along with that ceases the need for attainment and fulfillment. *Moksa* is realization and living of the truth namely *Aham Brahma Asmi* and *Tat Tvam Asi*. In other words it is waking up of human consciousness at the highest level of reality i.e., *paramarthik satta*. The liberated person neither acts nor causes others to act. He may work for the good of humanity without moral obligation. But he has no duties to perform. It is total destruction of egoism. We can call *moksa* as a sublime goal. It can be known through mystical experience. Many saints like Tukaram and Kabir have talked about it and ultimately we all have to aim at it and only then we will be able to come out of the reincarnation (Senha 2010).

4.7 A MATERIALISTIC CRITIQUE

The above treatment of the self and the goals of life may be critiqued from an atheistic or materialistic point of view. The term 'Materialism' is a commonly used and loaded term. There is a misconception that materialism is a modern age phenomenon. In reality this phenomenon is as old as the human mankind irrespective of the place and time. It has been mentioned in ancient Indian literature also. Charvaka and the Hindu sage, Brahaspati, its founder and champion have been associated with philosophical school of materialism in Indian literature ('Materialism' 2020).

Metaphysically, he Charvaka admits the existence of four elements - earth, water, fire and air-only and he rejects the fifth, the ether, because it is not perceived but inferred. Similarly, soul and God and the Hereafter are rejected. Everything which exists, including the mind, is due to a particular combination of these four elements. The elements are eternal, but their combinations undergo production and dissolution. Consciousness is regarded as a mere product of matter. It is produced when the elements combine in a certain proportion. It is found always associated with the body and vanishes when the body disintegrates. Just as the combination of betel, arecanut and lime produces red colour or just as fermented yeast produces the intoxicating quality in wine, though the ingredients separately do not possess either the red colour or the intoxicating quality, similarly a particular combination of the elements produces consciousness, though the elements separately do not possess it. Consciousness is the result of an emergent and dialectical evolution. It is an epi-phenomenon, a by-product of matter. Given the four elements and their particular combination, consciousness manifests itself in the living body. The so-called soul is simply the conscious living body.

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1. What is the meaning of *Artha*?

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2. Give a brief summary of the Carvaka position.

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4.8 LET US SUM UP

By way of summing up we can assert that the views of the self in classical Indian philosophy span a wide spectrum of ideas. For the Brahmins, the self is a non-physical soul, a 'ghost in the machine'. For the Buddhists, the soul is a mere figment of the imagination. The Carvaka on the other hand, see the self as an epiphenomenon. The Brahminical theories of the self can be considered not true because the spiritual conception of the self does not correspond with empirical reality—if one concedes that religious experiences are not part of reality. The Carvaka theory could be true, but as is known to us it cannot provide any explanation, only a description of the self. The Buddhist or Carvaka theory of the self explains our natural beliefs about a self without any of the metaphysical complications of the Brahmanical theories. The *Purusarthas* briefly express Indian understanding of the goal of human life, which also may be differently understood by various schools in India.

4.9 KEY WORDS

Lokayata: Belief only in this world. Stemming from pre-Vedic times, Lokayata would broadly mean 'prevalent among people' or 'prevalent in the world' (*loka* and *ayata*)

Purusarthas: The goal of life, *Purusarthas* that have been recognized in India from very early times are four: Dharma (duty), *Artha* (wealth), *Kama* (pleasure), and Moksa (liberation).

4.10 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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