

## UNIT 2

## HEIDEGGER

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### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this Unit, which is exclusively devoted to the study of the Philosophy of Martin Heidegger, is to give a solid foundation to the contemporary Western philosophy, since it is very much based on Heidegger. Once we have a good grip on his philosophy, it would be comfortable to handle the other thinkers of contemporary period. Besides, study of Heidegger will enable the students to see the difference and complementarity between the Eastern and the Western way of philosophizing, since Heidegger's earlier thought is more in line with the western style of thinking, whereas his later thought has taken him more towards the east. We shall begin by situating the importance of Heidegger and by taking a quick glance at his life and works. We will be doing justice to both the phases of Heidegger's philosophy with a rather detailed analysis. But we will try to see both the phases together in their unity and difference. We shall conclude the unit with a critical appraisal.

Thus by the end of this Unit you should be able:

- to understand the 'specificity' of Heidegger's philosophical approach;
- to know as to how and why Heidegger is so influential;
- to have a taste of Heidegger's existential analysis of Dasein;
- to enter into the poetic thinking of Heidegger-II;

-to make a critical appraisal of a thinker

## 2.1 SITUATING HEIDEGGER'S THOUGHT AND LIFE

Martin Heidegger is widely acclaimed as the most outstanding and creative philosopher of 20<sup>th</sup> century, not merely for the novelty of his thought, but mainly for having brought about a 'revolution' in Western philosophy. Almost every philosopher after Plato and Aristotle, the great masters of Western philosophy, continued to philosophize in the same tradition, i.e., without any serious change. Heidegger, on the other hand, stood single-handed against the monolithic structure of Western philosophy of two millennia, pointed out its deviating growth, and proposed a novel and primordial approach to philosophy. His thought has been so fundamental and pivotal, that its influence is seen not only in the various branches of Western philosophy and the different disciplines of knowledge, but it takes into its embrace both Eastern and Western way of philosophizing. Besides, his philosophy is built on phenomenology and existentialism, and has built up hermeneutics and postmodernism. Thus his thought occupies a central position in the contemporary Western thought. Hence it is quite fitting that the philosophy of Heidegger is given adequate importance in the philosophical course.

Heidegger was born at Meßkirch (South Germany) on 26 Sept. 1889 of Catholic parents. His familial background of natural environment and agrarian community may have contributed towards retaining an *earthliness* in his philosophy, preventing him to fly to the distant realms of abstraction unrelated to concrete existence. He had the opportunity directly to get to know the phenomenological method developed by Husserl who had the single greatest influence on Heidegger. From being a privatdozent at Freiburg, Heidegger was invited to the university of Marburg, where he published his most famous work, *Being and Time*. Through this work phenomenology got a new formulation, and he came to be known in the philosophical world. It was in Marburg that he came in contact with Bultmann and Paul Tillich, who were the pioneers of an 'Existential Theology', drawing much of inspiration from Heidegger. At the retirement of Husserl, Heidegger was chosen to occupy the Chair of Philosophy in 1928. For a year he was the Rector of Freiburg University, but he resigned the job, owing to criticism from others, and disillusioned by the fanatical excesses of the Nazi party. He spent the second

half of his life in a mountain-hut at Todtnauberg in Schwarzwald. The atmosphere of silence and natural environment provided an ideal setting for his philosophizing. He died in 1976; and his life can be summed up in a sentence: "He was always a seeker, and always on the way."

Heidegger has to his credit numerous works, most of which were published during his life. Now all his works and lectures are being edited and published under the enormous *Gesamtausgabe* which is expected to cover 57 volumes. The English translations of some of the important works of Heidegger are the following: *Being and Time*; *What Is Metaphysics?*; *Basic Writings*; *Discourse on Thinking*; *Identity and Difference*; *On the Way to Language*; *Poetry, Language and Thought*; *The Question of Technology and Other Essays*; *What Is Called Thinking?*; *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*; *On Time and Being*; etc.

## 2.2 EARLIER PHILOSOPHY OF HEIDEGGER

### Fundamental Ontology

The problem of Being, that has inspired the whole western philosophy, has remained forgotten in the history of western philosophy. It was this 'forgottenness of Being' (*Seinsvergessenheit*) which motivated Heidegger to launch a new thinking. His philosophy is the most consistent attempt to break away from the traditional domination of Western thought by the category of 'substance' or 'thinghood'. He carefully avoids falling into the old error of reifying 'Being'. Hence he says that Being (*Sein*) is to be differentiated from entity (*Seiendes*). Since Being is the being of some entity. In order to clarify the meaning of Being we must start with some entity. And he finds that Dasein—the ontological term for man—is the privileged entity to start with, as it is gifted with an ontological transcendence—its ability to go beyond the entities to their Being. Thus he takes the analysis of Dasein as the point of departure to the clarification of the meaning of Being in general. This project of looking into the meaning of Being from the perspective of the ontic pole, Dasein, is called 'fundamental ontology'.

To work out the question of Being, Heidegger proposes a twofold task: one positive, the

other negative. The positive task consists in the ontological analysis of Dasein in view of the meaning of Being, and the negative task, in the destruction of the history of ontology. The existential analysis of Dasein, according to Heidegger, must begin with an account of Dasein in its everydayness, which will reveal ontologically significant structures, called 'existentials'—essential ways of Dasein's Being. The existential analysis of Dasein brings out 'care' as its Being, leading to the primordial interpretation of its meaning as temporality. With this we will have prepared the ground for the clarification of the meaning of Being in general. By the 'destruction of the history of ontology' Heidegger intends to dig into the past to extract the primordial meaning of Being, frozen and petrified by tradition. With this project in view Heidegger started his *Being and Time*, but in the midway of his philosophical journey, he changed his approach, resulting in a Heidegger-II.

The method that Heidegger employs in his existential analysis of Dasein is hermeneutical phenomenology. Phenomenology is associated with Husserl who developed it as a method and gave it a systematic expression. Heidegger took inspiration from Husserl, but departed from him radically by developing phenomenology into *hermeneutical* phenomenology. In Heidegger's *Being and time* the method of hermeneutical phenomenology gradually unfolds itself.

### **Preliminary Analysis of Dasein**

Heidegger begins with the analysis of Dasein in its everydayness, which shows itself primarily as Being-in-the-world, which is the fundamental way of its Being. The various other ways of its Being (existentials) refer to the 'how' of its Being-in-the-world. Although 'Being-in-the-world' is a unitary phenomenon, in the phenomenological language it consists of two complementary aspects: 'Being-in' and 'the world'. Heidegger clarifies that Dasein's relation to the world is ontological, rather than epistemological. We shall consider 'the world' and 'Being-in' separately, in order to arrive at the being of Dasein.

Heidegger considers 'world' neither cosmologically as an objective entity, nor epistemologically as the object of knowledge, nor theologically as opposed to God, but

ontologically as the horizon of Dasein's existence as Being-in-the-world. Since world is to be seen in relation to Dasein, we can distinguish between the environmental and communal world, according as Dasein relates itself to it.

Dasein's ordinary relation to the entities within the world can be either one of theoretical cognition or one of practical dealings. According to Heidegger, the practical or existential dealings are more basic than theoretical observation. In circumspective dealings the entities show themselves as ready-to-hand (*zuhanden*) and in theoretical observation as present-at-hand (*vorhanden*). Only in relation to some Dasein can an entity show itself as such a thing, and in this relation entities show themselves as *for the sake of* Dasein. In Dasein's existential Being-in-the-world it relates itself to the communal world of other Daseins. Dasein is essentially *Being-with* (*Mitsein*), even in factual loneliness. As Being-with, Dasein is essentially *for the sake of* others. Dasein, thus, is related to the environmental entities and communal entities (persons). Its relation to the former is guided by 'practical concern' (*Besorgen*) and to the latter, by 'personal concern' or solicitude (*Fürsorge*). World as the horizon or relation enables the humans to be related environmentally and communally.

'Being-in' refers to Dasein's disclosedness (*Erschlossenheit*). Dasein is disclosive in three basic ways: as thrown, as projective and as falling. The inevitable and irrevocable character of Dasein is its 'thrownness' (*Geworfenheit*). It is also called Dasein's 'situationality' or 'facticity' (*Fakticität*). Situationality (*Befindlichkeit*) as an essential mode of disclosedness points to the *facticity* of Dasein. Dasein discloses itself also projecting or understanding, which pertains to Dasein's potentiality-for-Being (*Seinkönnen*) in the world. It refers to Dasein's choosing of possibilities. The projective character of Dasein represents more of the active dimension of disclosedness. In its everydayness Dasein shows itself to be 'falling' from its ownmost self. Instead of revealing the unique self that Dasein is, it tends to be the 'one', the 'they' (*das Man*). As thrown, projecting and falling, Dasein is its 'there'—its disclosedness; and it is the *way* Dasein *is* essentially.

The analysis of Dasein in its everydayness that began with its basic state (being-in-the-world) culminates itself in 'care', the unity and Being of Dasein in its everydayness. The unifying notion of care consists of its three structural constituents: existentiality, facticity

and fallenness. Care stands for the existential totality of Dasein's ontological structural whole. It is because Dasein's Being is 'care' (*Sorge*) that it can relate itself to things by concern (*Besorgen*) and to persons by solicitude (*Fürsorge*). In the phenomenon of care we have arrived at the peak-point of the existential analysis of Dasein in its everydayness.

### **Primordial Interpretation**

In order to make the ontological analysis more primordial, the hermeneutical situation or the fore-structure of Dasein has to be considered. Clarification of the fore-structure implies that we bring into our consideration the *whole* of Dasein, and in what way it can be *authentic*. These hitherto lacked aspects of totality and authenticity of Dasein are unfolded on a two-level interpretation: on ontological and ontic levels in the analysis of death and conscience respectively.

As long as it is, there is in Dasein something ahead-of-itself, some not-yet. The ultimate *not-yet* of Dasein is its death. Once the not-yet is no more, there is no more a Dasein. Death as the 'not-yet' is already always present as soon as and as long as Dasein is. Dasein faces death as a possibility which is its ultimate, exclusive, inevitable, most certain, and uncertain regarding, making it a constant certainty. Death is inauthentically considered as an occurrence of a moment in the distant future. Dasein's authentic Being-towards-death is 'anticipation'. In the anticipation of death we have the ontological characterization of Dasein's *totality* and *authenticity*: totality, because anticipation refers to Dasein's total Being, and authenticity, because it refers to Dasein's genuine (authentic) Being, permeated with finitude.

Heidegger shows, through the analysis of conscience, as to how the ontological possibility of Dasein's totality and authenticity becomes ontically concrete. Conscience is presented as a 'call' addressed to Dasein to come back to its own self—to its total and authentic Being. The call of conscience comes from itself, is addressed to itself and is a summons to be itself—a call from itself to itself to be itself. The call points to Dasein's ontological Being-guilty—the permeating nullity (*Nichtigkeit*) of Dasein. The authentic response by Dasein to the presence of nullity in its Being is its 'resoluteness'

(*Entschlossenheit*). It is in this context that the radical finitude of Dasein is presented by Heidegger.

As constantly faced with its ultimate possibility and ultimate facticity, Dasein is confronted with the constant and closest presence of the 'not' in its Being. What Dasein authentically projects towards is that into which it has already been irrevocably thrown. The ultimate possibility and facticity of Dasein—the boundary-line—encircle and demarcate its wholeness, which is but its limit situation. Dasein's finitude is nothing but its permeating presence of the limit in its Being. Thus the Being of Dasein, as *total*, and *authentic*, is radically *finite*.

The question that arises now is this: what enables Dasein to exist as anticipatory resoluteness? The answer will provide the meaning of its finite Being. Heidegger shows that temporality is the meaning and ground of Dasein's finite Being, and temporality is concretized in historicity. Dasein, as existence, is ecstatic—standing out. It stands out into its possibility by coming towards itself, it stands out into its facticity insofar as its 'coming towards' is a 'coming back' to itself. This two-fold standing-out is a standing out into the present, into its limit-situation. This three-fold standing-out is the single process of temporalizing. By appropriating the ultimate *ahead* and the ultimate *already*, Dasein authentically exists. In such a notion of temporality, the future is *already* present, the past is *still* present, as different from the 'not yet' and 'no more' of the objective conception. Historicity belongs essentially to temporality. Just as primordial time cannot be taken as a linear succession of 'nows', so also historicity cannot be taken as a record or dead deposit of the past events. Dasein historicizes by a choosing and living of the existential possibilities. Such a choosing is not a fragmented happening, but a single stretching out. The possibilities are rooted in the past (already), though projected to the future (the ahead). In historicizing, Dasein repeats (reclaims) its inherited possibilities. Historicizing Dasein sees the past consisting, not of dead factualities, but of repeatable possibilities. Gandhiji's life of *ahimsa* and *satya* emits possibilities to be reclaimed, rather than dead ideas to be reflected upon. History has thus primarily a futural character, as it has to do with possibilities.

### Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

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

1) What does Heidegger intend by Fundamental Ontology?

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2) How does Heidegger work out Dasein as Being-in-the-world?

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3) How does Heidegger carry out the analysis of death and conscience in a related manner?

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### 2.3 LATER PHILOSOPHY OF HEIDEGGER

After having published *Being and Time* in its present form, Heidegger could not continue in the same line of thought, as there was a 'turn' in his thought.

#### The 'Turn' and his Critique of Western Metaphysics



The forgottenness of Being in the history of philosophy inspired Heidegger to think the question of Being anew. But the way he carried it out in his *Being and Time* was still contaminated by the metaphysical tradition that represents entities in their Being, relating them to transcendental subjectivity. In his changed vision, Being is not clarified in its relation to man, rather man is looked at in the light of Being. Thus the change from the transcendental inquiry of Being from the perspective of the human being to an authentic thinking of Being as the happening of truth is the so-called 'turn' in Heidegger.

Metaphysical thinking begins with Plato and Aristotle, culminates itself in German idealism, and becomes complete in Nietzsche. This monolithic growth is characterized by its forgetfulness of Being, since it remained, ever since its inception, *onto-theological* in character. Instead of considering 'Being' metaphysics has been considering the 'unity' of entities in its universality and ultimacy. Insofar as metaphysics considers the unity of entities in their abstracted universal trait, beingness, it is ontology. Insofar as it looks into the unity of entities as grounded in the highest entity, God, it is theology. Onto-theo-logical tendency of metaphysics was kept nurtured during the two millennia, reaching upto Nietzsche. With modern philosophy, metaphysics became epistemology with the emphasis on subject-object polarity. Man becomes the arbiter of truth. This reached the climax in the absolute idealism of Hegel. The extreme expression of human domination over Being is modern technology. The scientific attitude of representation and objectification becomes one of manipulation of reality for total power by the technological man.

### **Thinking of Being**

In characterizing the 'thinking of Being' (*Seinsdenken*) Heidegger moves into a language that is more poetic and less metaphysical in character. Thinking comes to pass in the belonging together of Being and man, as a call and as a response. It is to be specially noted that thinking here is not an intellectual activity as in metaphysical thinking.

Heidegger explains in a variety of ways that Being presences or un-conceals itself to the receptive humans finitely. In the various explanations, the following seems to be the most important, as it brings Being and time together. In order to clarify the presencing of Being, Heidegger exploits an impersonal verb like 'it rains', which refers to the subject-less 'activity of raining'. Being, thus, is not the subject, but the activity of presencing or un-concealing. There is a 'giving' only insofar as there is a 'given' (gift) and a 'receiver'. Hence to be complete in its meaning we must say: Being is the giving itself in the entities to the humans. In the history of metaphysics Being has been considered as the *given* or the gift, that is, the entity. But the *giving* of the gift was not given thought to. The un-concealing of Being takes place in the mode of time. When Being was thought as presence, an 'idea' without any reference to time, it showed itself as a static, eternal and infinite presence. The time-character speaks for its *finite* presencing. As mentioned above, the presencing of Being takes place only insofar as there is a receiving from the part of the humans. Heidegger characterizes the openness or receptivity from the part of man variously as dwelling, releasement, shepherding, listening, thanking, responding, gathering, seeing, etc. Heidegger finds that poets, mystics and thinkers listen to the voice of Being. For them the greatest wonder is: *that something is!* They see the coming-to-be of entities, the process of un-concealment.

After having considered Being as historical presencing and man as receptive opening, Heidegger takes his thought to a higher realm—the event of appropriation or 'event-ing' (*Ereignis*), and towards the far end of his thinking, he preferred to use the term, *Ereignis*, instead of the metaphysically saturated term, Being. Event-ing shows itself as the 'difference' between Being and entities, the difference between the verbal and the nominal sense of Being, the difference between concealing and revealing. This *difference* is the coming-to-be of entities, the process of 'un-concealment'.

### **The Divine**

Despite Heidegger's strong resolve to keep his philosophical thinking free from theological contamination, the question of God crept into his thought especially at its later phase. Heidegger's thinking of the Divine has to be seen in togetherness with his critique of

the metaphysical conception of God, which is but a corollary to his critique of Western metaphysics. With the adoption of Greek philosophy by Christianity, the metaphysical notion of God found a fertile soil. The two-world doctrine of Plato got baptized as the theory of the natural and the supernatural realms. God is confined to the supernatural realm, and is superimposed with metaphysical attributes of superlative degree. Thus 'God' was reduced to an object of human estimation. Metaphysics thus nurtures a pseudo-God, a product of human representation in the innumerable theological books. Aligning himself with the Nietzschean proclamation of the death of God, Heidegger shows the caricature of the metaphysical God.

In keeping with his way of thinking Heidegger does not take us to a concept of God, but directs our thought to the presencing (*Wesen*, Being) of the Divine—a much preferred term than the metaphysically pregnant term, God. The Divine can be thought only in the light of the truth of Being. As Being is thought as a process of presencing and absencing, so also the Divine presencing is marked by absencing. Heidegger speaks of the absencing of the Divine in terms such as 'flight of gods', 'destitute time', 'darkening of the world, etc. The divine absencing is a mode of presencing. The world's night of the Divine absence is to be taken as the *Holy Night* of Divine presence. The divine presencing is very much 'worldly' and 'historical'. This is in clear contrast to the metaphysical God as the 'absolute other' secured in a supra-sensory realm, untouched by time and space. Authentic thinking of Being is at the same time a thinking of the Divine. When one's disposition is more receptive, one's wondering at the coming-to-be of things is an experiencing of the presencing of the Divine. Heideggerian thinking of the Divine is a cosmic thinking beyond the distinction between philosophy and theology, and beyond the barriers of religions and cultures. In the eminently purified disposition of receptive thinking, the Divine gives itself to be thought; and this open disposition is authentic thinking, primordial poetizing, aesthetic contemplation and genuine mysticism.

## **2.4 LET US SUM UP**

A fundamental philosophy can be adequate only if it includes within its consideration the various dimensions of reality. Heidegger's philosophy is not sufficiently multi-dimensional, since its main and almost exclusive concern is truth as the process of un-concealment. While being

faithful to this dimension, he neglected to some extent the other dimensions such as intersubjectivity, ethics, God, faith, hope, earthliness, bodiliness, eros, etc. On the other hand, it is not very possible for a seminal and creative thinker like Heidegger to be totally multidimensional, as an eclectic thinker may well be. Besides, Heidegger has given a more solid foundation to philosophy than many other philosophers. His philosophy remains open to the other dimensions. *The merit of a thinker consists not merely in having considered great many problematics, but in not having closed himself to any of the problematics.* His philosophy provides a multi-directional opening to a multidimensional problematic. Although Heidegger has given only minor importance to the questions of God, intersubjectivity, ethics, body, etc., he has not closed his philosophy to the further consideration of them. *It is because of the primordially of his approach that his thinking could be open to almost all dimensions of reality.* With his philosophy of finitude, Heidegger shows himself, not as a prophet of doom that instills fear and despair, nor a prophet of hope that points to a future paradise, but as a prophet of ‘earthly paradise’—a prophet that calls on man to take over resolutely and receptively his unique possibilities to be himself. It is to Heidegger's merit that he, in embracing a philosophy of radical finitude does not leave man to absurdity and triviality, but lets him find a wholeness and meaningfulness in his radically finite situation.

**Check Your Progress II**

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

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

1) Dwell on Heidegger’s Critique of Western Metaphysics.

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2) Shed light on the notion of Being according to later-Heidegger

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 3) How does Heidegger present the question of the Divine?  
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**2.5 KEY WORDS**

Heidegger’s philosophy is known for its numerous terms that are specially coined with typically Heideggerian meaning. We mention only a few of them:

**Dasein:** ontological term for human being (*Da* of *Sein*, the ‘there’ of ‘Being’)

**Facticity:** givenness or thrownness

**Care:** the Being of Dasein as relation

**Resoluteness:** it combines the meanings of openness and decision; decisive openness

**Onto-theological:** the character of metaphysics that considers ‘Being’ in terms of ‘beingness’ and ‘highest being’ (God)

**Event-ing:** *Ereignis*, Being as happening

**2.6 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES**

Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*. Translated by J. Macquarrie and Robinson. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1973.

Puthenpurackal, Johnson. *Heidegger: Through Authentic Totality to total Authenticity*. Louvain: Leuven University Press, 1987.

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Richardson, William. *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974.

## 2.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

### 1) What does Heidegger intend by Fundamental Ontology?

The problem of Being, that has inspired the whole western philosophy, has remained forgotten in the history of western philosophy. This 'forgottenness of Being' (*Seinsvergessenheit*) motivated Heidegger to launch a new thinking. He carefully avoids falling into the old error of reifying 'Being'. Hence he says that Being (*Sein*) is to be differentiated from entity (*Seiendes*). Since Being is the Being of some entity, in order to clarify the meaning of Being we must start with some entity. And he finds that Dasein—the ontological term for man—is the privileged entity to start with, as it is gifted with an ontological transcendence—its ability to go beyond the entities to their Being. Thus he takes the analysis of Dasein as the point of departure to the clarification of the meaning of Being in general. This project of looking into the meaning of Being from the perspective of the ontic pole, Dasein, is called 'fundamental ontology'. To work out the question of Being Heidegger proposes a twofold task: one positive, the other negative. The positive task consists in the ontological analysis of Dasein in view of the meaning of Being, and the negative task, in the destruction of the history of ontology.

### 2) How does Heidegger work out Dasein as Being-in-the-world?

Heidegger begins with the analysis of Dasein in its everydayness, which shows itself primarily as Being-in-the-world, which is the fundamental way of its Being. Although 'Being-in-the-world' is a unitary phenomenon, in the phenomenological language it consists of two complementary aspects: 'Being-in' and 'the world'. World is to be seen in relation Dasein, and so we can distinguish between the environmental and communal world, according as Dasein relates itself to it. Dasein's primarily related to the entities within the world by way of practical or existential dealings, and in such dealings the entities show themselves as ready-to-hand (*zuhanden*) as different from present-at-hand (*vorhanden*) in theoretical observation. In

Dasein's existential Being-in-the-world it relates itself to the communal world of other Daseins. Dasein, thus, is related to the environmental entities and communal entities (persons) by 'practical concern' (*Besorgen*) and by 'personal concern' (*Fürsorge*) respectively. 'Being-in' refers to Dasein's disclosedness (*Erschlossenheit*). Dasein is disclosive in three basic ways: as thrown, as projective and as falling. The inevitable and irrevocable character of Dasein is its 'thrownness' (*Geworfenheit*). Dasein discloses itself also projecting or understanding, which pertains to Dasein's potentiality-for-Being (*Seinkönnen*) in the world. Dasein shows itself to be 'falling' from its ownmost self as well. The analysis of Dasein in its everydayness that began with its basic state (being-in-the-world) culminates itself in 'care', the unity and Being of Dasein in its everydayness.

### **3) How does Heidegger carry out the analysis of death and conscience in a related manner?**

It is in the context of his clarification of the hermeneutical situation of Dasein that Heidegger makes use of the analysis of death and conscience. He explains death as the ultimate *not-yet* of Dasein. Death as the 'not-yet' is already always present as soon as and as long as Dasein is. Dasein faces death as a possibility which is its ultimate, ownmost, exclusive, inevitable, most certain, and uncertain regarding, making it a constant certainty. Dasein's authentic Being-towards-death is 'anticipation'. In the anticipation of death we have the ontological characterization of Dasein's *totality* and *authenticity*: totality, because anticipation refers to Dasein's total Being, and authenticity, because it refers to Dasein's genuine (authentic) Being, permeated with finitude. Heidegger shows with the analysis of conscience as to how the ontological possibility of Dasein's totality and authenticity becomes ontically concrete. Conscience is presented as a 'call' addressed to Dasein to come back to its own self—to its total and authentic Being. The call of conscience is a call from itself to itself to be itself. The call points to Dasein's permeating nullity (*Nichtigkeit*). The authentic response by Dasein to the presence of nullity in its Being is its 'resoluteness' (*Entschlossenheit*).

### **Check Your Progress II**

## 1) Dwell on Heidegger's Critique of Western Metaphysics

Heidegger's philosophy grew with his critique of the prevalent metaphysical thinking. The monolithic growth of metaphysics is characterized by its forgetfulness of Being, since it remained, ever since its inception, *onto-theological* in character. Instead of considering 'Being' metaphysics has been considering the 'unity' of entities in its universality and ultimacy. Insofar as metaphysics considers the unity of entities in their abstracted universal trait, beingness, it is ontology. Insofar as it looks into the unity of entities as grounded in the highest entity, God, it is theology. With modern philosophy, metaphysics became epistemology with the emphasis on subject-object polarity. Man becomes the arbiter of truth. The extreme expression of human domination over Being is modern technology. The scientific attitude of representation and objectification becomes one of manipulation of reality for total power by the technological man.

## 2) Shed light on the notion of Being according to later-Heidegger

Heidegger characterizes Being not as concept, but as the process of un-concealing or presencing. In a poetic language he explains it. In order to clarify the presencing of Being, Heidegger exploits an impersonal verb like 'it rains', which refers to the subject-less 'activity of raining'. Being, thus, is not the subject, but the activity of presencing or un-concealing. There is a 'giving' only insofar as there is a 'given' (gift) and a 'receiver'. Hence to be complete in its meaning we must say: Being is the giving itself in the entities to the humans. In the history of metaphysics Being has been considered as the *given* or the gift, that is, the entity. But the *giving* of the gift, the coming-to-be of reality, was not given thought to. The un-concealing of Being takes place in the mode of time. When Being was thought as presence, an 'idea' without any reference to time, it showed itself as a static, eternal and infinite presence. The time-character speaks for its *finite* presencing. Heidegger says that the receptive mortals 'sees' the greatest wonder: *that something is!* Being as the 'coming-to-be' of reality is referred to as 'event-ing' (*Ereignis*) by Heidegger at the fag end of his thinking. It is the 'difference' between concealing and revealing—the process of 'un-concealment'.



### 3) How does Heidegger present the question of the Divine?

Heidegger did not want to bring in the question of God in his philosophy; but it crept into his thought especially at its later phase. Heidegger's thinking of the Divine has to be seen in togetherness with his critique of the metaphysical conception of God. With the adoption of Greek philosophy by Christianity, the metaphysical notion of God found a fertile soil. The two-world doctrine of Plato got baptized as the theory of the natural and the supernatural realms. God is confined to the supernatural realm, and is superimposed with metaphysical attributes of superlative degree. Thus 'God' was reduced to an object of human estimation. In keeping with his way of thinking Heidegger directs our thought to the presencing (*Wesen*, Being) of the Divine, which can be thought only in the light of the truth of Being. As Being is thought as a process of presencing and absencing, so also the Divine presencing is marked by absencing. Heidegger speaks of the absencing of the Divine in various terms. The divine absencing is a mode of presencing. The divine presencing is very much 'worldly' and 'historical', as different from the metaphysical God, untouched by time and space. Authentic thinking of Being is at the same time a thinking of the Divine. When one's disposition is more receptive, one's wondering at the coming-to-be of things is an experiencing of the presencing of the Divine.

