
UNIT 3 FOUNDATIONS OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP

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3.0 OBJECTIVES

- To explore the philosophical foundations of interpersonal relationship.
- To appreciate the uniqueness of person to person relationship.
- To formulate some of the philosophical foundations for healthy interpersonal relationship.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Interpersonal relationship is something we experience daily. That is what keeps us moving forward. That is what makes us humans. In this unit we ask ourselves: What is the philosophical basis for interpersonal relationship? How is person to person relationship different from person to things? To what extent can we enhance respectful human relationship so that we build a society that is more egalitarian, free and healthy? As response to these questions we take up three philosophers: Martin Buber, Gabriel Marcel and Immanuel Kant.

3.2 MARTIN BUBER'S *I AND THOU*

Martin Buber's *I and Thou* (*Ich und Du*) presents a philosophy of personal dialogue, in that it describes how interpersonal relationship can define the nature of reality. Buber's major theme is that human existence may be defined by the way in which we engage in dialogue with each other, with the world, and with God. According to Buber, human beings may adopt two attitudes toward the world: 'I-Thou' or *I-It*. 'I-Thou' is a relation of subject-to-subject, while 'I-It' is a relation of subject-to-object. In the 'I-Thou' relationship, human beings are

aware of each other as having a unity of being. In the 'I-Thou' relationship, human beings do not perceive each other as consisting of specific, isolated qualities, but engage in a dialogue involving each other's whole being. In the 'I-It' relationship, on the other hand, human beings perceive each other as consisting of specific, isolated qualities, and view themselves as part of a world which consists of things. 'I-Thou' is a relationship of mutuality and reciprocity, while 'I-It' is a relationship of separateness and detachment.

Buber explains that human beings may try to convert the subject-to-subject relation to a subject-to-object relation, or vice versa. However, the being of a subject is a unity which cannot be analyzed as an object. When a subject is analyzed as an object, the subject is no longer a subject, but becomes an object. When a subject is analyzed as an object, the subject is no longer a *Thou*, but becomes an *It*. The being which is analyzed as an object is the *It* in an 'I-It' relation (Iweadighi 1992). The subject-to-subject relation affirms each subject as having a unity of being. When a subject chooses, or is chosen by, the 'I-Thou' relation, this act involves the subject's whole being. Thus, the 'I-Thou' relation is an act of choosing, or being chosen, to become the subject of a subject-to-subject relation. The subject becomes a subject through the 'I-Thou' relation, and the act of choosing this relation affirms the subject's whole being (Buber 1958).

Buber says that the 'I-Thou' relation is a direct interpersonal relation which is not mediated by any intervening system of ideas. No objects of thought intervene between *I* and *Thou*.¹ 'I-Thou' is a direct relation of subject-to-subject, which is not mediated by any other relation. Thus, 'I-Thou' is not a means to some object or goal, but is an ultimate relation involving the whole being of each subject. Love, as a relation between *I* and *Thou*, is a subject-to-subject relation. Buber claims that love is not a relation of subject-to-object. In the 'I-Thou' relation, subjects do not perceive each other as objects, but perceive each other's unity of being. Love is an 'I-Thou' relation in which subjects share this unity of being. Love is also a relation in which *I* and *Thou* share a sense of caring, respect, commitment, and responsibility (Buber 1958).

Buber argues that, although the 'I-Thou' relation is an ideal relation, the 'I-It' relation is an inescapable relation by which the world is viewed as consisting of knowable objects or things. The 'I-It' relation is the means by which the world is analyzed and described. However, the 'I-It' relation may become an 'I-Thou' relation, and in the 'I-Thou' relation we can interact with the world in its whole being. In the 'I-Thou' relation, the *I* is unified with the *Thou*, but in the 'I-It' relation, the *I* is detached or separated from the *It*. In the 'I-Thou' relation, the being of the *I* belongs both to *I* and to *Thou*. In the 'I-It' relation, the being of the *I* belongs to *I*, but not to *It* (Iweadighi 1992).

'I-Thou' is a relation in which *I* and *Thou* have a shared reality. Buber contends that the *I* which has no *Thou* has a reality which is less complete than that of the *I* in the *I-and-Thou*. The more that *I-and-Thou* share their reality, the more complete is their reality. According to Buber, God is the eternal *Thou*. God is the *Thou* who sustains the 'I-Thou' relation eternally. In the 'I-Thou' relation between the individual and God, there is a unity of being in which the individual can always find God. In the 'I-Thou' relation, there is no barrier of other relations which separate the individual from God, and thus the individual can speak directly to God (Scott 2010).

The eternal *Thou* is not an object of experience, and is not an object of thought. The eternal *Thou* is not something which can be investigated or examined. The eternal *Thou* is not a knowable object. However, the eternal *Thou* can be known as the absolute Person who gives unity to all being. Buber also explains that the ‘I-Thou’ relation may have either potential being or actual being. When the ‘I-It’ relation becomes an ‘I-Thou’ relation, the potential being of the ‘I-Thou’ relation becomes the actual being of the ‘I-Thou’ relation. However, the ‘I-Thou’ relation between the individual and God does not become, or evolve from, an ‘I-It’ relation, because God, as the eternal *Thou*, is eternally present as actual Being (Buber 1958).

Buber contends that the ‘I-Thou’ relation between the individual and God is a universal relation which is the foundation for all other relations. If the individual has a real ‘I-Thou’ relation with God, then the individual must have a real ‘I-Thou’ relation with the world. If the individual has a real ‘I-Thou’ relation with God, then the individual’s actions in the world must be guided by that ‘I-Thou’ relation. Thus, the philosophy of personal dialogue may be an instructive method of ethical inquiry and of defining the nature of personal responsibility.

3.3 GABRIEL MARCEL’S AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIP

Gabriel Marcel rejected the Cartesian dualism of mind and body by his doctrine of incarnation. Marcel extolled the primacy of existence and sought to restore the ontological weight of concrete human experience. Thus he objects to any type of thought that would remove man from the real, concrete lived experience (Marcel 1948). In this enthusiasm, existence become for Marcel a signification of experience when he writes, “The assertion ‘I exist’ is valid only if it signifies ... an Original datum which is not ”I think” or even ‘I am alive’ but rather ‘I experience’” (Iweadighi 1992). Following this, Marcel held as false and trickery the celebrated ”Cogito, ergo sum” (I think therefore I am) of Descartes and any such attempt to leap from thought to existence. For Marcel, on the other hand, existence is an affirmation of experience and thought a product of experience. This is why philosophy for Marcel is “experience transmitted into thought”.

Consequently, because experience is signified in existence, then the assurance of existence becomes the result of our direct participation in the world through our Incarnation. Hence Marcel holds that: “The central datum of existence is incarnate being, i.e. the affective unity I have with my body.” Incarnation in Marcel is understood not in the theological sense of the word, but as a sign of our bodylines in relation to other beings in the world. Incarnation is according to Marcel: “the infinitely mysterious act by which an essence assumes a body” (Iweadighi 1992) It is the situation of a being that appears to him to be bound to his or her body. It is the notion of our non - instrumental communion with our bodies (Marcel 1948).

Human being then is essentially incarnate and the only way he can exist in the world and think about the world is by being incarnate, that is to appear to him as a body, as this particular body. My incarnation makes me a being present in the World but does not make my body an object, a tool or an instrument for use or manipulation. It is not an object for the satisfaction of our instinctual cravings.

I cannot be distinguished from my body as Descartes erroneously holds. For Marcel, there does not exist any gap between myself and my body. In fact, I am my body. Marcel therefore warned against any objectification of this body when he says: “I am my body insofar as I succeed in recognizing that this body of mine cannot be brought down to the level of being this object, an object, a something or other.” (Iweadighi 1992) It therefore becomes evident that it is only through my incarnation that I become present to the world and to others. The awareness of my body becomes the awareness of my being with others. Thus, the incarnate being is not a self-isolated self, for according to Marcel: “It is a property of my body that it does not and cannot exist alone.” (Marcel 1948)

Therefore, the awareness of my incarnation consequently becomes the awareness of my inter-subjective existence. This is because I transfer to the world and to others the sense of being and presence that I experience when I become aware of my body. Through my incarnation therefore, I encounter others and enter into a loving relationship with them because according to Marcel, I regard them as prolongations of my body. However, my relationship with others is determined by the type of relationship that exists between us. In other words, as a human being I can exist or act in one or two ways. I can exist and relate lovingly and authentically with others. This is the level of the authentic inter-subjective, dyadic type of relationship, this is what he calls the ‘I-Thou’ relationship. On the other hand, I can relate inauthentically to others as I would relate to any object, tool or instrument. This is the triadic or I – it or he or she relationship.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1) According to Buber is a subject-to-object relationship possible in love?

2) What is philosophy for Marcel?

3.4 MARCEL’S ‘I – THOU’ RELATIONSHIP

The I-thou relationship in Marcel discovered under the-plane of secondary reflection and mystery is both horizontal as well as vertical. On the horizontal plane, I.-thou relationship is the relationship of the finite “I” to a finite ‘thou’. On the vertical, it is a relationship of a finite being to the Absolute Thou - God.

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The “thou” for Marcel is the other, who can be invoked by me. He is the being with whom I can enter into a loving relationship. This is the plane of the authentic inter-subjectivity. Here, we are no longer two isolated or self-enclosed entities, two strangers struggling to possess and objectify each other. Rather I become present to the thou in Mutual openness and self-giving. Thus I discover thou in a genuine meeting in love, friendship and spiritual availability. In the I-thou relationship, I cease to regard the other as an object, an item in my mind, or merely as a function, a freedom to be appropriated. The other becomes for me a real person, a thou with whom I commune in the most intimate way. He becomes my other self not a he a she or it.

When I address the other as “thou” in a relationship of love, I become completely involved in all his or her affairs and whatever affects him, affects me also. Thus I - Thou relationship is an invocation, an appeal to being, a call intended to be listened to, heard and as well responded to. Through this invocation of the other, the ‘I’ moves out to encounter the other in a meeting of love and spiritual availability. It is an address - and - response type of relationship, a dialogical relationship of the ‘I’ to a ‘Thou’ as opposed to the dialectical, question - and - answer (information) type of relation between the subject and object. It involves a “witness” of real being. It may be noted that the love of the thou does not stem from love of certain basic qualities in the person neither physical, physiological nor psychological. It involves the “Global wholeness”, the complete person of the I directed to the unlimited, unspecified being of the thou. Thus: “The I does not love the other because he has certain good qualities, or because the I - has judged the other. To - possess specific intellectual, moral and religious virtues.”

Both the I and the Thou discover their freedom by entering into loving relation and becoming available to each other, as they shatter their self- enclosed egocentric prisons to open up to others. The mutual communion of I - Thou affirms my freedom as opposed to Jean Paul Sartre’s negative inter-subjectivity, where the other engulfs my freedom, and where the look and presence of the other erodes my personality. Also on the vertical plane, I encounter God who becomes the Absolute Thou for me. I thereby enter into a mutual, reciprocal and dialogical relationship with the Absolute Thou. The Absolute Thou cannot be reduced to an object, a he or it, He can only be addressed as “Thou’ . Thus the I – Absolute Thou relation becomes a dialogical and responsive relation in which the I becomes a ‘Thou’ for God. In this case then, belief in God for Marcel becomes “a thou-address meant to be heard” and responded to. Thus Marcel Observes: “A God whom my belief did not interest would not be God but a simple Metaphysical entity.”

Therefore, the religious experiences of Prayer, faith, contemplation etc., becomes a dialogical relationship with the Thou, a mode of participation between the finite thou and the Absolute. This dialogical, responsive and mutual or reciprocal relationship of the I and the Thou Marcel described as a “dyadic” relationship. It is a dyadic relation because it involves participation, presence and availability. Basically the I-Thou relationship is “dyadic” because it contains some measure of “exclusiveness”. It is exclusive of a third party beside the I and the thou, who may either try to verify or describe our experience of the communion. As Cain would say: “Three is, a crowd here, as in any I - Thou relationships. Rather, I - thou relations is personal, a relation between me and the thou and as such defies any verification from outside as is characteristic of all ontological participations.

3.5 MARCEL’S PRESENCE, PARTICIPATION AND AVAILABILITY

It is only the I-Absolute Thou relationship that possesses the lone character of the “all - inclusiveness”. In this case, my relationship with the Absolute Thou necessarily entails my willing others to be ‘thou’ for God alongside with me. This is because I exist, only when other beings exist with me, as Marcel will say “*esse est co-esse*”, to exist is to co-exist. Therefore, my relation to God becomes one of “I hope in thee for us” The ‘I-Thou’ relation in Marcel connotes the idea of presence, participation and availability. The reality of presence is an important aspect of the I - Thou relationship. Presence in the Marcelian I - Thou relationship denotes something more comprehensive than the fact of just being there. It transcends spacio-temporal proximity. This is because I can be present to a thou far away from me through feeling and spiritual availability when the person sitting beside me may not be present to me; just as things cannot be present to me.

Therefore, I can only be present to a thou the being who takes me into consideration or account. According to Marcel, presence by definition becomes a mutual self-giving to being. In this case, presence becomes the. Response by which the subject opens himself to receive he thou in his self- giving, and as such; “Presence belongs only to the being who is capable of giving himself” (Marcel 1949). Therefore in the ‘I-Thou’ relationship, I encounter the thou and become present to him. The ‘I-Thou’ encounter then becomes a mingling of two presences, a co-presence. So the reality of presence implies encounter. Participation on the other hand, is the main element of Marcel’s I - Thou relationship, as he observes: “The dyadic relation is what in my previous inquiries I called participation” (Marcel 1949).

Participation is the interpenetration of beings. The being of the ‘I’ penetrate the being of the thou and allows itself to be penetrated by the thou. It is a being – with, a togetherness of realities. It is a subject - subject mode of relation as opposed to the abstract and detached subject - object relation. Through participation, I become present and available to the other. To be present and available to the other is to be at the disposal of the other. to find time for the other, and to listen attentively to his feelings both of joy and sorrow .

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1) What is a “dyadic” relationship.

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2) What is “participation” for Marcel?

3.6 IMMANUEL KANT AND PERSONS AS “ENDS IN THEMSELVES”

Though it was Immanuel Kant who popularized the idea that persons are ends in themselves and can never be used “merely as a means”, the view had been upheld a long time before him (notably by scholastic thinkers). A means is that which is useful, a thing (and the word is deliberately chosen) which is sought only for the sake of something else and not desired for its own sake. Thus as long as I need my cycle or my tooth brush it is of any value for me: once I’ve finished using it, I put it aside and forget about it. Persons are not things: they are to be loved, not used. Of course, there are occasions when I make use of a person (his or her services, to be precise), as when I ask someone to drop me to the station by motor-bike or even when I avail of a driver and bus conductor to use the public transport. Kant recognized that we sometimes have to “make use of” each other’s services: that is why he, very wisely, said we shouldn’t use a person *merely* as a means. We need make use of people’s services from time to time. That is what life in community is all about: mutual co-operation and assistance. But it would be totally wrong on my part were I to use a person merely as a means, exactly like I would use, say my toothbrush or cycle. I must respect the freedom of the person and politely request his/her services, recognizing his/her right to refuse. I have to pay him or her some compensation if he or she is a public servant like a bus driver (this is done by paying for my ticket.) Finally, I must render to him or her basic respect that is due to a person, something which I am in no wise obliged to give to my cycle or toothbrush. We may find ourselves in a situation where we have to use the other person as a means, but nothing would justify us using him or her merely as a means.

But why not it is? What is the basic metaphysical reason, why we should not use a person merely as a means? On what grounds can persons claim preferential treatment over things? There is a very good reason for this. And humanists, of both the theistic as well as the atheistic persuasions, would uphold it. For theistic humanists, the person is an “end in him/her” because; of all created beings only the person can directly attain the ultimate end of all reality. Our transcendental analysis of the metaphysical fact of direct judgment has revealed that the unlimited being is the ultimate goal of my intellectual dynamism, the dynamism that underlies all my other striving and drives. Inasmuch as I can know and love, I can directly apprehend (not comprehend) the ultimate reality though, in this present condition, I can only do so indirectly and mediate: here and now I have only a mediated encounter with the Unlimited Being (i.e. through the finite things which I affirm in my daily experience). But I could – if that opportunity were granted me as a freely bestowed gift (in the beatific vision, for instance) – respond

directly to such a direct, personal encounter by means of my “spiritual” faculties. Other, non-personal beings, can attain the ultimate and of all reality only in and through personal beings like myself. Hence it is that other beings can be sought and used merely as a means whereas persons can never be so exploited. Let us remember that an “end in oneself” is not the same as the ultimate end. No finite person can be made one’s ultimate end, though he or she must be loved for his or her own sake and not even be “used spiritually” (whatever that is supposed to imply) as a means to attain God. If there comes about a clash between any person I love and God (a clash of loyalties or demands) then, without ceasing to love the former, I have to elicit preferential love for the latter, i.e. God. Let us also not forget that to make any finite person my ultimate end would be to do him or her grievous harm. For I would be absolutizing or divinizing him or her. This would be unfair and tantamount to making demands of him or her that he or she would be unable to fulfill.

The atheistic humanist would agree that a person is an end in him/her, though for a different reason. The argument would be that there is no higher being given us on earth than the human person. Only humans have consciousness to the extent of being free, intelligent and creative. Only human beings can love each other in the fullest sense of the term. Hence they cannot be treated as mere things, as inanimate or non-free, non-rational beings. Indeed, some of the most ardent and dedicated champions of human rights have been atheists who have been prepared to die for their fellowmen and women... and have actually done so. They do exist even martyrs of love among Marxists.

3.7 DIFFERENT FORMULATIONS OF CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVES

The categorical imperative is the central philosophical concept in the moral philosophy of Immanuel Kant, as well as modern deontological ethics. Introduced in Kant’s *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, it may be defined as a way of evaluating motivations for action. According to Kant, human beings occupy a special place in creation, and morality can be summed up in one ultimate commandment of reason, or imperative, from which all duties and obligations derive. He defined an imperative as any proposition that declares a certain action (or inaction) to be necessary. A hypothetical imperative compels action in a given circumstance: if I wish to quench my thirst, I must drink something. A categorical imperative, on the other hand, denotes an absolute, unconditional requirement that asserts its authority in all circumstances, both required and justified as an end in itself. He has three famous formulations of the Categorical Imperative.

The First Formulation: “Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law without contradiction.” (Categorical Imperatives 2010). The Second Formulation:.”Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end and never merely as a means to an end” (Categorical Imperatives 2010). The Third Formulation: “Therefore, every rational being must so act as if he were through his maxim always a legislating member in the universal kingdom of ends” (Categorical Imperatives 2010).

We ought to act only by maxims that would harmonize with a possible kingdom of ends. We have *perfect duty* not to act by maxims that create incoherent or

impossible states of natural affairs when we attempt to universalize them, and we have *imperfect duty* not to act by maxims that lead to unstable or greatly undesirable states of affairs.

3.8 ARGUMENTS FOR THE CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE

What are Kant's arguments for the Categorical Imperative? First, consider an example. Consider the person who needs to borrow money and is considering making a false promise to pay it back. The maxim that could be invoked is, "when I need of money, borrow it, promising to repay it, even though I do not intend to." But when we apply the universality test to this maxim it becomes clear that if everyone were to act in this fashion, the institution of promising itself would be undermined. The borrower makes a promise, willing that there be no such thing as promises. Thus such an action fails the universality test (McCormick 2001).

The argument for the first formulation of the categorical imperative can be thought of this way. We have seen that in order to be good, we must remove inclination and the consideration of any particular goal from our motivation to act. The act cannot be good if it arises from subjective impulse. Nor can it be good because it seeks after some particular goal which might not attain the good we seek or could come about through happenstance. We must abstract away from all hoped for effects. If we remove all subjectivity and particularity from motivation we are only left with will to universality. The question "What rule determines what I ought to do in this situation?" becomes "what rule ought to universally guide action?" What we must do in any situation of moral choice is act according to a maxim that we would will everyone to act according to (McCormick 2001).

The second version of the Categorical Imperative invokes Kant's conception of nature and draws on the first *Critique*. In the earlier discussion of nature, we saw that the mind necessarily structures nature. And reason, in its seeking of ever higher grounds of explanation, strives to achieve unified knowledge of nature. A guide for us in moral matters is to think of what would not be possible to will universally. Maxims that fail the test of the categorical imperative generate a contradiction. Laws of nature cannot be contradictory. So if a maxim cannot be willed to be a law of nature, it is not moral.

The third version of the categorical imperative ties Kant's whole moral theory together. Insofar as they possess a rational will, people are set off in the natural order of things. They are not merely subject to the forces that act upon them; they are not merely means to ends. They are ends in themselves. All means to an end have a merely conditional worth because they are valuable only for achieving something else. The possessor of a rational will, however, is the only thing with unconditional worth. The possession of rationality puts all beings on the same footing, "every other rational being thinks of his existence by means of the same rational ground which holds also for myself; thus it is at the same time an objective principle from which, as a supreme practical ground, it must be possible to derive all laws of the will" (McCormick 2001)

3.9 PERSONS AND SOCIETIES

Just as collections of things can be gathered together into aggregates and held together by some external means and thereby, thanks to the creativeness and inventiveness of human beings, be put to work to fulfill various uses, persons, too, can form analogous groupings or societies. The basic difference here is that such persons have come together freely and bind themselves together by moral (not physical) links, which they can surrender if and when they so will. Such groups may come together for a limited goal (e.g. to perfect their skills in a particular language or sport: thus we have language academies and sports “clubs”) or in an attempt to support and help each other in all-round personal growth and development (as may be the case in a nation, a religious order or a religion). The scholastics generally referred to the last group as “perfect” societies and the former as “imperfect” societies. The appellation “perfect” or “imperfect” was not meant to refer to the moral status of the persons who made up the society in question. In the first place, *perfecta* in Latin means complete and, in the second place, it is meant to be descriptive of the goal of the society. A “perfect” society is one which seeks the total, all-round good of the persons who are its members. In that sense, a religion is most adequately called a perfect society, inasmuch as it seeks to make persons better persons and not just better speakers or better citizens or better athletes (Desbruslais 1977).

A very relevant question which is often asked today is, to what extent can a society (club, the state, a religion) ask the individual to sacrifice himself or herself for the common good? It is equally clear that we cannot allow a person to be swallowed up and annihilated, as it were, by any society: he or she is an end in itself and can’t be totally sacrificed for some other allegedly “higher purpose”. But persons are no mere private individuals: a person is a “community being”, too. After all, the supremely perfective acts of a person are knowing and loving and these turn one outside of himself/herself – indeed, as we have seen, both these “spiritual” activities attain their fulfillment in an inter-personal relationship. So, were a person to refuse to relate himself to others in a meaningful community he would frustrate one of the most essential dimensions of his being. Hence, we cannot advocate the “drop out” solution, where a person turns his back on society, on all societies and refuses to make any adjustments or sacrifices for the community. But where do we draw the line?

Generally speaking, no society can use a person merely as a means. If a given society were to ask a person to do something immoral for the sake of an alleged “greater good”, it would be wrong. For instance, if a given society decided to eliminate all “unproductive” persons (the aged, the terminally ill and the mentally defective) on the grounds that, since they were not making any contribution to the per capita income of the people and were, on the contrary, a drain on its resources, obviously this would be treating all those persons as mere means for augmenting the income of society (even if this did, in the long run, increase the apparent well-being of the others – but, can one really become an all-round better person by forcibly killing of hopeless and helpless people who might have already given their best to society or who, through no fault of their own, cannot contribute to the amount of goods and services that society craves? Besides, even if they are not “productive” in this narrow, physical sense, can we be so sure that they are unable to contribute to the personal growth of people in other, more vital,

ways?). So also would it be against the personal nature of humans, to take children away from their families and indoctrinate them in isolation from their natural parents and families. Again, it would be totally false to identify personhood with a particular ethnic origin or social class or even sex or the color of one’s skin. We have seen that what constitutes a person is something deeper than any of these things.

This does not deny the fact that sometimes, for a limited period, the state may curtail some personal rights for the sake of the deprived, in order to give them a chance to overcome the obstacles and injustices meted out to them by an unfair and dominant class. Hence the reservation quotas and land ceilings may interfere with the legitimate aspirations of certain persons, but these are temporary and seek to right an unjustified imbalance that has been done in the past. In all these matters, there needs to be a place for dialogue and the accepted process of democracy. People have also the right to protest decisions of the State if they feel, in good conscience that these go against fundamental personal rights but they should be on the guard against ways and means of protesting that are uncalled for, such as hasty resort of violence and endangering lives of innocent and helpless people (Pandikattu 2011).

3.10 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we tried to bring forth the basic notions of human uniqueness in terms of ‘I-Thou’ relationship (Buber and Marcel), authentic presence, participation and availability (Marcel). Then we say how Kant views humans as ends in themselves and his categorical imperatives that enable us from a rational perspective to see the uniqueness of human beings and human relationship. They form together the philosophical foundations of interpersonal relationship, which is quite different from other relationships present in the world.

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1) According to Kant can we ever “make use of “ persons?

2) Give any two formulations of Kant’s categorical imperative.

3.11 KEY WORDS

- Categorical imperative** : Kant defined an imperative as any proposition that declares a certain action (or inaction) to be necessary. A hypothetical imperative compels action in a given circumstance: if I wish to quench my thirst, I must drink something. A categorical imperative, on the other hand, denotes an absolute, unconditional requirement that asserts its authority in all circumstances, both required and justified as an end in itself.
- Ends in themselves** : A typical Kantian expression it means that persons have unique dignity and they should never be merely used as means. Since they have value on their own, they are “ends in themselves.”

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