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**UNIT 1      CATEGORIAL NOTION OF BEING (BEING AND CATEGORIES)**


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**1.0. OBJECTIVES**


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Being in itself can neither be defined nor objectified clearly. Being escapes human definition and objectification. However, the various manifestations of Being experienced in finite beings can be objectified and classified. Categorisation includes within it, both objectification and classification. The present Unit's object is to understand categories:

- From early Western perspectives
  - From early Indian perspectives
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**1.1. INTRODUCTION**


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The term 'category' is from the Greek root '*kategoria*' meaning an 'accusation' or 'charge' in a court of law. Aristotle (384-322 BCE) transferred the word from legal use to a logical use in attributing one thing to another as done in predicating a quality of a subject. Just as the courts of law render their judgments on 'accusation' or 'charges' brought before them, so does the human mind make its judgments on ideas that appear before it by way of affirmation or denial. Hence, the primary meaning of category is one of *the supreme classes of predicates* found in our judgments and propositions. The categories in this sense belong to the science of logic. Even Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) recognizes this fact. For Kant, categories are transcendental conditions of knowledge. Transcendental means a condition which must be in the mind for cognition to take place. The first of these transcendental conditions are the a priori forms of sensibility: space and time. They are in the senses making possible the cognition of sense experience. Kant's categories are such transcendental conditions for intellectual knowledge. They are subjective forms or modes into which the data of sense experience are fitted. Our cognition arises from the union of these forms with the phenomena of sense experience. These categories or forms are part of the furniture of the mind. They are applied to the phenomena according to the law of the mind's nature so as to give us the knowledge we have. Such knowledge is not a representation of things but a representation of the mind's own subjective states, and thus it does not reveal anything of the *noumena* (things-in-themselves). Kant lists twelve categories that correspond to twelve classes of judgments. They are pure mental constructs entirely independent of experience, and pre-existing as modes of thought antecedent to all knowledge derived from experience. Their purpose is to unify the manifold of sense experience and to impose on it the forms of necessity and universality. They do not tell us anything of the reality independent of the mind. Hence, they are different from the Aristotelian categories which are classes of direct universal ideas and modes of real being.

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**1.2. EARLY WESTERN PERSPECTIVE: ARISTOTLE**


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For Aristotle, there are ten categories: substance, quantity, quality, relation, action, passion, place, time, habit, and position. 1) *Substance*: Aristotle calls the first category *ousia*, which literally means *beingness* or substance, sometimes this term has the formal-abstract meaning of the essence of the subsistent being. It is a reality, bodily or spiritual, suited to exist as itself. The name substance is from the Latin *substans* or 'standing under;' for a creatural substance is capable of 'standing under' the accidents of which it is the subject. It supports accidents in being. 2) *Quantity* is Being as dispersed in parts outside parts. It is an accident proper to bodies; it is the extension of bodies in space. To say a thing is big or little is not to speak of quantity; for quantity deals with measurements. Big and little indicate qualities. If we say a human is six feet tall we indicate quantity; so also we indicate quantity when we say 'forty rupees,' or 'a nine by twelve rug, or 'a kilometre walk,' etc. 3) *Quality* is Being as determined in itself. It is an accident which determines the sort or kind of a thing. Nearly all adjectives indicate qualities. Quality is a very broad and inclusive category. Thus it indicates: (a) *dispositions and habits* such as prudence, industriousness, strength, weakness, gullibility; (b) *abilities or capacities* such as capability, keen-sightedness, quick-mindedness; (c) *passive characteristics* such as colour, the state of being esteemed, age, temperature (age and temperature can also be *quantities* when expressed in definite numbers, that is, they can be quantities by analogy). 4) *Relation* is Being as referring to other things. It is an accident which determines a thing in its standing to or towards another. It is unique among accidents because it involves two realities and does not really exist in either but *between* them. Examples of relation are: equality, similarity, unlikeness, paternity, loyalty, servitude, etc. 5) *Action* is Being as actuating its reference to others. It is an accident which determines a reality as doing something, as producing an effect; for example, talking, writing, speeding, striking, painting, etc. 6) *Passion* is Being as undergoing the action of others in being acted upon. It is an accident which determines a reality as undergoing something, as affected by some action; e.g., being talked to, being written, being struck. As action is expressed by the active voice of verbs, passion is expressed by the passive voice. 7) *Place* is Being as finding itself somewhere. It is an accident which determines a reality as to its position with reference to other realities. It is an accident which, strictly speaking, is proper only to bodily substances. Place finds expression in such terms as, in the room, at the corner of the main street, in this country, on the surface of the earth, on that chair. 8) *Time* is Being as movement. It is an accident which determines a reality in its position with reference to *before* and *after*; e.g., at midday, this evening, at five o'clock, next Tuesday, in 1492, before midnight, after supper, etc. 9) *Habitus or Possession* is Being as the state or condition with reference to external things. It is an accident proper to bodies, which determines its subject with reference to its clothing or external accoutrements or adjuncts; e.g., well-dressed, armoured, moss-covered, ivy-hung, bearded, swaddled. In one aspect, habit is also *quality*. Mental and moral habits are always merely qualities. *Habit* as a predicament or category means some kind of bodily *dress* or bodily adornment or bodily swathing. 10) *Position or Posture* is Being as referring to attitude, the disposition of the parts of a being. It is an accident to bodies which determines its subject with reference to the arrangement or disposition of its own part; for instance, sprawled, sitting, standing, lying down, huddled up, erect, prone, cross-kneed, outstretched, etc.

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### 1.3. EARLY INDIAN PERSPECTIVE: VAISESHIKA SCHOOL

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The Indian term for 'category' is *padartha*, which means 'the object or meaning (*artha*) of a word (*pada*).' A *padarth* is an object which can be thought (*artha*) and named (*pada*). *Prasastapada* defines *padartha* as a knowable thing (*jneya*), or as a validly cognizable thing (*prameya*), or as a nameable thing (*abhidheya*). The approach of the *Nyaya-vaisheshika* to the

universe is purely a realistic one in which one regards all the objects of the universe as real things. Such objects are cognized either through the external sense-organs or through the internal ones. In the former case, the external objects of cognition are the specific attributes of the five *mahabhutas*: *rupa*, *sparsa*, *gandha*, *rasa*, and *sabda*, which are cognized through their respective sense-organs. In the latter case, the objects of the sensible world are cognized through the internal organs, and hence are subtler elements like *paramanus*, *tanmatras*, etc. Kanada divides the whole reality into six categories. The seventh (non-existence) was added afterwards. Of these seven categories, the first three, i.e., substance, quality, and action possess a real objective existence. The next three, i.e., generality, particularity, and inherence are products of intellectual discrimination. These six categories have existence, nameability and knowability, which are not logical notions (as that of Gautama's classifications) but ontological entities. The seventh category, i.e., non-existence is also an ontological category which is not mere negation of a substance in thought, but real non-existence of a substance. When a jar is destroyed, there is a real negation of the jar. It is to be noted that neither Kanada nor Prasastapada speak of non-existence as a separate category, but Sridhara, Udayana, Vyomasiva, and Sivaditya add the seventh category of non-existence.

**Substance (*dravya*):** Substance is the substratum where actions and qualities inhere and which is the co-existent material cause of the composite things produced from it. It is the substratum of all things. A substance is destroyed only by the destruction of its substratum. It is not destroyed either by its own effect or by its own cause. It means that the relation of the destroyer and the destroyed does not exist between two substances which have entered into the relation of effect and cause. Thus the *Sutra* states: "Substance is not annihilated either by effect or by cause" (VS I, 12). For Prasastapada, 'substance is the main category, and all categories depend on it for their existence. So it is first named.' Being the substratum of qualities, it is different from qualities. For instance, in the case of a white cloth, the white colour is experienced as a property residing in the substratum, cloth. Therefore, white colour and cloth are different in their essence. The word 'property' does not mean only qualities, but is used in a wider sense and includes all the five kinds of properties (i.e., substance, quality, movement, the universal, and *visesha*), which subsist in their substrate by inherent relation. A substance does not possess qualities at the first moment of its production. If the qualities arise simultaneously with substances, there cannot be any distinction between them, and if the qualities do not arise, then substances would be free from qualities. Then the definition of substance, as that which possesses qualities, would be violated. To meet this difficulty, it is said that substance is the substrate of qualities either in the relation of intimate union (*samvaya sambandha*) or antecedent negation (*pragbhava*). Qualities inhere in a substance from the second moment of its production until its destruction. A substance is also the material cause of its composite product. For example, threads are the material cause of cloth made by their combination. Only substance is capable of producing an effect out of its stuff. These substances are nine: earth, fire, air, water, ether, time, space, spirit, and mind. The *Vaiseshika* philosophy is pluralistic and realistic but not materialistic since it admits spiritual substances. Out of the nine substances, the first five (i.e., earth, water, fire, air, and ether) are called physical, since each of them possesses a unique quality sensed by the external sense. Smell is the unique property of earth, and other substances have smell only if mixed with some quantity of earth. There is smell in muddy water, but not in pure water. In the same way, taste is the property of water, colour that of light, touch of air, and sound of ether. The substances – of earth, fire, water, and air – are both eternal and non-eternal. The atoms of earth, water, fire, and

air are eternal, as an atom is indivisible and can neither be produced nor destroyed. All others are non-eternal as they are produced by the combination of atoms and are subject to destruction. There are four kinds of atoms: earth, water, fire, and air, each having its own special quality. Ether is the fifth physical substance, the substratum of the quality of sound. The sound is perceived, but not ether. It is one and eternal as it is indivisible and does not depend on any other substance for its existence. It is all pervading as it has an unlimited dimension whose effect is perceived everywhere. Time and space are also eternal, all-pervading, imperceptible, infinite, partless, and indivisible. Time causes our cognitions of past, present, and future; and of 'younger' and 'older.' Space (*dik*) causes our cognitions of east and west, here and there, near and far. There are innumerable souls that are independent, individual, eternal, and all-pervading spiritual substance, the substratum of the quality of consciousness. The souls are divided into two: the individual and the Supreme. The Supreme is only one, the Creator of the world. The individual is internally perceived as possessing some quality when one says, 'I am happy', 'I am sorry', and so on. The individual is not one but many, being different in different bodies. Mind is an internal sense which is atomic, many, eternal, and imperceptible. Each self has a mind through which the self comes into contact with the objects. Its existence is inferred from the fact that the self must perceive internal states through an internal sense, just as it perceives external objects through external senses. Moreover, the mind is selective in the perception of external objects. We perceive colour, touch, taste, smell, and sound subsequently, even though all the external senses may be in contact with objects simultaneously, coming into contact with one sense only at a time.

Hence, one can distinguish between two points of view from which the concept of *dravya* can be studied: first, as a cosmological and nature-philosophical concept, and second as a functional-categorical concept. From the cosmological and nature-philosophical concept of view, *dravya* is the cause of its qualities; from the functional-categorical concept of view, it is the subject of qualities and other determinations such as relations and universals.

**Quality (*guna*):** A quality cannot exist independently; it inheres in a substance which is its substrate. "Inhering in Substance, not possessing Attribute, not an independent cause in Conjunctions and Disjunctions, - such is the mark of Attribute" (VS I, 16). It is the non-material cause of things as it determines only their nature and character, but not their existence. All qualities must belong to substances without qualities themselves having qualities. Kanada lists seventeen qualities: colour (*rupa*), taste (*rasa*), smell (*gandha*), touch (*sparsa*), number (*samkhya*), size (*parimana*), individuality (*prthaktva*), posteriority (*aparatva*), knowledge (*buddhi*), pleasure (*sukha*), desire (*iccha*), aversion (*dvesha*), and effort (*prayatna*). Prasastapāda adds seven more: heaviness (*gurutva*), fluidity (*dravatva*), viscosity (*sneha*), merit (*dharma*), demerit (*Adharma*), sound (*śabda*), and faculty (*Samsara*). Some others add lightness (*lagutva*), softness (*mrudutva*), and hardness (*kathinatva*) to the twenty-four qualities. But these are not separate qualities. For lightness is only the absence of heaviness, and softness and hardness represent different degrees of conjunction. The qualities that belong to eternal substances are called eternal and to the transient ones, non-eternal. Those that subsist in two or more substances are known as general, while those in only one substance are called specific. Number, magnitude, distinctness, conjunction, disjunction, remoteness, nearness, derived fluidity, gravity, and velocity are general qualities while colour, taste, smell, touch, viscosity, natural fluidity, knowledge, pleasure, pain, desire, hate, effort, merit, demerit, faculty, and sound are special

qualities which help to distinguish objects which possess them from others. Qualities are of three kinds: (a) those perceived through one external sense-organ: colour, taste, smell, touch, and sound; and (b) those perceived through two external sense-organs: eyes and the skin, viz., number, magnitude, distinctness, conjunction, disjunction, remoteness, nearness, fluidity, and viscosity; and (c) those perceived through any sense-organ: gravity, merit, demerit, and faculty. The qualities of the self – cognition, pleasure, pain, desire, hate, and volition – are perceived through the mind (*manas*).

Colour, perceived by the visual organ, only resides in earth, water, and light, though in the latter two the colour is permanent. It varies in earth when heat is applied. There are seven colours: white, blue, yellow, red, green, brown, and variegated (*citra*). Taste (*rasa*), possessed by earth and water, is the quality of things apprehended only by the gustatory organ. The tastes are of six kinds: sweet, sour, salty, pungent (*katu*), astringent (*kasaya*), and bitter. Odour (*gandha*), residing in earth, is the quality apprehended only by the olfactory organ. It is of two kinds: fragrant and the non-fragrant, i.e., bad smell. Touch (*sparsa*) – residing in earth, water, light and air – is the special quality apprehended by the tactual organ. Touch is of three kinds: hot, cold, neither cold nor hot. Water is cold, light is hot, and earth and air are neither cold nor hot. Sound (*sabda*) is a quality perceived by the auditory organ. Number (*samkhya*) is a generic quality (*samanyaguna*) of things. Of these numbers, unity (*ekatva*) is eternal in eternal substances and transient in transient substances. Magnitude (*parimana*), the specific cause of measurement, is of four kinds: minuteness, largeness, length, and shortness. Ether has extreme largeness (*paramamahattvam*) and extreme minuteness (*pariman dalya*). The dimension of non-eternal substances is determined by the number, magnitude, and arrangements of the parts. *Dyads* are minute, while the others are of limited magnitude. *Individuality* (*prthaktva*) is the principle of distinction. It is eternal in eternal substances, and transient in transient substances. *Conjunction and disjunction* refer respectively to the union of separate things and separation of things which are in union. *Remoteness and proximity* are the principles of the notions of ‘remote’ and ‘near’. Each of them is of two kinds: spatial and temporal. Knowledge, pleasure, pain, desire, aversion and effort belong to the soul. *Knowledge*, both valid and invalid, is the apprehension of objects, a quality of the self. Valid knowledge is of four kinds: perception, inference, comparison, and testimony; invalid knowledge is of four kinds: doubt, illusion, indefinite knowledge, and dream. *Pleasure* is produced by the interaction of the sense-organs with desirable objects. *Pain* is a feeling of self-abasement. *Desire* is a craving for the attainment of an unattained object. *Aversion* is the feeling of rage which arises from pain and recollection of painful objects. It causes effort, remembrance, merit, and demerit. *Effort* enables one to the attainment of the desirable and to the abandoning of the undesirable. *Gravity* (*gurutva*) causes things to fall to the ground. *Fluidity* (*dravatva*) causes flowing, and it exists in earth, water, and light. *Viscosity* (*sneha*) is the quality of water. It is the cause of cohesion, smoothness, etc. *Merit* (*dharma*) and *demerit* (*adharma*) respectively cause happiness and misery.

**Action (*karma*):** Action is that which inheres in one substance, devoid of qualities, and is the direct and the immediate cause of conjunction and disjunction. “Residing in one Substance only, not possessing Attribute, an independent cause of Conjunctions and Disjunctions – such is the Mark of Action” (VS I, 17). It resides in a substance, but it is its temporary feature, whereas a quality is its permanent feature. Conjunction resides in many substances which are conjoined with each other, but action is present only in one substance. For example, conjunction of a book

with a table resides in two substances, whereas the action of a fan resides only in it. Action, an unconditional cause of conjunction and disjunction, is destroyed by conjunction. For example, the action of a vehicle is the immediate cause of its disjunction from one part of the ground and conjunction with another part of it. The vehicle, which is a substance, is the inherent cause of its disjunction and conjunction. But its action is their cause. All actions subsist in corporeal substances such as earth, water, fire, air, and the mind. The incorporeal substances – such as *akasa*, time, space, and soul – cannot change their position. An action cannot produce another action. If an action produces another action, then every action will go on producing another action of its own type *ad infinitum*. Similarly, an action does not produce any substance since at the time of the production of a substance action does not exist. The actions are classified into five: *utksepana*, *apaksepana*, *akuncana*, *prasara*, and *gamana*. *Utksepana* is the cause of the contact of a body with some higher region due to weight, effort, and conjunctions, e.g., throwing a ball upward. *Apaksepana* is the cause of the contact of a body with some lower region, e.g., throwing downward. *Akuncana* is that by which the upper parts of an extended substance are disjoined with those parts with which they were connected before and are combined with the parts at the bottom so that the substance becomes curved, e.g., clenching of the fingers. *Prasara* is that by which the upper parts of a substance become disjoined with the parts of the same substance at the bottom, and become connected with the upper parts with which they were disconnected before so that the object becomes straight, e.g., opening one's clenched hand. *Gamana* – which embraces different kinds of action as rotatory action (*bhramana*), going up of flames, flowing down of liquids, falling down due to weight, etc. – is any type of action not covered by the varieties mentioned above.

**Generality (*samanya*):** Generality refers to an abstract characteristic that is singular and eternal and yet pervades many. “And from a commonly observed mark (there is) no (inference of anything in) particular” (VS III, 7). For instance, individual jars are designated by a common name ‘jar.’ Hence, every object has both general and particular aspects. The same property which is general in relation to one class may be particular in relation to another. Universal is a real entity which corresponds to a general idea or class-essence. There is the class-essence or general idea of human in all individual humans. It is one, though it inheres in many individuals. It is eternal, though the individuals in whom it inheres are subject to birth and death. We know individual humans as belonging to the same class because there is the same class-essence of human in all humans. The generality subsists in substances, qualities and actions. ‘Jar-ness’ of the jar subsists in individual jars which are substances; ‘colourness’ of colour subsists in individual colours which are qualities; and the class-essence of movement subsists in all individual movements which are actions. However, the universal does not subsist in another universal in order to avoid infinite regress. All particular cows have the same essential qualities, as the same class-essence subsists in them all. The universal exists in each individual wholly and never partially, because it has no parts. When a particular individual comes into existence it is already related to the universal. The universals are distinguished in three classes, i.e., the highest, the lowest, and the intermediate. “Being-ness” is the highest universal as it includes all, and is not included in anything. The lowest kind of generality has the most limited referents, such as Americanness, Indianness, potness, and chairness, present in all Americans, Indians, pots, and chairs. The genus of substance is intermediate between the highest and the lowest since it is wider in relation to substances like earth, water, etc., and narrower in relation to the universal ‘being-ness’ which belongs to substance, quality, and action. A distinction is also made between

*jati* and *upadhi*. The *jati* is inborn, natural, and eternal, while *upadhi* is adventitious and transitory. Every general characteristic is not a *jati*. Since some persons are blind, we cannot speak of a *jati* of blindness. If it were so, blind humans and blind brutes would be grouped under the same class. Humanity distinguishes humans from other animals, but blindness does not differentiate blind humans from blind cows. So, the classification of humans as humans is a *jati*, while their grouping according to blindness is an *upadhi*. The following are some of the conditions which exclude generality: *Abheda*: Generality inheres in many individuals. If there is only one individual, it can have no generality. *Tulyatvam*: Potness and pitchness are not two different classes as they are mutually implicative synonyms. *Sankara*: If there is a cross-classification between two classes, they cannot be true universals. Four kinds of atoms (i.e., earth, water, fire, and air) and ether are physical substances while the four atomic substances and the mind are corporeal substances. Ether is physical but not corporeal; mind is corporeal but not physical. So physicality and corporeality cannot be generalities, because they involve cross-classification. *Anavastha*: No generality can subsist in another generality leading to infinite regress. *Rupahani*: Generality cannot subsist in particularities contradicting their nature. For, generality is inclusive, whereas particularity is exclusive. So particularity refuses to allow the inherence of generality in it. *Asambandha*: Since there is no relation of inherence between generality and inherence, there cannot be generality of inherence.

**Particularity (*visesha*):** Particularity (*visesha*) distinguishes a thing from all other things, distinguishing the smaller from the larger. “It is smaller, it is larger, - such affirmations, in respect of one and the same object, arise from the existence of the species, or of the peculiarity [particularity], and from the non-existence of the species, or of the peculiarity [particularity]” (VS VII, 11). Everything in this world is differentiated from another on account of different attributes, qualities, and universals. But two objects (e.g., two jars) – which have not only the same universal but, being quite similar, have the same qualities – are differentiated on account of the difference of their parts. Even two atoms of the same class – say of earth, which have the same universal and the same qualities, and which have no parts – possess an ultimate differentiating characteristic called particularity by means of which it is distinguished from all other atoms. What is true of atoms is also true of other eternal substances (e.g., *akasa*, *kala*, *dik*, *Atman*, and *manas*). Kanada defines *visesha* as the ultimate distinguishing feature of an eternal substance. Prasastapada also defines it as the ultimate distinguishing features of eternal substances. They are the causes of the ultimate distinction of their substrates from one another. They are the final distinctive character of eternal substances. From these definitions we may say that particularity is an aspect of every object which causes the notion of its differentiation from other objects. It inheres in each of them, which distinguishes it from the other eternal substances. Particularities are thought to be eternal because we cannot conceive of any eternal substance remaining undifferentiated from others at any time. Particularity is thus an independent, self-sufficient principle of differentiation, which is the unique feature of a single individual, and so its only function is to differentiate. It is ultimate because it functions even when every other means of differentiation fails. Particularities do not require other particularities to distinguish them from one another since that would lead to infinite regress. They perform, in fact, a double function: firstly, they distinguish the eternal substance from other eternal substances, and secondly, they distinguish themselves from other particularities. *Visesha*, according to *Vaisesika*, is a unique type of real, which cannot be brought under any other category. It is not substance as it is not the substratum of quality. It is not quality or action, for it does not participate in a universal. It is not

a relation and so cannot be identified with inherence. Each particularity inheres only in one eternal substance and is, therefore, not a universal which is supposed to be related to many individuals. In the same way, mutual non-existence, which exists in two entities and are dissimilar, cannot serve the purpose of *visesha*. There is a mutual non-existence of a cloth and a jar in each other. But particularities exist in two eternal substances, which have similar qualities, and distinguish themselves from each other. So, mutual non-existence cannot serve the purpose of particularities. Therefore, the existence of particular must be inferred to account for the ultimate distinction of eternal substances.

**Inherence (*samavaya*):** Inherence plays a very important part in upholding pluralistic realism. That principle which relates two inseparable entities is recognized as inherent relation. It is necessary to relate a substance to its quality, action, generality, and particularity. Kanada defines inherence as that combination which produces, in respect of cause and effect, the notion of this being contained in that or here. “That is Combination by virtue of which (arises the intuition) in the form of ‘This is here,’ with regard to effect and cause” (VS VII, 26). From this definition it seems that the conception of *samavaya* at first originated in connection with the relation of cause and effect. But after Kanada, the scope of inherence was extended to the subsistence of qualities, movements or universals, and later on, when a separate category ‘*visesha*’ was formulated, it was also held to be residing in atoms or other eternal substances. Prasastapada understands inherence as the relation which subsists among inseparable things, which relate to one another as the container and the contained. The two entities necessarily stand in the relation of the container and the contained. That which cannot exist without the other is always the contained; and the other which can exist independently is always the container. Inherence always subsists in inseparable things such as the whole and the parts, quality and substance, action and substance, generality and the individual, and particularity and an eternal substance. The whole inheres in the parts; quality inheres in substance; action inheres in a substance; generality inheres in an individual; and particularity inheres in an eternal substance. Inherence is one eternal relation; it is one, because it has the same distinguishing feature. One inherence can account for all notions, and so it is useless to assume many inherences. Inherence is also eternal; for all positive produces are produced in their material cause by the relation of inherence, and if inherence is produced, it will require another inherence, and so on ad infinitum. So in order to avoid infinite regress, inherence is regarded as eternal.

**Non-existence (*abhava*):** “In consequence of the non-application of Action and Attribute (to it), (an effect is) non-existent prior (to its production)” (VS IX, 1). Here, *the Vaseshika Sutra* begins the ninth book with a demonstration of ordinary or popular and extra-ordinary or hyper-popular perception produced from proximity or presentation due to other causes. For the author, the category of non-existence is necessary for a metaphysics of pluralism, which holds that every experience has its counterpart in the external world. When a jar is destroyed, there is the experience of its non-existence. This experience must have its counterpart in the world, i.e., non-existence of the jar should have an objective reality. Since the non-existence of the jar is not unreal, the non-existence of the jar is the reality of a negative kind. If things simply exist without becoming non-existent, then all things should be eternal. Non-existence is mainly divided into two kinds: *samsargabhava* and *anyonyabhava*. *Samsargabhava* means the absence of something in something else. *Anyonyabhava* means the fact that one thing is not another thing. A jar is not a cloth. Here is mutual non-existence of the jar and the cloth. *Samsargabhava* is of

three kinds: *pragabhava*, *pradhvamsabhava*, and *atyantabhava*. *Pragabhava* (prior non-existence) is the non-existence of an effect in its material cause before its production, e.g., the non-existence of the cloth in the threads before its production. Thus prior non-existence is not produced but destroyed. If it is not destroyed the effect cannot be produced. This is the basis of the *asatkaryavada*. *Pradhvamsabhava* (posterior non-existence) is produced by the destruction of the thing, e.g., when a jar is destroyed, it has posterior non-existence. *Atyantabhava* (absolute non-existence) is the absence of a connection between two things in the past, the present, and the future. Colour did not exist in the air in the past, does not exist in the present, and will not exist in the future. So there is absolute non-existence of colour in the air.

### Check Your Progress

**Note:** use the space provided for your Answers

1) How do you interpret the Aristotelian understanding of categories?

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2) What do the Vaiseshikas say about categories?

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### 1.4. LET US SUM UP

Since there is no science that deals only with the individual as such, classification is a necessary item of any scientific system. The number of particular items of knowledge that can be predicated of an individual is infinite, and they differ from time to time. It would be chaotic and impossible to try to enumerate everything that could be said of a thing during every moment of its existence. The categories reduce this chaotic mass to order and system. They arrange all reality into a few general classes, and thus assist the mind in interpreting the manifold of experience. They are the fundamental concepts which are distinct from one another without being mutually and irreconcilably opposed, but merely juxtaposed, and under which we can classify finite beings in their particular modes of Being. As fundamental concepts, they are as general as possible. However, they are not absolutely general or transcendental since they are distinct fundamental modes of Being, which may be found only in the finite being. They have the notion of Being 'above' them as all-inclusive and as applicable to every finite being. They are analogous realization of the notion of Being and the most general diversifications of everything which experience shows us to be possible, real, or necessary.

### 1.5. FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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## UNIT 2      AGAPEIC NOTION OF BEING (BEING AND AGAPE)

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### 2.0. OBJECTIVES

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Being is love, *agape*. Being is love, because Being gives itself to beings in total freedom. Being gives itself to beings so that there can be beings. This Unit:

- Investigates into the notion of Being
  - Investigates into the notion of love and freedom
  - Affirms that Being is love
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### 2.1. INTRODUCTION

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A lover who tries to love the beloved must face towards the beloved and concentrate full attention on the latter. This full attention draws upon all four levels of the lover's being: biological, psychological, moral, and ontological. This full attention of the lover to the beloved calls for total devotion or dedication of the lover to the beloved. Hence, this total dedication is total self-giving or self-donation of the lover to the beloved. It is the self-giving of the being of the lover to the beloved. The best gift is self-gift, i.e., giving of one's being to another. That is *agape*. *Agape* is not merely giving what we have but what we are. In this way, it is distinct from *eros* and *philia*. In *eros* we give only what we desire (like) to give; in *philia* we give in proportion to what we receive. Hence, in *eros* and *philia* we give what we have, but in *agape* we give what we are. When we give what we are, we also give what we have. Consequently, *agape* does not exclude *eros* and *philia*, but includes and transforms them. It is because originally and fundamentally Being gives itself to beings, so that beings are made possible. Without Being there cannot be beings. Beings are possible because Being gives itself out of itself. In this way, Being by nature is self-giving or love. Being is love. Since Being is love, it calls for loving response on the part of beings.

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### 2.2. NOTION OF BEING

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**Being as Distinct from Beings:** Being as such is distinct from particularized being. *Particularized being* is being which is studied by the diverse sciences of nature. It is the sensible and mobile beings which are either the object of the philosophy of nature or of the other empirical sciences. Particularized being marks and envelops the metaphysical notion of Being. The metaphysical notion of Being is not disengaged from the particularized being, but is present in it in a disguised and invisible manner. All our notions and concepts are resolved in the metaphysical notion of Being. It is the first of all our notions, of which all the rest are determinations. Being is determined by the difference which arises within and not outside itself. It is Being which the intellect perceives first

and before anything else. Hence, the metaphysical intellect must disengage Being and know it in its distinctive mystery. Being as such is real being in all the purity and fullness of its distinctive intelligibility – or mystery. All objects express this being. They utter it to the intellect – not to all intellects but only to those capable of hearing it. Being, seen in its distinctive properties, is trans-objectively subsistent, autonomous, and essentially diversified. When the intellect makes its first judgement in regard to Being (*esse*), it forms its first idea, the idea of being (*ens*) by which the intellect, through simple apprehension, ‘crosses over’ to judgement and lays hold of what properly belongs to judgement, the act of Being.

**Being as Act:** Being (*Esse*) is the very act which turns a possible into a being. Essence is not the highest perfection in the order of being but *esse* (act of Being). However, essence is an element of finite being of absolute necessity and very high nobility, as each essence is the possibility of an actual being endowed with its own finite degree of perfection. Finite being is also act and perfection. The world of finite beings is made possible by the very essences of the things which their own *esse* makes to be true beings. In this way, everything is called a being because of its *esse*; while everything is also called a thing on account of essence or quiddity. As long as one keeps within the notion of the Pure Act of Being, essence cannot be distinguished from it. But as soon as one begins to think of a being, it becomes necessary to conceive it as a participation in the Pure Act of Being, which is the source of its dynamism.

**Being as Dynamic:** The human intellect is not a mirror that passively reflects the objects which come within its field; rather, it is active, fundamentally oriented towards its final goal, the absolute Being. The intellect is dynamic and active. It is a faculty in quest of its intuition, i.e., of assimilation with Being which is pure and simple, supremely one, without limitation, without distinction of essence and existence, and of possibility and reality. Tending towards the infinite, it is not fully satisfied by any finite object. However, to the extent that a finite object participates in the infinite, the intellect finds a partial goal for its appetite in the object, affirms it categorically, and makes a judgement of reality. Hence, truth is found in judgement. The judgement is a *synthesis* through concretion. It unites a subject of inherence and a form. The substantial unity of the knowing subject renders possible the *conversio ad phantasma* without which the intellect could not think of the material singular, nor bring about the concrete synthesis of the judgement. Judgement is not only a synthesis, but an *act of affirmation* too. The affirmation is the essential element of the judgement; for it makes the synthesis which has been effected into an ‘object.’ It endows it with truth by relating it to the absolute Being. Affirmation is an absolute objectification of the subjective form. It transforms subjective form into an ‘ontological object’, an affirmation of Being which is a necessity. *The necessity of affirming Being* is identical with the very necessity of thought. Since only Being can become a content of thought, it follows that the necessity of thought is identical with the affirmation of Being. *The affirmation of Being is the a priori condition of the possibility of every object in consciousness*; and in every affirmation of the finite, the mind goes beyond the finite to the infinite. In other words, human necessarily judges. Judgement implies affirmation of Being. In the affirmation of Being, human experiences a movement, a dynamism. This dynamism has its ultimate source in Being which is necessarily affirmed in every judgement. Human intellect is dynamic because Being, which is absolute, is dynamic. In fact, there takes place a twofold movement: human intellect moving towards Being and Being moving the human intellect towards itself. However, the ultimate source of this twofold movement is the Absolute Being, without which no

movement is possible. It is the objective of the pure desire to know. Pure desire to know means the dynamic orientation manifested in question for intelligence and reflection. It is the a priori and enveloping drive that carries the cognitional process from sense and imagination to understanding, from understanding to judgement, from judgement to the complete context of correct judgements that is named knowledge. It moves human to seek understanding, and then it prevents one from being merely content with one's own imperfect, subjective personal experience. It moves human to reflect, to seek the unconditioned, and to grant unqualified assent only to the unconditioned and the unrestricted.

**Being as Unrestricted Notion:** At the root of all that can be affirmed or conceived is the pure desire to know. It is the pure desire which underlies all judgement and formulation, all questions and all desire to question, that defines its all-inclusive objective (pure desire defines Being). The objective of the pure desire to know is Being. It is the source not only of answers, but also of their criteria; not only of questions but also of grounds on which they are questioned. In other words, there is a cool, detached, disinterested desire to know at the root of cognitional process, and its range is unrestricted and spontaneous.

**Being as Spontaneous Notion:** There is a distinction between the spontaneously operative notion and theoretical accounts of its genesis and content. The spontaneously operative notion is invariant. It is common to all human beings. It functions in the same manner irrespective of what theoretical account of it a human may come to accept. The theoretical account of the content and genesis of the notion are numerous. They vary with philosophical contexts. Spontaneously operative notion is present, invariant in all. The notion of Being is such a notion present in all, and thus extends to everything that is known and unknown. It is true that Being is known in judgement. It is in judgement that we affirm or deny. Until we are able to affirm or deny we do not yet know. Although Being is known only in judgement, the notion of Being is prior to judgement. For judgement presupposes reflection. Reflection presupposes question. Question presupposes the desire to know. The desire to know is the desire to know Being which is immanent to self or spontaneously operative. It is all-pervasive and underpins all cognitional contents and penetrates them all, constituting them as cognitional. All cognitional contents such as ideas and concepts are responses to the desire to know, and all judgements are responses to the demand for the unconditioned. It is the notion of the to-be-known through that content which is prior to every content. The 'to-be-known through the content' passes without residue into the known through that content as each content emerges. The Notion of Being also constitutes all contents as cognitional (can be known) levels of knowing: experience, understanding, and judgement. *Experience* is the first level of knowing. It presents the matter to be known. *Understanding* is the second level of knowing. It defines the matter to be known. *Judgement* is the third level of knowing by which the experienced is thought and the thought is affirmed or denied. Hence Being is really known in judgement by which it is known as Being. Hence, knowing is knowing Being spontaneously as it is the core of meaning.

**Being as the Core of Meaning:** The notion of Being is the core of meaning as it underpins all contents, penetrates them, and constitutes them as cognitional. Meaning can be distinguished from the viewpoint of its sources, acts, terms, and the core. A *source of meaning* is any element of knowledge such as data, images, ideas and concepts, the grasp of the unconditioned and judgement, and the detached and unrestricted desire to know. *Acts of Meaning* are of three kinds: formal, full, and instrumental. *The formal act* of meaning is an act of conceiving, thinking, considering, defining,

supposing, and formulating. *The full act* (of meaning) is an act of judging. *The instrumental act* (of meaning) is the implementation of a formal or of a full act by way of words or symbols in a spoken, written, or merely imagined utterance. The *all-inclusive* terms of meaning is Being, since apart from Being there is nothing. In this way, the *core* of all acts of meaning is the intention of Being. A given judgement pertains to a context of judgements. It is from the context that the *meaning* of the given judgement is determined. For, the meaning of the judgement is an element in the determination of the universal intention of Being, which is the act of existence.

**Being as the Act of Existence:** Being is grasped only as the act of existence of entity. Being is at once separate and united to a receptive subject that is distinct from it. In other words, in the pre-apprehension we grasp Being only through the concept of a specific, sensibly presented, and particular entity. In the same way, every entity is apprehended in the pre-apprehension of the unlimited scope of all the possible objects of thought. This means that entity is apprehended at the moment when it finds itself with the totality of its possible objects. This totality is the one original ground of all determinations of the possible objects or 'beings,' which are the manifestations of Being.

**Being Manifests Beings:** When Being is conceived, it is conceived in the manner of an 'object' in the world, in the manner of an appearance. Being in general, and all that is immaterial, is conceived in the manner of material beings. That is to say, it is considered as a being which 'has' Being. One cannot conceive a thing existing in itself, in any other way. Hence the origin of all human concepts is through the senses. Even non-material beings cannot be comprehended by human, apart from reference to an appearance through which this non-material being becomes a datum. Hence, Being – both in direct knowledge and in metaphysical reflection – can be grasped only through beings manifested by Being. Even transcendental reflection on Being is effected necessarily through beings. In appearance or manifestation, human finds Being in general opened to it. In the pre-apprehension that goes beyond the appearance, Being in general is disclosed to the human spirit as an objective grasping of appearance. In the pre-apprehension, the most general structures of Being are simultaneously known. Being is being-present-to-itself; Being is knowing or luminosity; Being is self-affirmation, the will, and the good. Therefore, Being in general is disclosed to human in the appearance or manifestation of beings insofar as these most general definitions of Being in general are known through beings, through question.

**Being as the Absolute Fact of Question:** Human Question is something final and irreducible. Every attempt to place the question in question (i.e., to question the question) is itself again raising a question. So human is bound to question. Hence it is the absolute fact which refuses to be replaced by another fact. This question is a metaphysical question. The metaphysical question is the reflexive articulation of the question about Being which pervades the ground of human existence itself. It turns upon itself as such and thereby turns upon the presuppositions of the question. The transcendental question does not merely place something asked about in question, but also the one questioning and the question itself; thus Being is the end of question itself.

**Being as the End of Human Question:** When we ask questions, we not only know how things are in relation to us but also how they are absolutely, in themselves - what it is in itself. In this way, the unconditioned, absolute Being puts an end to human question. The very act of questioning reveals that even if we only explicitly inquire about a relative validity for us personally, this relative validity

itself is posited as Absolute. Behind the relative horizon there is always an absolute horizon. 'Validity for me' can be spoken of only because we contrast it with 'validity in itself'. The horizon of our questioning is the Unconditioned. The unconditioned is expressed in the word *IS* (Being). Here Being is the unconditioned condition of all questioning. It is the absolutely necessary. It is always and necessarily presupposed as the condition of every question. It is co-affirmed in the very act of questioning without any limit.

**Being as the Unlimited:** If the horizon of our knowing is limited, then our knowledge cannot be absolute. In a limited horizon, we cannot ask about the ultimate, absolute, unconditioned point of view. Hence, the horizon must be unlimited. To penetrate into the *intensively* deepest core of Being, we must reach the *extensively* widest range of Being. That which constitutes the ultimate, unconditioned reality of things is *Being*, and that which affects absolutely everything, without any limitation, is also Being. Therefore, Being is the ultimate reality both intensively and extensively. The horizon of Being within which we ask the question as question is unlimited, as it is knowing and not-knowing at the same time.

**Being as Knowing and Not-Knowing:** Every question implies that we know about Being. For, we cannot question about something of which we do not know anything at all. However, the question also presupposes that we do not know about Being. In this way question manifests both the identity of Being and knowing, and the distinction between them. In other words, our knowledge about Being consists in the identity of Being and knowing, and our not-knowing about Being consists in the non-identity of Being and knowing. Thus, Being is the principle of all beings.

**Being as the Principle of Beings:** One may ask two basic questions about everything: *whether* it is and *what* it is. The first question is about the thing's *act of Being*; the second is about its *essence*. Should something possess only an essence without the act of Being, then that would not be a real being, but a mere possible. The real differs from the possible as the act of Being is added to its essence. Hence, the act of Being is that in the entity which makes it real. It distinguishes the entity from a merely possible thing. It is the inner principle or ground of that which really is. It is the inner ground through which beings are in themselves. It is that through which every entity is real. The whatness of each entity receives its reality from the act of Being of the same reality. The Act of Being makes real whatever is real, including all determinations of the entities, including its whatness. Being is the universal ground or principle of all entities and of their determinations.

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### 2.3. BEING AS AGAPE (LOVE)

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Beings come from Being. If beings come from Being, how do they come from Being? Why should they come from Being? Why should there be beings rather than nothing? It is a clear fact of experience that we are beings and what we encounter are all beings. One reasonable explanation for the presence of beings is that they all come from Being. Are they there on their own? They cannot be there on their own power because they are finite or limited. Hence, these must be there because of Being which is by its own power. If Being is there totally on its own power, it must be all-powerful. If it is all-powerful, it must be unlimited. If it is unlimited, it must be infinite. If it is infinite, it must be eternal. If it is eternal, it must be the ultimate. If it is ultimate, it must be the unconditioned condition of all other conditions. Hence, Being – which is the all-powerful, infinite, eternal, ultimate, and the unconditioned – is the principle of all finite beings. Since all finite beings come from Being the finitude of the finite beings must also come

from Being that is infinite. The finite beings must be limited by Being, only since there is nothing outside the domain of Being. If it is so, then, is Being finite? The question is contradictory because the infinite cannot be finite. Although the infinite cannot be finite, the infinite can allow itself to be limited so that finite beings are possible. In this way, there takes place always, an 'ontological incarnation' by which the infinite on its own freely allows itself to be limited in the finite for the sake of the finite. The infinite Being is infinitely free to give itself to the finite so that finite can respond itself in freedom. In other words, Being gives itself so that finite can be. The finite beings are the instances of the self-giving of the infinite Being. This self-giving of the infinite, completely for the sake of the finite, is *agapeic* in nature. That is, Being by its very nature is self-giving or *agapeic*, love. Thus, Being is *agapeic* or love; ontology, by its very nature, is **agapeic ontology**. One could be justified in saying, *I love therefore I am*. If Being is self-giving or *agapeic*, then every being is expected to give itself back to Being in freedom. There can be no genuine love without freedom.

**Freedom as Condition of Love:** A determinist is one who denies human freedom. The determinists reason that every human action is a definite, determined act. Since the act of choice is determined, it is caused, and hence not free. According to them, an act is an unavoidable response to a stimulus. The true cause of our actions may not always be clear to us; it may be hidden from our consciousness. What we normally call choices is firmly controlled by factors that lie beyond the individual's control. If the controlling factor is physiological, then the determinism is hereditary, or genetic, which means that through certain inherited characteristics, one is led to choose and to choose unalterably the way one does. If the controlling factor is one's past patterns of behaviour and one's fundamental mind-set, then the determinism is psychological. If the controlling factor is one's cultural and educational background, then the determinism is environmental. Finally, the determinism is theological, if the controlling factor is attributed to the divine will or heavenly bodies.

**Free will** is the ability of the will, all conditions for action being present, to decide whether to act or not to act, and whether to act in this manner or in that manner. Freedom (in the widest sense) is absence of external coercion or force; (in the narrow sense) it is absence of intrinsic necessity or determination in the performance of an act. 'Intrinsically necessary' means that which is determined by its very nature to be what it is and to act as it does. The will is free from intrinsic necessity or determination in at least some of its acts, i.e., will is capable of choice when all the conditions for acting are present. It does not mean that will is free in every respect. For instance, it is governed by intrinsic necessity or determination in seeking happiness. Besides, the will acts impulsively and indeliberately in many circumstances. The advocates of free will also admit that certain states and mental conditions make it impossible for the will to exercise its freedom, such as sleep, absent-mindedness, delirium, hypnosis, insanity, etc.

We shall consider four arguments justifying freedom: (1) the argument from common consent, (2) the psychological argument, (3) the ethical argument, and (4) the philosophical argument. *Argument from Common Consent:* The great majority of humans believe that their will is free. This conviction is of the utmost practical importance for the whole of human life. Therefore, if there is order in the world, the majority of humankind cannot be wrong in this belief. Hence the will is free. *Psychological Argument:* We have said that most people naturally hold that the will is free. Why do they cling to that conviction? This is because they are directly and indirectly aware of the freedom

of their own decisions. They are directly aware of their freedom in the very act of making a free decision; they are indirectly aware of it because of the many instances of behaviour which can only be explained by admitting the freedom of the will. *Ethical Argument*: If there is no freedom, there is no real responsibility, no virtue, no merit, no moral obligation, no duty, and no morality. The necessary connection between freedom and these spiritual realities is quite obvious and is demonstrated in Ethics. This is a strong argument, because the sense of duty and the belief in morality and moral obligation come naturally to human, and even those who deny their existence in theory live in practice as if they admitted it. Kant, who claimed that the existence of freedom was not demonstrable by theoretical reason, nevertheless was convinced that human is free, and he derived this conviction from the fact of duty, which he considered to be immediately evident to the practical reason. *Philosophical Argument*: Every kind of knowledge evokes a corresponding kind of striving as my knowledge is always knowledge of (after) 'something'. In knowledge, my mind freely tends or strives towards the object of my knowledge. This follows from the fact that knowledge and striving are the two fundamental immaterial functions or aspects of a rational being. In other words, there is in human an immaterial kind of knowledge. Hence, there must also be in human an immaterial kind of striving. Immaterial striving is intrinsically independent of matter which is one of the principles of limitation or restriction of a material finite being; the other being an infinite principle, namely, the Absolute Being. And since immaterial striving in itself is independent or free of matter, there is in human a free principle which is the principle of free striving, i.e., free-will which is relatively free (but not absolutely free as it is not free of the absolute Being).

Philosophically speaking, freedom is also an analogous concept predicated in different ways of different types. The various forms of attribution indicate a formal relation which remains the same. This relation can be put negatively or positively. Negatively, freedom means 'being free from,' i. e., the relation of not being bound, of being independent from something. This negative concept is also a relative one since every finite being is related to other beings in the world. It may be free from direct relationships to this or that, but not from all things. Beings, for instance, which are free from insertion into civilization and history, are all the more fully involved in nature and the universe. A being fully free in the negative sense could not be a being in the world. A fully isolated being, without any relationship, would be based on nothing and be nothing. Negation is always based on something positive. If negative freedom was conceived as an absolute, such a fully indeterminate being would be without a world and reduced to nothingness. In contrast to the negative and relative concept, there is a positive and absolute concept of freedom. A being is positively free insofar as it is in possession of itself with the sufficient condition for all its being and relations. Hence, freedom means self-possession, of being completely present to oneself. Self-possession is the essence of 'person' too. A person is in possession of oneself and is not possessed by another.

When we look at freedom in this way, human freedom is neither merely negative and relative nor fully positive and absolute. Of course, human has some dominion over oneself and so also over parts of the world. But one is at the same time inserted into the world and dependent on the beings among which one finds oneself. Thus human freedom is constituted by isolation and power, and being 'free from' and being 'free to.' This basic mode of human freedom may be called 'transcendental freedom' which is the fundamental property of human by which human alone can say 'is.' Human can contrast all things with oneself as 'beings' and so comprehend them in being. In this way, human has the capacity of distancing all things from oneself and oneself from all things

and even from oneself. This universal freedom of distancing is transcendence, 'being over and beyond' every individual being. Thus, freedom is the foundation of human's self-transcendence. This capacity for self-transcendence is the basis of *agapeic* or self-giving love. If a being does not give itself to Being and beings, then it goes against its very nature as being.

**Agapeic Love:** In classical Greek, especially in Plato's *Symposium*, there are two terms for love. These are *eros* and *philia*. *Eros* is based on strong feelings toward another. It usually occurs in the first stages of a man-woman relationship. It is based more on physical traits. For example, when a man says he has 'fallen in love' with a woman because 'she looks like an angel', or when a woman 'falls in love' with a man because he is intelligent and he has good breeding, etc. It is based more on self-benefit, on what can benefit oneself rather than the other person. When one person doesn't feel happy anymore in loving the other person, she/he is led to believe that she/he has fallen out of love. *Philia*, as we mentioned earlier, is love based on friendship between two persons. Undoubtedly, friendship is the foundation of a successful relationship. This is true whether it is marriage, relationship between family members, relationship with co-workers, one's employer, etc. This is in contrast to a man-woman romantic relationship which starts out by *eros*. With *eros*, one sees only each other's strengths/good side; everything is rosy. *Philia* is based on 'give-and-take', where two people enrich each other in a mutual relationship. One partner is still concerned with what she/he can take, but at the same time is also concerned with her/his partner's benefit and therefore gives back in return. It is a higher type of love than *eros*. *Philia* is a mutual, 'give-and take' relationship, while *eros* is a self-based form of love that is more concerned with self-benefit. There is also a third Greek term '*agape*', which occurs rather infrequently in Greek usage [of course, the verb *agapao*= 'to love' was common in classical Greek], and occurred in the Septuagint (LXX) borrowed from the popular Egyptian dialect. It is love above *philia* and *eros*. It is a love that is totally selfless, where a person gives out love to another person even if this act does not benefit her/him in any way. Whether the love given is returned or not, the person continues to love even without any self-benefit. Say for instance, one helps another person, even though that person hates her/him. Or one takes insults from one's partner without hitting back, all the while forgiving and praying for the partner to amend her/his ways.

**Agapeic Love as Love for Peace:** Indian ontology, though the term 'ontology' is symptomatically Western, denotes the ontological speculations of prominent Indian thinkers, ancient or modern, Hindus or non-Hindus, theists or atheists. Even in the ancient writings of the orthodox Hindu philosophers, like the *Sarva-darsana-samgraha* of Madhavacharya which tries to present in one place the views of all (*sarva*) schools of philosophy, we find the views of atheists and materialists like the Carvakas, and unorthodox thinkers like the Bauddhas and the Jainas, along with those of the orthodox Hindu thinkers. Indian ontology is marked, in this respect, by a striking breadth of *agapeic* inclusiveness, other-centered outlook which only testifies its unflinching devotion and love to the other in its search for truth. Though there were many different schools with various views, each school took care to learn the views of all the others and did not come to any conclusion before considering thoroughly what others had to say. This *agapeic* spirit led to the formation of a method of ontological discussion. A thinker had to first state the views of one's opponents before one formulated one's own theory. The statement of the opponent's view came to be known as the prior view (*purvapaksa*); then followed the refutation (*khandana*) of this view; last of all came the statement of the philosopher's own position, which, therefore, was known as the subsequent view (*uttarapaksa*) or the conclusion (*siddhanta*).

This *agapeic* commitment to the knowledge of reality, of giving oneself to the knowledge of rival positions with humility and concern, was more than rewarded by perfection that each philosophical school attained. If we open a comprehensive work on the Vedanta, we will find in it the statement of the views of all other schools – Carvaka, Bauddha, Jaina, Sankhya, Yoga, Mimamsa, Nyaya, and Vaisesika – discussed and weighed with all care. Similarly, any good work on the Bauddha or Jaina philosophy discusses the other views with an *agapeic* openness. If the *agapeic* openness of mind – the willingness to listen to what others say – has been one of the chief causes of the greatness of Indian philosophy in the past, it has also a definite moral for the future, especially for the Indian Christian Philosophizing. If Indian philosophy is once more to revive and continue its onward march, if the Indian Christian philosophizing is to be relevant in today's context, if the Association of Christian Philosophers of India is to be of significance to the thinkers of this country, it can do so only by taking into consideration the new ideas of Being, reality and life which may originate from a vast multitude of peoples – the Blacks, the Whites, the Dravidians, the Aryans, the Semitics, the Mongolians, the Dalits, the Tribals, the scientists and technologists, from all religions of the world and their problems – and only by being *agapeic*. In this way, as we go through the history of Indian ontology, we find India's ontology, despite several diametrically opposed doctrines, to be an outstanding ontology of unity in diversity rooted in an *agapeic* openness. Our fellow-citizens, passing through the inevitable process of struggles and cooperation, have been giving themselves to the promotion of love, harmony, and peace. Moreover, by strengthening harmony – one of the most practical aspects of *Ahimsa* – they have been attracting the attention of the people of the world to the predominant feature of Indian ontology as *agapeic*, and thus, as an ontology of love and peace. Influenced by the Indian concept of peace, not only the Greeks and the Chinese, but many others too reached the Indian soil. They stayed here for months and years, and went back to their respective countries with the eternal message of *agapeic* love and peace.

### Check Your Progress

**Note:** use the space provided for your Answers

1) What is the relation between Being and *agape*?

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2) How do you explain that *agapeic* love is love for peace?

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### 2.4. LET US SUM UP

From our presentation and analysis of the notion of Being we know that Being is self-giving or love (*agape*). If Being is self-giving or *agapeic*, then every being is expected to give itself back to Being and to other fellow-beings in return. When a being gives itself to another in love,

harmony and peace follow. Thus, the path from violence to peace is the path of *agapeic* ontology, the ontology of *agapeic* love characterized by kindness, compassion, gentleness, patience, humility, forgiveness, and reconciliation. The *Agapeic* ontology of love permeates the philosophies of India, and is very much implicit in the life and activities of Mahatma Gandhi and Mother Teresa of Kolkata. Thus, we can rightly conclude that *agapeic* ontology, as an ontology of love, is a fitting and challenging philosophical response to the present day evils of our society.

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## UNIT 3 TRANSCENDENTAL NOTION OF BEING (BEING AND TRANSCENDENTALS)

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### 3.0. OBJECTIVES

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In this Unit we will consider the following transcendentals:

- Oneness
- Truth
- Goodness
- Beauty

As we consider a being in its relation to its constitution, it is *one*. As we consider it in its relation to another, in relation to a knowing intellect, it is *true*. As we consider it in relation to an appetitive power (will), it is *good*. As we consider a being as a combination of truth and goodness, it is *beautiful*.

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### 3.1. INTRODUCTION

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The 'transcendentals' are often called attributes or 'properties' of Being. In the strict sense of the term, 'property' is some attribute which flows necessarily from an essence integrally constituted. As such, it is a positive entity adequately distinct from essence itself. Applying this to the notion of Being, it is evident that there can be no such properties of Being. For a property adequately distinct from Being must be non-being, which cannot be the attribute of anything. Hence, we can describe them as certain *inadequate and intrinsic supreme modes or attributes necessarily present in every being*. *Transcendental means the notion which applies to each and every being*. The transcendentals are not confined to any particular category or classification of Being as they 'transcend' or 'go beyond' all particular beings.

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### 3.2. BEING AS ONE

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*One is that which is undivided in itself and divided from all others*. *Undivided in itself* means that there is no need of comparing a thing with another in order to speak of its oneness. A thing would be 'one' even if no other being were in existence or possible. For instance, God existed from eternity as the only one without the co-existence of any creature. Because a thing is undivided in itself it follows that it is *divided from all others*. Since a thing, according to the Principle of Identity, is what it is, it must primarily be undivided in itself. Then, since the thing, according to the Principle of Contradiction, cannot simultaneously be both itself and not itself, it must also be divided from every other. Hence a 'part' of a thing cannot truly be one as it is not actually divided from the other

part. A part is united with the other part or parts to form the unity of the whole. The whole is one, not the part. One signifies interior indivision and distinction from other beings. The more easily divisible a being is, the less consistency it has in itself. The tendency to divisibility is an ontological weakness. It is a tendency to be no longer itself - to be alienated. In fact, every being tends to conserve its own *unity*, as it tends to conserve its own *being*.

**Kinds of One: Perfectly One and Imperfectly One:** *Perfectly One* is one of simplicity without any inner real distinction. A thing is 'simple' when it is not a 'compound'. A compound is a unit made up of a number of parts. In other words, a compound is one, and undivided in such a manner that it can be resolved into a number of components called its parts. Hence a compound is actually undivided (a unit) but divisible. On the other hand, what is 'simple' is neither divided nor divisible. Simplicity is defined as *the absence of composition in the reality of a being*. This definition is negative in form but positive in content. The reason for this negative form of the definition lies in the fact that what human perceives in this world is affected by composition in some way. Human arrives at the notion of simplicity by denying composition. Since it is some 'reality' which is devoid of composition, the definition is positive in content. The denial of composition in a being implies the affirmation of simplicity in that being. Since a simple being is undivided in itself and indivisible, there are two kinds of simplicity: *absolute and relative*. *Absolute simplicity* excludes all parts of whatever nature, be they real or conceptual. An absolutely simple being is not only actually undivided but also potentially indivisible, since it is devoid of all parts. A compound being is actually undivided (because it is a unit) but potentially divisible since it consists of parts, which make it to be a compound, and into which it can be divided. *Relative simplicity* excludes parts of one kind but has parts of another kind. The relatively simple being is indivisible in one respect but divisible in another. For instance, human has a composite nature consisting of body (matter) and soul (form). Human body is a compound made up of different parts (head, trunk, arms, legs, etc.); whereas human soul is simple because it does not consist of substantially different parts. Thus human possesses relative simplicity in the simple substance of one's spiritual soul; but in many other respects one is a composite being. In no case can human be absolutely simple. For, only God is absolutely simple. *Imperfectly One* is one of composition with a real distinction of the principles of a being, e.g., all corporeal beings. A being of this kind has parts within itself, but these parts are so united that they form a unit, a whole, and a totality. For instance, a human's body is composed of head, trunk, and extremities, and each of these consists of various minor parts. These parts are not separated from each other as they form an organism, and an organism is a whole or unit.

**Convertibility of Being and One:** Being and one are convertible. Being is one in so far as it is. Every being is one or a unit, and everything that is one or a unit is a being. First, *every being is one or a unit*: Every being is either simple or compound in its nature. A being is simple when it does not consist of parts. It is compound when it consists of parts. Whatever is simple is actually and potentially undivided; for it has no parts into which it can be divided. Consequently, a simple being is undivided in itself and thus a unit or one. In the same way, a compound is a compound only insofar and only so long as its parts are united and not actually divided. Consequently, a compound being is undivided in itself and therefore a unit or one. Whether simple or compound, the being of every thing is characterized by indivision. In other words, every being is a unit or one. Secondly, *every unit or one is a being*: To be a unit or one means to have the unity of simplicity or the unity of composition. That presupposes that some thing has this unity of simplicity or unity of composition. Unity of simplicity necessarily implies the concept of a reality consisting of no parts. If the simple

unit were not Being, it would be nothing, and nothing cannot be a unit of any kind whether simple or compound. Unity of composition necessarily involves the concept of a reality consisting of parts, and these parts must be real in the whole. Otherwise, they would be nothing, and 'nothing' cannot be distinguished into parts. From this it follows that Being and one are convertible as they are identical.

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### 3.3. BEING AS TRUE

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What is truth? This question is of central importance in the whole of philosophy, though different philosophers understood it differently. It was first explicitly considered in the didactic poem of Parmenides in which the goddess teaches the way of truth that is distinguished from mere opinion (*doxa*) which is fallible. Plato too contrasts opinion with truth. The myth of the cave describes the accessibility of the human mind to truth. Aristotle further reflected on truth and identified it as judgement. St. Augustine emphasized the necessary nature of truth which human reason discovers by the illumination from God who is the absolute, eternal, and changeless truth. For St. Thomas, truth is the "adequation of the intellect to the thing" (*adequatio intellectus et rei*). Descartes held God to be the guarantee of truth. Kant regarded truth as the "agreement with the laws of the intellect." For Hegel it is the Absolute Idea. Heidegger understands it to be the discourse or revelation of Being, and for the *Logical positivists* it is nothing but verifiability. These concepts from the history of philosophy must have contributed to the development of the most known theories of truth such as the correspondence theory, coherence theory, performative theory, pragmatic theory, and semantic theory. Truth is correspondence insofar as it is a correspondence between the mind and the object. It is coherence insofar as the truth of a proposition is in some way dependent on another. It is performative insofar as it endorses or confirms a proposition. It is pragmatic insofar as it is useful, and it is semantic insofar as it signifies and relates the metalanguage to the object language which in turn is related to the concrete objects. Hence, *truth is correspondence between the mind and the object that implies mutual dependence on and confirmation of propositions which are useful and meaningful*. Besides being conformity or correspondence, truth also implies an original identity of Being and knowing. For Being is what is known truly. Knowing is true by its relation to Being. Hence truth is a relation of knowing to Being. What is this relation? This relation is a relation of *identity or conformity*. In *identity*, knowing is Being. When there is such an identity of Being and knowing, truth consists in the absence of the difference between knowing and the known Being. *Conformity* or correspondence is the conformity or correspondence of the subject's affirmation and negation to what is and what is not. It is the same as the traditional definition of truth: '*truth is a conformity or correspondence between the mind and the object*'.

**Kinds of Truth:** *Logical Truth* is the conformity or correspondence of the intellect to the thing. Here the thing is prior, and the idea posterior. This relationship constitutes the true knowledge of a thing. It is clear that every being has its own peculiar entity and reality, independent of the intellect which thinks of it. Things are what they are even though no mind forms an idea of them. When a mind does form an idea of a thing in order to have some knowledge of it, this knowledge will either correspond ideally with the reality or will not. If it corresponds, it is true, otherwise it is false. The mind has knowledge of a thing when it forms ideas of its reality and unites them in a judgment which can be either affirmative or negative. It is opposed to falsity in judgement. *Moral Truth* is the due conformity or correspondence of expression and judgment (in speech, writing, etc.). When we make a judgment in our mind, regarding a certain fact, and then make a statement in speech which

expresses this judgment in words, we have moral truth, because our speech agrees with our thought; but when our speech disagrees with our judgment, then there is moral falsity (falsehood, lie). Thus, when a person is called upon to 'say the truth', the person should state according to one's understanding of the matter what one judges to be the fact. One may be mistaken as to the real nature of this fact, but so long as one's verbal statement agrees with one's mental judgment, one says the truth, even though the statement does not agree with objective reality. On the other hand, if one's verbal statement is the opposite of one's judgment, one will be telling a lie, even though the falsehood happens to correspond to objective reality. Moral truth may be considered as a form of ontological truth viewed from the standpoint of an agreement between intellect and thing. The mind's knowledge is the standard in ontological truth with the conformity of the thing to it in order to be true. In moral truth too, the mind's knowledge is the standard to which the verbal statement must conform to be true. *Ontological Truth* is the conformity or conformability of things to the intellect. There is always conformity of things to some kind of intellect, at least to the divine intellect insofar as God knows whatever is. In this sense, everything is true and nothing is false. Everything is true insofar as it is. There are two kinds of ontological truth: exemplary ontological truth and identical ontological truth. *Exemplary ontological truth* is that in which the intellect possesses an idea of the being which is taken as the norm, the standard, or the pattern of a being. A being must agree with this idea. Insofar as the object agrees with the type-idea which the intellect has of this object, it is ontologically true. Ontological truth, thus, resides in *objects* as they must conform to the intellect and its idea of the object. For example: An artist desires to paint a picture of the Madonna. He has not seen her, but he has within his imagination an image or type which he intends to reproduce on the canvas. He paints the image. If the picture agrees with the image previously present in his mind, it would be ontologically true; because it is in conformity with the image as conceived before the painting was made. *Identical ontological truth* is the original identity of Being and knowing, of Being and truth. Being is the fundamental unity since both the object and the subject are Being. Hence, Being is an identification of Being and knowing, i.e., Being is self-knowledge, and knowledge is the self-presence of Being. Consequently, Being and truth are also convertible. Truth, as an attribute of Being, is not nothing, but something. Something is Being and Being is something. Hence, Being is truth and truth is Being.

**Ultimate Criterion of Truth:** A criterion of truth is the rule or test by which we distinguish true judgments from the false ones. The final criterion, beyond which there is no appeal, is the ultimate criterion which is the internal, immediate, and objective evidence, or self-evidence. Objective evidence is that characteristic of reality whereby something becomes objectively manifest to the perceiving faculty. Objective evidence makes reality cognitively clear and intelligibly apparent to the intellect, like the luminosity of a shining body to one's eyes. It is the clear self-revelation of reality to the intellect, which is capable of forming a correct judgment by interpreting the reality as it exists in its objective being. Objective evidence is internal when the ground for our judgment is clearly perceived to lie in the reality affirmed by the judgments. Such, for example, would be the judgments, 'It is raining this afternoon', ' $2+2=4$ ', 'a circle is round', etc. Internal objective evidence is immediate when the reality interpreted (judgment) is directly present to the intellect or to the senses. In other words, the ultimate criterion of truth is the self-evidence (internal, immediate, objective evidence) of reality as it manifests itself to the intellect and is recognized by the intellect as such.

**Ultimate Foundation of Truth:** The ultimate foundation of truth, logical and ontological,

consists in the essential conformity of all beings to the Divine Mind. For, logical truth depends on the positive elements of being present in a thing, as it is the conformity of the intellect to the thing. Its foundation is the being of the thing known. Ontological truth, since it is the conformity of the thing to the intellect, has its ultimate foundation in that intellect which is the ultimate foundation of the intrinsic reality of things. Such an intellect is the divine intellect, according to whose type-ideas all things have been created. Hence, the ultimate foundation of all truth is the divine mind.

**Problem of Falsity:** Falsity is the disconformity between thing and intellect. As there are three kinds of truth, so are there also three kinds of falsity: moral, logical, and ontological. Moral falsity is the disconformity of speech with thought or judgment. Logical falsity or error is the disconformity of the intellect to the thing. It is evident in all the mistakes, confused opinions, frequent corrections, changing views, and conflicting systems of thought. In the same way, is there also ontological falsity? There is no absolute ontological falsity. Since every being is ontologically true, there cannot be absolute ontological falsity. In order to be ontologically false in an absolute sense, it would be necessary that a being disagrees with every possible intellect. If it agreed with a single intellect, it would no longer be ontologically false, but ontologically true. Now, every being must always agree with the intellect of God who created it according to the type-idea in His intellect. Hence every being is ontologically true with regard to the ideas of God. However, there is a relative ontological falsity in relation to the human mind. For, we do not always succeed in making the products of our skill and art agree with the plan or type we have in our mind. Hence we can say that there is no ontological falsity in an absolute sense, but only in a relative sense with reference to human, in a limited manner.

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### 3.4. BEING AS GOOD

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As Being is one and true, it is also good. Good is the object of desire. Hence Aristotle gives this definition: "Good is what all desire". When the good is attained, it is experienced as pleasant, enjoyable, and satisfying. But man experiences aversion no less than desire and pain no less than pleasure. Hence, good is always also coupled with its opposite – evil. A being is good inasmuch as it is appetible or desirable. Goodness, then, consists in the appetibility or desirability of a being. Desirability presupposes something in a being which is good and on account of which it is actually desired or desirable. What a being desires or seeks as good in another, depends also on the sort of the individual the being is. For example, a magnet seeks iron, a plant seeks sunlight, a lion seeks food, a man seeks knowledge, etc. Hence, good consists in this, that something is suitable to a being. Now, all beings have a nature or essence as members of a class and as individuals. And each such nature has a very real and definite *purpose or end within itself* which it tends to bring to full completion and perfection. A being is perfect when it has everything that it is supposed to have according to the exigencies of its nature, i.e., when it has attained its full actualization, having as much reality as its nature demands. For example, man has the natural purpose of actualizing himself as a fully developed human person. In this way, each nature implies a specific natural tendency within itself, and all beings will be 'good' for it insofar as they suit its nature. Hence, we can define good as the suitability of a being for that which has or seeks it.

**Kinds of Goodness:** *Physical Goodness is that which satisfies the demand of the nature of a being.* Each being has its own specific and individual nature, and as such it has a very definite end and purpose. For example, a human person is supposed to have a head, a trunk, two arms, two legs, two

eyes, two ears, etc. They are required if a person is to be considered physically good. *Moral Goodness* is that which satisfies the demands of the *moral law*. An action may be ontologically and physically very good but morally evil. For instance, a soldier defends one's country in a just war. In an attack by the enemy, the one kills an enemy soldier with one's rifle. On another occasion an enemy soldier comes toward the one carrying a flag of truce. The soldier kills the enemy soldier too with the rifle. In both cases human beings are killed. The action is ontologically good insofar as it is something. The action is also physically good insofar as it is physically successful. But the morality of the action is different in each action. In the first it is morally good as it is a justifiable homicide in defence of one's country. In the second it is morally bad as it is murder; for the moral law requires respect for the enemy with a flag of truce. *Ontological Goodness* is that which is good in its very being itself. Every being insofar as it is, is good. Every being is good insofar as it possesses a certain amount of reality. For its reality is suitable for the tendency of its own nature to be what it is, to perfect itself, and to retain its perfection. As beings are good in themselves by possessing their own being, they are capable of being desired and striven for, so as to perfect the nature of some other being. Ontological goodness is also called 'transcendental' or 'metaphysical' goodness, as it is also convertible with Being. The opposite of good is evil.

**Problem of Evil:** The problem of evil has always baffled the thinkers of every age, and it continues to be one of the most puzzling ones. Once, David Hume raised the old Epicurean question: "Why is there any misery at all in the world? Not by chance, surely. From some cause then. Is it from the intention of the Deity? But he is perfectly benevolent. Is it contrary to his intention? But he is almighty". "Why thus eternal punishment for the temporary offences of so frail a creature as man? Can any one approve of Alexander's rage, who intended to exterminate a whole nation, because they had seized his favourite horse, Bucephalus?" God is absolute good. Hence it is impossible for him to be the author of evil. He cannot will evil, and no shadow of evil falls on him. 'How can anything be or happen which is opposed to God and his goodness'? Or 'how can a just, omnipotent and an infinitely good God create evil or permit evil'?

Some thinkers have abandoned the omnipotence of God in favour of his goodness (J.S.Mill, William James, J.M.E. McTaggart and E.S. Brightman); others take as mere appearance (F.H. Bradley, B. Bosanquet, Absolutists, and Advaitins in India); for some others, evil is partially good insofar as it is instrumental to some higher good (G.W. Leibniz, R.A. Tsanoff); some others hold that natural and moral evils are inevitable in a morally directed world (F.R. Tennant and Mark Pontifex).

**Kinds of Evil:** There are two main kinds of evil: physical and moral. *Physical evil* is the privation of a perfection pertaining to the physical order. It is the privation of a physical good. Physical evil is an established fact in the world. Many beings lack some reality which they ought to have. Sickness and injuries deprive living beings of that physical integrity which they require. Beings are physically evil only insofar as some entity is missing in them. Whatever entity they possess is in itself good. For instance, a cancerous lung is a physical evil only because that portion of the body is infected, but the remaining parts are good. The rest of the body is not a physical evil. This privation is not an entity in itself, but something relative to an individual's needs. *Moral evil* is the privation of a perfection pertaining to moral order. It is also evident that moral evil is present among humans. Sin is an undeniable fact. Crime is an everyday occurrence. However, it would be false to consider moral evil as a positively existing entity. In fact, the sinful action as an action is ontologically good,

insofar as it is something. The action is also physically good if the action is performed in a manner conducive to the natural purpose of the act. But it is morally evil since this ontologically and physically good act is not in accordance with the requirements of the moral law. There is no morally evil entity here, but rather the defect or privation of an entity, namely, the defect of the proper relation between the act and demands of the law. Moral evil, therefore, does not consist in a positive entity or reality but in a privation that is relative.

**Nature of Evil: Evil is Relative:** Evil is the privation of perfection (good) which is due to a subject. Privation is to be distinguished from negation which is mere absence of perfection, which is not due to a subject. Negation indirectly asserts the existence of something positive. For example, when we say that this tree is not green, we indirectly imply that it has some colour other than green. It might be brown or yellow by virtue of which the term 'green' cannot be applied to it. In contrast, privation means the present absence of the quality of a thing, e.g., this man is blind. Of course, this man at the present time cannot see, but in future the man can be endowed with vision. In other words, privation of a perfection can be replaced by a positive quality. Now, if evil is the privation of perfection or good, then it means that in due course it will be replaced by the good. Hence evil is not absolute but relative.

*Evil is Mystery:* Gabriel Marcel makes a distinction between problem and mystery. A problem is a difficulty set before us quite detached from us and to which we respond with an increase in knowledge or technical skill. A problem may be solved. A mystery, in contrast, is that in which we participate and with which we are vitally involved. We cannot separate ourselves from a mystery as we can a problem, and no amount of increased knowledge or skill will dispel it. Mysteries are intrinsic to human existence and include life itself. In this way, evil is a mystery impenetrable by rational analysis. Even if we could arrive at a perfect theodicy, which accounts for the presence of evil in the world, we would still have to face evil. A perfect theodicy would not make the experience of evil less intense.

To sum up: We can explain in some detail *the fact* of evil. However, *the final cause* of evil is incomprehensible (Why is there evil?). A solution to the problem can be sought in those paradigms of the great personalities like Buddha and Jesus Christ who *accepted* evil and suffering in their own lives. Their acceptance had two consequences: they had to suffer evil, even unto death; death on a cross (in the case of Jesus). Secondly, it was their mission to save others from the same evil and suffering. It can be my own motto too: *accept evil and suffering in my life, but I will commit myself to liberate others from it.*

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### 3.5. BEING AS BEAUTIFUL

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According to Aquinas, "Beauty is that which pleases the mind when seen or apprehended." *It is the splendour of order by which a being can delight a cognitive faculty.* It is a transcendental which is the result of the unity of the true and the good. Its essence consists in a combination of truth and goodness. The beautiful is the good insofar as it satisfies our striving. It is the true insofar as it satisfies our desire for knowledge. The beautiful is the true insofar as it coincides with the good. It is the good insofar as it coincides with the true. Hence, beauty is the unity of truth and goodness. Now both truth and beauty express a relationship of conformity with the intellect. In the same way, both goodness and beauty also express suitability for the appetite. Yet, beauty is distinct from both truth and goodness. As regards truth, beauty adds an element of pleasure to the conformity; whereas truth

as such does not imply that pleasure is derived from it. For, sometimes truth can be very unpleasant. Regarding goodness, beauty expresses suitability for the appetite of the intellect, which comes to rest in its possession by contemplation; whereas goodness expresses suitability for appetite in general.

**Characteristics of Beauty:** *Beauty pleases:* Whatever is beautiful – whether it be a poem, a painting, a melody, a piece of sculpture, or an architectural structure – pleases, gratifies, and gives enjoyment. *Beauty gives disinterested pleasure:* The pleasure derived from beauty is called ‘aesthetic pleasure’. One experiences aesthetic pleasure when one derives pleasure from beholding it. If one owns a painting and takes pleasure in it because one knows one can sell it at an advantage, one does not have aesthetic pleasure. But if one is satisfied to contemplate and thus enjoy it, then one is enthralled with its beauty. There is beauty in the seas, in the stars, in the sunrise, in the waterfalls, and in the mountains. But there is no selfish enjoyment in these things. Things may taste and smell and feel good; but such pleasure is not the delight encountered in the enjoyment of the beautiful. Hence the primary object of beauty is not the pleasure derived from profit, consumption, possession, or even use, but the pleasure aroused through the contemplation of the beautiful. The eye, the ear, and the imagination are the faculties properly engaged in the production of aesthetic delight. They are mainly perceptive in character. *Beauty gives disinterested intellectual pleasure:* The Intellect is necessary for the enjoyment of beauty. Human is the only animal that appreciates beauty. Brutes do not contemplate and enjoy the beauty of the flowers, the hills, the woods, the sunsets, etc. They are concerned with beautiful objects only insofar as they are of assistance to them in their struggle for existence. For, order, proportion, unity, appropriateness, and the agreement between the ideal and the real are the fundamental elements of beauty judged only by a rational being. Hence beauty must have an intelligible content.

*Beauty gives a disinterested intellectual- sensuous pleasure:* The intellect perceives beauty through the mediation of the senses. The intelligible must be perceived in a sensibly pleasing appearance in order to be beautiful. Hence the artists pleasantly impress the senses with images and plastic forms. Ideas alone, without the beauty of form, are found in science, mathematics, and philosophy. But no one considers them as the proper medium of beauty. We go to the artist for beauty and enjoyment. The ideas are to be clothed in a sensibly pleasing form before we can consider them to be beautiful. The scientist, the mathematician, and the philosopher can enlighten others with their insights and ideas, but they may not give them aesthetic delight. The artist may express the same ideas less exactly but clothing them in impressive forms or figures. The way of art is twofold: the idea may be first and then the form, or the form may be first and then the idea: true idealism and sound realism, the idealized real and the realized ideal. Beauty is the happy combination and fusion of idea and form, corresponding to the composite nature of human. Consequently there must be equilibrium between the intellectual and sensible elements. An overcharge of idea or a lack of form would mean a lack of beauty, abstractness, or too much intellectuality. In the same way, an overcharge of form or lack of idea would mean shallowness or extravagance. *Beauty gives a disinterested intellectual-sensuous pleasure due to the radiant perfection of a thing:* Beauty is not merely subjective in character as it has its foundation in the things themselves. We experience the delight of beauty in consequence of some objective factors present in the objects. It is the perfection of a thing manifested in a pleasing, happy manner. It is resplendent, radiant perfection. For just as light, splendour, radiance, and colour produce a pleasing impression on the eye, so also does beauty. Beauty pleases, as perfection and goodness are its fundamental properties.

**Objective Factors of Beauty:** Some of these factors are more general and others are particular. The general factors can be identified with the transcendental properties of Being such as unity, truth, and goodness. *Unity:* Beauty and unity are closely united. Unity is a perfection which aids the intellect in grasping the underlying meaning of things. *Truth:* There is also an intimate relation between beauty and truth. For beauty is also apprehended and understood like truth in everything beautiful. *Goodness:* There is also a close relation between beauty and goodness. Beauty satisfies, pleases, and delights. These characteristics of beauty have a natural reference to an appetency, and thus a delectable good. The element of goodness, in this way, is present in the beautiful.

Besides these general factors, there are also the following particular factors of beauty: integrity, proportion, and clarity. *Integrity:* The first one is integrity or completeness. We enjoy beauty by contemplating on something as a whole. Any noticeable defect in a thing makes an unpleasant impression on the beholder. The mind is dissatisfied with this incomplete condition and makes an effort to restore the missing part in its imagination. We observe this when contemplating a dilapidated building, a damaged painting, a crippled body, an awkward dance, a melody out of tune, the badly memorized lines of a drama, etc.

*Proportion:* Proportion or balance is the index of a mind which works in an orderly fashion. The mind experiences aesthetic pleasure in detecting an orderly arrangement in what at first appears to be chaotic confusion. A mere jumble does not please. A heap of stones is not an aesthetic object. But if they are arranged in the orderly construction of a building, provided there be symmetry and balance in the arrangement, they form an object of beauty. In the same way, *unity without variety is not beautiful*; for in that case the energy of the perceptive faculty will be exercised in an unbroken, unrelieved strain. That would produce tension and fatigue, and not pleasure. *Variety without unity is also not beautiful*. For, then the mind's energy would be scattered and spent without being able to come to rest. That would disturb and hinder the normal, healthy, full, and vigorous activity of the faculties. Unity in variety, or one in many, acts like a focus bringing harmony into the manifold elements and making of them a simplified whole. This one in many facilitates the mind's activity, gives it a feeling of restful completeness, and thus produces in it the joy and delight so characteristic of beauty.

**Clarity:** Clarity or splendour is the third requirement. To be beautiful means to have a certain amount of compelling force. It must be impressive. It must possess a vivid presentation. It must attract and charm through its very appearance. That is why all the arts use contrast as an effective technique to set the splendour of beauty in a sharper light. The elements of aesthetic value then fairly leap into the central position of attention and thereby give the mind the proper perspective which enables it to survey the parts and the whole in a comprehensive glance. The opposite of beauty is ugliness.

**Problem of Ugliness:** Every being is beautiful insofar as it is. It means that every being has a form which is appropriate to it. Now anything with an appropriate form pleases when seen. Hence every being is beautiful. Now the problem is: What about all those things which we judge to be ugly? The answer is that, although everything is beautiful according to its own form, the human intellect is not always capable of perceiving this beauty. This incapacity may be accounted for certain subjective and objective reasons. *The subjective* reasons, such as the fashion of time or place, may pre-

establish more or less arbitrary norms of beauty and refuse to consider objects from the objects' own worth. Everything that does not conform to our pre-conceived ideas of beauty is judged to be ugly. *Objective reasons* mainly flow from the nature of human knowledge. Appreciation of beauty requires contemplation of an object. If anything prevents an objective contemplation, human cannot see the beauty of the objects of perception. The following are some of the reasons that may prevent our intellect from an authentic contemplation of the objects: a) If an object has a certain defect, human's attention is more or less irresistibly drawn towards this defect. As a result, the intellect cannot come to rest in the contemplation of the perfections that remain in the object. The more striking the defect is, the more irresistibly the intellect is drawn to it. For instance, if a beautiful face suffers the loss of its nose, the face is considered to be ugly because we are prevented from paying attention to the beauty which remains in the undamaged part of the face; b) Some beings remind us so much of others that we can consider them only as caricatures of the latter. For instance, the face of a monkey is generally thought to be ugly, because it resembles human so much that upon seeing the face of a monkey we unconsciously compare its face to that of human and conclude that the monkey is ugly; c) Human is so accustomed to many objects that their beauty no longer strikes the one. Hence such objects generally do not succeed in holding one's attention long enough to allow contemplation of their beauty. Yet when these objects are presented to human in a suitable setting so as to show forth their form in splendour, as is often done in advertisements, their beauty is sufficient to arrest human's attention.

### Check Your Progress

**Note:** use the space provided for your Answers

1) What is truth? What are the main kinds of truth?

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2) What is goodness? Do you agree with the statement that ontologically 'everything is good'?

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### 3.6. LET US SUM UP

*Transcendental means the notion which applies to each and every being.* The transcendentals are not confined to any particular category of Being as they 'transcend' or 'go beyond' all particular beings. Thus, the 'transcendentals' are the invariant qualities of Being. In relation to Being, the concept 'transcendental' could be interpreted in a twofold manner – Being as a transcendental and Being as possessing transcendentals. Being is a transcendental insofar as Being underlies, penetrates, transforms, and unifies all things, as the most underlying principle of all things. Being also possesses the transcendentals such as oneness, truth, goodness, and beauty. Where there is Being, these transcendentals are also invariably present. Being is all-pervading; hence, the

transcendentals are also all-pervading. In this sense, every being rooted in Being is also one, true, good, and beautiful.

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**UNIT 4      ABSOLUTE NOTION OF BEING (BEING AND ABSOLUTE)**


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- 4.0. Objectives
- 4.1. Introduction
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- 4.3. The Notion of Absolute
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- 4.7. Responding to Be-ing
- 4.8. Some Quotes
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**4.0. OBJECTIVES**


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- To conclude the course of metaphysics with a deeper understanding of Being.
- To identify the notion of Absolute with that of God cautiously.
- To enable us to appreciate the profound meaning of Be-ing, who is the source of everything, is finally the challenge to respond to it.
- To open the students to the limits of metaphysics where the mystical begins.

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**4.1 INTRODUCTION**


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In this concluding unit, attempt is made first to understand the dynamic meaning of Being. Then we try to bring in the notion of the Absolute and relate it to God. We take care to characterise this Absolute (or God) as unlimited and at the same time reaching out to the humans. The proper response of the humans then is to be open to the triad of faith-love-hope or *sat-cit-ananda* that is the fullness of existence.

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**4.2. STARTING WITH HEIDEGGER**


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In this unit we come to grips with the main work of metaphysics, according to Heidegger: the enquiry into the Being (act of existence) of beings (things that be). What occupies us mostly in this chapter, then, is to spell out and make explicit some of its implications.

We note, first, first of all, that the critical enquiry into beings as well as into Being is discovered to be intertwined and inseparable. As Heidegger himself admits, we have no direct access to Being: we can only attain it in and through things which we run into in our daily round, among which our own selves take the primacy. For, in making a critical enquiry into the act of existence

as it is manifested in our own selves, we already have an “insider’s view”, an intuition of what it is and involves. Our starting-point, the direct judgement, is a critical reflection on an undeniable activity of ours: hence, it lands us already in the existential order (i.e. Be-ing). Nor have we, like Descartes, imagined that we could elicit, as our most basic action, some inward-looking movement, divorced from all contact with the outside world. Indeed, there is no such thing: we can only know and affirm ourselves by knowing and affirming the external world in which we are. And such contact is grounded on their sensitive-rational act of direct judgement. Note what is relevant for us is the affirmation that something exists: we may be mistaken in what concerns its essence (what it is), but that something does exist is undeniable. In other words, it is and has always been Being that we have been focusing on throughout the process, whether it be my existence, the existence of direct judgement, or the existence of the affirmed object! Furthermore, the relentless analysis has shown that the ultimate goal of the existential act of direct judgement is yet another existence: pure, unlimited existence. Indeed, the only reason why “the things of this world” interest our intellectual activity at all is because they are partial realisations of that ultimate and unlimited existence which is responsible for our intellectual drive. We ended the quest by realising that we have to grant that this “unlimited existence” is not, cannot be, a mere mental fabrication (a concept) but something eminently real. Indeed, it is so real that all other realities derive their existence and actuality from it (Desbruslais 1977).

We shall now spell out some of the conclusions that can be derived from all this, after briefly understanding the notion of Absolute.

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#### 4.3. THE NOTION OF ABSOLUTE

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The Absolute is the concept of an unconditional reality which transcends limited, conditional, everyday existence. It is sometimes used as an alternate term for "God" or "the Divine" (especially, but by no means exclusively) by those who feel that the term "God" lends itself too easily to anthropomorphic presumptions. The concept of The Absolute may or may not (depending on one's specific doctrine) possess discrete will, intelligence, awareness, or even a personal nature. It is sometimes conceived of as the source through which all being emanates. It contrasts with finite things, considered individually, and known collectively as the relative. As such, the word "Absolute" signifies a negative concept: non-relative, non-comparative, or without relation to anything else. This is reflected in its Latin origin *absolutus* which means "loosened from" or "unattached." (Wikipedia)

This term is employed in modern philosophy with various meanings, but applied generally speaking to the Supreme Being. It signifies (1) that which is complete and perfect; (2) that which exists by its own nature and is consequently independent of everything else; (3) that which is related to no other being; (4) the sum of all being, actual and potential (Hegel, Pace 1907).

In the first and the second of these significations, the Absolute is a name for God which Christian philosophy may readily accept. Though the term was not current in the Middle Ages, equivalent expressions were used by the Scholastic writers in speaking, e.g. of God as Pure Actuality (*Actus Purus*), as uncaused Being, or as containing pre-eminently every perfection. St. Thomas, in particular, emphasizes the absoluteness of God by showing that He cannot be classed under any genus or species, and that His essence is identical with His existence. Aquinas anticipates the difficulties which arise from the use of the term Absolute, in the sense of unrelated being. It was

urged that the Absolute could not consistently be thought of or spoken of as First Cause, for the reason that causation implies relation, and the Absolute is outside of all relation; it cannot, therefore, be conceived as producing effects. St. Thomas, however, offered a solution. He holds that God and created things are related, but that the relation is real only in the effects. It implies no conditioning or modification of the Divine Being; it is in its application to God, merely conceptual. The fashion of our thought obliges us to conceive God as one term of a relation, but not to infer that the relation affects Him as it affects the created thing which is the other term. This distinction, moreover, is based on experience. The process of knowledge involves a relation between the known object and the knowing subject, but the character of the relation is not the same in both terms. In the mind it is real because perception and thought imply the exercise of mental faculties, and consequently a modification of the mind itself. No such modification, however, reaches the object; this is the same whether we perceive it or not (Pace 1907).

Now it is just here that a more serious difficulty arises. It is claimed that the Absolute can neither be known nor conceived. "To think is to condition"; and as the Absolute is by its very nature unconditioned, no effort of thought can reach it. To say that God is the Absolute is equivalent to not saying that He is unknowable. The Absolute (or God), though incomprehensible, is nevertheless knowable according to the manner and capacity of our intelligence. The Agnostic contends that God, precisely because He is the Absolute, is beyond the range of any knowledge whatever on our part. Agnosticism, in other words, insists that we must believe in the existence of an absolute and infinite Being, and at the same time warns us that we can have no idea of that Being. Our belief must express itself in terms that are meaningless (Pace 1907). To avoid this conclusion one may reject altogether a term out of which all significance has evaporated; or (and this seems a wiser course) one may retrace the genesis of the term and hold fast to the items of knowledge, however imperfect and however in need of criticism, which that genesis involves. In proving the existence of God as First Cause or as Absolute Being, we take facts that are knowable and known as our starting-point. So far as, in reasoning upon these facts, we are led beyond them to the concept of an Absolute, some remnant of the knowableness which facts present must be found in that which is the ultimate explanation of the facts. If, "every one of the arguments by which the relativity of our knowledge is demonstrated distinctly postulates the positive existence of something beyond the relative", it follows that by getting clearly before our thought the meaning of those arguments and their force for distinctly postulating we must obtain some knowledge of the Being whose existence is thus established. Spencer, indeed, does not realize the full import of the words "positive existence", "ultimate reality", and "incomprehensible power", which he uses so freely. Otherwise he could not consistently declare that the Being to which these various predicates apply is unknowable. It is in fact remarkable that so much knowledge of the Absolute is displayed in the attempt to prove that the Absolute cannot be known. Careful analysis of a concept like that of First Cause certainly shows that it contains a wealth of meaning which forbids its identification with the Unknowable, even supposing that the positive existence of the Unknowable could be logically demonstrated. Such an analysis is furnished by St. Thomas and by other representatives of Christian philosophy. The method formulated by St. Thomas, and adopted by his successors, keeps steadily in view the requirements of critical thinking, and especially the danger of applying the forms of our human knowledge, without due refinement, to the Divine Being. The warning against our anthropomorphic tendency was clearly given before the Absolute had taken its actual place in philosophic speculation, or had yielded that place to the Unknowable. While this warning is always needful, especially in the interest of religion, nothing can be gained by the attempt to

form a concept of God which offers a mere negation to thought and to worship (Pace 1907). The Absolute, which philosophers seek to understand, may not be identified as God, at least initially. But at the end of our philosophical search or metaphysical journey, believer may equate both of them with proper care and caution.

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#### 4.4. GOD, THE UNLIMITED EXISTENCE

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Coming back to our understanding of Being as proposed by Heidegger, we can claim that such a Being reveals itself to us (*Dasein*). All things that be, participate ontologically – that is, are totally and always dependent – on the unlimited existence. This, as we have seen, is nothing but creation seen from the point of view of the creative cause. Only God can create, for only uncreated, infinite, unlimited existence is God. In other words, God is existence, existence pure and simple, existence unrestrained by any composition or limitation (which comes to the same thing). In other words, the analysis of intellectual dynamism had revealed to us that the Being of beings is God! This doesn't mean that my existence is God: my existence is a finite, limited existence very specially participating in God: it is partially and secondarily what God is primarily and fully. Nor is the identification of God with unlimited existence anything startlingly new and unheard of. Thomas Aquinas did the same thing (by way of a questionable hermeneutics of Exodus 3:14). Thus, in *Summa Theologica* (ST Is, 13, 11), where he is discussing what the most appropriate name for God is, he concludes that “He who is” would be the best choice, even better than “The Good”, for it does not signify any particular form, but rather existence itself. Since the existence of God is His essence and since this is true of nothing else. ..., it is clear that this name is especially appropriate to God, for the meaning of a name is the form of the thing named (Desbruslais 1977).

Hence the most proper name of God is one which designates his basic dynamism. Just for the record, when God tells Moses, in response to the latter's demand to know God's name, “Jahweh”, the meaning was not something like “I am the one whose very essence is to be”, or “I am pure existence, the one that must be!” Situating Moses' question in the context of Jewish culture, it was more than likely that he was desirous of knowing God's name so as to be able – hopefully – to manipulate Him: after all, in Jewish culture, to know the name of someone/something meant to have some power over that being! So, as Jewish scholars tell us, God's answer most likely meant something like, “I am who I am: it's none of your business!” A few others suggest that it might also imply, “I am the one who is true to his promises.” Whatever be the merit of Aquinas' metaphysical comment in this connection, it can hardly be derived from an exegesis of the text.

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#### 4.5. THE BE-ING OF BEINGS IS PERSONAL

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As we have seen, there is no real composition in Be-ing, in God. Above all, there is no materiality, the basic principle of indetermination which resists presence of self, as Rahner (1994) so rightly deduces. Inasmuch as there is nothing in Be-ing to resist presence to self, Being is perfect self-transparency, perfect presence to self, and perfect consciousness. But as we have seen, an intellectual suppositum is a person. Now the most perfect form of presence to self, implies the most perfect form of knowing (or intellectuality, if you prefer). Thus God is personal. This, too, is nothing very revolutionary. Aristotle, approaching the issue from another path, concluded

that God by his very nature is *noesis noesos* (thought thinking of itself), again perfect self awareness (Desbruslais 1977).

However it is not at all difficult to show that Be-ing is also (and very specially), LOVE – which is the basis of the definition of person that I have championed, along with such giants like St. Albert the Great. For, we have noted that all beings participate ontologically in Be-ing which, thereby, is their creator. As (unlimited) Be-ing, God has no need of anything. Hence God, in creating, has nothing to gain: it is an act of pure giving, in which nothing is sought in return. This is nothing but another name for love (See The Bible I John 4:8) . The definition of God as Love is more revolutionary than we realise. Pascal culminated against “the God of philosophers” (like Aristotle) who is seen as a cold Absolute, more or less wrapped up in himself (*noesis noeseos*). John’s definition sees God as the very antithesis of a detached Absolute. Love is by its very nature relational. This necessary relational nature of God is seen in His/Her inner life whereby He/She is, in effect, a community (Trinity) and not an isolated monad. This relationally spills over in the free act of creation which binds all creatures to Him/Her inextricably. He/She creates but does so out of no lack or need – purely out of the unconditional act of sharing love!

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#### 4.6. BE-ING IS BLISS

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Be-ing is perfect self awareness and is devoid of any kind of limit whatsoever. Hence Be-ing is perfectly aware of its fullness, of the fact that there is nothing lacking. This, in turn, is but another word for BLISS, UNALLOYED JOY. Thus we can say, in agreement with the basic insight of Indian thought, that our enquiry into the Be-ing of beings (which gives us an insight into the Unlimited Be-ing in which they participate) is – as the ancient Indian sages had intuited – *sat-cit-ananda* (Being-consciousness-joy). Indeed, approaching reality from the more immanent perspective in keeping with our Indian tradition, one could make a case for these as the three basic transcendentals, corresponding to the one-true-good that swims into our ken when beings are viewed from the complementary Western, whereby we go out of ourselves in a cognitive act of exteriorisation. Of course the “Indian transcendentals” would also be applied analogically to beings, inasmuch as they participate or share in it at various degrees – in what the ultimate Be-ing is fully (Desbruslais 1977).

It is no slight encouragement to us when we discover that traditional Eastern and Western metaphysics show little difference in their final conclusions ... just as there is scarce any major discrepancy to be found in the sharings of the great mystics of all religions. While speaking of Rudolf Otto we can show that there is practical unanimity, that the core of the encounter with the *ganz Andere* (the wholly other) is the experience of the *mysterium fascinans*: one realises that what one is faced with is something wholly other than anything one has experienced in this world (hence “mystery” is the best name for it); one’s first reaction is awe and fear – one trembles as one suddenly becomes more and more aware of the all holiness of this other and of one’s pervasive unworthiness: indeed, one’s first reaction invariably is headlong flight; then comes a culminating, overwhelming conviction that the Other is gracious, grace-radiating and seems to be saying, “Come closer. Don’t be afraid.” Finally, the moment of loving mystical oneness (climaxing in adoration, prayer or worship) gives way to a prophetic sending forth to set others free. The grand finale of the meeting with God (or Be-ing) is the sense of commission, of being sent forth to do the work of justice. Of course, I have over-simplified and hurried things along a bit. It doesn’t always unravel itself in such a clear, chronological, and pointed direction,

but it can be discerned to be “at work” in that way nevertheless. Mystics and metaphysicians seem to meet each other at this climactic moment of union.

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#### 4.7. RESPONDING TO BE-ING

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A concluding word about the reactions and responses that the encounter with Be-ing elicits from us may be useful. There seems to be, once again, a threefold dimension, interrelated and intertwined here too.

There is first (logically, not necessarily chronologically) a moment of enlightened encounter. As one personally meets Be-ing, one is gradually purified of wrong notions and attitudes as regards the Supreme Reality. This calls for a lot of openness and honesty as it often entails letting go of some of our favourite prejudices and brain-washed rigidities. Then – since the will follows the intellect – comes the moment of love. Corrected, purified knowledge of Be-ing, derived from an inter-personal encounter, calls forth from one a great surge of love – love for the gracious goodness of the Other. And as one is more and more caught up in the outgoing, unconditional love of Be-ing, one cannot but find oneself seized and carried along that same outgoing movement of sharing, of unconditional love to other beings. In other words, there comes the third and final movement of action, benevolent and beneficent action for those in need of it – action for justice (Desbruslais 1977).

And, once again, we find we join hands with the great mystics and sages of India. For what are these three moments but the traditional *margas* or paths to the Absolute: *jnana* (knowledge), *bhakti* (devotion or love) and *karma* (action or service). What may need to be emphasised here, however, is that there is to be no water-tight compartmentalising of the three, much less an endless debate as to which of the three, in isolation, is “the most excellent way”. For knowledge cannot be liberative unless it be informed by love (else it could descend into proud Gnosticism) and love cannot be redemptive without being enlightened by knowledge (otherwise we would be led to all manner of fanaticism) and neither of the two are fully authentic until they spell themselves out in justice-seeking actions for all beings.

Finally we can find yet another assimilative echo of all these in the other well-known triad, faith-hope-love. Nor can these, in the last analysis, be separated from each other. Faith cannot be really salvific, if it is merely “belief that”. It has to be “belief in” and we can only believe in one whom we love. Hope is nothing but loving, trust-filled action for justice, an action that never wanes in spite of difficulties and apparent failures because it is filled with hope that is grounded in faith and love. I leave it to the student to discover for herself/himself how faith-hope-love, *jnana-bhakti-karma*, *mysterium-tremendum-fascinans*, *sat-cit-ānanda*, one-true-good, and Father-Son-Spirit are intimately bonded together. What God had joined together, let us not (by unwarranted metaphysical speculation) seek to put asunder. Understood thus we can make sense of the paradoxical statement: “My end is my beginning!” (Mary, Queen of Scots).

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#### 4.8. SOME QUOTES

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“To be or not to be – that is the question!” (Shakespeare, Hamlet)

“I am Who I am ...” (Exodus 3 : 14)

“Let us be moral. Let us contemplate existence.” (Mr. Pecksniff in Charles Dickens' Martin Chuzzlewit)

“We will now discuss in a little more detail the struggle for existence.....” (Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species*)

“Man’s love is of man’s life a thing apart, ’Tis a woman’s whole existence.” (Byron, *Don Juan*)

“Instead of starting with the heavens and firmament, mountains and oceans and drifting clouds, with things, and peeling all these away in a vain search for something, somehow more precious at their center, do the opposite. Instead of withdrawing inward, toward some imagined bit, some atom (which will surely slip away the moment you think you have it) – instead of this, try to proceed outward, and see heaven and earth, mountains and oceans and drifting clouds, all you have been taught to regard as things, as others, as foreign and distant, see all these as they are. You will be momentarily astonished to find yourself and nature in one and the same; and far from dreading nothingness, which now seems like sickness, and hardly worthy of anyone, which is how you began all this, your state of mind will be just the opposite. You will rejoice in being, in nature, in your self, which will now have ceased to be any mystery, and you will finally understand without seeking further what Spinoza meant by the intellectual love of God (Taylor, *Metaphysics*, 126)

#### 4.9. LET US SUM UP

The absolute may be regarded as the Being, the beginning, and end of our metaphysical search. With care and caution, towards the end of our search, we can identify that Being or Absolute with God, for theists. Such a God or absolute can be seen as the unlimited existence, that is unalloyed bliss and perfect consciousness (*sat-cit-ananda*). We can respond to such a gift of existence personally or individually only through love.

#### 4.10. KEY WORDS

**Gnosticism:** The doctrines of certain pre-Christian pagan, Jewish, and early Christian sects that valued the revealed knowledge of God and of the origin and end of the human race as a means to attain redemption for the spiritual element in humans and that distinguished the Demiurge from the unknowable Divine Being.

**Mysterium-tremendum-fascinans:** Numinous (from the Classical Latin numen) is an English adjective describing the power or presence of a divinity. The word was popularised in the early twentieth century by the German theologian Rudolf Otto in his influential book *Das Heilige* (1917; or *The Idea of the Holy*, 1923). According to Otto the numinous experience has two aspects: *mysterium tremendum*, which is the tendency to invoke fear and trembling; and *mysterium fascinans*, the tendency to attract, fascinate and compel. The numinous experience also has a personal quality to it, in that the person feels to be in communion with a Holy other. The numinous experience can lead in different cases to belief in deities, the supernatural, the sacred, the holy, and the transcendent.

**Ganz Andere:** With regards to our understanding of the absolute (or God), *ganz Andere* implies that it is “totally other” or completely different.

**Be-ing:** Here Being is used with a hyphen to stress the dynamic or verbal aspect of Being.

**Noesis -noeseos:** Following Aristotle scholastic philosophers think of an Absolute Being Being Who is pure actuality, and Whose life is self-contemplative thought (*noesis noeseos*) or Thought thinking about Itself.

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