

Siddheshwar Rameshwar Bhatt

# Philosophical Foundations of Education

Lessons for India

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Siddheshwar Rameshwar Bhatt  
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*Dedicated to  
seers, sages and thinkers who  
have shown the way to Reality,  
Knowledge, and Values*

# Foreword

प्रकाश जावडेकर  
*Prakash Javadekar*



मंत्री  
मानव संसाधन विकास  
भारत सरकार  
MINISTER  
HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

The objective of the present book is to provide a philosophical foundation to the theory and practice of education from the Indian perspective, which is the need of the times in the contemporary educational scenario of our country. The book is guided by the 'axionoetic' approach to education and therefore it deals with the epistemological foundation and value orientation of education. The Indian mind is intuitive as well as argumentative, descriptive of the nature of Reality and prescriptive of the norms and ideals of life in accordance therewith. Indian philosophical reflection is not just a love of wisdom but a love for life lived with wisdom. These have been the guiding principles in writing this book. The author has dealt with ontological, epistemological, logical, ethical and axiological bases of education in a holistic and integrated manner.

It is rightly maintained that knowledge plays a fundamental role in the system of education. Logical organization of knowledge keeping in view the psychological state of the learner, suitable and effective teaching learning strategies, appropriate techniques of assessment and evaluation and methodical pursuits of values are the focal points of this book. The author rightly maintains that education is a planned, methodical and purposive enhancement of human potentialities as a natural development. This presupposes a correct and adequate formulation of the objectives and goals of education as per the needs and aspirations of the pupil. Education is the hallmark of any civilized society and a robust, vibrant and holistic education has to ensure all-round development of an individual. It has to provide opportunities for fullest possible efflorescence of inherent potentialities and enhance capabilities to realize this. This is what is meant by personality development. This also implies needed character development. A system of education has not only to turn out learned people but also good and virtuous people. This apart, education is also meant to equip an individual to live a good quality of life. "Knowledge is power" and imparting 'life skills' education helps in the empowerment of an individual. So education has the twin purpose of ennobling and enabling good quality of life. In the Indian context the generic term *vidya* has been used to comprise information, instruction, skill, training, knowledge and wisdom or realization.

Education is also a medium through which a society transmits its heritage of past experiences and achievements. This is known as tradition. But it has to be a 'living tradition'. A living tradition is that which is deeply rooted in the past, firmly footed in the present and has a glorious vision of the future. A good system of education has to preserve and ensure such life-sustaining and life-enhancing healthy traditions.

Keeping in view the applied dimension of philosophy, the book analyses practical problems like loss of character, value-negativism, and spread of dis-values like violence, terrorism, and environmental pollution, etc., in the context of education. It also deals with issues concerning peace, sustainable development, sustainable judicious consumption, etc., which should have a bearing on educational policies and programmes.

I am sure that the book will be useful for educational planners and practitioners, educators, and educational researchers.



(PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)

Prakash Javadekar  
Union Minister, Ministry of Human Resource  
Development, Government of India

# Preface

It is universally felt that knowledge-based and value-oriented education is the need of the day. Gradual decline and loss of values and the menacing spread of vices have acquired the magnitude of global problem. An axionoetic approach to education can be one of the appropriate measures to address this malaise. It requires a valuational study of human nature, human needs and aspirations. For this, there is a need for a sound theory of knowledge with adequate apprehension of values. All forms of human pursuits, cognitive, affective, and conative, need such axionoetic basis. This necessitates the due application of a valuational theory of knowledge in the field of education in a gradual and graded manner at all levels and dimensions of education.

The present work enunciates a holistic and integral approach to Reality and life and delineates a symbiosis of knowing, doing, and being in individual, social, and cosmic spheres.

There is a well-acclaimed postulation that philosophy can and should provide a foundation to the theory and practice of education. No system of education can be meaningful unless it is based on the solid foundation of a systematic philosophical reflection. Though it has too often been declared that education is the dynamic side of philosophy, in contemporary times no sincere effort has been made to provide a genuinely philosophical basis to education. An attempt is being made here to analyse the various philosophical foundations of education—ontological, axiological, ethical, epistemological and logical—with a view to establishing the inevitability of philosophy for the entire gamut of the process of education. These have been the focal points of this book together with a discussion on the “axionoetic” approach to the entire process of education. Axionoetics means a valuational approach to knowledge.

In this book, the Indian cultural context has been brought in because it provides a holistic and integral viewpoint which to my mind is nearer to Reality. Almost all the contemporary Indian thinkers like Vivekananda, Dayananda, Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi, and Sri Aurobindo who wrote on education followed the Vedic-Upaniṣadic holistic and integral approach, and I adopt the same approach in this book. Keeping in view the applied dimension of philosophy in the Indian context, I have in the last

part of the book dwelt upon problems like violence, terrorism, environmental pollution, need for peace, sustainable development, and judicious consumption from the Indian perspective. While the book comes with an Indian perspective, it can suitably be adopted within other cultural traditions. For the sake of reiteration and emphasis, some themes are repeated across the chapters.

I am indebted to all my teachers and scholarly writers who have sharpened my ideas and helped me in the cultivation of my mind. I am extremely grateful to the Hon'ble Minister of Human Resource Development Shri Prakash Javadekar for obliging me with an erudite Foreword to this book. I acknowledge my thanks to Ms Shinjini Chatterjee, Ms Priya Vyas, Ms Jayanthi Narayanaswamy and other staff members at Springer for undertaking the publication of this book.

This work is based on and is a thoroughly revised and enlarged form of my earlier book *Knowledge, Value and Education* (1986). I hope that it will be useful to students and scholars of education as also to educational planners and administrators.

New Delhi, India  
June 2018

Siddheshwar Rameshwar Bhatt

# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Philosophy and Education</b> . . . . .	1
	Introduction . . . . .	1
	Nature of Philosophy . . . . .	1
	Philosophy as <i>Darśana</i> . . . . .	2
	Goal-oriented Nature of Philosophy . . . . .	2
	Experience-centricity of Life and Philosophy . . . . .	3
	Practical Orientation of Philosophy . . . . .	5
	Philosophy as Symbiosis of Theory and Practice, Knowledge and Conduct . . . . .	5
	Culture-embeddedness of Philosophy . . . . .	6
	Holistic and Integral Nature of Philosophy . . . . .	7
	Nature and Dimensions of doing Philosophy in India . . . . .	7
	What Is Education? . . . . .	8
	Role of Knowledge in Education . . . . .	9
	Education for Personality Enhancement . . . . .	9
	Education for Character Development . . . . .	10
	Education for Living and Livelihood . . . . .	11
	Education as a Life-prolonging Force . . . . .	12
	Education is a Hallmark of Civil Society . . . . .	12
	Right to Education is Fundamental . . . . .	12
	Present-day Scenario and the Need for Education . . . . .	13
	Philosophy and Education . . . . .	13
	What can Philosophy Contribute to Education? . . . . .	14
	Reference . . . . .	15
<b>2</b>	<b>Philosophical Foundations of Education</b> . . . . .	17
	Introduction . . . . .	17
	Facets of the Noetic Basis of Education . . . . .	18
	Knowledge, Values and Education . . . . .	18
	Nature of Knowledge . . . . .	19

Sources of Knowledge and Education . . . . .	20
Validation of Knowledge and Education . . . . .	21
Knowledge and the Curriculum . . . . .	21
Knowledge and Teaching–Learning Strategy . . . . .	22
<b>3 Nature, Sources, and Validation of Knowledge . . . . .</b>	<b>25</b>
Introduction . . . . .	25
True and False Cognition . . . . .	25
Six Ways of Knowing . . . . .	26
Validation of Knowledge . . . . .	26
Realism in Epistemology and Education . . . . .	27
Correspondence Theory of Truth . . . . .	27
Idealism in Epistemology and Education . . . . .	28
Coherence/Consistency Theory of Truth . . . . .	28
Pragmatism in Epistemology and Education . . . . .	29
Pragmatist Theory of Truth . . . . .	30
Symbiosis of All the Three Approaches . . . . .	30
<b>4 Knowledge, Values and Education . . . . .</b>	<b>31</b>
Introduction . . . . .	31
Noetic Basis of Value Considerations . . . . .	32
Value Problems in Education . . . . .	33
Values are Realizable . . . . .	34
Sources of Knowing Value . . . . .	34
Two Types of Values . . . . .	38
Theory of <i>Pañcakośa</i> . . . . .	39
<b>5 Knowledge and Curriculum-framing . . . . .</b>	<b>43</b>
Introduction . . . . .	43
Nature of Knowledge and Curriculum-framing . . . . .	43
Responses of Different Schools . . . . .	44
Upaniṣadic Basis of Curriculum-framing . . . . .	45
Holistic Approach . . . . .	46
Knowledge Explosion and Curriculum-framing . . . . .	47
<b>6 Logic and Teaching–Learning Strategy . . . . .</b>	<b>51</b>
Introduction . . . . .	51
The Logical Order of Instructional Material . . . . .	51
Nature and Function of Logic . . . . .	52
Logic and the Language of Education . . . . .	53
Logic and Educational Concepts . . . . .	54
Logic and Generalizations in Education . . . . .	55
Logic and Educational Analogies . . . . .	55
Logic and Educational Inferences . . . . .	56
Logic and Theory Construction in Educational Research . . . . .	57

Logic and Educational Curricula . . . . .	57
Logic and Educational Measurements . . . . .	57
Logic and Educational Methods of Assessment . . . . .	58
Logic and Educational Objectives . . . . .	59
Logical Operations in Teaching and Learning . . . . .	59
Ignorance of Logical Operations Non-conductive . . . . .	60
Need for Initiation into Logic . . . . .	60
Pattern for framing such a Course in Logic . . . . .	61
Logic and the Teaching–Learning Process . . . . .	62
Efficacy of this Technique for Teaching and Learning . . . . .	63
Uses of Logic in Teaching–Learning Strategy . . . . .	64
Concluding Remarks . . . . .	65
References . . . . .	66
<b>7 Education and Joyful Learning . . . . .</b>	<b>67</b>
Introduction . . . . .	67
What is Joy? . . . . .	67
Nature of Joy according to Classical Indian Thought . . . . .	68
Nature of Joyful Learning . . . . .	68
Importance of Joyful Learning . . . . .	69
<b>8 Educational Perspectives on <i>Ānanda Mīmāṃsā</i></b>	
<b>(Analysis of Bliss) . . . . .</b>	<b>73</b>
Introduction . . . . .	73
<b>9 Freedom, Responsibility and Professional Education . . . . .</b>	<b>79</b>
Introduction . . . . .	79
Human Being as the Highest Emergent . . . . .	80
Human Being as Rational, Free and Responsible Agent . . . . .	80
Meaning and Significance of Human Life . . . . .	80
Constitution of Human Being . . . . .	81
Significance and Complexity of Human Sociality . . . . .	81
Meaning and Significance of Culture . . . . .	82
Concept of Freedom . . . . .	82
Social Freedom . . . . .	82
Freedom and Equality . . . . .	84
Freedom and Authority . . . . .	84
Freedom for Ethics . . . . .	84
Awareness of Values . . . . .	85
Need for Multiple Professions . . . . .	86
<b>10 Ethics of Knowledge and Education . . . . .</b>	<b>91</b>
Introduction . . . . .	91
Terrorism . . . . .	93

<b>11 The Vedic System of Education and its Contemporary</b>	
<b>Relevance</b> .....	97
Introduction .....	97
<b>12 Theory of <i>Puruṣārtha</i> and its Educational Relevance</b> .....	105
Introduction .....	105
Analysis of the Concept of <i>Puruṣa</i> .....	107
<i>Dharma</i> as <i>Puruṣārtha</i> .....	108
<i>Artha</i> as <i>Puruṣārtha</i> .....	110
<i>Kāma</i> as <i>Puruṣārtha</i> .....	111
<i>Mokṣa</i> as <i>Puruṣārtha</i> .....	112
<b>13 Ecological Balance and Eco-education</b> .....	117
Introduction .....	117
<b>14 Education for Peace, Sustainable Development and Judicious</b>	
<b>Consumption</b> .....	123
Introduction .....	123
Reference .....	129
<b>15 Education for Human Wellness and Social Progress</b> .....	131
Introduction .....	131
Goal of Human Life and the Cosmic Process .....	132
Nature of the Universe .....	133
Nature of Human Existence .....	133
Meaning and Significance of Human Life .....	134
Quality of Life and Globalization .....	135
Mode of Achieving the Goal .....	135
Value Schema for Individual and Social Progress .....	136
Progress as Evolution banking on Tradition and rooted	
in Culture .....	136
Holistic and Integral Approach to Progress .....	137
Science, Technology and Social Progress .....	137
Social Progress, Democracy and Beyond-Democracy .....	138
<b>16 Education for Global Ethics</b> .....	141
Introduction .....	141
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	149

## About the Author

**Prof. Siddheshwar Rameshwar Bhatt** is an eminent philosopher and Sanskritist. At present, he is Chairman, Indian Council of Philosophical Research. He is also Chairman of the Indian Philosophical Congress and Asian Congress of Philosophy. He retired as Professor and Head, Department of Philosophy, University of Delhi, Delhi. He is internationally known as an authority on ancient Indian culture, Buddhism, Jainism and Vedanta. His research areas include Indian philosophy, logic, epistemology, ethics, value theory, philosophy of education, philosophy of religion, comparative religion, social and political thought, etc. He has lectured in many universities and research institutes in the United States, Canada, Finland, Trinidad, North Korea, South Korea, Japan, China, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Singapore and Thailand. He is a member of many national and international associations. He is a member of the Board of Advisors of the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, Washington, D.C., which has brought out several volumes on world cultures and civilizations.

# Table of Diacritical Marks

## Key to Transliteration (using diacritical marks)

	अ	इ	उ	ऋ				
	a	i	u	ṛ				
आ	ई	उ	ए	ऐ	ओ	औ	अं	अःa
ā	ī	ū	e	ai	o	au	am	aḥ

## Classified Consonants

क	ख	ग	घ	ङ
k	kh	g	gh	ṅ

च	छ	ज	झ	ञ
c	ch	j	jh	ñ

ट	ठ	ड	ढ	ण
ṭ	ṭh	ḍ	ḍh	ṇ

त	थ	द	ध	न
t	th	d	dh	n

प	फ	ब	भ	म	म् (intermidate)
p	ph	b	bh	m	m̐

## Unclassified Consonants

य	र	ल	व	श	ष	स	ह	क्ष	त्र	ज्ञ
Y	r	l	v	ś	ṣ	s	h	kṣa	tra	jña

Anusvaraḥ-(◌)	⇒	m̐
Visargaḥ-(◌)	⇒	ḥ

# Chapter 1

## Philosophy and Education



**Abstract** The present chapter deals with the experience-centric, goal-oriented and practical nature of philosophy keeping the Indian context in view, which is holistic and integral. It delineates the nature of and need for education. It emphasizes the role of knowledge in education for personality enhancement, character development, and betterment of quality of life. The chapter highlights the contribution of philosophical reflections in the theory and practice of education.

**Keywords** Philosophy · Reality · Education · Holistic and integral approach  
Personality enhancement · Character development · Quality of life

### Introduction

It has been said about Hegelian philosophy that it died of being misunderstood. The same has been the case with general philosophy as well. So much has it been misconceived, mistrusted and misused that the word “philosophy” is more often than not used contemptuously to brand anything that is vague, confusing and abstruse. To a great extent, the so-called philosophers and the teachers of philosophy are responsible for this plight of philosophy. Therefore, before we embark upon our avowed task of establishing the correlation between philosophy and education, we shall do well to see the exact nature and function of philosophy, education and the philosophy of education.

### Nature of Philosophy

Etymologically, philosophy means love of wisdom, but functionally it means both the seeking of wisdom (process) and the wisdom sought (outcome). This wisdom, it must be made clear, is in no way mere abstract ratiocination or information seeking. It really means a prudent and practical orientation and a vision for use in life based on veridical knowledge. Philosophy, thus, stands both for the theoretical knowledge

of the nature of Reality and the nature of life and its forms and conditions, and the practical (applied) knowledge of the principles of conduct for the guidance of life. It is a systematic reflection on the entire Reality with a view to fathoming its mysterious potentialities for possible actualization. Because of its ability of self-reflection, self-awareness, and self-realization human life is the most significant facet of Reality, and therefore it is one of the most important tasks of philosophy to solve the riddles of human life and existence and provide opportunities for the fullest possible efflorescence. Philosophy thus is concerned with Reality within, Reality without, and Reality beyond.

In the twentieth century, under the impact of empiricism and positivism, an attempt was made by some philosophers to restrict the scope and function of philosophy to mere linguistic analysis and logical hair-splitting or to abstract analysis of the phenomenology of experience. Undoubtedly such an analysis has its own importance in clearing the rubbish from the path of philosophical thinking, but that is not the end-all and be-all of philosophy. That is just a preliminary task. Philosophy has to do something deeper and more serious. It has to address itself to the imminent problems facing humankind, failing which it would cease to be the “queen” of all the disciplines (*pradīpaḥ sarva vidyānām*). It is redeeming to note that in the twenty first century, there is a welcome shift and an “about-turn” in philosophizing and philosophy has become applied as well.

## **Philosophy as *Darśana***

Philosophy, as *darśana* in the Indian context, is a systematic reflection by a thoughtful human mind upon *lived* experiences in order to benefit from the same for the realization of quality in worldly life (*abhyūdaya*) and ultimately the *summum bonum* of life (*niḥśreyas*). It is mainly an enterprise of self-awareness, self-reflection, and self-realization, but taking into account the entire gamut of Reality. Right from the dawn of human civilization, the Indian mind has been given to philosophical reflections. It is essentially goal oriented in the form of the fullest efflorescence of our inherent potentialities and therefore it is also called *mokṣasāstra*. So, any account of philosophy has to begin with the philosophy of life as lived and to be lived in this cosmos. It is a search for the ideal of life along with an endeavour to realize the same. Thus, it is not merely a view of life but a way of life based on it. It has an essential practical orientation.

## **Goal-oriented Nature of Philosophy**

Philosophy as *darśana* is essentially goal oriented, as stated earlier. That is why most of the philosophical works in India begin with stating the aims and objectives of their composition. A philosophical enterprise is not a futile exercise but a

purposeful activity. Philosophical reflections consist not in just raising questions but also in providing their efficacious solutions. A genuine philosophical thought, therefore, has to be prompted by life's urges and ideals, problems and vicissitudes. Since human life is one of the most evolved and significant facets of Reality, it is an important task of philosophy to help in solving the riddles of human life and existence and also in paving the way for the attainment of the *summum bonum* of life. The chief motive of all thinkers, schools, and systems of philosophy in India has been the search for the proximate and ultimate ideals of life. For this they have constructed elaborate systems of epistemology and logic, metaphysics and morals, social and political thought, language and hermeneutics, all in the Indian context and in the Indian setting. This search for the ideals of life implies that they were not satisfied with actual life—material, intellectual, moral, and religious, both individual and social. At the empirical level, the problems and riddles of life arise due to the finitude and infirmities of human nature along with socio-politico-economic and other material conditions in which human beings are born and brought up. These are not merely theoretical questions but practical ones which are to be faced in concrete life situations. The real worth and utility of the philosophical enterprise lies in providing the required and desired solutions which may supply practical guidance to human society, failing which it ceases to be of any value and worth.

## **Experience-centricity of Life and Philosophy**

To undergo experiences is a feature common to all living beings. But nature has endowed human beings with the unique capacity to heighten, deepen and widen experiences and also to reflect upon them. It is a prerogative of the human being to retain experiences, to ratiocinate about them, to discriminate among them and to articulate all these in clear, distinct and logical terms. Conceptualization and verbalization of experiences provide human beings with immense empowerment. A human being who possesses reflective awareness can exercise the rational ability to regulate experiences by manipulating innate endowments and external surroundings after examining the veracity, utility and significance of his/her experiences. Human cognitive and reflective potentiality is tremendous and unfathomable. It is wondrous and variegated. It admits of expansion, manipulation, regulation and systematization. It would be a sheer wastage of human potentiality if such an exercise is not undertaken.

The Vedic seers describe humans as the offspring of the Infinite (*amṛtasya putrāḥ*) and enjoin us to utilize our potentialities for the betterment and excellence of life. Philosophy as *darśana* springs from experience; it is embedded in experience and gets its culmination in experience. It thus begins from experience and ends in experience. It is rooted in experience and is tied down to experience. To be meaningful and useful it has to confine itself to the arena of experiences alone. Experience is the only gateway to Reality, knowledge, values and their realization. They are apprehended in experience and there is no other way or means to have

access to them. They are amenable to experience and genuine experience must pertain to them. To experience is to experience the real. The unreal is never experienced but only imagined or hypostatized and superimposed. The human mind has this capacity of abstraction, computation and superimposition. It can also discriminate between the real and the unreal, the experienced and the mentally construed. Of course, the construed also has its significance, value and utility. It is given the status of knowledge in a different capacity and in a different context as *ūhā*. It is sometimes called speculation. A speculative enterprise begins from experience, but it gets entangled in the labyrinth of the imagination and becomes removed from Reality. It has importance but its role is ancillary and subservient to experience. So long as it helps experience in revealing the depths, complexity and subtlety of Reality, it has meaning, value and utility.

In India, philosophy has been done foundationally as *īkṣā* and derivatively as *anvīkṣā* and *parīkṣā*. *Īkṣā* stands for viewing Reality *as it is* (*yathā bhūta*). For this experience is the only starting point and the overriding factor. The role of reasoning in the form of *tarka* or *yukti* is only next to that known as *anvīkṣā* and *parīkṣā*. They are therefore called *anu+īkṣā* (i.e., that which follows *īkṣā* as post-reflection) and *pari + īkṣā* (complete examination). *Īkṣā* stands for immediate apprehension and direct realization. When veritable experience gets consolidated and codified, it becomes *śruti* and *śrutiparamparā*. Thus, *anubhava*, *yukti* and *śrutiparamparā* are the triple foundations of doing *darśana* in the Indian context. No history of Indian philosophy can be genuine and representative unless all these three are made use of symbiotically. It should not be forgotten that the Indian mind has been both intuitive and argumentative.

Every system of philosophical thought in India is an outcome of the felt need of the age and therefore it has a social context and definite purpose. One of the requirements of the composition of a text (*śāstra-racanā*), technically known as *anubandhacatuṣṭaya*, is *prayojana* (objective of writing). So, for every school and system there is a rationale and a justification for writing their treatises and that should be discerned and prominently put forth in writing the history. Right from Vedic times, we have been told by the seers and thinkers that the Real, as experienced, is multifaceted and therefore there can be diverse and multiple apprehensions of the Real. Likewise there can be alternative approaches to and understandings of one and the same facet. Every *darśana* is therefore a viewpoint (*mata* or *naya*). Every system is perfect in itself but not complete. It is perfect in terms of its conceptual framework and theorizing from its presuppositions and basic premises. It is not complete in so far as it admits of improvement and advancement. There can be refinements in its presuppositions and conceptual framework but no outright rejection. The process of precision making or the drawing out of implications can be done without affecting or mutilating its basic framework. Branches within a school or system emerge on account of differences of opinion, and that is permissible in philosophizing. So also, inter-school differences are permissible. There can be attempts to reconcile the differences, but it is not necessary that there must be resolution. *Samanvaya* (coordination) is a guiding principle but not an overriding one. One may agree to disagree. What is significant is that it should be

vouchsafed by experience and reasonably worked out. The development of *vāda* as a mode of philosophizing has been occasioned because of this requirement. In this enterprise, care should be taken to present the *pūrvapakṣa* (rival viewpoint) in the most authentic way, otherwise the whole exercise of philosophizing would be fruitless. The development of philosophy has been possible in India only through *vāda* (exchange of views) which makes mutual interaction possible.

## **Practical Orientation of Philosophy**

Doing *darśana* is thus not speculation or brooding. It is primarily theoretical and not speculative, and therefore must have a practical orientation. It must entail practice. There is a popular saying that knowledge without action is a burden. If philosophical reflection is not applied to concrete life situations, it is incomplete and abortive. It will have an abrupt end if it is not put to use or if it does not fructify in action in the form of realization. There is no chasm or incompatibility between being and knowing on the one hand and between knowing and doing on the other. The relation among the three is to be viewed as symmetrical and transitive. Reality is at once all these three, but the modes of their realization are different and varied. This is because Reality is multifaceted and multilayered. This fact is vouchsafed by experience only. We do not have to go beyond the ambit of experience to apprehend Reality.

## **Philosophy as Symbiosis of Theory and Practice, Knowledge and Conduct**

Thus, philosophy in the Indian context is a symbiosis of theoretical knowledge and practical wisdom expressed in concrete life situations. Philosophy is basically a *tattvadr̥ṣṭi* (view of Reality), and based on that it is *jīvanadr̥ṣṭi* (way of life). It springs from experiences but does not accept them at their face value or superficial appearances. It dives deep into them, questions them, probes into them, evaluates them and ultimately views them in their veridical form in a holistic and integral way. It is not for nothing that Arthur Schopenhauer was enamoured of Indian thought when he wrote,

“But the conviction here described and arising directly out of the apprehension of nature must have been extremely lively in those sublime authors of the Upanishads of the Vedas who can scarcely be regarded mere human beings. For, this conviction speaks to us so forcibly from an immense number of their utterances that we must ascribe this immediate illumination of their mind to the fact that standing nearer to the origin of our race as regards time, these sages apprehended the inner essence of things more clearly and profoundly than the already enfeebled race, as mortals now we are, is capable of doing so.” (Schopenhauer, p. 475)

Schopenhauer described the Upaniṣads as “solace of my life and solace of my death”.

Charles Moore, former director of the East-West Center of Hawaii University, has also perceptively opined about Indian philosophy that “there are very significant ideas and concepts there no matter how old they are—to which the rest of the world may well turn for new insights and perhaps deeper wisdom” (p. 8). He further writes,

“In this respect India provides the basis for a potential philosophical renaissance, if only the rest of the world, especially the west, will search out the new insights, the new intuitions, the new attitudes and methods which might well at least supplement if not replace or correct and at least enlarge the restricted perspective of the western mind.” (Ibid., p. 9)

In the same vein, Edward J. Urwick in his book *The Message of Plato: A Reinterpretation of the Republic* writes as follows:

“But I affirm very confidently that if anyone will make himself familiar with the old Indian wisdom—religion of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads, will shake himself free, for the moment, from the academic attitude and the limiting Western conception of philosophy, and will then read Plato’s dialogues, he will hardly fail to realize that both are occupied with the selfsame search, inspired by the same faith and drawn upwards by the same vision.” (2014, p. 14)

## Culture-embeddedness of Philosophy

To philosophize is one of the significant ways of utilizing human potentiality in terms of thought constructions and system building with regard to the nature of Reality, knowledge, and values with a practical orientation. As stated earlier, every system of thought is an outcome of felt needs and aspirations of an age and a cultural milieu. Philosophical reflections do not originate in a cultural vacuum or void. To be meaningful and useful, they have to be rooted in culture-specific experiences.

Culture is a complex whole, the sum total of knowledge, beliefs, customs, habits, morals, law, art, science and technology, and other forms and techniques of living inspired by certain collective urges and fundamental values which human beings cherish and acquire as members of society. It is a cumulative effect of the total heritage generated and passed down by a society, resulting in a form of life based on and shaped by a common outlook. A value schema evolved, pursued and practised by a society results in a *paramparā* (tradition). A *paramparā* has to be deeply rooted in the past, firmly footed in the present and illuminated by a bright vision of the future. Then only it is *live paramparā*. If it loses its utility then it becomes dead and is discarded.

Philosophers have to operate in the social milieu in which they exist, and have the duty and responsibility to interpret their own culture and also devise ways and means of intercultural understanding. But this cultural specificity does not mean that philosophical reflections do not have universal relevance and utility, as human

nature, needs and aspirations are more or less the same across cultures. Though they have local origins, they have global appeal. Philosophy should have local and global, individual and universal dimensions. That is why the Vedic seers insist that noble thoughts should come to us from all over the world and we should transform the whole humanity into nobility (*ārya*). Human cultural heritage is open to all and should be shared by all. There cannot be any confinement or closed-ness about it.

## **Holistic and Integral Nature of Philosophy**

A philosophical enquiry has to be undertaken keeping in view the entire wide and variegated Reality that is the object of reflection. By its very nature it cannot be piecemeal, fragmented and compartmentalized, even though there may be a selective focus on some specific aspects with some specific objectives. It is a holistic and integral perspective keeping the entire Reality in view. It is an enquiry into the entire gamut of Reality, knowledge and values in order to understand their nature, meaning and significance and to shape human and cosmic existence accordingly. So it has a definite purpose and an end to realize. It is not a non-purposeful endeavour. It is to be done with the objective of being benefited by it in shaping the present existence, the future projections and the ultimate destiny of humankind in particular and of the whole cosmos in general. Naturally therefore, the individual human self, human society, cosmic evolution, natural environment, scientific and technological and cultural enterprises, etc., become the focal points in purposeful philosophizing. Considerations of deeper issues concerning these areas provide a practical orientation in the context of human life planning, social engineering, science policy and environmental stewardship.

## **Nature and Dimensions of doing Philosophy in India**

Indian philosophy is vast and varied in its scope. It presents a complex thought structure. It has not arisen only out of the intellectual turmoil of wonder and doubt, but it has also emerged from the “turbulence of spirit” and the “tribulations of flesh”. It is not mere epistemology and logic, metaphysics and ethics, religion and mysticism, natural and social sciences, eschatology and soteriology, but an organic synthesis of all these modes of thinking and ways of living. It exhibits a free and vital democracy in ideas and practices, a democracy which is tempered and seasoned by varied and variegated experiences, profound and deep insights, ancient and rich traditions, and cogent and coherent reasoning.

According to the Indian viewpoint, as stated earlier, Reality is manifold and variegated. It is experienced as multifaceted and multilayered. Because of its variety and manifoldness, there can be multiple approaches to comprehending it and describing it. In view of this rich diversity, there should not be any insistence on

uniformity or unanimity in our modes of thinking and ways of living. There cannot be any regimentation in this regard. So it would be improper and unjust to insist that there can be only one particular form of philosophizing that has to be universally acceptable. Genuine philosophical activity has to stem from concretely lived experiences that are culturally conditioned, and therefore democracy in ideas has to be the guiding point. There should always be a scope for healthy philosophical disagreement. Thoughtful and creative minds need not always agree or think along a fixed path. There is room for debate and discussion, mutual exchanges, give and take, in arriving at truth. This is enjoined in a well-known philosophical saying, *Vāde vāde jāyate tattvabodhah*. Even though there can be diverse modes of philosophizing, this enterprise has to be rational, logical, and methodical. Then only it is reasonable and acceptable. In ancient times, this was properly appreciated and practised, but later on some sort of dogmatism vitiated the philosophical atmosphere. There is a need for revival of this approach. Then only fresh approaches, newer intuitions, novel insights and innovative ideas are possible.

Against this background, we can formulate three important tasks of philosophy:

1. To study the nature and phenomenology of our knowledge, and to formulate the norms and criteria of its sources, validity, and truth.
2. To ascertain, in the light of and by means of the instruments and equipment so developed, the nature of Reality—within (human life), without (external world), and beyond (supra-mundane Reality).
3. And, finally, in the light of and on the basis of the enlightenment so gathered, to develop and formulate, for life's guidance, the goals or values and the means and modalities to realize the same.

## What Is Education?

Education is a conscious process which consists in a planned and methodical modification of the natural development of the human. The human being is imperfect by nature. His/her life is a process of development which tends towards something which is more perfect. This results in the modification of his/her behaviour pattern. In order that this modification may not fall short of its goal, it must be well planned and well engineered. This presupposes an adequate formulation of the potentialities, beliefs, and aspirations of human existence, in other words, the aims or objectives of education.

Education is a deliberate process of transformation in the natural growth and development of the person and the surroundings. It ensures an accelerated process of development in human life with the right rhythm. It is therefore a means of betterment and enhancement of life, a means of bringing about a high quality of life-enhancing inherent potentialities with self-help and with the help of the social and natural surroundings. Education undoubtedly is a major force to go forward in life in a meaningful way. In so far as education is a conscious and planned effort to organize life, education and life are intimately correlated.

Education, moreover, is a medium through which the society transmits its heritage of past experiences and their modifications, its system of values, and the modes of or skills for acquiring the values. Thus, all education is a means to the betterment of human life. It is the fruitful utilization of the knowledge attained by humankind for the enhancement of human existence. It is therefore a preserver of healthy, life-sustaining and life-enhancing tradition.

## **Role of Knowledge in Education**

Knowledge plays a very fundamental role in the scheme of education. The aim of all education is to impart knowledge effectively and thereby generate “life skills”. The human being has an inherent need to know what is “within” and what is “around” in the surroundings. This helps in the betterment of life by making the best use of that knowledge. In this sense, “knowledge is power” and it helps in the empowerment of the individual. Knowledge prepares successful life entrepreneurs among people who can carve a niche for themselves. A person who possesses adequate knowledge can soar to great heights of success in all walks of life. He/she can develop the capacity and confidence to take on the challenges of life. Knowledge generates the feeling of self-worth, self-respect, and self-confidence, and of independent existence which is the authentic existence. Through this a person can command respect from others as well. In this sense, knowledge is an elevating and enhancing force.

## **Education for Personality Enhancement**

A robust, vibrant and holistic education ensures the all-round development of an individual. It provides opportunities for the fullest possible efflorescence of inherent potentialities and enhances the capabilities to realize this. Personality development should mean the fullest possible manifestation of natural traits implicit in our being. Of course, it does involve the transformation of natural propensities, and this is the goal of culture, but this should not be unnatural or anti-nature. Culture is non-natural but not anti-natural. The Vedic seers addressed humans as *amṛtasya putrāḥ*, which implies that we are no doubt finite but we are born with infinite potentialities and we can infinitize our finitude. All individuals are born with some innate, dormant personal traits unique to themselves based on which they can be distinguished. These traits are amenable to endless transformation. Education helps in their enhancement. It is a sure means of health and strength of body, enrichment of mind, maturity of emotions, sharpening of intellect and illumination of spirit. Thus it is a process of physical, vital, mental (volitional and emotional), intellectual and spiritual growth. The Vedic seers exhorted humans by saying, *Manurbhava janayā daivyaṃ janam*. That is, “Be a person and cultivate noble qualities in life.”

For this realization, the role of education was highlighted. In Indian tradition, two accounts of value or goal of education are available. One is, *sā vidyā yā vimuktaye* (knowledge that liberates) and the other is, *sā vidyā yā arthakarī* (knowledge that affords quality of life). Both these are complementary, as education has to serve both the purposes. On the one hand, it should be ennobling and liberating from imperfections—cognitive, conative and affective, thus leading to character formation and personality development; on the other hand, it should also be enabling of a good quality of living. Thus, personality enhancement, character development and career making are the basic purposes of education.

By introducing better living, both in terms of character development and career making, education creates an interest in moving forward in life with greater strides by generating a positive mind.

## Education for Character Development

In contemporary times, humanity is facing an acute crisis of loss of character, a sort of value entropy and value negativism. The problem is how to ensure the needed character development. Character development is basically a relational notion. It stands for cultivation of certain qualities which are necessary to make human life worth living. These qualities may be in relation to one's own self and in relation to others. The generic term "self-realization" stands for qualities in relation to both. In a restricted sense, it stands for the former, and in a wider sense it means the latter. A human being in order to be called a "person" in the true sense of the term has to develop discriminative awareness (*viveka*), must have the capacity to exercise free will (*icchā-svātantrya*, *svarāt*) and must be responsible for his or her conduct (*bhoktā*). The other facet of quality cultivation is in relation to other human beings, all living beings, and nature. Knowledge, will and conduct are the three areas where the human individual has to excel. Four cardinal virtues—*maitrī* (universal friendship), *karuṇā* (universal compassion), *muditā* (universal benevolence) and *upekṣā* (selflessness and equanimity)—can envelop all these qualities. In Indian culture and in the classical system of education, these qualities were highlighted. It has been emphasized that only through proper education can this self-realization be achieved. It is the responsibility of the family, society and state to provide adequate opportunity for this.

In modern times, we have not only forgotten these noble qualities but we have also disowned our responsibility. The consequence is that there are multiple problems coming up and facing humankind. Unfortunately, we are alive to the problems, but we only raise an alarm and tend to the symptoms, and do not bother about the roots of the problems. Of course, the roots are not confined to the sphere of education but are spread all around. One has also to go outside the educational arena to the environments of the family, neighbourhood, caste or clan, workplace, marketplace, society, nation and the world at large. In fact, modern technological developments have relegated the educational set-up to the background, parental

mediation has declined, and a new type of group influence, mostly the unhealthy and perverting type of peer group of TV and other mass media, has acquired overpowering influence on the human mind. Nevertheless, the role of education cannot be minimized. Education can be geared so as to manage the media and re-mould human character, which is the need of the times. We live in a media-dominated age, an age in which the principles, ideals, symbols and images that give direction to our life and provide our sense of “being” are largely presented by the media through its vast and varied array of agencies. Through proper education, we can make use of this medium to enable us to reach messages that are ennobling and which may tell us what we are, what we have to be, what we have to do or not do, and how we have to live, etc.

It should be noted that character development is a natural-cum-social process rooted in the human individual but shaped by all types of environment. A holistic and integral perspective and an organic approach to life and Reality are the real solution to this malady, and there is no other way out of this labyrinth. We live in a world of coexistence and interdependence, of mutuality and reciprocity with the “other”; and therefore respect for the “other”, mutual care and share, universal responsibility, and *not just demands for rights*, can surely rectify the situation. Given the requisite knowledge, will and courage, it is not impossible though it is difficult and requires universal, all-round, systematic and planned endeavour. It is hoped that sooner or later, saner sense will prevail upon humanity. This has been the message of seers and sages all over the world at all times.

## **Education for Living and Livelihood**

Education is an important tool not only for survival, but also for quality of life in a competitive world. Cultivating life skills for vocational choice is a preparation for life, for living with dignity and joy, with economic self-sufficiency and material comforts, with mental happiness and spiritual satisfaction. It opens up glittering careers, booming career options, and attractive career advancement by creating a knowledge hub. Education as knowledge serves as a motive force for vocational choice, as a “success vitamin” or “ladder to success”, by generating competitive excellence and thus leads to a brighter tomorrow. Career planning is a process that should go on throughout life as we evolve and grow with our experiences. This is so because the occupational world is dynamic and expanding, the job market is volatile, newer opportunities become available, and therefore there is demand for professional development in the work situation. It is in fact a part of the function of education to help escape not from our own time—for we are bound by that—but from the intellectual and emotional limitations of our time, a transition from the present to the future. Thus, education is a liberating force from poverty and deprivation, stagnation and decadence.

Career planning should also be a process in accordance with one’s nature and inherent potentialities. It has to keep in view the goal of career making, the means

and the modalities involved. Without adequate awareness or knowledge of these, any attempt at career making is hazardous and random. There has to be vocational planning. The goal must be desirable and in conformity with one's nature. The means must be in accordance with and conducive to the realization of the goal and available to the pursuer, and the employment of modalities has to be efficacious and skilful. The ends, means and modalities constitute an organic unity in keeping with our psycho-physical make-up.

## **Education as a Life-prolonging Force**

By bringing about better living, education creates an interest in moving ahead in life with greater strides. It thus provides meaning to life and also a sense of fulfilment and satisfaction. Therefore it can be said that education is the most important thing other than peace of mind. In the course of life, favourable or adverse circumstances come unexpectedly and there can be ups and down. It is only the right type of education that can enable us to bear and endure adversity and carry us through. In this sense, education is a life-prolonging force.

## **Education is a Hallmark of Civil Society**

Education is a unique gift and a prerogative of human beings. It alone distinguishes a human being from lower animals. It is thus "human making", it makes a human being worth the name. The right type of education provides for democratic thinking and living. It is character building and results in the refinement of conduct. It generates enlightened and responsible citizens. A value-oriented education transforms human life from a savage to a civilized state of existence. It broadens the vision and enlarges the heart and thus paves the way for mutual caring and sharing, by making us live together in peace and harmony. It is thus an ennobling force. It emancipates us from ignorance, superstitions, false beliefs and moral infirmity. It may be compared to precious wealth that cannot be stolen, an ornament that can adorn a human being. This thus provides dignity and respectability to human beings.

## **Right to Education is Fundamental**

On account of the significance and importance of education, every person stands in need of it, and this calls for a right to education. It has to be a fundamental right, to be granted by the society to each and every individual. Denial of this right is suicidal not only for the individual but also for the society as a whole. The right to

education is not a privilege but a necessity. It is not something to be demanded and granted but *suo motu* to be given. We have a saying that without education the human being is like an animal (*vidyāvihīno paśubhirsamānā*). There are multiple uses and benefits of education, and therefore every person should get the best possible education. It is the responsibility of the parents and society to provide a congenial atmosphere and opportunities to every person to get a proper and adequate education so that he or she can march ahead in life with full satisfaction and adequate realization.

## **Present-day Scenario and the Need for Education**

In contemporary times, as mentioned earlier, humanity is facing a severe crisis of loss of character and valuelessness. It is not that this is a recent phenomenon. In every period and in every society this has been felt, but the magnitude is much more alarming in the present age, resulting in all-round destructive behaviour. The irony of the situation is that we have become conditioned to this mode of living. The problem is how to ensure the needed character development, how to overcome the chasm between knowledge of values and realization of values. There is explosion of knowledge, but correspondingly there is no enhancement of living a life worthy of human beings. This alarming situation calls for a new paradigm of education on the basis of deep philosophical thinking.

## **Philosophy and Education**

Every philosopher, if she is to make her philosophy of any worth, must determine what her philosophizing implies for the process of education, because *to know is to be* (i.e., knowledge is for the sake of being), and in order *to be*, education is the only means that is proper and adequate. The history of humankind testifies to the fact that all the great educators were also great philosophers, and their philosophical views were inevitably reflected in their educational schemes.

Since education is an instrument for the betterment of life, all educational questions in their ultimate analysis rest on the philosophy of life. Although not very many of the modern educationists attempt a precise formulation of their philosophy of life, none can afford to miss it. As it has been said, there can be no alternative between philosophy and no philosophy, but only between a good philosophy and a bad philosophy, a systematic philosophy and a jumble of ideas. If the dependence of education on philosophy is so inevitable, then why neglect it? Why not admit it from the start instead of imposing it post facto?

The modern estrangement between philosophy and education has been unfortunate for both fields. Such of those modern educationists who tend to rely on empirical sciences at the cost of philosophy need only to be reminded of what

ancient thinkers had said that true education is practicable only by a true philosopher. They had warned that the belief that human beings may continue to educate without concerning themselves with the subtle problems of philosophy means a failure to understand the precise nature of education. Similarly, some of the present-day “philosophy scholars” of India, who betray the restricted view of the sphere of philosophy, should also be told that Plato and Hume, Russell and Whitehead, Husserl and Wittgenstein, etc., from whom they have derived inspiration, did not regard education as a study unworthy of philosophical consideration.

## **What can Philosophy Contribute to Education?**

If general philosophy is a systematic reflection on the entirety of life to understand its nature, then educational philosophy is also a systematic reflection comprehending the phenomenon of education in its entirety. Every system of education has to base itself on certain ends and policies, and it is the business of philosophy to provide these ends and policies. The framing and selection of educational ends and policies presuppose value considerations and value judgements. The discipline of education, because of its positive nature, cannot make normative decisions. Hence the need for a philosophical framework. All the major issues of education are at bottom philosophical. We cannot examine existing educational ideals and policies, or suggest new ones, without considering such general philosophical problems as the nature of the good life to which education should lead; the understanding of human beings, because it is humans we are educating; of society because education is a social process; and of the ultimate structure of Reality which all knowledge seeks to penetrate.

Philosophy is helpful to education in four important ways:

1. in providing theories of the human, society, and the world;
2. in suggesting the ends and means of the system of education;
3. in examining the rationality of our educational ideals, their consistency with other ideals, and in ruling out the part played in them by wishful or unexamined thinking; in testing the logic of our language and concepts and their adequacy in explaining the facts they seek to explain, and in demonstrating the inconsistencies in our theories and indicating the precise range of the theories that are left when the inconsistencies are removed;
4. in evolving a suitable system of educational planning and administration and a teaching–learning–evaluation strategy for an effective and efficacious educational process to solve the problems of life.

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# Chapter 2

## Philosophical Foundations of Education



**Abstract** This chapter pertains to the axionoetic foundations of education. It deals with different theories of knowledge and their implications for education. It calls for their symbiotic application to the theory and practice of education, particularly in curriculum-framing and teaching–learning strategy.

**Keywords** Noetic basis of education · Value-oriented education  
Knowledge · Curriculum · Teaching–learning strategy

### Introduction

Every system of education must have its footing in the solid basis of a systematic reflection about the nature of Reality (*sat*), knowledge (*cit*), and values (*ānanda*). Of the three philosophical foundations of education, viz., ontological (pertaining to *sat*), epistemic and logical (pertaining to *cit*), and axiological (pertaining to *ānanda*), it is the epistemic which is the most fundamental and therefore the foremost in importance (though not the ultimate). This is because, though Reality has existential priority, it is knowledge which has noetic priority. That is, in order that there can be knowledge at all, there must be a prior being of Reality. But in the noetic process, knowledge reveals Reality and thus acquires priority. Therefore, from a human point of view, the approach to Reality is only through knowledge, and there is no passage from Reality to knowledge.

As regards value, it constitutes the very culmination of the process of existence and knowledge, and thus comes at the end as an apex. In this sense, it has primacy over all others. However, in this book we shall concentrate on the axionoetic foundation because of its basic significance in providing a foundation to education. We presuppose the Vedic-Upaniṣadic theory of Reality which is holistic and integral and most suitable to providing a sound foundation for education.

## **Facets of the Noetic Basis of Education**

Knowledge plays a fundamental role in the sphere of education. It is the very stock-in-trade, so to say, of education. And that is why a theory of knowledge is quite basic to any theory of education. The epistemic inquiry helps to evaluate educational thoughts and practices, develops them, and thus enables us to use them as instruments of human progress. One of the important functions of education is the acquisition and imparting of knowledge, but before we undertake this teaching–learning process, it is desirable to know the nature, sources, and validation of knowledge itself so as to get an insight into the complexities and intra-connections of its diverse forms and facets. This would not only help us in maintaining proportion and perspective in the curriculum, but would also enable us to avoid the superficial and get at the essential.

Further, education is a purposive activity, devoted to the development of an individual's personality. Its direction and shape are determined by human beliefs, aspirations, aims and ideals, which in turn are based on and moulded by knowledge. Education thus is determined in structure, contents, range, etc., by the varied forms of knowledge and their hierarchical interrelations. Therefore, no theory, or for that matter practice, of education can be complete and enduring if it is devoid of its noetic foundation. We will now discuss in brief some of the broad areas where epistemology provides a basis to education.

## **Knowledge, Values and Education**

Philosophy, and epistemology for that matter, is concerned, among other things, with the problem of value. This is because philosophy attempts to study Reality keeping the human being in focus. There is an innate necessity for the human being, caused by its finitude and imperfection, to participate in the process of value realization. Now all questions about values are basically epistemological. For example, what are the nature and the sources of values? What kind of existence do they have? How can they be acquired? And such questions presuppose the capacity of the human mind to know and realize values. All these questions are equally relevant to education. For example, if it is said that only by effort can one know and realize a value, this is just the same as to say that experiences which educate are fundamental to value realization. A way of looking at value epistemologically necessarily needs to look to educative activities as the means for their realization.

From the above, it is quite evident that the process of value realization is basically an educational one. The process of education tends to refer to a set of values or ideals embodied and expressed in the objectives for which knowledge is imparted. That is why questions as to what is human and what he/she aspires to are the unavoidable preamble to any kind of education, formal or informal.

## Nature of Knowledge

The problem of the nature of knowledge has occasioned a severe controversy in the field of epistemology. Different schools of thought, starting from different metaphysical assumptions, have taken different positions and have offered different answers for this. These various epistemic approaches have greatly influenced and moulded the thought and practice of education. They are reflected in similar corresponding shades in the sphere of education. For example, if knowing is identified with doing, as a pragmatist or instrumentalist would affirm, its natural consequence in the field of education would be a stress upon activity methods, like projects, experiments, problem solving, etc. The only genuine knowledge would be knowledge-in-action. The possession of a body of certified knowledge would be at a discount. The past heritage may not be considered important. The contemplative and meditative sides of education, quiet enjoyment of literary and artistic pursuits, etc., would be marked down and emphasis would be laid on knowledge by acquaintance.

Instead, like a realist, if knowing is regarded as representing something outside which is there to be known, then education would be regarded as a medium of revealing the outer reality to the knower. Learning would be regarded as true and effective if a pupil's impressions correspond to outer reality. The learner would be regarded as a passive instrument, having an empty mind, a *tabula rasa*, as Locke would put it, when she starts the process of knowing. Through the curriculum, only that knowledge would be imparted which was already known to the teacher and the textbook writer. All new inventions would tend to be regarded as mere discoveries. Greater emphasis would be laid on the natural sciences and knowledge of the external world. Religion, spirituality, and disciplines based on introspection, etc., would fall into disuse. Knowledge by description would not be discarded, but, on the contrary, established traditions would be banked upon.

As an idealist, emphasis would be laid on the constructive activity of the mind out of what is given in immediate experience. Knowledge would not be regarded as about existence but as existence itself. The pupil would be regarded as "in the process of becoming", and education as the means to the fullest efflorescence of the potentialities of the human being lying hidden in her. Education would be a constant training of body, will, and mind. It would consist of not merely the study of books, etc., but of active participation in, personal identification with, and real embodiment of what is known. In the learning process, self-activity, introspection, meditation, etc., would acquire prominence. As against the traditional formal and naturalistic education of the realist, there would be greater freedom for imaginative insight. Spiritual education would occupy a place of honour in the curriculum.

Further, if by knowledge we mean only that which is stated either orally or in writing, then such a view would certainly put a premium upon verbal examinations. If by knowledge we mean that which is useful in adjustment, then, like the pragmatist, practical efficiency and experiments would be relied upon. If by knowledge we mean inner experience which is ineffable, as a mystic or intuitionist would

contend, then the consequences of such a view would be that written examinations would be at a discount.

Now, a little reflection on the metaphysical assumptions from which these schools start would make it clear that they do not use the word “knowing” in one and the same sense, hence the diversity in their positions. The pragmatist uses the word “knowing” in the sense of that activity, mental or physical, which helps the individual in the struggle with the environment for existence. The realist, however, uses the word “knowing” in the sense of the mental process which enables a person to mirror the external reality to which he has to adjust for the advancement of life. An idealist, on the other hand, uses the word “knowing” in an altogether different sense. Since the idealist does not believe in any independent outer reality, friendly or otherwise, for her, all knowing is “self-knowledge” only, and it consists in being aware of one’s own “Being”. This analysis clearly suggests that there is no antagonism in the diverse positions adopted by these schools, and they can be regarded as complementary. They refer to different phases of life and Reality, and therefore in a particular context each one is true. This conclusion would certainly have a tremendous effect in the field of education, since educators are very often led to think that these schools are quite incompatible and the educational implications of one school can never be compatible with the educational implications of the other schools. Such a fallacy of exclusiveness can be brought to the notice of educationists only through the judicious analysis of the epistemological positions of the so-called conflicting schools.

## **Sources of Knowledge and Education**

With regard to the sources of genuine knowledge, again, there has been no unanimity among the philosophers. Different thinkers, having different backgrounds and assumptions, have emphasized different sources like sense perception, reason, intuition, revelation, authority, etc. These differences resulting in characteristic positions are reflected heavily in the planning of educational activities and programmes. For example, an empiricist who discards all a priori knowledge and accepts only a posteriori knowledge would attach exclusive weight to science and would fawn upon rationalistic philosophy and cognate rational disciplines. A rationalist, on the contrary, would bank upon a priori knowledge. The rationalist would discard all empirical studies as dubious and would harp upon purely theoretical and intellectual pursuits. A pragmatist, again, would go in another direction and accept only those disciplines which are based on immediate experience and which are helpful to the individual in promoting and furthering his/her life and existence. The pragmatist would emphasize vocational and practical education.

Here, again, a calm and serious reflection would help us realize that the facets of Reality are diverse, and hence diverse are the ways to know Reality. Consequently, none of the recognized sources of knowledge is false or complete. In the all-enveloping gamut of knowledge, each finds its adequate place, and hence none

should be discarded. Such a synthetic vision would have a tremendous impact in the sphere of education and would help to remove all false dichotomies.

## **Validation of Knowledge and Education**

One of the major tasks of education is to acquaint the pupil with the true criterion of knowledge. That education cannot be regarded as being of any worth or sense which does not enable a person to discern what is right, good and useful. No education can be perfect and complete if it merely concerns itself with the bare acquisition of knowledge without inculcating the ability to test its validity in concrete life situations. The optimum development of personality, which has been the recognized aim of education, requires the cultivation of a reasonably adequate pattern of judgement, and this can be provided only by imparting the definite criterion of meaning and truth. This is what is called the development of the critical faculty. This was the nature of education in ancient India.

Different criteria for truth have been advocated by different schools of thought. At the philosophical level, different schools working with different metaphysical and epistemological assumptions have usually shown a preference for one or the other of these criteria. But in actual practice, most of us are likely to use all the criteria usually proposed, with the emphasis shifting from one context to another. In daily affairs, in which our beliefs are concerned with events, objects, qualities and relations that can be perceived, we tend to accept the criterion of correspondence. On the other hand, when we are concerned with formal problems, dealing with conceptual relations, we tend to rely on the coherence test of truth. Instead, if we are concerned about the truth or desirability of complicated practical judgements or socio-political arrangements, we tend to use a pragmatist test judging the consequences of actions in terms of the more or less well-established norms or values of a culture. In the field of education, such a holistic and integral position would result in the synthesis of the triple tests of truth. This would widen the scope of curricula, teaching-learning-evaluation methodology, and value schema.

## **Knowledge and the Curriculum**

Knowledge plays a tremendously important role in the framing of the curriculum and the scheme of school organization. The curriculum being the only avenue of approach to knowledge, it behoves us to understand the nature of knowledge. Knowledge is the very essence or soul of the curriculum. A curriculum design or pattern is distinguished by the way in which it embodies knowledge. Therefore, before any framing of the curriculum can proceed, the curriculum framers must fully acquaint themselves not only with the nature, sources, and criteria of

knowledge, but also with the hierarchical organization and priorities of disciplines with regard to their teaching through the curriculum.

In the light of the above analysis of the problem pertaining to this area, we can examine the various traditional forms of curricula and, by an evaluation of their points of strength and weakness, we may evolve another form which may suit the growing needs of a country. The problem of explosion of knowledge can also be solved by discerning the essential from the superficial. Here we may put forth the following criterion for such discernment, viz., “what would be desirable knowledge for every human as a human in a particular context?” The answer to this may provide us with the guidelines for the formulation of the curriculum.

## **Knowledge and Teaching–Learning Strategy**

Since the aim of all education is to impart knowledge successfully, the success of the teaching–learning strategy lies in properly knocking at the door of knowledge. The curriculum is the store, as it were, in which all knowledge is locked up. The teaching–learning dynamics is the key to opening the lock and laying open the stored knowledge. This becomes possible only when the key is suitable to its purpose. This not only brings the teaching–learning strategy closer to knowledge, but also makes that process dependent on knowledge.

Different approaches to the nature of knowing and learning and their relationship would tend to make a difference in the nature of the teaching–learning process. For example, a pragmatist would want an active school, an active pupil and an activity-oriented programme. The function of a teacher would be not to impart theoretical knowledge, but to organize, select, and direct experiences so that participation in the activities may bring the maximum knowledge to the pupil. The interest of the pupil would be heavily relied on and it would be the responsibility of the teacher to stimulate, arouse, and direct the interest of the pupil. The pupils would not be asked to be engaged in fruitless memorization, but would be taught to think through the problems.

A realist, on the contrary, would stress the attainment of the knowledge of precise relationships between two facts, events, or objects. Learning would be regarded as conformity to what is outwardly true. The mind of the pupil would be repeatedly impressed with the nature of external things. Drill, memorization of well-established information, careful observation, and constant checking of facts would be some of the means of moulding the understanding to conform to what is objectively so. An idealist, on the other hand, would insist that education must conform to the supreme ideal of humankind, viz., fellowship with the Ultimate Reality. Here the teacher would be given a place of position and importance. Interest, effort, discipline, self-study, self-education, freedom of will, etc., would constitute the main features of learning process. The idealist would not make the pupil a devotee of any one particular method, but rather would like him/her to be a creator of method.

The above considerations would lead us to one important conclusion, viz., knowledge is the end and the teaching–learning process is the means to acquiring it. No means can be successful in the acquisition of its avowed end unless it is in conformity to its end. So it is the nature of knowledge which would determine, or from which would follow, the shape of teaching–learning strategy.

If we are experimenting with regard to a suitable and congenial form of teaching–learning strategy, then unless we are clear with regard to the nature of knowledge we have to impart, and also with regard to the curriculum which we have to evolve and frame, it would be quite futile and pointless to labour on experimenting upon the precise form of the teaching–learning strategy. As a matter of fact, such a thing would naturally come by way of consequence or as a corollary of the curriculum.

The upshot of the foregoing considerations is that from every angle of the educational problem, there comes a demand for a philosophical basis of education. The art of education will never attain complete clearness in itself without this basis. In subsequent chapters, these points are dealt with in detail.

# Chapter 3

## Nature, Sources, and Validation of Knowledge



**Abstract** In this chapter, the nature, sources and validation of knowledge are discussed in the light of theories of realism, idealism and pragmatism. The chapter emphasizes the role of knowledge in education, and underlines a holistic and integral approach.

**Keywords** True cognition · False cognition · Realism · Idealism  
Pragmatism · Correspondence theory of truth · Coherence theory of truth  
Pragmatic theory of truth

### Introduction

The nature, sources and validation of knowledge have always been problematic. There has never been unanimity among thinkers with regard to the precise nature of knowledge, because they look at it from a specific angle, and whatever vision they get from this angle that alone is regarded as genuine knowledge. Some look at it as something abstracted from life and as having an exclusive, unrelated existence. Others maintain that knowledge is dependent on life experiences and is subservient to them. It is nothing more than an instrument for the betterment of life. Some identify knowledge with pure cognition and deny its scope as extending to conation, whereas there are others who vigorously argue that conation is the very essence of knowledge. Some people advocate various levels or even kinds of knowledge, one subsuming the other.

### True and False Cognition

Though usually a twofold categorical distinction is maintained between valid/true cognition (*pramā*) and invalid/false cognition (*apramā*), some realistic thinkers do not accept any genuine invalidity in cognition. According to them, that which is

referred to as invalid cognition is in reality only a partially valid knowledge, an incomplete knowledge. All knowledge is essentially true (*yathārtham sarvam vijñānam*). However, no one denies the fact that all cognition is not necessarily complete and hence true. This leads to the problem of determining the ways which may provide complete knowledge.

## Six Ways of Knowing

With regard to the sources of knowledge also, the same differences of opinion prevail which are witnessed regarding the nature of knowledge. According to the Indian epistemologists, there are six ways of knowing, to wit, perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*), scriptural testimony (*śabda*) analogy (*upamāna*), presumption (*arthāpatti*) and non-apprehension (*anupalabdhi*). Of these, the first three are fundamental ways and the last three can be brought under the head of *anumāna*. In western epistemology, we find a similar classification which is as follows: sense experience (cf. *pratyakṣa*), reason (cf. *anumāna*), authority (cf. *śabda*), intuition (a special type of perception), etc. We need not go into the details of these.

## Validation of Knowledge

It has been the sole prerogative of humans not only to formulate knowledge out of our varied experiences but also to benefit from our own knowledge as well as by knowledge acquired by others and transferred to us. Though the human is thus bestowed with the faculties of formulating knowledge and of transferring it to and receiving it from others, this process is not always smooth. Whatever data are given by the senses, or whatever information is passed on by others as knowledge, are not always true representations of the facts, and hence genuine knowledge. So the possibility of error in human cognition cannot be ruled out. Sometimes the erroneous is brighter than the true and even blurs our vision of truth. The possibility of error not only calls upon us to be constantly vigilant, but also compels us to spell out precisely the criterion to discriminate the true from the erroneous. Different attempts have been made by the epistemological thinkers to determine such a criterion, but failure to recognize the fact that all experiences cannot be measured with one and the same yardstick has led to a diversity of positions. Different types of criteria are put forth as the exclusive instrument of measurement, whereas, in fact, all combined together alone constitute a unified criterion.

Since knowledge is the stock displayed in the curriculum and disseminated through the educative process, the differences of opinion with regard to the nature, sources and validity of knowledge are reflected heavily in the field of education as well. That is why different theories of knowledge also have correspondingly different theories of education.

Here we shall see in brief what different epistemological schools have to say on the problem of the nature and validity of knowledge, and how their viewpoints have affected educational theory and practice. Since one of the prime concerns of education is to discover and transmit knowledge, it is very necessary to see that all that goes under the label of knowledge is genuinely valid knowledge. There is a clear distinction between opinion, belief and knowledge, and the task of education should be to equip the pupil with a clear understanding of the differences among these three.

The main issue then is what must be the criterion for judging whether a piece of information is genuine knowledge as distinguished from opinion, belief, or false cognition. Western epistemologists have propounded three main theories to solve this issue, respectively, the correspondence theory of truth, the coherence theory of truth and the pragmatic theory of truth. A brief account of these theories vis-à-vis education can be given as below.

## **Realism in Epistemology and Education**

According to the realistic epistemology, the object known exists independently of the knower. It is external to the knower and is not affected by the knowing process. The mind does not create the world but merely receives information from it or copies the world. For a realist, an idea is true if it corresponds with the Reality it represents. Since we merely discover Reality and do not create it, the pupil must be given knowledge of what the world actually is through the teaching of positive sciences. The child cannot be given any freedom to find out for himself/herself what he/she wants to know, since what he/she wants to know may not be what he/she should know. The initiative in education, therefore, lies with the teacher. It is his/her responsibility to decide which knowledge the child should gain. Though the interest of the pupil should not be neglected, at the same time it should not be the sole consideration. The main criterion should be the validity of knowledge in terms of correspondence.

## **Correspondence Theory of Truth**

The correspondence theory, which is a sophisticated version of the common-sense view, states that if any piece of information squares with Reality, then it is true. Such a view is based on that realistic metaphysics according to which the external reality or world is independent of the human knower, and the truth lies in the external relation of correspondence between our ideas or impressions and the facts which the ideas or impressions represent.

The educational implications of such a theory are as follows. Learning would be said to be correct if the learner's impressions tally with the external reality. Truth is regarded as something external, objective and pre-existing the search for it. It is

immutable and not changing. The learner merely unveils the truth which is ever existent. He does not create it. His awareness or knowledge of truth does not in any way affect the Reality, since the Reality is independent of knowledge.

The correspondence theory of truth, though apparently it seems convincing, is vitiated by a serious difficulty. The truth or otherwise of knowledge is based on the correspondence between knowledge and Reality. But the point is, how can we be sure that our ideas and impressions really correspond to Reality? How can we say that our knowledge is true and hence is related to Reality unless there is another true knowledge to guarantee the truth or relatedness of our present knowledge? But that other true knowledge will, in turn, presuppose still another true knowledge, and so on ad infinitum. To avoid this if it is said that the knowledge of truth (certifying knowledge) that it is truth (certified knowledge) are one and the same, then every piece of knowledge would claim the certificate of truth and there would no longer be any distinction between truth and falsity. Further, one's own impressions of the same fact at different occasions or different persons' impressions of the same fact at one and the same occasion seldom correspond. How can we then determine which impression is closer to truth?

## **Idealism in Epistemology and Education**

Within idealism, different philosophers have developed different theories of knowledge. But the basic position of all idealistic thinkers is that since Reality is a whole, the knowledge which reflects Reality is not fragmented but unified. Any piece of knowledge becomes significant only to the extent that it is seen in its total context. Hence all ideas and theories must be validated according to their coherence within a continuously developing, unified system of knowledge.

Since the human is regarded as an active agent that analyses and synthesizes any event or object that it encounters, idealists believe that the purpose of teaching is not so much to familiarize students with a mass of information as to stimulate them to discover the meaning of this information for themselves. Since what is known depends in part upon the knower, students must relate the information to their own previous experiences, so that what they learn becomes significant to them personally. Learning, therefore, does not consist of absorbing selected items of knowledge but of personally exploring the Reality that is around and within us.

## **Coherence/Consistency Theory of Truth**

The idealists believe that the criterion of truth must be something more than merely external correspondence to Reality. We can never know the exact correspondence with naked Reality. At most, we can know only the consistency between our ideas or impressions about Reality. This is the consistency theory of truth. According to

the advocates of this theory, who are mostly idealists and agnostics, all that we know of Reality are merely its copies which take much of their character from the a priori nature of the human mind. The so-called acquisition of knowledge is as much a building forth from within as it is a taking in from without. In operating on its sense data, the mind checks them for internal consistency. The more consistent they are, the more nearly they approximate the universal law and order which is characteristic of the world wherein all knowledges subsist as an interrelated whole.

The advocates of this theory proclaim that such a view guarantees both the reliability as well as the objectivity of knowledge. Knowledge will be reliable if the successive impressions of the same knower tend to be consistent with each other, and objective if they are consistent with the impressions of other knowers operating under the same conditions.

The educational implications of this theory are as follows. Since the knower is intimately related to the known, he/she should not merely familiarize himself/herself with a mass of information but should try to learn about it by himself/herself. He/She should also try to unify his/her present knowledge with the past one, and instead of absorbing selected piece of knowledge, he/she should try to explore the Reality as a whole.

The consistency or coherence theory of truth seems to be an improvement upon the correspondence theory, but it also harbours the same fallacy which vitiates the correspondence theory. Here also the problem is, by what criterion does it decide the truth of the criterion of truth? Obviously it cannot be the criterion of consistency, for that would amount to begging the question.

## **Pragmatism in Epistemology and Education**

As against the realist, the pragmatist or instrumentalist conceives of the mind as active and exploratory rather than as passive and receptive. We do not simply receive knowledge but make it. Knowledge does not lie in the mere revelation of Reality, but is a product of the transaction between us and our environment.

According to the pragmatist, knowledge is acquired by locating and solving problems. The teacher, therefore, should construct learning situations around particular problems which he/she regards as truly significant for his/her pupils. Instead of teaching traditional subjects, he/she should prepare the pupils to confront life situations and life problems and enable them to understand the environment in a better way. The pupil's interest and curiosity should be the main motivators of learning. Instead of spoon-feeding, pupils should be allowed to learn themselves. The teacher should merely assist and guide pupils when they are in difficulty.

One variety of pragmatism is known as progressivism. As against the perennialists, progressivists believe that change, not permanence, is the essence of Reality. Education, therefore, is always in the process of development. Educators must be ready to evolve and modify methods and policies in the light of new knowledge and changes in the environment. The essence of education is a continual reconstruction of experience so that we may understand it in a better and more useful way.

## Pragmatist Theory of Truth

Dissatisfied with the practical futility and barrenness of the realist and idealist positions, pragmatists or instrumentalists or experimentalists propose to test the truth of ideas on the basis of their practical consequences. For them, truth is what works. It does not exist, it happens. It is never perfect, eternal, and immutable, but it is in the process of making. According to this position, ideas by themselves are neither true nor false. They only become so when employed to solve a problem or prosecute a project related to educational practice. For example, if ideas clear up the confusion and restore the continuity of instruction, then they are true. The pragmatic test of truth as workability is most familiar to educators in the project or problem-solving method of teaching.

But the pragmatic criterion of truth is also not free from flaws. It confuses truth with utility and subjects it to expediency. Though some thinkers have been careful to avoid this confusion, they do so only by ousting some basic pragmatic ideas and by bringing in some elements of consistency theory. That a theory or hypothesis works when it is corroborated by its consequences suggests that possibly this theory of truth is, in a sense, a further development of the consistency theory, for consistency is not just the relation that holds between ideas, but also the relation which holds between ideas and their consequences.

## Symbiosis of All the Three Approaches

From the above account, it is quite evident that knowledge plays a fundamental role in education, and that any particular view or theory about the nature and sources of knowledge has its characteristic counterpart in the sphere of education. All these different theories seem to be mutually conflicting. But it is so because they are looked at in abstraction. If we take them in their concrete frame of reference, we will find them mutually dependent and complementary. For example, the criterion of correspondence is true because it proposes consistency between knowledge and Reality and could be worked out. The criterion of consistency is true because it corresponds with the real structure of knowledge, and hence, it also works. The criterion of workability is also true because it shows how correspondence is a matter of fact to be known in practice. Similarly, that knowledge which is internally harmonious or consistent is likely to be true, but its likelihood increases if in addition to the internal harmony that knowledge is further believed to be in harmony with the external Reality. The realization of this mutual harmony of knowledge and Reality is made possible by the further harmony of knowledge with practice. So the ultimate criterion of truth is neither mere correspondence nor mere consistency or mere workability, but all the three taken together which constitute one harmonious criterion. So in the field of education as well, we should be conscious of this fact and test the truth of the instructional material on the basis of the particular frame of reference.

# Chapter 4

## Knowledge, Values and Education



**Abstract** This chapter deals with the axiological basis of education. It discusses education in the context of Reality and the need for value realization. A classification of values is attempted keeping classical Indian thought in view. The Upaniṣadic theory of *pañcakośa* is expounded.

**Keywords** Values · Knowledge of values · Classification of values  
Value problems · Theory of *pañcakośa*

### Introduction

The quest after values and the attainment thereof constitute the very core of human life. There is an innate necessity for human beings to participate in the process of value realization. That is why, consciously or unconsciously, value concepts, value discriminations and value judgements feature prominently in human life.

The process of value realization is basically an educational one. There is an educational dimension indigenous to axiology and, reciprocally, there is a necessary connection between educational objectives and value seeking. Education must have some objectives if it is to be effective and of any worth. It tends to refer to a set of values or ideals embodied and expressed in the objectives for which knowledge, skill, etc., are imparted. It is quite natural, therefore, to ask “what is it that education thrives to accomplish?” A consideration of this problem necessitates a sort of value thinking, for it is value decisions alone which can provide valid and adequate objectives.

Value considerations so widely pervade the sphere of education that all educational decisions involve or presuppose value decisions. For example, what is to be taught (ends or objectives), how it is to be taught (methods), whom it is to be taught to (fitness, motivation, and interest of the pupil), how to evaluate, mark, or grade the performance of the pupil—these are the problems which demand value considerations.

Moreover, in all educational activities, value involvement is inevitable, whether these activities consist of instruction by a professional teacher or of that influence

and stimulation which issue forth in the intercourse of human beings. The more the teachers or the educators are aware of the realm of values, the more they open the vision, understanding and perspective for the life of the person they guide. In all subjects of study as well as in all problems of life, imperceptibly value questions are involved, and whenever the teacher advises, calls attention to, speaks about, or reproves, he/she is inevitably diverting and moulding the value sensibility of the pupil. And therefore, the more unripe the pupil, so much the more responsible should be the teacher. A too narrow valuational perception on the part of teachers is always a serious danger for the youth entrusted to them. The consequence is a premature forcing into a one-sided, limited, or even biased interpretation of life. It is, therefore, highly necessary that we must educate the educator.

## Noetic Basis of Value Considerations

When once we accept the fact that the nature of humans, and therefore our constitution, is such as to urge us to participate in the fullness of life, to be receptive of the significant, and to remain open to whatever has meaning and value, then the question arises as to how we know what is valuable in life and in the world? What are we to make our own, to understand, to appreciate so as to be human in the full meaning of the word? What is it for which we still lack the ability so that we must first realize our capacity, sharpen and educate it? The question, in short, is: how can we discern the values of human life and education? The same problem in a different form confronted Socrates when he posed the problem, "Can virtue be taught?" The solution arrived at by him is of great relevance to our problem. Socrates maintained that virtue is knowledge and therefore it can be taught. Though values are not knowledge in the ratiocinative sense of knowledge, yet a knowing of some sort belongs to them. The process of value realization presupposes knowledge. Knowledge is the presupposition of all value decisions. This conclusion leads us to consider the noetic basis of values.

If knowledge is the prior condition of values, we must inquire what sort of knowledge this is. There are two alternative answers given to this question. Some hold that such knowledge is acquired by practice and can be taught. Conversely, others maintain that it is something inborn in a human being by nature and therefore to be discovered. These two disjunctive answers lead to two "either-or" positions with regard to the knowledge of values. The former alternative leads to relativism, whereas the latter culminates in absolutism in values. In the Vedic-Upaniṣadic tradition a symbiosis of the two has been advocated.

Plato (*Meno*, 82b–86e) undertook a cross-examination of a slave for the analysis of the phenomenon of teaching and learning. His cross-examination led him to establish that knowledge is an original possession in man. "Learning" is only becoming conscious of the factual contents inherent in him. The teaching by the teacher is only a directing of attention to the subject matter. The pupils must see it themselves and must be convinced by it, otherwise there is no real insight. Teaching

is merely the midwifery of knowledge. This learning which consists in the apprehension of inborn knowledge is called “anamnesis”. It means to recover knowledge from within oneself. Indian thinkers also endorse this view, but add that this value realization needs adequate effort and practice. Indian thought is non-dichotomous.

So, it has to be granted that there is a practical side of knowledge, and only in a concrete situation is knowledge generated. The a priori aspect needs an outside environment for actualization. From this analysis we can conclude that the knowledge of values is through a-prioristic insight. All value perceptions are necessarily a-prioristic. But their actualization depends on the external situation. There is another significant implication which must be brought to the fore. Though Reality or existence is inherently saturated with values, it lacks a distinct valuational form. It is, as it were, an unactualized mass of value. Therefore, the cognizance of value demands an effort for its fullest realization. This urge for realization of value is a-priori but its realization is a-posteriori. So a distinction can be maintained between two complementary processes, viz., valuational discernment and valuational effectiveness.

## Value Problems in Education

The confusion over values in our society is very much mirrored in education. The multiple problems of teachers, pupils, curriculum, etc., are nothing but its reflections. All these problems cannot be resolved without a serious attempt to adjudicate value conflicts. Some of the value problems that have an impact on the field of education are as follows.

The basic problem concerning values is with regard to their very existence. It has been very much doubted by some thinkers, especially in the west, as to whether there is anything like a value which is real and existent. Some of them take it to be merely a sentimental vagary or emotive expression having no cognitive worth; whereas others regard it as an abstraction of human thought. These people doubt whether values can be taught or realized.

In India, there are very few who are genuinely sceptical about the existence of values of life and, therefore, of education. The Indian thinkers from the Vedas downwards could find an abiding and enduring place for values in the very heart of the Ultimate Reality. The essentially valuational character of Reality is quite evident from the Upaniṣadic description of Reality (*Brahman*) as *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*. It is in *ānanda* (values) that there is the culmination of all existence (*sat*) and knowledge (*cit*). Any acceptance of *sat* and *cit* devoid of the *ānanda* (value) dimension is bound to be deficient. So much does Reality tend towards values that the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* describes *Brahman* as *raso vai saḥ* (2.7) or as *ānandam brahmaṇo vidvān* (2.9). It goes to the extent of saying, “who indeed could live, who breathe, should not this *ānanda* be there?” (2.7). The *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* is much more emphatic when it declares: “*Ānanda* is the beginning and the end of the world, the cause as well as the effect, the root as well as the shoot” (3.6). The whole world would not have been a place worth living if there were no values to be realized in the world.

On the basis of scriptural testimony as well as intuitional realizations, the claim of value upon existence was always upheld in India. It was, however, emphasized that the fullest expression and highest fruition of value is found only in *Brahman*, the Ultimate Reality, which is an index of perfection or fullness (*yo vai bhumā tatsukham* [7.13]). This is also the purport of the Ānanda Vallī section of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*. Here we are using the word *Brahman* in a very technical sense, and it should not be misinterpreted or misunderstood.

In human beings, because of their limitations and imperfections, values are only partially reflected. But every individual is at bottom one with *Brahman*, which means he/she has the potentialities for growth and development so as to be perfect. The very word *Brahman* stands for growth and perfection. So the ultimate aim of every individual should be the fullest efflorescence of the value essence lying hidden or dormant in him/her. In the Upaniṣads and the *Gītā*, there is a very suggestive description of a tree with roots upward and shoots downward. This suggests that our growth is rooted in, and nourished from above. It is this “*Brahmanization*”, i.e., perfection by growth, which is the real meaning of *mokṣa* or self-realization. It should be made clear that this realization is not regarded as a mere utopian dream, because it is firmly believed that every individual being has descended from perfection and has a natural claim to return to perfection. This is one of the implications of the famous invocatory verse of the *Īsopaniṣad*: *Aum pūrṇamadaḥ pūrṇamidam pūrṇātpūrṇamudacyate, Pūrṇasya pūrṇamādāya pūrṇamevāvaśiṣyate*, i.e., the Ultimate Reality is perfect and the cosmos which comes from it is also perfect because, from perfection, perfection alone can arise. If perfection is taken out of perfection, what remains is also perfect.

## Values are Realizable

From the above analysis we can derive a conclusion which is of great importance to the educational context. It is that values are realizable and therefore they ought to be realized. In *Brahman*, values are fully in existence, but for a human being, who is “*Brahman-in-the-making*”, they are yet to be realized. They are attainable through endeavour and that is why they are called *puruṣārtha*. This value realization is a spiritual necessity. But it is not possible until and unless all the obstacles in the process of growth and fullness are removed. Here comes the role of education, which is recognized to be the only mode of purification or emancipation.

## Sources of Knowing Value

There is another problem which much discussed these days by our educators and curriculum framers. That is with regard to the source of values. Who should provide the scheme of values to be incorporated in the curriculum and to be realized through

education? Should we rely upon the politicians, or on those who are at the height of the educational bureaucracy who themselves have no clear knowledge of the nature of values?

Among the western thinkers we find a great deal of divergence on this problem. Some of them propagate a supernatural origin of values. Some secular thinkers regard values as rooted in nature, whereas others insist that they are founded on human nature—individual or social. But such a position has resulted in a severe controversy as to whether the values are subjective or objective. In the field of education its corollaries are: (a) Do educational values exist independently of the evaluator, or do they exist in a valuing individual? (b) What is the relation between the interest, motive, and happiness of the learner and the subject learnt?

In India, such a situation never arose because Indian thinkers were always aware of the pitfalls of narrow compartmentalization. They were conscious of the dangers lurking in the subjectivist position as well as of the unpsychological consequences with which the abstract objectivistic position was fraught. In accepting the subjectivity of values in education, we would have been at the mercy of every passing whim or vagary of the fickle and vacillating individual mind. And this would tell upon the unity and stability of values. Further, every individual being is not so intellectually developed as to conceive what is desirable and what is undesirable. As Lord Kṛṣṇa points out, with regard to its intricacy, even wise people get confused on this issue (4.16). On the contrary, if we were to uphold the objectivism of values, then this would tend to a sort of regimentation and consequently the individual initiative and motivation would be put in peril.

In order to safeguard the unity and stability of values and at the same time retain individual initiative and motivation, the Indian thinkers maintain that the Ultimate Reality is the source and abode of all values. Such a position is of great educational importance and relieves us from the unrealistic subjective–objective hair-splitting. Since the values are rooted in the Ultimate Reality and since every individual being partakes in that nature, values are at once both subjective and objective. The order of values is closely akin to, or rather dependent on, the order of *being*. Therefore, no account of valuational theory would be true unless it is based on universal human nature, which is a reflection of a wider nature of the Ultimate Reality. Further, though the values originate in the Ultimate Reality, subtle seers or the wise people alone can cognize them and it is their function to formulate the aims and objectives of life and education. Though the values possess a sort of unity and uniformity, they are not rigidly uniform. They manifest certain differences and therefore admit of a classification. There can be different classifications of values on different bases. The basic classification that can be put forth is that between absolute or intrinsic values and relative or instrumental values.

Human beings as rational, free and goal-oriented agents (*puruṣa*) undertake a voluntary action after acquiring knowledge of the Reality which surrounds them. Their purposive agency stems from free will, which is guided by rational considerations. Dharmakīrti, a Buddhist thinker, rightly maintains that “All successful human endeavours are preceded by knowledge” (*Nyāya Bindu*, 1.1). The human being is potentially gifted with the capacity to know the goal (*sādhya*), the means

(*sādhana*) and the modalities (*itikartavyatā*). In the Indian tradition, acquisition of knowledge is not purposeless (*niṣprajana*) nor is it futile or based on nothingness (*nirviṣayaka*). It has an object to be known (*prameya*). It attempts to know an object as it is (*yathārtha*), through appropriate means (*pramā-sādhana* = *pramāṇa*), and all this is done in order to derive some useful purpose (*phala*). Determination of knowable objects (*prameyanirṇaya*) and consideration of the means of knowing and its result (*pramāsāadhanaphalavicāra*) are thus the primary objectives of a philosophical enterprise.

Though our aim is to acquire knowledge, as stated earlier, it is not always the case that we succeed in this endeavour. Knowledge is not the necessary acquisition of a cognitive activity. Quite often we end up in error or doubt or indecisiveness. If all cognitions were necessarily true, there would not have been any need for epistemological enquiry into the nature of knowledge, the appropriate means of knowing, the criteria of truth and validation, and our eagerness to get away from error, indecisiveness and doubt. All issues regarding *pramāṇa* (the means of knowing) and *prāmāṇya* (truth) arise because we quite often go astray in our cognitive endeavour.

Even if we may attempt true cognition, when it is codified in language, but if there is no exact communication and interpretation of the meaning of the given language, there is misunderstanding with unhappy consequences. Therefore, sufficient care has to be taken not only in the acquisition of knowledge but also in its communication and subsequent interpretation. Following the Indian epistemological tradition, the Mīmāṃsā school discusses these issues very succinctly, and merits due consideration.

The relation between knowledge and Reality is reciprocal. The two are mutually dependent. Knowledge depends upon its object, i.e., Reality, for its rise and existence. If there were no object, there would be no knowledge. The real alone becomes the object of knowledge and provides content to knowledge. If the traditional Indian theory of *Meyādhīnāmānasiddhi* (dependence of knowledge on Reality) is understood this way, there is an element of truth and acceptability in it. Likewise, Reality also depends upon knowledge for being known. Knowledge is the only gateway to Reality. Only through knowledge one can establish what is real and what is not real. So the other traditional Indian theory of *Mānādhīnāmeyasiddhi* (dependence of Reality on knowledge) also contains an element of truth and acceptability.

Taken in two different contexts, there is no contradiction or inconsistency or circularity in accepting both these theories. The term *siddhi* may mean here: (a) dependence in respect of *existence*; and (b) dependence in respect of *awareness*. The former is *ontic* dependence and the latter is *epistemic* dependence. The dependence of knowledge on Reality is ontic whereas the dependence of Reality on knowledge is epistemic. In the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā, there is explicit approval of *Mānādhīnāmeyasiddhi* but there is tacit acceptance of *Meyādhīnāmānasiddhi* as well in so far as it talks of two types of knowledge (*pramā dvaividhya*), which is possible only on the ground of accepting two types of objects to be known. It maintains a dichotomy of objects, a dichotomy of knowledge, and on this basis a dichotomy of the means of knowing.

As our experience vouchsafes, there are two types of objects to be known, the existent (*bhūta*) and the prospective (*bhavya*). The existent object is actual, having existence in the past or in the present. We have its descriptive awareness. The prospective object is virtual, its potential to be actualized. The one is already existent and the other is yet to be made existent. In the human context, *dharma* (value) is prospective (*bhavya vastu*) as it is to be accomplished through proper human effort (*puruṣānuṣṭhānādhīna*) and that is why it is called *puruṣārtha* (*puruṣeṇa arthyate prārthyate*), human accomplishment. Both the actual and the prospective are knowable, but they are not of the same category and therefore not knowable in the same mode of knowing. The existent is known through sense comprehension. Its knowledge is through empirical acquaintance and linguistic description. Its descriptive awareness is through external and/or internal senses. It is sense dependent and contingent upon human capabilities and other causal factors. About this knowledge, which can be named *puruṣa tantra*, borrowing Śankara's terminology, we have a very apt evaluation by Śabara when he writes that it cannot be decisive and that it can be true or false (*Śābarabhāṣya* 1.1). It is, therefore, subject to empirical verification and there is always a possibility of its falsification. When we refer to the devil of doubt, it is only in the context of this type of descriptive awareness. It is invariably vitiated by human fallibility.

The other type of knowledge is knowledge of an object which is yet to be realized or actualized. It is an ideal which is realizable and which ought to be realized. In the human context, it is a value (*sādhya*) to be realized through proper endeavour (*puruṣārtha*). It is not utopian (*asādhya*) but something which is capable of being realized (*bhavanānukūla*) and which must therefore be realized. There is an *optativeness* or ought-ness associated with it. It is injunctive in nature. *Dharma* (value schema) is such an object. *Dharma* cannot be known through empirical means. There cannot be descriptive awareness of it as firstly it does not exist and needs to be accomplished, and secondly, it must have universal and infallible *prescriptivity*. *Dhārmika* prescriptions cannot be subjective and contingent. They must be adhered to unconditionally by all under a given circumstance. In a changed circumstance they may no longer be unconditional, but their acceptance or non-acceptance is not arbitrary. They may be situational and perspectival, but this relativism has also to be rule based and rule governed. There may be exceptions but they are also to be regulated. The Pūrva Mīmāṃsā system deals with these elaborately and exhaustively. There is a dichotomous distinction between the actual and the potential, the descriptive and the prescriptive. There cannot be any mixing up or *samplava* between the two types, which are qualitatively different. The strict dichotomy between the two types of object entails the same dichotomy between two types of knowledge and modes of knowing. So far as the knowledge of *dharma* (value) is concerned, a *mānāntara* (a source of knowing different from the empirical) has to be admitted.

The knowledge of *dharma* has to come from a trans-empirical source. That source is named *codanā* in the Mīmāṃsā system. It is a qualitatively different type of source which is not empirical because every human claim to knowledge based on sense experience is suspect which cannot guarantee universality and finality.

The trans-empirical source, on the contrary, must be infallible and its reliability must be absolute. Then only can it claim unwavering acceptability. To invoke universal command of adherence, it must be free from all sorts of contingencies and infirmities from which human cognitive faculties suffer. Śābara, therefore, insists that *codanā* is such a mode of knowing which alone can know an object which is past or present or future and which is subtle, covered up, or far removed. It is free from all contingencies of time, space, circumstances, and persons. This source has to be non-sensory and trans-subjective. It is in the form of intuitive apprehension of a “realized soul” which in Indian terminology we call *Ṛṣi*. We shall discuss this subject in detail subsequently.

## Two Types of Values

All the values of life can be brought under two heads, viz., *preyas* and *śreyas*, as was done by the ancient Indian thinkers. *Preyas* pertains to material welfare and *śreyas* pertains to spiritual realization. Though these two types of values refer to two different orders of being, there is no incompatibility between the two. There is no schism in the two orders of being, and hence no bifurcation between matter and spirit. Therefore, they do not admit of any exclusiveness of an “either-or” position. *Preyas* provides the material basis and *śreyas* constitutes the spiritual summit of the same process of perfection. That is why in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, the preceptor in his final instruction exhorts the pupil, *kuśalāṇna pramaditavyam, bhūtyai na pramaditavyam* (you should not neglect spiritual well-being, you should not neglect material prosperity). Here, *bhūti* stands for *preyas* and *kuśala* stands for *śreyas*. The *Īśāvāsyopaniṣad* also avers the same. Since matter provides the arena for the self-realization of the spirit, the *preyas* has the natural claim to be first catered to. But one should not remain entangled with *preyas* for ever. After the necessary gratification of the *preyas*, one should make a passage towards *śreyas*. However, it should be remembered that such a passage must be gradual and not sudden. The example of King Bhartṛhari in Indian legend reminds us of the detrimental consequences of sudden passage. Another thing to be remembered is that all the demands of matter do not constitute *preyas* and hence are not to be gratified. Only those demands are to be regarded as *preyas* which are not incompatible with *śreyas*, which is the higher value.

*Preyas*, thus, is the proximate value and *śreyas* is the absolute and ultimate value. So far as *śreyas* is concerned, it is above the interest, motive, or happiness of the seeker. It does not go against the true interests of the seeker. But *preyas*, or the proximate values, being based on the empirical nature of the individual, differs from one individual to another, because of the differences in their *guṇas* (personality traits) and consequently in *svabhāva* (nature). That is why the ancient Indian thinkers formulated the fourfold classification of the stages of life. In order that there may be a conscious, well-organized and balanced pursuit of both *preyas* and *śreyas*, they established the *āśrama vyavasthā*. The word *āśrama* is suggestive of

the points of beginning and stoppage. First of all the individual must be made aware of his/her *preyas* and *śreyas*. Then he/she should be taught first to realize *preyas* up to a certain extent of his/her life, and then to turn towards the realization of *śreyas*. He/She should also be taught that he/she himself/herself is a whole but belongs to a still larger whole. Therefore, there should not be any occasion of collision of his/her *preyas* with the *preyas* of the society. That is why through various similes like the *puruṣa yajña* in the *Rgveda* or the *virāṭa puruṣa* in the *Gītā*, the individual is reminded of the basic unity of humankind. Right from the very beginning of pupilhood, the individual is initiated into community life, as is clear from the following prayer: *Aum sahanāvavatu saha nau bhunaktu saha vīryam karavāvahai. Tejasvināvadhītastu mā vidviṣāvahai*, i.e., “Om! May He protect us: may He make us enjoy together: may we gain strength together: may our learning be fruitful and enlightening; may we not be jealous of each other” (invocatory verse of the *Kāthopaniṣad*).

In the foregoing account, we have seen that the individual is in the process of growth or perfection, which we have termed as self-realization (*Brahmanization*). This consists in a balanced realization of *preyas* and *śreyas*. The possibilities or potentialities for perfection are present in the individual, and what is needed is their evolution or fructification through purification (*saṃskāra*). This fact is beautifully illustrated in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* with the example of a small seed which contains within itself the possibilities of turning into a big tree (6.12).

## Theory of *Pañcakośa*

We have identified self-realization as the ultimate goal of education. But the question is, how to achieve this? Or, what are the different steps in the process of this realization? For this, we should explicate the meaning of the word “self”. The Upaniṣadic thinkers use the word “self” in a very wide sense. It encompasses all of human nature and extends to the entire cosmos (*etadātmyamidam sarvam* [*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 7.25.2]). The Upaniṣadic thinkers firmly believe in the fundamental unity of the microcosm and the macrocosm. They analyse human nature into five aspects, one leading to the other in succession, but there is also simultaneity in them. They name them *kośas* (sheaths) (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 3.2). They are *annamaya* (physical), *prāṇamaya* (vital), *manomaya* (mental), *vijñānamaya* (intellectual) and *ānandamaya* (spiritual). The same aspects are present in *Brahman* (Ultimate Reality) and in the outer cosmos as well. That is why the Upaniṣads declare, *annam vai Brahma, prāṇo vai Brahma*, etc. (ibid.).

Though these aspects are present in *Brahman* in their fullest, for *Brahman* is fullness, they are not so in the individual, and are to be developed. An all-round development of the human being means the fullest development of all these aspects in a proper proportion. These aspects exist not only in a juxtapository order but in an internal hierarchical order as well. Therefore, the process of realization should

start from that which is the outermost, and should culminate in that which is innermost. Since the bodily aspect comes first, it should be developed first. But one should not feel contented with the development of the body only. After its necessary development, it has to be transcended to reach the next higher aspect, and so on (cf. Prajāpati-Indra-Virocana Saṃvāda in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, Chap. 8). It should be made clear that in this transcendence from outer to inner, the outer is not negated or annihilated by the inner but is absorbed by it. Each inner principle is more inclusive and comprehensive than the outer, and in the realization of the inner the outer *ipso facto* gets realized. The outer takes its proportionate place in a pattern of living in which the inner gives the general direction of emphasis. Thus, the *ānandamaya kośa* which is the innermost *kośa* is the most comprehensive and includes all within its fold. That alone is the real self and all others are only partial appearances of the self. When we speak of self-realization, we mean the realization of this total self.

Of these five *kośas*, the first two pertain to the level of gross existences, and are associated with the gross body. They may be referred to as *sat*. The next two belong to the level of subtle existence or mind and intellect. They may be referred to as *cit*. The last, i.e., the *ānandamaya kośa*, is the real self which resides in all bodies and which is realized in the transcendental state. This may be referred to as *ānanda*. A proper and full development of all the aspects of *sat*, *cit*, and *ānanda* is the overall goal of a human being. There is another concept available in Indian culture which also suggests the same. The realization of the overall self is viewed as the foremost duty and obligation. We have sparked off from *Brahman* and owe a debt to *Brahman*. This debt has three aspects, viz., to the *pitṛ* (forefathers), to the *guru*, and to the *deva* (the entire cosmos). The *pitṛ ṛṇa* obliges us to develop the first two *kośas*, the *guruṛṇa* demands the perfection of the next two *kośas*, and the *devaṛṇa* urges the realization of the last *kośa*.

The above account may be regarded as a fair reconstruction of the Vedic-Upaniṣadic order of being and value. This account has great educational significance for us today. The doctrine of the *pañcakośas* tells us that the value of education lies in training and exercising the five *kośas* in such a way as to make them a fit instrument for a good life which consists in fullness and perfection. It further tells us that in the process of value realization, which is nothing but self-realization, proper balance should be maintained to avoid the dangers of lopsided development. The correlation between *preyas* and *śreyas* reminds us that there is no antagonism between body and mind, and mind and spirit, that the body is the “vale of soul-making”, and that there is nothing unnatural in spiritual attainments being realized in a natural order. These two accounts, along with the Upaniṣadic classification of *vidyā* (knowledge) as *aparā* and *parā* (*jñāna* and *vijñāna* in the *Gītā*, see VI.8, VII.2, IX.1) enjoin us to frame our curriculum so as to do justice to all the orders of being and value. The *Īśopaniṣad* strongly advocates the complementary nature of the prior knowledge of the physical and social sciences and the later knowledge of the spirit. The knowledge of physical sciences and technology, which deals with *annamaya* and *prāṇamaya* aspects, is quite basic and must be imparted. But that is not enough. For providing a balanced and perfect

education, the role of social sciences, philosophy, humanities, etc., which deal with *manomaya* and *vijñānamaya* aspects, and of religion and spirituality which deal with the *ānandamaya* aspect, cannot be denied or underestimated. Such a balancing approach towards the curriculum alone can give a proper representation to the different facets or dimensions of human personality.

# Chapter 5

## Knowledge and Curriculum-framing



**Abstract** This chapter pertains to the method of curriculum-framing. It points out that the organization of knowledge in curriculum framing has to be based on the psychological order of the learner and the logical order of instructional material. In this context, efficacious use of Upaniṣadic *pañcakośa* theory has been invoked. The chapter also deals with the explosion of knowledge and ways to reckon with it.

**Keywords** Curriculum-framing · Upaniṣads · Knowledge explosion  
Interrelationships among knowledge disciplines · Holistic approach

### Introduction

All educational thinkers concur in regarding knowledge as the indispensable organ of education. This is especially so with respect to the curriculum. Knowledge influences not only the organization of the curriculum but also its teaching. The curriculum is the avenue through which the pupil approaches the stock of knowledge. In the present chapter, therefore, an attempt will be made to see how a philosophical analysis of the phenomenon of knowledge can provide a framework for curriculum planning. Here we shall not enter into details about exactly what should be taught in any given academic situation, for this would mean transgressing into the field of the syllabus planner.

### Nature of Knowledge and Curriculum-framing

The basic question pertaining to knowledge vis-à-vis the curriculum is with regard to the type of knowledge that has to be imparted to the pupil through the curriculum. In other words, the problem is how shall we determine the content of the curriculum? There is another problem in the field of curriculum framing which needs to be tackled epistemologically. The problem arises because knowledge is

diverse and infinite and therefore everything cannot be learnt at once. This necessitates ordering of the content of instruction. Such an ordering presupposes an insight into the complexities and interconnections of the diverse forms and facets of knowledge. The problem of the explosion of knowledge also requires a critical analysis of the existing stock of knowledge as well as the new, incoming knowledge, so that we may not only maintain proportion and perspective in curriculum-framing but also can avoid the superficial and get at the essential.

## Responses of Different Schools

Knowledge already attained constitutes the subject matter of the curriculum. Here the problem is whether we should regard knowledge as antedating the experiences of the learner or as acquired with the process of learning by the learner. Most of the schools, with the exception of the pragmatists, believe in the former alternative. For them knowledge is the funded capital of social experience which is embodied in books. The only business of the teacher and the pupil is to unlock this storehouse of knowledge. Such an attitude leads to a kind of theoretical education. The reason for organizing the curriculum in this fashion is to release the student from the demands of the immediate situation. However, this theoretical education should not be conceived as non-practical or be taught apart from example. Otherwise this would sever intelligence from action and volition, and knowledge from the everyday concerns of life. This would also lead to the evils of memorizing facts and information.

The pragmatist's view regarding knowledge vis-à-vis the curriculum, on the other hand, is that in a changing world it would be inadvisable only to apply past, verified knowledge resulting from previous inquiry to subsequent problems of inquiry. We can, at most, regard it as the data for solving subsequent problems, but never as the solution. So there should be no rigidly fixed curriculum, but it should evolve as the learning proceeds.

In a holistic approach, there has to be a symbiosis of theory and practice. Knowledge is an evolving process. In this process, the past provides a foundation to the present and the present leads to the future. Past inheritance is as significant as present acquisition and future aspiration.

There is another problem with regard to the arrangement of the various types of knowledge in the curriculum. Those who believe that knowledge is dependent upon gradation, maintain that there are several grades of knowledge. These grades are measured on the basis of the degree of abstraction they achieve. Accordingly, a hierarchy is established in which natural sciences constitute the first stage, mathematics the middle stage, and metaphysics the final stage.

To this problem, different schools of epistemology do not give identical solutions. That is because their basic assumptions and presuppositions are so diverse as to lead them to dissimilar positions and conclusions. However, one thing should again be noted: these diverse positions and conclusions are reached from different

standpoints, and instead of contradicting one another, they rather mutually complement and supplement. The school of naturalism, being anti-authoritarian in its approach to knowledge, emphasizes the present experience, activities, and interests of the pupil. It insists that the child should have his own proper experience unhampered and unhindered by adult interference and direction. There are no set goals of knowledge and hence of education. The only goal is that of fostering the growth of a free, active, happy and well-adjusted human being. Pragmatism, on the other hand, takes the future utility also into consideration. The curriculum must include the knowledge and skills that the child requires, not only for his present life as a child but also for his future life as an adult. That is why pragmatism emphasizes vocational education. It stresses the child rather than the subject or the teacher. So the content of the curriculum must be concerned with the realities of human life. Idealism, however, approaches the problem of the curriculum from the domain of ideas rather than from the viewpoint of the child and his present or future activities. It concentrates on the rounded whole of human knowledge and experience.

Different thinkers and schools of thought have suggested different bases for curriculum organization. On the basis of the familiar psychological analysis of experience into conation, cognition and affection, it has been maintained that the curriculum must comprise: (a) what we do and strive to do (this would include all crafts and technology); (b) what we know, i.e., our major modes of thinking (this would consist of all sciences, philosophy and literature); and (c) what we feel (this envelops all the fine arts like poetry and music). This classification also has as its basis the tripartite division of the human being into hand, head, and heart.

## Upaniṣadic Basis of Curriculum-framing

The best way to organize the curriculum is to base it on the analysis of the constituents of the human being. To repeat what was stated earlier, the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* conceives of the human being as consisting of five elements which envelop one another in succession. That is why these elements are named sheaths or coverings (*kośa*). The first and outermost sheath is the gross physical sheath named *annamayakośa*. The second is that of vital breaths, i.e., physiological. This is termed *prāṇamayakośa*. The third is the mental, which consists of feelings and volition. This is called *manomaya kośa*. The fourth is the sheath consisting of the intellect and rational pursuits. This is termed *vijñānamayakośa*. The last is the self which consists of pure bliss, termed *ānandamaya kośa*.

A balanced organization of the curriculum demands that the needs of all these aspects of the human being must be catered to. This means that physical sciences and technology, which deal with the first two aspects, social sciences and humanities dealing with the next two, and spirituality and value pursuits which deal with the last aspect must all be included in the curriculum. The main object of education is to impart knowledge—knowledge which is conducive to the fullest development of the individual. Therefore, no education can be regarded as perfect

or complete which neglects or overlooks any of these five aspects of the human being.

Since the human is at the centre of education, it must be a human-making education. If that is so, then the role of all the disciplines which may lead or contribute to this end must be properly recognized. Otherwise, education would be lopsided. The present-day tendency is swinging too much in the direction of science and technology and economics and commerce. Since these disciplines deal with the physical aspect of the human being, they must come first, but one must not regard them as the only pursuits of knowledge. They are the instrumental ends for the acquisition of some higher ends, and therefore in pursuit of these disciplines, the higher ends must not be lost sight of.

## Holistic Approach

There has been a tendency to uphold a false dichotomy between science and technology and humanities and social sciences on the one hand, and religion and spirituality on the other, on the ground that the former deal with the values of “matter” whereas the latter deal with the values of the “spirit”. But it is fallacious to make such a sharp distinction between the two. The values of matter and of spirit are not so distinct as to admit of separate pursuits. As the ancient Indian thinkers had emphasized, *preyas* and *śreyas* are complementary goals, the former providing a base to the latter. No pursuit of materialistic values can be regarded as *preyas* unless it culminates in the welfare of the spirit as well. Similarly, no *śreyas* can be worth its name unless it has *preyas* as its base. To regard *preyas* and *śreyas* as antagonistic is to breed a false antithesis between matter and spirit, but in fact neither is matter the prison house for spirit nor is spirit the annihilator of matter. Matter rather is the “vale of spirit making”, and spirit is the blossomed flower of matter.

Education is a preparation for life. But life is not mere livelihood. Similarly, life is not merely catering to the needs of either matter or spirit. There is no exclusive “either-or” between general education and a specialist education. No individual is merely a professional, whether an engineer or a doctor or a scientist or a technician. An individual is above all human—a social human, a common human. Hence, the fullness of education must include, besides the skills and techniques of professional training, the development of all the five faculties described in the Upaniṣad.

From the above it follows that a true and adequate system of education must aim at and provide for the education of the whole human. Though the fullest realization of this may not be possible, this must not deter or deflect us from aiming at it. How far we may succeed in achieving it is a matter for sober, realistic, and sanguine reflection. But let us initially not overlook the final aim of education which is to produce the human and not tools, to make human beings and not machines. If this ultimate ideal is once understood and accepted, there should arise, in principle at least, no conflict between special and general education, between professional and

liberal education, between sciences and humanities, or science and spirituality. The problem then would be only one of adjustment and coordination among different disciplines.

In order to solve this problem, we should keep in mind the views advocated by the Upaniṣadic thinkers. There are three main components which are required in a holistic system of education, namely, the scientific and technical curriculum, the liberal curriculum, and the spiritual curriculum. But each of these curricula should include the other two. However, there should be a distinction between primary elements and secondary elements in the curricula at different stages, and the dominant emphasis must be laid on the primary elements. Care must be taken that the dominant emphasis, whether scientific and technical, liberal and spiritual, should be such that it should not lose the element of coordination and should infuse into each form of education something of the other two. Such a thing alone can ensure a balanced curriculum. But in order to accomplish this, we should not only have a sense of priorities but also of the dominant emphasis. Such an approach to education would solve the problem of explosion of knowledge and would provide the basis for the elimination of the non-essential and retention of the essential.

## **Knowledge Explosion and Curriculum-framing**

The structure of the curriculum is dependent upon the structure of disciplines. But what is the structure of disciplines? It means three things, three distinct but related sets of problems. The first problem is that of identifying the disciplines that constitute contemporary knowledge. This would provide the subject matter of education. Here we have to establish the relations among various disciplines so that they may be joined together for purposes of instruction. This will also help us in keeping apart those disciplines which cannot be so joined. Further, this will enable us to determine the sequence of instruction, i.e., it will tell us what must come before what, or what is most desirably placed first, or second, or third.

The second problem is with regard to the substantive structure of the disciplines. That is to say, it is concerned with the structure of concepts and theories and with the understanding of the powers and limits of the inquiries that take place under their guidance. Every inquiry has its origin in a conceptual structure. It is through this that we are able to formulate a telling question. Through the telling question alone can we know what data to seek and what experiments to perform to get those data. Once the data are in hand, the same conceptual structure tells us how to interpret them, what to make of them by way of knowledge. Finally, the knowledge itself is formulated in terms provided by the same conception. In the sphere of education, this problem has great significance. For, to know what structures underlie a given body of knowledge is to know what problems we shall face in imparting this knowledge. This would enable us to determine which sort of knowledge should be imparted at what stage of mental development of a child so that the knowledge may be imparted without any difficulty.

The third problem of the structure of disciplines relates to their syntactical structure. This problem arises because, since different disciplines have different conceptual frameworks, there are likely to be major differences between one discipline and another. There is, then, the problem of determining for each discipline what it does by way of discovery and proof, what criteria it uses for measuring the quality of its data, how strictly it can apply canons of evidence, and in general, determining the process by which the discipline moves from its raw data through a longer or shorter method of interpretation to its conclusion.

The world of knowledge has today become radically plural. It is a world of different types of knowledge, pursued in varied ways towards diverse ends. These various inquiries are usually carried on with little thought for their relation to each other. Each researcher has their own goals, their own methods, their own language of talking about what they are doing and what they have discovered. Though this pluralism in knowledge is not an unwelcome feature, it poses a problem for those who are concerned with the organization of the entire curriculum. For the curriculum builder is concerned not only with the structures of the individual disciplines, but also with the structure of the instructional programme within which all the fields of knowledge find their place. This leads us to the problem of organization of the disciplines.

The problem of organization is a problem of classification primarily. Since the disciplines are quite complex, we are faced with a wide choice of bases of classification. Four bases of classification of disciplines are usually put forth: (a) their subject matter; (b) their practitioners; (c) their methods and modes of inquiry; and (d) their ends.

There is another factor which matters much in the organization of disciplines. It is that of the relationship among the various disciplines. For just as the relationships among ideas are at the heart of the concept of structure as applied to individual disciplines, so the relationships among the disciplines are at the heart of the notion of structure as applied to the curriculum as a whole.

There are many ways in which one can conceive of these interconnections. Of these, three types deserve special mention. They are as follows:

1. Relationships among cognate or allied disciplines that deal with similar problems or phenomena. For example, the traditional broad groupings of organized disciplines are the natural sciences, the social sciences, mathematics, and humanities.
2. Another such grouping can be on the basis of modes of thought, viz., the analytic, the empirical, the aesthetic, and the moral.
3. Relationships of knowledge to human affairs. The goal of education is not merely to impart knowledge but also to prepare students for their future life, the empirical and trans-empirical.

Present-day curricula rightly focus their attention on the organization or interrelations of the various disciplines. Such an approach is very profitable, and therefore there must be much greater emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches and

collaboration among the disciplines. So there is a need for a broader context for curriculum planning. All the disciplines should be called upon to join in this new venture in which the integrity of all the disciplines will be safeguarded, while at the same time a substantial measure of coherence and relatedness will be achieved.

# Chapter 6

## Logic and Teaching–Learning Strategy



**Abstract** This chapter deals with logic and teaching–learning strategy. It emphasizes the role of logical order in teaching and learning. It expounds different issues relating to logic in the field of education. It highlights the role of logical operations in teaching–learning strategy.

**Keywords** Logic · Logical order · Psychological order · Logic and education  
Logic in education · Logical operations

### Introduction

Ultimately, the focal point of all educational phenomena centres around the teaching and learning strategy. The character and outcome of this process depend on the curriculum and the methods that are employed; and the latter, in turn, are dependent upon the way in which they stand in relation to knowledge. Thus, remotely yet fundamentally, the entire working of the educative process is based on an epistemology of which logic is an important component.

There is another point that should be noted in this connection. The basic thing in all educational activities is the aims and objectives of education. These educational aims not only indicate the values to be sought, they should also involve a personal commitment thereto. This brings in the element of interest. A teacher cannot hope to generate interest in the pupil unless the latter already has an inquisitive mind to acquire knowledge. An inquisitive mind is logical and demands systematic thinking.

### The Logical Order of Instructional Material

In order that the teaching–learning process may be smooth and interesting, it is necessary to keep up the logical order of the instructional material. Not only has the human mind a longing for order, but it is also an invincible quality of the world.

It would be wrong to believe that mind is a-logical and that logical order is detrimental to interest and motivation. In fact, logical order is conducive to the development of interest. Moreover, logical order can be based on the psychological order, and thus there can be many logical orders depending on the present state of the pupil's knowledge and interests. The logical order proceeds from simple to complex, but "simple" and "complex" are relative notions depending upon the mental development of the learner. That which is simple for one may be complex for another. Thus, both the logical and psychological orders go hand in hand, and it is false to regard them as antagonistic. Both are necessary for any rounded approach to the educative process.

It is quite clear from the above considerations that it is not only desirable but also necessary to organize instructional material in a logical fashion. The more it is logically interrelated, the more sensitive it would be to invoke interest in the pupils. Here it should also be remembered that the logic of teaching is not the same as the logic of learning, because the teacher represents in achievement and maturity what the pupil only potentially has in his or her immaturity.

When the content of instruction is organized logically, it is arranged according to a hierarchy of principles and concepts that are said to be present in the branches of knowledge themselves. Each branch has its own hierarchy of knowledge, and all these branches are said to form a hierarchy together.

Knowledge is organized in a number of disciplines, and each discipline is both a kind of knowledge and a kind of knowing. It is both a system of ideas or theories and a means of acquiring them. Thus it also involves a methodology, a way of inquiry. As knowledge evolves, new fields open up for investigation and newer methods of inquiry are found. In this process new disciplines are established, and some old ones are sometimes abandoned. Some disciplines seek knowledge for its own sake whereas others are concerned with applying knowledge to practical ends. But all applied disciplines rest on theoretical ones. Hence in the curriculum, knowledge should be organized as it is organized in the theoretical discipline. So far as the actual organization of the various disciplines, as a whole, is concerned recently a number of classifications have been proposed. There cannot be finality about this. We have discussed this issue earlier.

It is worthwhile here to deviate and discuss the nature and function of logic.

## **Nature and Function of Logic**

Logic can broadly be defined as the study of the principles and methods of valid reasoning. What interests a logician is the correctness of the process of reasoning. The prime concern is the connections between the conclusions arrived at and the grounds (or evidences) on which these conclusions are based. Barring the state of doubt, there can be three possibilities which can logically be conceived with regard to such a connection. It may be necessary, in the sense that the grounds are such that the conclusions derived from them cannot be denied. Or the connection may be

contingent (i.e., probable), in the sense that the grounds are such that subject to certain conditions, the conclusions based on them can justifiably be asserted. Or, the connection may be impossible, in the sense that the grounds can never entail the conclusion.

There is another function of logic which consists in conceptual and linguistic analysis. The significance of this function lies in the fact that all reasoning is conceptual and all conceptual knowledge finds its expression through a language. Formulating concepts precisely and distinctly, operationalizing concepts and putting them to proper use, forming and testing hypotheses, making appropriate generalizations, defining, describing, explaining, and dividing, recognizing inconsistencies and contradictions, identifying and avoiding fallacies, giving cogent reasons and justifications, making conceptual distinctions—these are some of the basic functions or “thinking skills” involved in logical reasoning, and they must be taught to pupils in any system of education.

Likewise, learning judicious use of language (which is an indispensable medium of expression of thought) is equally significant. Language should be so transparently employed as to be able to faithfully and adequately represent the thought, otherwise it would fail to serve its intended purpose. If it suffers from deficiencies, it may hinder the logicity of thought and may distort, twist, or conceal the intended ideas. Some faulty uses of language could be in the form of confusing abbreviations and compressions, ellipses, suppressed premises, misleading metaphors, inadequate analogies, etc. It is therefore imperative that the language employed is free from ambiguity, vagueness and opacity.

Thus, a study in the logical foundation of education would reveal two important roles which logic could perform, and therefore must be called upon to perform, in the sphere of education. They are: (a) analysing the language of educational discourse; and (b) determining the logical components in the process of education.

## **Logic and the Language of Education**

Language, being the medium of expression of thought, must be so transparent as to be able to faithfully represent thought, otherwise it would fail to serve its intended purpose. If the language used by educational researchers and practitioners is not adequate because of its “open texture”, it may then distort and twist the gist of the subject and may conceal or misdirect the very purport. Because of such careless use of language, it may be possible that many assumptions slip into educational discourse which may be in conflict with the general drift of the theory or practice of which the educator may not be aware.

Loose thinking also may be current among educators. Proverbs, sayings, slogans, etc., are very often used, which are sometimes vague, false, or meaningless. For example, when it is said that “All that glitters is not gold,” it does not convey any precise meaning. What an idealist or a realist or a pragmatist thinker means when she uses this phrase can be made clear only when it is converted into a

directly meaningful sentence. Similarly, some educators are fond of exhorting, “Teach children and not subjects.” As a slogan it may have some value of emphasis, but when it is taken literally and put in the form of a dilemma, “What do teachers teach? Do they teach subject matter or do they teach children?” then it becomes quite ridiculous, because we always teach something to somebody.

Analysis of the language of educational discourse would further make it clear that the language of education as a discipline (science) and the language of educating (activity) are not the same. The former is the language in which a disciplined knowledge is expressed, and the latter is language in which the teacher and the pupil communicate. The same analysis alone would further enable us to standardize the use of these two types of language.

## Logic and Educational Concepts

Like educational language, many educational concepts are also quite vague and often misleading. For example, it is maintained that education is a “process of self-realization”. But what “self” and “realization” precisely mean has been often left vague, with the result that this concept fails to signify anything concrete. Equally vague and misleading are phrases like “education according to nature” or “education as a process of development of personality and character”. Similarly, phrases like “meeting the needs of youth”, “providing life experiences”, and a host of other ideas are either too vague to be of practical use unless clarified, or they may be beyond the capacity of educational institutions to fulfil if adequate means are not available. They need to be specified and delimited.

Moreover, educators often use the same concept to denote different objects. Conflicting uses of terms like “role”, “need”, “status”, “freedom”, “authority”, “creativity”, “nature”, “development”, “knowing”, and the like lead to disagreements about how data are to be collected and classified, and conclusions established. This comes in the way of agreed findings.

It is here again that the role of logical analysis is called for. It can help us: (a) in detecting enigmatic, pretentious, and tautologous definitions of educational phenomena; and (b) in developing an agreed set of concepts to describe them. Such an analysis can have three phases:

1. Charting out the various possible meanings of a concept.
2. Defining the senses in which it is used in different theories within a single branch of inquiry and also among the different branches of inquiry.
3. Studying the implications of their sense in educational theory and codifying their usage.

Such an attempt will bring about unanimity, precision and clarity in educational discourse, and thus ensure effective communication which can guarantee mutual understanding, which operates in the realm of the natural sciences. As a matter of

fact, there have been some significant studies by analytical thinkers in this direction in the west. Gilbert Ryle in *The Concept of Mind* has clarified many mental conduct concepts like “knowing”, “teaching”, “learning”, etc. The concept of “adjustment” has been analysed by C. J. B. Macmillan (Kneller). Komisar (1966) has analysed the concept of “need”. In collaboration with Jerold R. Coombs, he has also worked out the different meanings of the concept of “equality”. B. Othanel Smith and Robert H. Ennis have done a great service in editing the book entitled *Language and Concepts in Education*. In this book, Smith and Ennis (1966) analyse three meanings of the concept of “teaching”. Scheffler (1960) has worked out the logical implications of two kinds of statements common in educational discourse, viz., statements of definitions and statements of slogans. He also discusses their respective valid roles and logical force in educational discourse. The work of Peters (1967) is also a significant advance in this direction.

All these and many other studies are pioneering efforts in this new field and have to be carried further. The imperative today is for the standardization of the concepts used in educational discourse so that they are used scientifically and are employed with discrimination. There is a need to undertake such an exercise in the Indian context as well.

## **Logic and Generalizations in Education**

There has been a tendency among educators and educational researchers to base their theories and practices on generalizations borrowed from the behavioural sciences as derived from one cultural scenario and applying them to another culture. But many of these generalizations are based on certain assumptions which are uncritically accepted, and for which there may not be any warrant in experience. This is especially so with regard to the assumptions about human nature in psychology and sociology. In psychology, for example, there are many “schools”, and the psychologists interpret the data they study in the light of the teachings of the school to which they owe allegiance. Hence, educational theories and practices based on psychological theories are no more to be trusted than the assumptions of the schools that have provided the theories in question. One of the functions of the logical critique of educational thought should be to examine such assumptions and generalizations.

## **Logic and Educational Analogies**

Educators often draw analogies between certain educational phenomena and phenomena in other realms. Analogies are usually drawn out of metaphors. A metaphorical statement indicates important similarities between two phenomena in certain respects, without specifically stating in what the analogies actually

consist. The theoretical value of a metaphor lies in the fact that it points out significant parallels and may hint at a successful hypothesis. Thus, it has a serious theoretical role to play. But analogies are neither deductions nor valid inductive causal inferences, nor a statistical inference in terms of probabilities. And therefore, though they are not always false, they are weak and need to be used cautiously. Metaphors usually suffer from two types of weaknesses. They may prove to be sterile or trivial, like the metaphor of *tabula rasa* employed by Locke and Herbart, or of organic growth used by Dewey for cultural growth. The second type of weakness is that they may be limited in the sense that their applicability is contextual, and that they give only a specific perspective on their subjects. Such a limitation is not a reason to reject them completely. Analogies can be profitably drawn, provided two conditions are kept in mind, namely: (a) it is rewarding to give a comparison of alternative metaphors just as alternative theories are rewarding in a social science in revealing the multifaceted character of the subject; and (b) no attempt should be made to transplant the metaphors from one context to another, since each one is relevant to a particular context only.

Educators generally overlook these conditions and employ indiscriminately the metaphors of the mirror or the lamp to explain the state of mind of the learner, or metaphors of growth or moulding or carving to explain the respective roles of teacher and pupil in the process of education. So, the point in reference is that to call attention to analogies that may control discussions of educational objectives and means, and to examine their credentials, is a task which a logical critique alone can undertake.

## Logic and Educational Inferences

Many educational thinkers and researchers derive conclusions from data which do not usually provide complete grounds for those conclusions. The result is that many statements about educational phenomena are based on faulty inferences and inept value judgements. For example, it has been very often contended that since teachers are low-paid, the quality of teachers is poor. Firstly, the premise itself is disputable, and that apart it does not offer any strict logical reason for the conclusion. There is no necessary and invariable connection between low wages and the inferior quality of teachers. To give one more example, the reliability of the method of questionnaire employed in empirical study becomes questionable if the questionnaire is vitiated by certain internal flaws. Questions may be too narrow or too wide, one-sided or lopsided. Implicit in the garb of a positive language, these items may contain many negative suggestions which should have been avoided in order to elicit spontaneous responses.

A critical analysis of most such occurrences would bring out an array of logical flaws of which the writers might not be aware. So, if the researcher is given some training in the technique of logical thinking, she would perhaps be able to avoid such fallacious reasoning. A training in logic would not only help her in the

selection of the appropriate set of evidences and in the derivation of legitimate conclusions from it, but it would also provide her with a valid and suitable methodology for solving problems and tackling issues. This will be done by pointing out the nature of the steps involved in different research methodologies, and the limitations and the range of phenomena they cover.

## **Logic and Theory Construction in Educational Research**

In educational research, there may be many low-level generalizations rather than scientifically tested theories. It has been contended that these generalizations often mislead the educator and cause great harm to the theory and practice of education. In order to avoid such generalizations, techniques of science are brought into the field of education. But before we apply these techniques of science to the problem of education, we should be well trained in the process of “construct validation”, so that the methods of theory construction used by us may not be poor or fallacious and hence of negative validity or low reliability. Lest our remedial measures harbour newer vices, it is imperative that we should make a studied use of scientific methods by duly taking into consideration the logical principles involved in them. For example, it is desirable that the Hempelian model for explanation which is based on four logical principles may be followed. They are: (a) the explanandum must be a logical consequence of the explanans; (b) the explanans must contain general laws required for derivation of the explanandum; (c) the explanans must have empirical content; and (d) the sentences constituting the explanans must be true. What is needed, then, is that educational researchers should also be trained in the discipline of logical analysis.

## **Logic and Educational Curricula**

There is another sphere of education, viz., curriculum framing, where the help of logic must be sought. As stated earlier, and the repetition is significant, in order that the teaching–learning process may be smooth and interesting, it is necessary to arrange the instructional material in a logical way. Through a psychological approach, the logical organization is reached; and in this way, the organization is simultaneously both logical as well as psychological. Both are necessary for any rounded approach to the educative process.

## **Logic and Educational Measurements**

Just as for theory construction the methods of science have been introduced in the field of education, in the same way scientific measuring devices and tests have also been brought in. For example, in order to judge intelligence, educational

measurements have been constructed on the model of measurements in physics. It is very doubtful whether we can measure the properties of the intelligence in the same way in which we measure physical properties. Further, all these measurement tests evolved by educational psychologists are based on behaviouristic presuppositions, whose roots lie in a physics which has long ago been discarded. Still, without doubting the futility of these mental measurement tests, as they are called, it can be asked in which sense, out of the three senses of measurement which occur in physics, viz., intensive magnitudes, fundamental magnitudes, and derived magnitudes, properties are measured in educational experiments. There does not appear to be general agreement among educationists as to the answer to this question. But upon the answer to this alone depends the genuineness of the devices employed, because the logical principles underlying the three types of measurement are not the same.

## Logic and Educational Methods of Assessment

Assessment plays a key role in judging the outcome of the process of education. Through it alone we fathom the effectiveness of teaching and the depth of learning. The usual method employed for this task is that of setting a question paper. But to ask a question is not the same as to ask the right type of question. Many of the question papers set in our examinations suffer from inherent flaws, some of which can be enumerated here:

1. Depending on the source of information, some questions depend on investigation and some call for reflection. Questions pertaining to the facts of sense experience which are empirically testable, fall under the first category, whereas questions like “Are our wills free?” require only reflection. So, while expecting a response from pupils, this distinction should not be overlooked.
2. With regard to the answerability, some questions are answerable in principle but may not be so in practice, either now or ever. To give a stock example, questions like the number of stars in a galaxy or hair on the head, etc., are such and care should be taken by the examiner to avoid such questions.
3. On the basis of the motive of the questioner, a distinction must be made between “fact finding” and “verbal” questions. For example, if someone committed a particular act and the juries were asked to opine whether it was legal or illegal, this question would not demand any fact finding but only interpretation of facts on the basis of the wording of the law or principle. Fact finding is the work of another agency and has to be performed earlier.
4. In most question papers, we find a question pertaining to definitions. Pupils are asked to state whether a particular definition is true or false. But definitions are of two types, viz., bi-verbal and ostensive. It should be remembered that truth value belongs to the former type only.

5. There are certain structural fallacies in the framing of questions and care must be taken to avoid them. Loaded questions like “Do you approve of the act of Mr X?” or “Don’t you like him?” clearly hint at the kind of answer demanded. Closed questions like “Who will win, X or Y?” shut out the possibilities of further selection, if the alternatives are more than two. Some questions embody built-in assumptions like, “Have you stopped stealing?” Questions like “Who is your favourite hero?” suffer from question begging when one has no such particular choice. In some questions, there is built-in unanswerability; e.g., in philosophy if it is asked, “How is the world related to the Absolute?”, then the question would be nonsensical, since the Absolute, by definition, is that which is beyond all relations.

These and many more such flaws can be detected and avoided, provided a logical analysis is undertaken.

## **Logic and Educational Objectives**

Education is a medium through which human society formulates the required system of values and the models of acquiring it. A meaningful education therefore has to be a means for the betterment and enhancement of human existence.

Education is a purposive activity devoted to the development of human personality. Its direction and shape are determined by human ideals and values, which in turn are based on and moulded by knowledge. Education, thus, is structured in its form, mode, contents, range, etc., by the varied forms of knowledge and their hierarchical interrelations. As stated earlier, conceptual knowledge stands in need of logical analysis. Logical analysis helps in the discernment of values and in the construction of the value system as also in the validation of the modes of value realization. Logical analysis further helps to evaluate educational thoughts and practices in terms of their conformity and conduciveness to the value schema which is put forth as the objective of education.

## **Logical Operations in Teaching and Learning**

Since the aim of all education is to impart knowledge effectively, the success of the teaching–learning strategy lies in properly knocking at the door of knowledge. The teaching–learning process involves expounding and mastering an item of knowledge. In expounding a piece of knowledge, the teacher presents before the pupils a set of conclusions together with the grounds or evidences that support it. The teacher presents arguments, facts, proofs, etc., defines concepts, explains them, draws conclusions, and generalizes. And reciprocally, pupils also in mastering this piece of knowledge ascertain that the grounds or evidences do, in fact, support the conclusions. Thus, both these processes invariably involve some logical operations.

## **Ignorance of Logical Operations Non-conductive**

The more the teaching–learning process is intended to be effective, the more it should have a logical basis. The quality of this process could surely be improved if teachers and pupils are made aware of the logical operations that they perform or could perform when expounding and mastering a piece of knowledge. In case of ignorance of the logical operations involved in a genuine teaching–learning method, it would be far less intellectually oriented than it ought to be. Then teachers may fail to challenge and stimulate the minds of pupils because not only would they be ignorant of these logical operations, but they also may not know the logical techniques of argument, exposition, debate, etc., which have to be engineered to stimulate the intellectual abilities of pupils. That is why, when an intelligent student makes a point, however imperfect in logicity, the teacher may not pursue it to its logical completion because of inability to grasp the logical operation that the student is unconsciously carrying out.

The pupil too, though a reflective and rational individual, would be hindered in intellectual development by not being aware of the logical operations that need to be performed or ought to be performed in mastering a particular content of instruction and in initiating and carrying on classroom discussion. The pupil would be further handicapped by lack of training in the technique of appraising the arguments and contentions of others. Hence, although pupils may commit to memory a good range of information and to some extent may learn to solve problems in particular areas which they have studied, they may rarely transfer what they learn in one discipline to other disciplines which they have to learn subsequently. Hence, the thinking that pupils do in history, for example, would be of little benefit to the thinking they would be required to do in geography or political science. This is so because in most cases neither the pupil nor the teacher is aware that roughly the same techniques of thinking and standards of assessing thoughts are involved in all realms of knowledge. That is why different studies by the pupil would not contribute to one another as they should.

## **Need for Initiation into Logic**

Since certain logical operations are necessarily involved in clear, consistent, and systematic thinking, and since certain standards are employed in appraising the products of such thinking whatever the subject matter, this provides a sufficient rationale and justification for instituting special courses for teachers in the knowledge and performance of logical operations. Teachers, in their training courses, should be made aware of the need to master the various logical operations that are involved in the process of teaching and learning. It is no doubt important for teachers to understand the psychology of the pupil, but it is in no way less important for them to know the logicity of thinking upon which the learning process mostly depends.

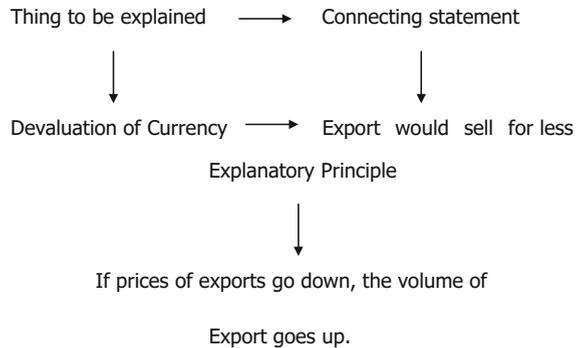
## Pattern for framing such a Course in Logic

There are certain logical operations and standards of evaluation which are, roughly speaking, universally applicable. They should be taught in the various subjects the pupil studies. Or, they can be taught as a separate subject in their own right. Apart from these broad and general operations and standards that cut across different areas of knowledge, there are specific operations and standards that are characteristics of particular branches of knowledge. The teacher or educator should devise ways of teaching them as a part of the subject matter of these branches of knowledge.

The syllabus which will provide a background course in such a methodology must envelop the following considerations within its fold. The growth of logical powers in a child is always gradual, and therefore the teacher must be made to know what logical operations the pupil can perform at each stage in her development and with what sophistication. For example, classifying, ordering in serial relations, and numbering are the most fundamental logical operations. Upon these are based the more complex operations like deduction and induction. So an attempt must be made to find out how many possible logical operations are involved in the teaching and learning process. Some of these can be enumerated as follows: (1) defining; (2) describing; (3) designating (identifying); (4) stating; (5) reporting; (6) substituting; (7) evaluating; (8) opining; (9) classifying; (10) comparing; (11) contrasting; (12) inferring; (13) explaining. After identifying the possible logical operations as exhaustively as we can, an attempt must be made to divide and subdivide each of these operations so that their nature and function may be thoroughly studied. For example, explaining can be further divided into: (1) mechanical; (2) causal; (3) sequential; (4) procedural; (5) teleological; (6) normative, etc. Such a study can be named the “calculus of logical operations”.

The teaching–learning process in a classroom always centres round a particular topic which can be called “episode”. Whatever the discipline, its classroom instruction must be so specific and pertinent that it must be crystallized into one or more distinct episodes. Each episode is initiated with a question which can be called “move” or “entry”. For every entry there is an ideal logical pattern determined by the logical operations required by the entry. For example, an episode of the explaining kind must have three elements, viz., something that is explained, a principle of explanation, and a statement connecting the principle and instance. Thus, while teaching economics, a teacher may initiate an episode on devaluation by an entry or move in the form of a question, “Why does any country devalue its currency?” And if an intelligent student in the class, who is also well informed, replies, “So that its export would sell for less,” then the teacher should grasp the link and supply the missing principle, viz., “If the prices of export go down, the volume of export tends to go up.” The teacher may further explain that this would clear the dumping of goods and thus help to rotate the money, since it would fetch foreign markets for sale at low prices. The pattern of this episode can be schematized thus as in Fig. 6.1.

**Fig. 6.1** Model of Explanation



It should be made clear here that all episodes do not have one uniform pattern. The pattern would differ in accordance with the nature and requirements of the episode. For example, in the case of an evaluating episode there would be four elements, viz., (1) something to be appraised; (2) an appraisal; (3) criterion of appraisal; and (4) grounds regarding the adequacy of the criterion. Thus we shall have to undertake a study of the various possible types of episodes and, by analysing their nature and requirements, we shall have to find out the elements of logical operation involved in each of them. Such a study can be named “calculus of episodic structure”.

The problem of assessment is also quite basic to the learning process. One of the major tasks of education is to acquaint the pupil with the true criterion of knowledge. No education can be perfect and complete if it merely concerns itself with bare acquisition of knowledge, without inculcating the ability to test its validity. The optimum development of personality, which has been the recognized aim of education, requires the cultivation of a reasonably adequate pattern of judgement, and this can be provided only by imparting the definite criterion of meaning and truth. This is what is called the education of a critical faculty. Here the problem is, how should pupils know that their own or their teacher’s arguments, proofs, conclusions, and generalizations are valid (if deductive) or reliable (if inductive)? This would lead us to formulate all basic categories of judgement with the help of which the pupil will acquire an adequate sense of discernment. Such a study can be named the “calculus of logical discernment”.

## Logic and the Teaching–Learning Process

Lastly, logic provides the very basis of the teaching–learning process. The aim of all education is to communicate knowledge effectively, and therefore the act of education involves the two processes of teaching and learning. Since education is imparting knowledge effectively, the success of the educative process lies in evolving a suitable teaching–learning strategy. There are several logical operations

involved in different types of knowledge situations. The effectiveness of the teaching–learning strategy lies in properly conducting the specific operations appropriate to a particular knowledge situation.

Logical operations are inevitable not only because the ideas or thoughts to be communicated have to be systematically linked with one another, but also because in the educative process neither is the beginning random nor is the end abrupt. From a set of premises, a reasoned discourse leads to a conclusion and, therefore, it is thoroughly logical.

Over the past several years, the adequacy and efficacy of teacher preparation have been questioned by articulate critics both within and outside the profession. They have been quite vocal in pointing out that our teachers are ill prepared for the complexity of their task in stimulating pupils' learning and in sharpening their rational faculty. The teachers simply mug up some amount of information gathered from this or that textbook and mechanically reproduce it before the pupils, who will just try to store it and reproduce it at the time of examination. The consequence is that education has been reduced to mere memorization.

The remedy for this malady lies in realizing the fact that education consists not in teachers' putting ideas into the minds of students, but in getting ideas out of students. This presupposes a thorough acquaintance with, if not mastery over, the thought process on the part of the teacher. Teachers should themselves be capable of undertaking and discerning the various logical operations involved in different thought processes, of detecting logical flaws, of formulating hypotheses, of identifying and organizing evidences, of assessing cogency in arguments, etc. They should further have the capacity to stimulate a parallel thought process in the minds of the pupils. All this is possible if teachers in their training courses are taught the various logical operations involved in the process of teaching and learning. In our zeal to psychologize education, we seem to have neglected the role of logic in our present-day curricula. It is no doubt important for teachers to understand the psychology of the pupil, but it is in no way less important for them to know the logicity of thinking upon which the efficacy of the teaching–learning strategy depends. To make our education purposeful, it is imperative to take due cognizance of the logical operations and standards that are characteristic of particular branches of knowledge. They should be taught as part of the subject matter of these branches of knowledge.

## **Efficacy of this Technique for Teaching and Learning**

It may be contended that theoretically, the proposed logical structure of a classroom discourse is quite compact and convincing, but how far would it be useful in actual educational practice? The answer is, such a logical structure would provide the teacher an appropriate technique for introducing an episode that would allow the subject matter to be communicated more effectively. Not only will this enable teachers to transmit knowledge in a logical fashion, it will also guide students so

that they can handle this knowledge in a logical manner. This will enable students to grasp at once the logical operation that is required of them. By bringing out the logical implications of a topic, teachers can make the treatment of it more searching and more complete. And consequently, students' grasp will be at once more thorough, more comprehensive, and more enduring. This is the creative aspect of the utility of this technique.

The critical utility of the technique lies in the fact that it provides a standard for assessing the logicity of instruction in any classroom episode. This will tell: (a) how far the teacher is succeeding in actualizing the logical structure; and (b) what steps the teacher should take in guiding the discussion in order to realize this structure still further. Teachers will now be in a better position to improve students' ability to think logically per se, because they will know what the operations of logical thinking are, and how students can be led to perform these operations more effectively. They will also be able to identify mistakes in reasoning, defining, explaining, and other logical operations and to classify these errors to the students who commit them.

## **Uses of Logic in Teaching–Learning Strategy**

Logic is useful when its key words, like teaching, learning, expounding, explaining, defining, justifying, etc., are adequately defined and properly used and when the sentences in which ideas or thoughts are presented are systematically linked with one another. This is necessary because in the process, we begin somewhere and end somewhere. From a set of premises, a reasoned discourse leads to a conclusion. It is therefore logical.

In present-day curricula, we have neglected the importance of language and discarded the role of logic. Those who disregard logic in education suffer from the erroneous notion that the principles of logic deal only with the ideal thinking process, and they have nothing to do with the actual thinking process. But the fact is that these principles are helpful in scanning our thinking. They tell us whether or not the conclusions we have reached follow necessarily from our premises, or, as in inductive thinking, they decide the probable truth of our conclusions. Moreover, those who try to move directly from the psychologists' description of how we learn to a position on how we ought to learn, and try to derive an educational method from a psychology of learning, are showing a basic fallacy of judgement. There can be no justified leap from that which is descriptive to that which is prescriptive. The emphasis upon psychology and the relative absence of logical studies in the curricula of teacher training institutions furnish primary evidence that we have fallen into this error.

## Concluding Remarks

From the above considerations, it is quite clear that logic can be highly useful in the field of educational research and training. It can help to raise the standards of educational research by analysing the logical structure of the presented knowledge, by reconstructing the language of educational discourse, and by proposing canons of theory and concept formation. The method of logical analysis is also remarkably congenial to the problems of education. It clarifies concepts and assumptions, unsnarls logical and linguistic tangles in pedagogical knowledge, states criteria for meaning, explanation, and verification, and provides models of theory. Logic is also an inherent element in the teaching–learning process, and an understanding of the logical operations involved in it makes the task of the teacher and pupil more orderly and effective.

The present chapter has provided only a tentative theoretical basis for experimental inquiry regarding the ideal logical structure of the classroom teaching–learning process. It is based on the assumptions that some logical operations and standards are invariably involved in all kinds of teaching–learning processes, and that there can and should be a logical structure for every classroom instruction. However, these assumptions and the logical structure erected here on them are open for review and revision. It is intended that this may be reviewed keeping the following questions in view:

1. To what extent does learning to think logically depend on: (a) the degree to which the teacher carries out each logical operation completely; (b) the degree to which the student is required to conform to the ideal logical structure of each initiated episode; and (c) the student’s own knowledge of the logical structure of the episode?
2. How much better does the student understand the content of instruction if she is taught these logical operations as tools in their own right?
3. If more precision is desired in the logical operations performed in the classroom, should teachers know their subject matter in ways different from how they know it at present?
4. Would teachers’ improved ability to promote the logical handling and exploration of subject matter make them less dependent on textbooks?

Answers to these questions are sought on the basis of experiments, and if the answers to all these are affirmative that would provide sufficient rationale and justification for instituting special courses in logic for teachers in training colleges.

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# Chapter 7

## Education and Joyful Learning



**Abstract** Education has to be both enlightening and joyful. Learning with joy and learning for joy should be the objectives of education. In Indian culture, joy is given supreme importance and it is equated with Reality. This chapter discusses the nature of joy and methods of joyful learning.

**Keywords** *Ānanda* · *Rasa* · *Mokṣa* · Joyful learning · Learning for joy  
Learning with joy · Methods of joyful learning

### Introduction

The concept of joyful learning is a very rich, rewarding, and innovative idea in a system of education, particularly when it gets entangled in the labyrinth of rote learning, mere information gathering, insensitive teaching and unintelligent learning. It is a therapeutic concept in a situation where wisdom and knowledge get replaced by information, and the system of education becomes socially irrelevant. It is a concept which should constitute the core of any system of education worth its name. It is a pivotal concept around which the objectives, the means, and modalities of the system of education should revolve.

### What is Joy?

Joy is the realization of a state of achievement, contentment, and happiness at the physical, mental and spiritual levels. It is a state in which one feels that one has realized what one wanted and needed to realize. It is a natural and spontaneous expression of the fulfilment of one's being and becoming. Negatively speaking, it is a state in which one feels as if one does not lack anything, does not want anything, and does not miss anything. It is a state which is free from bondage, restrictions, limitations and suffering.

Of course, such a state of joy as described above is temporary and evanescent, and more often than not we do not experience it for a long while. It should, however, be our endeavour to realize it and to make it endure as long as possible. It is an indisputable fact that we do have occasions in our life when we have such a realization, however fleeting it may be. It is also a fact that all of us do aspire to have such a realization in the best and the highest form. This is natural also because only in this lies the meaning, significance and value of life. Life is not worth living if there is no joy.

## Nature of Joy according to Classical Indian Thought

According to classical Indian thought, we are the progeny of the immortal and the perfect. We are *amṛtasya putrāḥ*, say the Vedas. We have come from the source which is perfection and our destiny is to reach back to that source. Where there is perfection there is happiness and joy (*Yadbhūmā tadvai sukham, nālpe sukhamasti*) say the Upaniṣads (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 7.23). This perfection is joy. This is the Ultimate Reality. *Raso vai saḥ. Rasam hyevāyam labdhvā ānandī bhavati*, says the *Taittīriya Upaniṣad* (II.7). That is to say, Reality is of the nature of joy, and all beings become happy on realizing the same. It further declares: *Ānando Brahmeti vyajānāt. Ānandāiḥyeva khalvimāni bhūtāni jāyante. Ānandena jātāni jīvanti. Ānandam pratyantyabhisamviśanti* (III.6). That is, “Know the Reality to be joy. From joy all these beings arise. By joy all these created beings live and are sustained. In joy all these culminate.” The Reality is of the nature of joy in essence. Therefore, we should ultimately attain the state of joy. This should be our *summum bonum*. All else should be subservient and instrumental to it. This should be our aim and aspiration, our attainment and realization. This is what is known as *mukti* or *mokṣa*.

In this ultimate analysis, genuine education should equip us with that knowledge and wisdom which is redemptive of all pain, suffering, limitations, and bondage. *Sā vidyā yā vimuktaye* should be the motto of our educational institutions. Education should enable us to attain that *vidyā* which leads us to perfection and joy, named as *amṛta* in Indian culture. It is our pristine nature and we must attain it. Through education alone we can do so. Being the progenies of the immortal and perfect, we have the natural propensity to go back to that state of *amṛta*. Education alone is the way to do so. There is no other way (*nānyā panthā vidyate ayanāya*).

## Nature of Joyful Learning

The above analysis of the nature of Reality and of human nature brings us to the concept of joyful learning. Joyful learning is learning with joy and for joy. It is both joyful and joy yielding. It is the means and the end, the process and the outcome,

the beginning, the middle, and the end. Learning is a process of unfoldment of inherent potentialities for the realization of perfection, which, as we said earlier, consists in a joyful state of existence, a state of unalloyed bliss. With each step in the process of learning, at each moment in the duration of learning, there should be the gradual realization of perfection and consequent attainment of joy. This is the ultimate objective of all education. Education for jobs or livelihoods, etc., is only a means. It does not have an end value. It is valuable only for the sake of the ultimate value of joy.

If we accept the view that our real essence is of the nature of joy, then it follows not only that the learning process should also be geared towards the realization of the essence, but that the very nature of this learning process should also be joyful. So learning for joy implies as its corollary learning with joy.

Learning is a natural and spontaneous process. So there should be no imposition and coercion. Then only it becomes joyful. This means that learning should be in the form of play. According to Indian culture, the whole cosmic process is also a joyful play (*līlā* or *krīdā*) of God. It is a sportive play in which the Supreme person expresses Himself through a divine dance. The origin of all languages and all forms of knowledge is through the divine dance only. So all learning should also be in form of playful activity.

Perfect joy springs up from the state of perfection. But that is only an ideal. Our earthly existence is imperfect, and all our activities including learning can only give us imperfect joy. Nevertheless, we must make our learning process as joyful and joy yielding as possible. But the ultimate purpose of all learning should be to acquire joy. The objective of life is also the same.

## Importance of Joyful Learning

The foregoing analysis has a very interesting implication for the process of education. The learning situation should never be painful and boring. It should not cause any strain on our learner. Otherwise it is not a genuine learning situation. It will then be anti-learning. This requires a proper framing of the curriculum and syllabus and also an appropriate teaching–learning situation. In this respect, both the logical and psychological orders involved in the process of education should be given due attention and care. Logical order is needed for proper arrangement of the instructional material involved in the curriculum, syllabus, and textbooks. Psychological order is needed to ensure the sustained interest of the learner. These two orders are mutually supporting and reinforcing. They are not antithetical and they go hand in hand. So along with the psychological foundation, the logical foundation should also be taken into consideration in a balanced process of education.

Learning is a process of acquiring knowledge. But knowledge is not just information. It is a true understanding of the nature of Reality which must transform our being. It must be liberating knowledge. It must liberate us from our wants,

sufferings, and imperfections. Only such knowledge can enable us to realize joy. This liberating knowledge is not merely theoretical or academic. It must result in or lead to successful behaviour. All our ends and objectives, all *puruṣārthas* or *summum bonum*, all purposes and goals of our existence are realizable only through proper knowledge. In other words, knowledge should be knowledge-in-action and knowledge-for-action. Only such a type of knowledge can have spontaneity and creativity. It is knowledge through practical experience, through activity methods. It is learning through play and activity methods, through self-effort and self-study. In the Upaniṣads, we find several instances of learning situations through practical experience. It would be relevant here to cite one such example from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (VI.12–13) where the profound and subtle metaphysical truth that there is one fundamental Reality invisibly underlying the entire world of multiplicity, has been explained in a very simple and interesting way with the help of a practical example. The text offers a parable, in which the father Uddālaka explains and brings home to his son Śvetaketu this great and highest philosophical truth as follows:

“Bring a fruit from this fig tree.”

“Here it is, revered Sir.”

“Split it.”

“It is split, revered Sir.”

“What do you see in it?”

“These minute grains, revered Sir.”

“Break one of them, dear boy.”

“It has been broken, revered Sir.”

“What do you see in it.”

“Nothing, revered Sir.”

To him [the father] said, “Dear boy, this minutest seed-part which you do not perceive, as the product of this minutest seed-part stands this large fig-tree. Have faith, dear boy.

“That which is this subtle principle, all this world has that as the self. That is the truth. That is the self. That thou art, O Śvetaketu.”

“Revered Sir, May you be pleased to enlighten me further.”

“Let it be so, dear boy,” said he.

“Put this salt into water and then come to me in the morning.” He did as instructed.

To him he [the father] said,

“Dear Son, bring the salt you had put into water last night.” Having searched for it he could not find it.

“As this has become dissolved and you do not see. Dear son, take a sip from the top of this water. How is it?”

“It is salty.”

“Take a sip from the middle. How is it?”

“It is salty.”

“Throw this water away and then come to me.”

He did accordingly and said,

“The salt is always there everywhere.”

Then his father said to him,

“Dear boy, in the same way, *Sat* (the one Ultimate Real) which you are unable to perceive is always there everywhere in the world.”

There are innumerable such examples which may be given here to illustrate this point. In fact, all the Upaniṣads are replete with similar types of examples which are interesting as well as illuminating. In joyful learning, such examples and activity methods play a pivotal role. What is needed is a paradigm shift in the form of learning by doing, learning as play, and learning by discovering. They make the lessons interesting and attractive and enable the learner to absorb the knowledge. In this method there is a role for the teacher, but it is only that of a guide and a help. It is more a process of self-learning and self-experience. This alone can be sustainable learning as it becomes a part and parcel of one’s being.

It is unfortunate that the present-day system of learning in India is far removed from this type of joyful learning. The pupil is overloaded with textbooks and overworked with home assignments. There is too much quantity but too little quality in terms of the relevance of instructional material. In many cases, neither are teachers interested in their job, nor are pupils inquisitive in learning. The learning is also in the form of information gathering, rote learning, cramming, and memorization. Not only is the teaching–learning process dull and mechanical, the method of evaluation is far from being genuine and trustworthy. It is much more unfortunate that all concerned are painfully aware of this unhappy situation, but everyone feels helpless, everyone finds themselves in despair. The situation seems to be incurable at present. But we can hope that the day of redemption will come and we shall revert to the joyful days of joyful learning. Human beings live by hope, and let us hope that such a time will come.

# Chapter 8

## Educational Perspectives on *Ānanda* *Mīmāṃsā* (Analysis of Bliss)



**Abstract** The Vedic system of education aims at perfection and bliss. In this chapter, the nature and levels of bliss are discussed. Details of the Indian theory of aesthetics are worked out. Life is to be regarded as joyful play. All arts—fine and gross—are to be resorted to for seeking bliss. But spiritual realization is the highest bliss. It is the same as perfection.

**Keywords** Bliss · Joy · *Preyas* · *Kāma* · *Ānanda mīmāṃsā* · *Rasa mīmāṃsā*  
*Madhu vidyā* · *Śreyas*

### Introduction

One of the distinguishing features of the Indian system of education is propagation of the fact that the ultimate nature of Reality is bliss and beatitude (*ānanda*), which is the same as pure consciousness (*sat = cit = ānanda*). In the Indian context, philosophizing is reflection on *sat* (the Real) by *cit* (consciousness) for *ānanda* (bliss). It is self-awareness, self-realization. The Vedic seers in their inspired visions and intuitive apprehensions experienced and expressed the supreme truth that the inner core of all existences is infinite bliss and beatitude, though this is hidden (*tirobhāva*) from our purview because of our finitude and the limitations caused by ignorance. Their deliverances are inspired visions stemming from pure intuitions and enlightened by spiritual experiences. They realized that every living being in which consciousness is manifested in a limited way naturally seeks after bliss, but gets only partial and restricted happiness (*parimitapramātā*). Everyone, consciously or unconsciously, wants to be happy and to shun suffering and pain. Unfortunately, only a fleeting and evanescent iota of bliss is experienced as pleasure or happiness even though fullness is one's own nature.

However, it is the prerogative of human beings as self-conscious and reflective creatures to systematically plan and endeavour not only to realize happiness which is transitory and mixed with pain, but to transcend this state and realize perpetual and unalloyed bliss. The Indian seers, sages and thinkers therefore put forth *mokṣa*,

meaning bliss, as the supreme goal of life and devised various ways and means to realize bliss. They also talked of different stages in the pathways to experience this *summum bonum* of life.

Indian thinkers and Greek thinkers in the west have endeavoured to theorize on this matter, but the subtle and deep Indian thinking surpasses the Greek both in its sweep and sublimity. The Indian mind is intuitive, ratiocinative, aesthetic and spiritual. As stated earlier, according to Indian thought, in the ultimate analysis, Reality, consciousness and bliss are essentially one and the same. Though linguistically stated in a particular sequence because of human limitations of expression, they refer to the same Reality. Every iota of Reality is consciousness and bliss. We should only have the manifest capacity and ability to experience this fact. Indian seers have always emphasized that this experience cannot be expressed and analysed, but as a result of human habit and sociality, once experienced we falteringly try to express it imperfectly, since every expression is limitation in thought and language. Nevertheless, for our mundane purposes, we do have the deliverances of seers and sages and critical examinations thereof by scholars with logical acumen. In Indian culture, following the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* we call it *Ānanda Mīmāṃsā* in spiritual context and *Rasa Mīmāṃsā* in the empirical pursuits.

By way of a digression, it may be stated that in the west because of empiricist bias and lack of spiritualistic overtones, there has not been much literature on *Ānanda Mīmāṃsā* and the aesthetics (derived from the Greek word *aesthesis* meaning sense experience) developed there is based on the subject-object dichotomy. But that is not the case with Indian thought. Though accepting this distinction, in Indian literature there are enormous references to the need to transcend this dichotomy and to realize bliss and go beyond the transitory happiness of the worldly life. In the west in philosophical circles right from Greek times, with some exceptions there has been a sort of misgiving about emotions and high opinion about the faculty of reason. In Plato, for example, we find mistrust against art and literature. Perhaps because of his rationalistic approach he did not appreciate art, rather he condemned it, and his diatribe against poetry is well known. This tendency continued for quite some time in Europe. Though Aristotle wrote the *Poetics*, he was more under the sway of reason. Of course he talked of *eudaemonia*, but it is not the same as bliss. The same is the case with medieval thinkers. This uneasy tension surfaced in many forms.

Later on, Kant, the German philosopher, though he did not find a cleavage between philosophy and art, he put them in compartments. He therefore wrote three separate *Critiques* and separated the cognitive and the emotive. After Kant, no doubt Schopenhauer and Nietzsche and the existentialist thinkers gave importance to affective feelings and volition, yet the type of smooth relation that should have obtained could not get the appreciation of the western mind and the logical positivists reversed this trend. The western mind is dichotomous, and therefore in the context of aesthetic experience also, it engaged in the controversy between subject-centredness and object-centredness. This apart, under the influence of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, instead of joy tragedy was emphasized. This is not the occasion, however, to discuss the details of the western approach.

In India, on the contrary, this sort of problem did not arise because the Indian approach to Reality is holistic and integral, based on the understanding of unified nature of Reality. The cognitive and affective were not bifurcated, though the distinction between the two was not overlooked and their symbiotic relation has been appreciated. All existence and all life are regarded as glorious and joyful. The Vedic seers in their intuitive vision experienced a unity, a harmony, an order, and a balance in the entire gamut of Reality. The real nature of Reality is to be self-situated and every iota of Reality has to partake in it. Any deviation is harmful. They exhorted that Reality is consciousness and it is the very nature of consciousness to be self-expressive. It is natural self-disclosure. Consciousness is spontaneity and creativity. Therefore, Reality has to get itself expressed. There cannot be any cause for this, and therefore the question “why creation?” is uncalled for. This self-expression is joy or joyful play (*līlā*). It is joyful and joy yielding. The Vedic seers aver *madhuvātārītāyate* etc. The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* is very explicit and elaborate on this point. The Ultimate Reality is characterized as *Brahman* because its all-pervasive and all-inclusive nature is bliss (*ānandaṁ bhrahmeti vyajānāt*). One becomes blissful by realizing this nature which is self-nature (*svarūpa*). Every iota of reality is the self-effulgence of Reality and has bliss as its nature. Everything springs from the same Reality, is sustained by it, and merges back into it. This is *Brahman*.

Another distinguishing feature of Indian culture is its twofold approach to Reality, knowledge, and values, known respectively as *pāramārthika* (*transcendental*) and *vyāvahārika* (*empirical*), *parā vidyā* (*spiritual wisdom*) and *aparā vidyā* (*empirical knowledge*), and *preyas* and *śreyas*. Accordingly, a clear distinction is drawn between two levels of experience of bliss. One is the mundane level and the other is the transcendental level. Between the two, there is no qualitative difference. That is why the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* puts forth a beatific calculus of ten stages in which each higher stage is a hundred times more quantified than the lower one. This account is figurative but meaningful. Likewise, it also expounds the theory of *pañcakośa* (five coverings) which are to be gradually transcended from the lowest to reach the highest which is bliss. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* calls the supreme bliss *rasānāmrasatamaḥ* (*highest type of beatitude*), using the superlative degree of expression. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* refers to it as *paramagati* (*ultimate goal*). In Indian culture, there is always an emphasis on the experience of joy and the culmination of joy, and adequate means are prescribed to realize this.

Both *preyas* (*material prosperity*) and *śreyas* (*Spiritual realization*) are *puruṣārthas* (*goals of human life*) to be pursued in succession. This is the purport of the *Īsopaniṣad* and *Kaṭhopeniṣad*. This is the Vedānta, the supreme truth of Vedic wisdom. So far as *śreyas* is concerned, it is the highest goal of life. This is a state of perfection and infinitude. This is self-realization. The Upaniṣads employ several linguistic terms to describe this, some of which are synonyms (*pariyāya*) and some have family resemblances (*sagotra*). It will be interesting to go into the finer and subtler nuances of these usages, which can be the subject matter of another work.

The transcendental experience is supra-mundane, which is pure and unalloyed bliss. It can only be experienced and can never be expressed because it is *unitive* experience. At this level, there is no distinction between the experiencer and the

experienced. In the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* it is called the *turīya* (forth and highest) state, and in the Pratyabhijñā school it is named as *turiyāṭīta* (even beyond the forth state). This state is regarded as the *summum bonum* of all existence. Since it cannot be described and analysed, we cannot and do not dwell upon it.

It is the *preyas* which is the subject matter of aesthetics. But it has to be remembered that Indian aesthetics has an inevitable spiritual orientation. *Preyas* is also termed *kāma puruṣārtha* (psycho-physical satisfaction). It is insisted that *kāma* has to be seasoned and tempered by dharma so that it does not get relegated to *kāmācāra* (Vulturousness). The *Bhagavadgītā* is very explicit about this. *Preyas* has been analysed threadbare in Indian culture. Though it can be termed *Ānanda Mīmāṃsā*, it can also be referred to as *Rasa Mīmāṃsā*. As stated earlier, between supra-mundane and mundane experience, there is no qualitative difference. Qualitatively they are the same, and that is why sometimes the terms *ānanda* (bliss) and *rasa* (aesthetic pleasure) are used as synonyms. Generally the word *rasa* is used for mundane experience.

In the mundane sphere, the Vedic seers always highlighted the joyful nature of our life and of the nature which nurtures and surrounds us, which sustains and supports our existence. They prayed for a joyful life of a hundred years, a healthy life, and life with plenitude. They prayed that our body be strong, our mind be pure, and our intellect be sharp, bright, and positive so that we can be joyful. Our existence is an organic whole, and therefore happiness cannot be piecemeal. It has to pertain to all levels and facets of our existence.

In the Indian tradition, there is always emphasis on the arousal of joy (*raso-dreka*), the experience of joy up to its culmination (*rasāsvādāna*), and the partaking of joy by expressing and co-sharing it (*sādhāraṇikaraṇa* with *sahr̥daya*). What is expressed can also be analysed and examined. So we should draw a distinction among *rasajñā*, *sahr̥daya*, and *pañḍita* (critice), though this has not been done in the tradition. One who experiences *rasa* is *kavi* (*kaṁ ānandaṁ vyatanoti kavi; kaṁ ānandaṁ lātīti kalā*). The artist or experiencer is *rasajñā*. One who partakes is *sahr̥daya* (connoisseur), having the same joyful heart, and this sharing can be universalized. Both have to partake in aesthetic experience. One who undertakes analysis is *pañḍita* (*Kaviḥ karoti kāvyāni rasam jānāti pañḍitaḥ*). A *pañḍita* is the *kāvyaśāstri*; he may or may not be *rasajñā* or *sahr̥daya*. The experience of the *kavi* can be called *īkṣā*, that of the *sahr̥daya*, *anvīkṣā*, and that of the *pañḍita* *samīkṣā*.

This mundane joy also has value, and therefore it is regarded as *puruṣārtha*. When it is heightened, it is also called *ālaukika* or *lokottara*, and later on the word *camatkāra* (wonderous) has also been used, but it is only *brahmānandasahodara*, a foretaste of *brahmānanda* (Brahmāsvādamiva Anubhāvyaṁ, *Kāvya Prakāśa*, IV. 27–28).

This sort of aesthetic pleasure is an outburst or effulgence (*prasphūṭana* or *unmeṣa*) of a unique human cognitive capacity known as *pratibhā* (genius). This concept of *pratibhā* is a singular contribution of the Indian mind. It is described as *nava nava unmeṣa śālīnīprajñā*. It is insightful wisdom which is characterized by increasing, novel joy. There is a gradual heightening of joy in it. It is not informative or discursive knowledge, but intuitive knowledge which always generates

newer and newer sensibilities, higher and higher sensibilities. Another term used to characterize it is *ramañīya*; it is defined as *kṣaṇe kṣaṇe yat navatāmupeti tadevarūpam ramañīyatāḥ*. Still another term used is *lāvanya*. In fact, in the Sanskrit language, we have a host of terms used in this context, some of which are synonyms and some have family resemblances. The ultimate aim of human pursuits according to Indian culture is *preyas* and *śreyas*, *preyas* leading to *śreyas*. So *preyas* is significant but it must culminate in *śreyas*. It must lead to the ennobling of life, the refinement of our mundane existence. This is the implication of the term *ramañīyatā*. By regarding it as *lāvanya*, it is meant that it has to be soothing, endearing, and comforting. Thus it is beauty as well as sublimity.

Every one cannot be a *rasajña* or *sahr̥daya* or *pañḍita*. It requires an awakening of *pratibhā*, which may be due to some stimulus as in the case of Vālmīki or Kālīdāsa or Tulasidāsa, or it may be inborn or cultivated by *sādhanā*. *Sādhanā* no doubt helps to cultivate all the three. There are multiple forms of expression of joy, such as the arts, sciences, technology, or agriculture, or industry and commerce. In fact, all life is joy and all activities of life have to be joyful. What is required is that one must be deeply steeped in the subtleties and skills of these activities. All this is yoga (*yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam*) and all life is yoga (Sri Aurobindo). However, it is necessary that one must be a connoisseur.

Artistic creation and aesthetic experience are complementary to each other as an outcome of aesthetic configuration (*yojanā*). *Rasa* is unitive experience out of aesthetic configuration as a result of *sāmarasya* (harmonious unification) in which the experience, the experiencer and the experienced get unified. They constitute a symbiotic unity, an organic unity which we express as *tanmayatā*, *tadrūpatā*, or *tadākārātā*. In this state, the dualism of subject and object is overcome and transcended.

Aesthetic configuration is the organic unity of subjective and objective factors. The subject has a basic state of mind known as *sthāyībhāva*. It is a psycho-physical disposition with spiritual overtones. It is the emotive part characterizing the subject of experience. But this state is experienced only when there is some stimulus. Then it assumes the form of *vibhāva*. Therefore, the object is the *ālambana* which stimulates. The environment in which the object is situated is the *uddīpana* (emotive situation). The interplay of the subjective and objective gives rise to *anubhāva* (psycho-physical responses) and the accompanying *sañcārībhāva* (transient emotions). In this way, there are two unities in the subject and in the object, and the symbiosis of the two results in unitive experience. Bharata Muni compares this unity to a delicious food dish called *sāndava rasa*, in which different food ingredients get unified.

Though the aesthetic experience is qualitatively the same, it has been understood and expressed differently by different exponents. Bhatta Lollata describes it as *gamyā-gamaka bhāva* or *utpādyā-utpādakabhāva*. Śankuka calls it *sādhyā-sādhakabhāva*. Bhatta Nāyaka explains it as *bhojya-bhojakabhāva*. Abhinavagupta says that it is to be understood as *vyañja-vyañjakabhāva*. These are alternate ways of expressing the same fact. These are different terms used by different *pañḍitas*.

The main point is that in the ultimate analysis, all dualities lead to one unified experience.

Indian culture is holistic and integral. It is one in many and many in one. In aesthetics also the same phenomenon is evinced. Following Bharata Muni, it can be said that at the level of experience there is symbiosis among *sthāyībhāva*, *vibhāva*, *anubhāva*, and *sañcārī* along with *ālambana* and *uddīpana*. At the level of expression there is coordination among *rasajñā*, *sahṛdaya*, and *paṇḍita*. It is believed that *rasanīṣpatti* and *rasāsvādana* spring from the four Vedas in unison. From the *Rgveda* there is *vāk* (speech), from *Sāmaveda* there is *gāna* (music), from *Yajurveda* there is *abhinaya* (acting), and from *Atharvaveda* there is *rasāsvādana*. Likewise, in this enterprise Brahmā creates *nāṭaka* (play), Viṣṇu performs *abhinaya* (acting), and Maheśvara performs *nṛtya* (dance). This is Indian spirituality, in which oneness is paramount and all-pervasive. Where there is oneness there is joy.

Every experience in general and art experience in particular has to be ennobling, a medium of refinement allowing for the fullest efflorescence of implicit potentialities. This holds good in the fields of science, technology, agriculture, industry and commerce, and for that matter in every human enterprise. A culture is characterized by the heightening of this experience. Let us therefore be joyful and disseminate joy. This is the aesthetic education which is a part of the total scheme of education.

# Chapter 9

## Freedom, Responsibility and Professional Education



**Abstract** This chapter deals with the seminal life-guiding principles of freedom, responsibility and professional ethics. It defines the human being as a rational, free, and responsible agent. Human life is valuable only in this respect. Human sociality and the role of culture are emphasized. The need for professions and professional ethics is pointed out. For all this, the significance of education is foundational.

**Keywords** Freedom · Responsibility · Professional ethics · Rationality  
Culture

### Introduction

The present chapter is an exercise in self-awareness and self-regulation by a thoughtful human mind with regard to a very problematic but highly significant enigma of human life concerning the antinomy of freedom and determinism experienced in our concrete, day-to-day living in the context of human behaviour, and the need for the management of the same. In our daily life, we face several situations of dilemma, and a good education must equip us to face them meaningfully. In this endeavour, we may derive helpful guidance and redemption from the deep insights and enlightening visions of Indian seers and sages. In this enterprise, the entire wide and variegated Reality is to be kept in view, with the main focus on human existence. It has to be a holistic reflection from varied perspectives and multiple approaches. It has to be done with the objective of being benefited by it in shaping cosmic and human existence for universal well-being. Naturally, therefore, individual human existence, human society, the natural environment, scientific and technological enterprises, and socio-political organizations become crucial points in a purposeful deliberation. Consideration of deeper issues concerning these areas provides a practical orientation in the context of human life planning, social engineering, science policy and environmental stewardship.

## Human Being as the Highest Emergent

The human being is the highest emergent in the cosmic process so far. Shaped by genetic endowment, ecological interaction and cultural transformation human existence is multi-relational, multidimensional and multilayered. It has individual, social and cosmic aspects in a holistic and organic framework. It is intimately related with nature, other human beings and non-human species. Human identity, therefore, cannot be determined by any one of these facets alone in isolation from others; it is constituted by the totality and intricate unity of all of them.

## Human Being as Rational, Free and Responsible Agent

Human beings, ideally speaking, are ratiocinative, goal-oriented, free and responsible agents. They are knowers (*jñātā*), responsible agents (*kartā*) and enjoyers (*bhoktā*) through innate competence and overt performance. As self-conscious and reflective persons, they have the capacity to understand their own selves as also others'. The term used in Indian culture for such a creature is *puruṣa*. And their planned, purposive and methodical action is termed *puruṣārtha*. As *jñātā*, human beings are endowed with the capacity to know, to discriminate and to form judgements. They have freedom of will and can make choices. They are also responsible agents and have to be accountable for their actions. The free will is regulated will. All wilful actions should therefore be in the form of *puruṣārtha*. Human beings have to perform actions with full knowledge, freedom and responsibility. Actions should be in the form of *artha* (conducive and leading to well-being) and not *anartha* (detrimental). Activity is the law of life, and every human being must act as *puruṣa* for survival, sustenance, and for enhancement of quality of life. So there is inclusive alternation between freedom and determinism. Rationality as discriminative ability implies freedom to choose, but being guided by certain norms. It also implies responsibility for the consequences so generated by one's actions.

## Meaning and Significance of Human Life

Human life is a unique and special gift which is rare among all the creatures. It is a prized possession acquired through the accumulation of meritorious acts in previous births. It is valuable and is to be valued. A mechanistic understanding of human nature is truncated and cannot explain the spontaneity, creativity and goal orientation inherent in human nature. Only a teleological, holistic and inclusive understanding of human potentialities, capabilities and achievements can do justice to human aspirations. The knowledge of and quest for values and planned efforts to

realize them constitute the core of ideal human life. All human beings must participate or be made to participate in the process of value realization. This is our universal responsibility.

## Constitution of Human Being

Human beings are intricate psycho-physical complexes animated and enlivened by a spiritual principle called “soul” or “self”. There are varied understandings of the human constitution in different cultures and disciplines of knowledge, but the Vedic-Upaniṣadic understanding in terms of five sheaths (*pañcakośas*) is most helpful. Among these five, the physical and vital are material; the mental and intellectual are quasi-material and termed psychical; and the spiritual (*adhi+ātma*) transcends these four which are empirical. It is a very neat and useful classification. But it should be kept in mind that all these five are integrally correlated and cannot be separated. In order to understand human nature, our attempt should be to know the nature, functioning and interrelationship of all these five in a holistic framework. The fine and subtle constitution of the physical body and conative senses, the wondrous play of vital breaths, the wonderful functioning of senses, the marvellous functioning of the mind and cognitive senses, the brilliant displays of thoughts, emotions, feelings and volitions, are all amazing and astounding, but we have to know all these. The functioning of the human mind is amazing. It is something more than a live computer. But much more significant are beatitudes and the bliss of consciousness, the spiritual principle. We at the present juncture of our knowledge and capabilities may have only partial or faltering understanding of all these marvels of human life, but we must steadily continue our efforts to enhance our knowledge.

## Significance and Complexity of Human Sociality

Sociality is built into human existence and human nature. Our social dimension is a highly complex, complicated, and subtle network of relations. Society provides the ground and the sustenance for human existence and also for the basic structure and materials for human evolution. The lowest unit of society is the family, which may be joint or single; but the former has been the traditional form and it has served a very useful purpose for a smooth and happy life in a corporate spirit of mutual care and share. It is called *kuṭumba*, a replica of *viśva*, a mode of coexistence in interdependence and interrelation, a supportive mutualism with a spirit of self-sameness. In this *saṅghajīvana* or corporate living, the roles of grandparents, parents, children and grandchildren are well defined by socio-cultural norms. In this context, the role of *paramparā* or tradition is significant. *Paramparā* is a live tradition deeply embedded in the past, well footed in the present and envisioning

the bright future. It is the accumulative process of transmitting, adjusting, and applying the norms and values cherished in a culture. It admits of creative freedom and innovative changes.

## Meaning and Significance of Culture

Tradition is rooted in culture. Culture is a mode of being, a pattern of living, a set of commonly shared values and belief patterns and practices. It is a complex whole comprising knowledge, beliefs, conduct, morals, laws, custom, artistic, scientific and technological pursuits, and humanities and social sciences. It is a total heritage borne by a society. It contributes to the discovery of the meaning of life. Therefore, culture has to enhance, enrich, enlarge, and encourage the fullness of life, health of the body, delight of the mind and plenitude of peace and bliss.

## Concept of Freedom

It is against this background that one has to understand and approach the concept of “freedom” (*svarājya/svātantrya*) in the Indian context. Freedom constitutes the very core (*svabhāva*) of Reality, say the Vedic seers. Whether it is the Vedic conception of *anidavātām svadhayā tadekam* (i.e., that One Ultimate Being which exists by itself independently) or the Buddhist account of *tattva* as *prapañcaśūnya*, the ultimate nature of all existence is freedom. The phenomenal nature is due to dependent origination and interdependent existence, which is not original and final. It is a state of circumscription of freedom. But every entity has the innate instinct and potentiality to realize freedom which consists in getting back to its pristine nature (*svarūpāvasthāna* in Yoga and *pratyabhijñā* in Śaivism). It is in this sense the Sāṃkhya thinker Īsvaraḥṣṇa talks of freedom not only of *puruṣa* but also of *prakṛti* (Nature). Whatever the account of the nature of final destiny, conceived variously it consists in the realization of freedom. In this sense, freedom is the *summum bonum* of all existence. It is a state of existence which can only be experienced and cannot be expressed and described. This is metaphysical freedom.

## Social Freedom

The freedom which is meaningful and significant for a human being in the state of worldly existence is social freedom, of which cultural, moral, political, economic freedom, etc., are the various dimensions. Freedom along with creativity and ratiocinative consciousness constitutes the essence of human beings. For a human being, freedom is the very life and soul. That is why Lokmanya Tilak declared that

it is our birthright. Freedom alone provides socio-political integrity to a human being. Without freedom we are dead though alive physically. If human life is just for eating and sleeping, it is nothing different from animal life. Only freedom provides dignity and worth to human existence. That is why the history of humankind has witnessed tens of thousands of people who have sacrificed their lives for the sake of freedom not only of their selves but also of their country and people. They also knew the value of life and their life was dear to them, but they sacrificed their lives because they thought that they would rather die than live a worthless life of servitude subjected to others. We have examples of Maharana Pratap, Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, and many others in Indian history. The point is that freedom cannot be bartered with anything else. Of course they valued physical life, but for them freedom was more valuable. Physical life is precious, but more precious is dignity of life.

Human beings' concrete demand for freedom is cognized by consciousness and creative activity to transform human and cosmic existence is also due to consciousness. So freedom and consciousness go together. Because of freedom, creativity and consciousness, human beings feel superior to other living beings. They also try to manage nature. By virtue of the possession of freedom, creativity and consciousness, a human being approaches the world not fatalistically but transformatively, not passively but actively, transform the world not mechanically but purposefully and deliberately. Human history has been the history of struggle for freedom.

In worldly existence, political freedom becomes foundational. All other facets of freedom depend on this. If political freedom is lost, all other freedoms are jeopardized. But to safeguard political freedom, preservation of ideological freedom is most essential. If intellectual freedom is lost, all other freedoms get endangered. This is what ancient Indian thinkers exhorted, and they made *kṣātra teja* (political power) subservient to *brāhma teja* (spiritual power). The greatest slavery is flunkeyism. Prof. K. C. Bhattacharya in modern times emphasized "svarāja in ideas". His essay on this subject is both instructive and inspiring. Mahatma Gandhi also highlighted this point.

There are two aspects of freedom which are essential and complementary to each other. One is freedom from all limitations, restrictions, etc., which are detrimental to one's well-being and development. It stands for absence of interference from others, of constraints or domination or control or coercion by others. It also means freedom from wants, pain, and suffering. Classical Indian thinkers talked of three types of suffering, physical, mental, and spiritual. They longed for freedom which is termed *mukti*. The other aspect is being free to act in such a way as to enable one to realize one's potentialities in the best possible way. So freedom is not just absence of external constraints, but also availability of objective conditions and actual opportunities for self-realization.

## Freedom and Equality

Freedom and equality are commensurate with each other. The human being is a social creature. Only in a social context and social framework where there is *sahavāsa* (coexistence), *sahakāra* (cooperation) and *sahabhoga* (mutual caring and sharing) is freedom meaningful. This implies reciprocity, which is possible only in a complementary situation of freedom, justice and equality. This has been the keynote of many Vedic hymns and averments of the Upaniṣads and the *Gītā*. Equality and justice do not diminish freedom; rather, they make freedom available to all.

If a commensurability situation is to be obtained, and it should be obtained, then there should be a system of duties and obligations (*ṛnas* and *mahāyajñas*) in an organicismic framework.

## Freedom and Authority

Freedom is not licence, and it has to be circumscribed by social authority. We cannot take freedom to be unconditional. It has to be within the contours of social authority. Thus, freedom means the freedom of an individual in society. A human's freedom is carved out in relation to others. But it is also to be understood in terms of awareness of one's needs and aspirations, potentialities and capabilities, and scope to exercise choice and options to realize the objectives set forth for meaningful existence. For all this, authority is a means. And just realization of freedom is an end. The need for authority is due to our demand for freedom. So authority cannot be designed independently of our cherished goals of freedom. In this context, a distinction is drawn in classical Indian thought between "an authority" and "in authority". "An authority" is impersonal *dharma* as expounded by *brāhmateja*, and "in authority" is the ruler, a person or body of persons which puts the authority in use (*kṣātra teja*).

## Freedom for Ethics

Since all pollution and perversion is of human making, there is need to regulate human conduct. The discipline of ethics is primarily concerned with the postulation of norms for good human life and the regulation of human conduct in accordance with these norms. On the presumption that the human being is a *puruṣa*, ethical considerations, ethical theorizing, and ethical judgements are undertaken. The determination and choice of alternatives requires norm prescription, but human freedom also implies a scope for both norm adherence and norm violation. Values

to be pursued and disvalues to be shunned are both equally central to moral considerations.

Philosophy is systematic reflection on our lived experiences with a view to profiting from it. One of our most problematic experiences is human behaviour which is indeterminate and unpredictable but concerning which paradoxically constant endeavour is made for determination and regulation. The discipline of ethics is primarily concerned with the postulation of norms for good human life and regulation of human conduct in accordance with these norms. Ideally speaking, the human being is a rational, free, and responsible agent. On these presumptions, ethical considerations, ethical theorizing, and ethical judgements are undertaken. It is hoped and believed that human conduct can be regulated and be made norm abiding. This is the objective of the discipline of ethics.

There is always a gap between theory and practice, and our endeavour should be to bridge it as far as possible. A moral norm may not be adhered to in its totality or fullness, but this does not mean that it should be given up as impracticable or utopian. The distinction between *mahāvratā* (*rigid discipline*) and *anuvratā* (*lenient discipline*) in the Jaina tradition is a good guide in this regard. The mark of an ideal being is harmony between the inner and outer reality of the agent, between inner feelings and outward behaviour. But this cannot be a foolproof criterion. Public vigilance helps in norm following.

Activity is the law of life and every human being has to act for survival, for sustenance, and for enhancement of quality of life. So, human conduct has to be teleological and goal oriented. In the choice of conduct, there is freedom as also regulation of free will. There is inclusive alternation between freedom and determinism. Rationality implies the freedom to choose but also being guided by certain norms. It further implies responsibility for the consequences generated by one's actions. Freedom to choose means availability of alternatives to opt for that which is good, right, and conducive to well-being, or to opt for that which is bad, wrong, and harmful to well-being. A human being can act in either of the two ways, but has to be responsible for that action. In this context, ethical considerations become meaningful since they tell us about the rules and regulations to be adhered to and prohibitions to be avoided. In the ethical context, values are termed virtues, and this relation between values and virtues should be kept in mind.

## Awareness of Values

Our awareness of values is always prescriptive. It is different from the descriptive awareness concerning facts. A description can be true or false or doubtful, but the logic of prescription has another set of values. A prescription can be good or bad or indifferent. It may be conducive to well-being or harmful or of no effect. A description has to be local with the possibility of universalizability, but a prescription has to be global with the need to be applied to local situations. Accordingly, the mode of knowing prescriptions cannot be the same as the mode of

knowing descriptions. Of course, both are to be grounded in experience, but the nature of experience cannot be the same. The ideals are conceived in and spring from actual situations, but their source is not sense experience.

Another point to be raised is that norms are posited to be pursued (they are *sādhyā* and not *asādhyā*). In an ideal situation, they are to be practised spontaneously as a matter of habit or by the force of conscience. But in practice it may not be so. That is why the importance of moral education is accepted, as it helps in the cultivation of moral will. But more often than not, because of the moral infirmity built into human nature, there is a need of external sanctions, social or political. That is why codes and laws are formulated. But this enforcement from outside is always feeble as moral weakness is ingrained in human nature. That is why there is greater need for moral education and constant vigilance. But it should not be overlooked that values are not to be taught but to be imbibed.

Every human being has to undertake some profession for survival, for self-fulfilment and for social obligation. It has to be performed for self-expression, for self-enhancement and for self-realization. But its immediate aim is to earn a livelihood. Every profession for its proper and efficacious performance has to depend upon several factors which may be regarded as its guiding principles. To determine these guiding principles there is need of a professional ethos, regulations and management. A broad criterion of end-means-modalities-results can be considered.

## Need for Multiple Professions

Human needs and aspirations are multiple. This requires a variety of vocations and professions. Every human being cannot undertake all the vocations and perform all the functions of every profession. So, inter-professional and intra-professional ethos and management are needed to regulate them. All professions are meant for universal well-being and we have the universal responsibility of upholding their purity and respectability. Unfortunately, we seldom care for this. Every profession has to work out its own norms and regulations keeping in view the ultimate goal of cosmic well-being. A professional ethics is a management ethics. It pertains to the management of a profession in the sense that it regulates knowledge, will, skilful performance, and distributive enjoyment of the outcomes of that profession. Proper education is the only means to achieve this. This education need not be a formal classroom education. It can be imparted in very many ways suited to that profession and can be devised accordingly. Here some areas can be taken up for consideration.

So far as the question of values in public life and private life is concerned, in a holistic and integral approach the public-private divide is not entertained. Values are to be posited and pursued for both spheres, and they are to be sought conjointly. Public life is more demonstrable and loss of values can be detected with greater ease. External sanctions can operate with greater force. But value pursuit is a collective and corporate endeavour. It is not a single-person enterprise. There has to

be an all-round effort for this. It is a physical-mental-spiritual exercise. It is a *yajña* to be performed by the collectivity for the collectivity. This is the message of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads. We have this cultural heritage available to humankind, and it is for us to look to it and be benefited by it.

The quest for values, the pursuit of values and the realization of values have to be holistic and integral exercises. They have to pertain to different dimensions of the human constitution, as for example analysed in the *pañcakośa* theory of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*. Each dimension of human existence is valuable and must be catered to in a balanced and graduated manner. There should not be a lopsided endeavour, concentrating on one and excluding the rest.

Similarly, human existence is situated in a multilayered environment and all layers are to be catered to. Human beings exist in the family, in social and natural surroundings. The *Śāntipāṭha* in the Upaniṣads refers to many such layers. Values pertain to each of these layers. The value schema should not be regarded as partite or divisible. All values in the schema are intertwined and possess inseparability. No one value can be realized without the rest. There is organic unity in the total Reality and this is reflected in the value schema as well. In classical Indian thought, this organic understanding was built in, but now under the impact of western civilization we have neglected it. In our value considerations we have to go back to the classical thought if we are sincere and honest in our enterprise. We have talked a lot about values, particularly in the context of value-oriented education, without caring about the nature of Reality given to us in our concrete experience. The Reality we talk about is not the lived Reality but abstracted Reality, rationalized Reality, and therefore we are far away from concrete Reality. It is high time that we shed our bias against classical Indian thought, revisited classical Indian thought and did so in a positive and constructive frame of mind. The contemporary mind is looking for new intuitions, fresh insights, and innovative thinking, and classical Indian thought has the potentiality to provide the needed guidelines provided we understand it in its true spirit. The onus of responsibility for this guidance lies on young creative Indian minds, and it is hoped that they will prove to be worthy of this task.

Every profession for its proper and efficacious performance depends upon several factors which may be regarded as its guiding principles. The most important criterion for classifying such guiding principles is the distinction of ends–means–modalities–results (*sādhya–sādhana–itikartavyatā–phala*). Every profession is meant to serve some goal, to realize some purpose, and to attain some result. It is the basic requirement of every profession to have clarity about the end for which it is to be pursued. An absence of clarity or confusion about the goal very often results in improper or immoral performance.

There is a quadruple principle of knowledge–will–action–result for proper performance of a profession. The agent in a profession has to know the knowledge–will–act–result relationship (*jñāna–icchā–kriyā–phala*). If the agent is knowledgeable in this, he/she is a fit and competent person (*adhikāri*) to undertake that profession. Then only can there be skilful performance of that profession. The role of knowledge is foundational and pivotal. Lack of knowledge is harmful and detrimental to well-being. In all cultural traditions of India, the significance of

knowledge is highlighted. But mere knowledge is not enough. It has to generate will and fructify in effort and action. If someone claims to know but does not have a will to act, that knowledge is unripe or incipient or false pretext. In the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā, it is emphasized that *śābdībhāvanā* must lead to *ārthībhāvanā* and then only the *yajña* can be said to have been performed. Knowledge generates will and this stirs an agent to act, but the power of the agent lies only in the performance of action and not in the results of action.

The *Gītā* ideal of *anāsakta karma* or *karmayoga* (*selfless action*) is the performance of *brahmayajña* (*action for universal wellbeing*). It provides a blueprint for professional ethics as it comprehends properly both the quadruple principles referred to above. A proper management of these quadruples has been the keynote of the *Gītā* and Pūrva Mīmāṃsā which provides a foundation to professional ethics.

Performance of any profession has to be in the spirit of *yajña* or universal responsibility understood in the spirit of the *Yajurveda*, of which *Īśāvāsyopaniṣad* is the concluding part. This is the meaning of *yajña* in the *Gītā* as well. A *yajña* is a collective and corporate action for the sake of general well-being (*brahmārpaṇa*). *Brahma* stands for totality. Every profession is to be undertaken not for one's selfish ends only. It is for *vyāṣṭi* (*Individual*), *samaṣṭi* (*Social*) and *parameṣṭi* (*Universal*), though apparently it is done for one's own self. So the result of action is to be surrendered to the totality (*svāhā*). Every existence is a part of the corporate whole and is integrally related to the whole and its parts. There is fundamental unity of all existences. The basis of *yajña* is in *satya* and *dharma* which are rooted in *ṛta*. They are at the base of the cosmic process and sustain it. The cosmic process itself is a *yajña*. These are the subtle and sublime ideas not to be taken in their ordinary, mundane meaning. They are to be understood in the context of the Vedic Saṁhitās and Brāhmaṇas in the *ādhyātmika* (*Spiritual*) sense. They provide a foundation to Indian spirituality which is characterized by a holistic, integral, and unitive approach to Reality. These are rich concepts pregnant with profuse meaning for universal well-being. It is unfortunate that in the course of the vast temporal span and due to exigencies of history, they have lost their original meaning, been distorted and misused. But they need to be re-understood. No culture can survive and thrive if its seminal ideas, key concepts and fundamental doctrines get fossilized and sterilized.

In the cosmic set-up, there has to be a multiplicity of professions depending upon the needs and aspirations and abilities of the human individual. These professions keep on evolving and dissipating as the societies change. On account of human limitations and the large number of wants, there is a need for a multiplicity of professions. All professions are equally useful and valuable and therefore they should be treated at par, but it is human nature to prioritize them and to put them in a hierarchy. It is a part of professional ethics to respect all professions and to follow the maxim of "work is worship." All professions are meant for universal well-being and we have the universal responsibility of upholding their purity and respectability. Unfortunately we seldom care for this.

Every human individual cannot perform all the actions and fulfil all wants by themselves, and therefore there has to be choice of vocations. This should depend

upon one's capacity, ability, interest and need. The *Gītā* calls it *svadharma*. Everyone has to mind their own *svadharma*. This is professional ethics. Every profession calls for a code of conduct for its proper performance. The code stands for a set of rules and regulations. These rules and regulations are to be both intra-profession and inter-profession. The *Gītā* emphasizes both these types of professional ethics. Generally we tend to sidetrack inter-professional ethics and mind only intra-professional ethics. In modern times, most professions have become inter-professional. For example, the medical profession has preventive and curative aspects but it is also intimately related with the pharmaceutical, engineering, business, dietary, legal, psychological and many other professions.

There can be as many professional ethics as there are professions. Some professional regulations are common to all professions and cut across all of them in spite of their varied nature, modes of functioning, objectives, etc., but they also require some separate or distinct set of norms as per their specific requirements.

All professional ethics is management ethics. It deals with proper and effective management of that profession. This can be realized by proper education. This education need not be formal classroom education. It can be imparted in many ways suited to that profession. But this much is certain, that without management there cannot be proper performance and without education there cannot be proper management.

# Chapter 10

## Ethics of Knowledge and Education



**Abstract** In this chapter, an attempt is made to diagnose the value crisis and remedial measures are suggested. Types of malignancy are discussed and the importance of education is suggested as a remedy. Moral values are to be cultivated through proper knowledge. In this context, the problem of terrorism—both political and sectarian—is discussed.

**Keywords** Ethics of knowledge · Value entropy · Virtue ethics  
Virtue education · Terrorism · Remedial measures

### Introduction

The present-day world is passing through a period which is beset with a value crisis. This crisis has pervaded all the spheres of value realization, but it is felt much more deeply in the field of education. It is mirrored in the student community in the form of aimlessness, indiscipline, unrest, strikes, violence, disobedience of authority, etc. What is needed is to make a philosophical analysis of the problem so as to find its roots, and to attempt to visualize whether a reform in education, which is the most important and foundational sphere of value realization, can bring about its dissolution. Terrorism is one of the glaring instances of the spread of vices which have bedevilled human society. So an analysis of the genesis of vices involves the genesis of terrorism.

A deeper penetration into the problem would reveal the fact that the present-day tendency of value negativism is a resultant phenomenon of the loss of faith in a moral order. The inevitable consequence of such circumstances has been the disappearance of moral virtues and the spread of vices. As a matter of fact, these two phenomena are two aspects of the same situation. In order to resolve the value crisis, two ways, to be employed simultaneously, can be suggested. The first is that of a cure, i.e., to diagnose the possible causes of the origin of vice. The second is that of prevention, that is to say, to provide morality a solid, rational footing. In the present chapter, we shall concentrate on the former.

A psychological analysis of the pathological cases will bring home to us why vice arises. There seem to be four main factors which occasion vice, viz., badness, madness, rashness and folly. We may explain each one of these.

In some individuals, vices are innate and intrinsic. They possess some such psycho-ontological qualities of *tamas* that they cannot do otherwise except commit evil. Like Nero, they may rejoice in doing evil, or, like Duryodhana they may possess the ability to recognize evil as evil and yet may not desist from doing it. They may know the good and yet may lack the will to do good. Such people need both pathological treatment and remedial circumstances through proper education.

In some cases, people's evil deeds result from some sort of mental disease. Such people are not bad but only mad. They do not have discriminative capacity or the power to foresee the consequences. Such people are to be treated medically.

Some people, who are neither bad nor mad, tend to do evil not voluntarily, but because they are compelled to do so by circumstances. These people need proper counselling and conducive circumstances.

But in most cases, evil is due to ignorance or folly. Socrates has rightly opined that virtue is knowledge and vice is ignorance. The Upaniṣads also aver the same. The evildoer does not know the evilness of his acts, otherwise he would not have acted that way. So it is the lack of knowledge, and not voluntary sinfulness, that issues in bad conduct. Knowledge is the only panacea for such people.

The proportion of the first group is quite negligible and these people can be checked by constant vigilance and can be deterred by strict punishment. It is difficult to reform them only through education or legislation. Those who fall in the second group should be sent to reformatories and treated psychologically. The people coming under the third category can be brought back on track by proper training and improving their lot. The fourth group, which, as we have said, is the largest one, definitely requires moral and spiritual training. All these groups provide the rationale for moral and spiritual instruction. This is what is being done through yoga in jails. But that is not enough. Proper education is also required.

Here, it may be argued that the sinner knows that it is bad to commit sin and yet he does it. So it is not ignorance but wilfulness which is the cause of evil. But in such a view the connotation of knowledge is misconceived. By knowledge we do not mean mere intellectual awareness. It stands for wisdom, which consists in a practical sense of values. This is the purport of the poet saint Kabirdās when he laments, *Poth paḍhi paḍhi jaga muā pandita bhayā na koya*. So true knowledge must tell upon one's behaviour. There is no gap between genuine knowing and doing. When the *Gītā* declares, *yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam*, or when the popular saying asserts that *yaḥ kriyāvan sa pandītaḥ*, it is contended that there should be a conjunction of true knowledge and goodwill. One who knows the good cannot stop exercising it. When Duryodhana boasted, as the saying goes, that he knew *dharma*, his knowledge was only superficial and not genuine. To know the good and not to act by it is a psychological impossibility. A true knowledge of the good must stir the whole being of man. It must be noetic or illuminating. This is what the Jaina thinkers declared when they said that *samyak jñāna* (*right knowledge*) inevitably

leads to *samyak caritra* (good conduct). Socrates and Jesus Christ also meant the same when they said that the sinner does not really know what the good is.

From the above, it is evident that wisdom or genuine knowledge is not devoid of action, that it consists in a practical sense of values, and that virtue being knowledge can be taught and acquired. What is needed is to train the individual in a proper way to know the good and to live up to it. And here comes the role of education. This is what is called the educational theory of goodness.

The Indian seers were all along conscious of this fact, that a man devoid of wisdom can never be noble (*dhiyā vih nonahi yāti dhanyatām*). So the task of education must be to inculcate in people wisdom or a practical sense of values. The words *saṃskāra* (purification), *saṃskṛti* (culture), *dvija* (twice-born), *sattva-saṃśuddhi* (self-purification), *viśuddhātmā* (pure self), *nididhyāsan* (self-realization), etc., used for education and educated beings suggest the true character of education. This was the type of education which was imparted in the old days. The famous convocation address in the *Taittir ya Upaniṣad* starts with *satyam vada, dharmamcara*, etc. All this emphasizes that wisdom can be acquired by that person alone who has moral and spiritual qualifications. At present, under the western influence, we concentrate only on information giving. The various instruments of knowledge, like sound sense organs, sharp intellect, adequate methodology, etc., do play their role in the acquisition of knowledge, but more important is the knower who uses these instruments. The moral and spiritual character of the knower influences his capacity for acquiring the truth. The fivefold gradation of knowledge in Jaina epistemology, the *sādhana catuṣṭaya* (four-fold means) of the Advaita Vedānta, the *sādhana saptaka* (seven-fold means) of Rāmānuja's philosophy, all evince the truth that the greater the purification of being, the more certain is knowledge.

## Terrorism

Coming to the malaise of terrorism, there seem to be two main reasons, poverty and religious misinformation. So far as poverty is concerned, it is the responsibility of society and the state to provide job-oriented education. Education is an important tool not only for survival but also for quality of life in the competitive world. Cultivating life skills for vocational performance is a preparation for life, a living with dignity and joy, with economic self-sufficiency and material comforts, with mental peace and contentment. Thus, education is a liberating force with regard to poverty and deprivations, stagnation and decadence. The Naxalite form of terrorism can be tackled in this way.

The other form of terrorism is in the name of religion. It has acquired global dimensions and needs deeper analysis. Among the multiple and variegated manifestations of human consciousness, the place and role of religion have been vital and significant, having an unmitigated influence on human modes of thinking and ways of living. The expected role of religion in the realization of fulfilment in human life and in devotion to a cause that gives our fragile and fugitive existence

meaning and value does not require any justification. Religiosity seems to be an intrinsic element in human nature that arises from the experience of imperfection and finitude in human life. The fleeting and evanescent character of our existence gives rise to a feeling that we are lacking something, we are missing something, and we are wanting something. Religion seems to come to our help to provide the needed supplementation. It is felt that it can provide the required solace and succour.

Religion has come to stay in human life, but we have to think seriously as to what form of religion should be adhered to. Herein lies human wisdom and cosmic well-being. Like all human enterprises, religion has evolved to serve human needs. It is an undeniable fact that religion is expected to bring about peace and beatitude in individual life and harmony and solidarity in social life. These are the values of religion, and ideally speaking the pursuit of religion is precisely for these purposes.

But unfortunately, it has also been an incontrovertible fact of history that humanity has bled and suffered from the malaise of dogmatism, fanaticism, intolerance, and exploitation in the name of religion. Instead of fostering unity, harmony, and accord, it has played into the hands of vested interests for generating division, discord, and disintegration. In the name of religion, internecine wars have been fought, and even now terrorism is rampant under the same pretext. In the name of religion, again, there have been inter-communal strife and struggles. They are not interreligious, as no one religion can come in conflict with another religion. Likewise there have been inter-sectarian and intra-sectarian conflicts and fights. All these are given a religious colouring. They masquerade as religious but they are not religious. Such a situation cannot be conducive to social progress. This, of course, is not to deny the positive role of religion. The point, therefore, is that we have to be vigilant and exercise judicious discrimination between that which is religious and that which is not so. Attempts to misuse religion should be exposed and checked. Since religion has great motivating force, its misuse can be extremely detrimental to social harmony and social progress.

We live in the age of science and rationalism and cannot be called upon to accept incredible dogmas and exclusive revelations. Religious tenets and practices that are insensitive to human ills and social crimes cannot appeal to a critical mind. The spirit of science must lead to refinement and purity of religiosity and safeguard it from the perverting influences of vested interests. It must lead to refinement of religion, enabling it to respond creatively and constructively to every challenge that humankind faces which science is unable to meet. Science and religion have not to collide and conflict but to supplement and reinforce. It is the binding responsibility of religious leaders as well as of votaries to respond creatively and selflessly in thwarting evil elements and protecting and projecting the good. Then only can religion restore its lost credibility and bring about confidence regarding its utility. Of course, to a credulous mind, religion stands for an external, institutionalized set of rituals and a bunch of beliefs deeply inculcated by mythological stories and clever preachers. But such misconceived religious phenomena cannot be conducive to individual well-being and need to be rectified.

In fact, every religion worth the name has to be true, good and beautiful. It has to be beneficial universally. No religion can be bad or harmful. A true adherence to religion must ensue in respect for others' life and others' ways of living. There are alternative pathways to the goals of life, and if we are sincere in our intentions and earnest in our efforts, we can realize them. This is the essence of Indian culture, and this is also the message of all religions of the world. Religious pluralism is the hard fact of our existence and we have to accept it. This acceptance is possible only if there is mutual understanding based on proper study of scriptures of different religions. This alone will entail inter-religious respect and harmony. If we are aware of the basic principles of our own religion as also of others' religions, there cannot be conflicts in the name of religions. There is no such thing as religious conflicts in the sense of conflicts among religions. The so-called religious conflicts are conflicts among the misguided votaries of religions. Religions are mutually tolerant but not their misguided votaries. Here comes the role of education. It is not *religious education* that is needed here but *education about religions*. It is unfortunate that the majority of the people are not only ignorant about others' religions but are also ignorant about their own religion. It is this ignorance that is at the root of all conflicts. It is therefore imperative to undertake the study of "comparative religion" at different levels of education, highlighting the essential unity among all religions. It will be out of place to discuss here the nature, role, scope, parameters and methodology of comparative religion. Only its need and importance are to be underlined.

The upshot of the above consideration is that the prime need of the day is socio-economic reform and a reorientation of the nature of our education. Along with being job oriented, it should also be character oriented. If our system of education fails to turn students into fully realized human beings, it has outlived its utility and is no more than dead weight.

# Chapter 11

## The Vedic System of Education and its Contemporary Relevance



**Abstract** This chapter deals with the need, importance, and relevance of the Vedic system of education in contemporary times. The Vedic literature presents a blueprint of what is to be taught and when it should be taught, and this is worth emulating. The Vedic system of education is life enabling and life ennobling. It is learner-oriented and life-enhancing. It stands for all-round development which is holistic and integral, leading to perfection. It takes into account the abilities of teachers and the receptivity of pupils.

**Keywords** Vedic · Life-enabling · Life-enhancing · Life-ennobling  
Learning-oriented · Teacher · Pupil

### Introduction

In the grand quest that humankind has undertaken ever since the dawn of thought for peace and harmony, for prosperity and perfection, a panoramic pageant of which is presented by history, the contribution of Vedic wisdom has been by all standards the most distinctive and sublime. It has provided ideas and ideals, moral and spiritual values, beliefs and practices, and patterns of behaviour—individual and social—on the basis of deep insight into the nature of Reality, which have universal appeal and the inherent vitality to survive in spite of all odds and vagaries of history, and which still continue to provide life sap to their adherents and votaries. It would be certainly beneficial to the whole of humanity if those sublime ideas are reiterated in their pristine purity so that the discerning human mind can evaluate and emulate them. In the words of Max Müller,

So great an influence has the Vedic age exercised upon all succeeding periods of Indian history, so closely is every branch of literature connected with Vedic traditions, so deeply have the religious and moral ideas of that primitive era taken root in the mind of the Indian nation, so minutely has almost every private and public act of Indian life been regulated by traditional precepts that it is impossible to find the right point of view for judging of Indian religion, morals and literature without a knowledge of literary remains of the Vedic age. (Müller, p. 8).

It may not be possible to know about the first apparition of Vedic thought, its beginning and development, as we do not have sufficient evidence or conclusive and clinching data mainly because of its prehistoric antiquity. In the given circumstances, it may not be worthwhile also to spend our time and energy in this speculative enterprise of its spatio-temporal location. What is significant is to note that on the basis of internal evidences it is the most ancient and the grandest. The Vedic seers very proudly and emphatically averred that it is the first to appear on earth and it is so noble and sublime that it is worthy of emulation all over the world (*Yajurveda*, VII.14). This has been the wish and the aspiration of the Vedic seers (*ibid.*, IX.63.5).

The Vedas not only embody these noble and sublime ideas and ideals, they also have propounded a suitable method and scheme of education to imbibe them in life. For imparting education, the word used in the Vedas is *śikṣā*. It is the first of the six subsidiaries (*vedāṅga*) of Vedic wisdom. It is intended for acquiring wisdom (*vidyā*) for a virtuous life, for spiritual enhancement, for material prosperity, for creative power, for protection, etc. It also denotes the transmission of knowledge. It contains the development of various disciplines of thought, both empirical and spiritual. It propounds a holistic view of Reality and accordingly develops a suitable system of education. It begins with techniques of learning alphabets, accents, phonetics, syntax, linguistic interpretation, and transmission of knowledge of all branches of learning.

The Vedic philosophy is symbolic in its presentation, and therefore the Vedic scheme of education has also to be interpreted and understood accordingly. It begins with a prayer to Agni, which symbolizes our true self or our psychic being and the method to realize the same. The *Ṛgveda* beseeches, “Oh! Agni when thou art well borne by us Thou becomes the supreme growth and expansion of our being. All glory and beauty are in Thy desirable hue and Thy perfect vision. Oh! Vastness, thou art a multitude of riches spread out on every side” (*Ṛgveda*, II.2.12). Agni is regarded as of fundamental importance in the path of education as it stands for all-pervading energy. It is described as the leader (*purohita*) who lead us on the path of wisdom and perfection. It kindles inherent energy and leads to perfection and therefore it is to be worshipped daily. Agni also brings the universality of the entire Reality through extinction of ego and purification. Savitṛ also does the same through stimulation. That is why Agni and Savitṛ (through the *Gāyatrī mantra*) play a pivotal role in the Vedic scheme of education. At the time of initiation, the pupil is required to carry fire in his hand (*samitpāṇi*) and the guru initiates him with the *Gāyatrī mantra*. This amounts to the removal of darkness and the kindling of the self with the lustre of the divine. The kindling of the fire and recitation of the *Gāyatrī mantra* are to be done daily. This removal of darkness means attainment of wisdom and cessation of ego and the cultivation of interrelatedness with the entire cosmos. This sublime realization of interrelatedness with everything in the cosmos has not only been supremely illuminating but also immensely delightful, as delight is the innate nature of Reality says the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (II.7).

The *Ṛgveda* contains a very apt analogy in the form of a parable of lost cows in the depth of *tamas* (ignorance) and the *riṣi* Angirasa searching for them. This

parable stands for the loss of wisdom (*gau* = cow = wisdom) and the seeking of wisdom (*gaveṣanā*) through sacrifice (*yajña* = collective and corporate action).

All this is possible only through leading an austere life of concentrated contemplation (*tapas*). In the Vedic scheme, great importance is attached to *tapas*. *Tapasyā* is intense longing, intense resolve, and intense effort, a perfect mastery over all that needs to be done. A disciplined life is known as *brahmacarya*, in which the teacher and the pupil have to resolutely follow a life of vows in search of truth and wisdom. It was a life vigorous and rigorous but joyful. It is emphasized and insisted that all knowledge and wisdom come only after undergoing *tapas*.

All seekers of truth and those desirous of education are not par, and therefore they must be classified and distinguished as per their inherent capabilities. Therefore, the *R̥gveda* (X.71.7) classifies them into three categories symbolically: those who are knee-deep, waist-deep, and unfathomable. Accordingly, education is to be imparted grade-wise. But *tapas* is essential for all the grades.

It is to be further noted that in the Vedic scheme, the receptivity of the pupil is emphasized but the ability of the teacher is not overlooked. A teacher has to be knowledgeable in a particular discipline. Then only can teachers attract pupils. Teachers have to be in constant search of knowledge and wisdom. This apart, a close relationship between teacher and taught is also emphasized. The teacher has to stimulate receptivity, develop intuitive power, and transform the total personality of the pupil, and this is possible only through an intimate relationship between the two. That is why the pupil is known as *antevāsin* (staying in the same household, or *āśrama*). But the pupil is advised only to emulate the virtuous life of the teacher and not the teacher's faults. They should have an amicable relationship and not be jealous of each other.

The system of education was learning oriented and life oriented. Greater emphasis was laid on self-study through concrete experiences, known as *svādhyāya*. For this, the power of memory, intellect, and intuitive realization were put in harmony. The role of the teacher was that of stimulator, guide, and enlightener. The learning process is regarded as having three stages: *śravaṇa* (listening to the teacher and study of texts with mental concentration or experiment), *manana* (contemplation on what is studied with a critical mind), and *nididhyāsana* (comprehension with life transformation). Education is not mere rote learning but life transformation. There is too much emphasis on *svādhyāya* (self-study) which is a lifelong process.

In the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (I.11) we find very illuminating advice given by the teacher to the departing pupil after the completion of education. The teacher exhorts the pupil to speak the truth, be dutiful, not to neglect self-study, and not to neglect the pursuit of cosmic well-being in one's conduct. He advises the pupil to be respectful to parents, teachers, etc. He warns the student not to imitate the faults of teachers and follow only their virtues.

India has the fortune of possessing one of the finest cultures in the world in the form of Vedic wisdom. It is characterized by an integral, holistic, and spiritual view of Reality and a way of life based on that. It advocates the fundamental unity of all existences, both animate and inanimate. Every existence is at bottom spiritual,

pulsating with life and consciousness. Everything in this cosmos has a common source and sustenance. In fact, whatever existed, whatever exists, and whatever shall come into existence, all are manifestations of the same Divine Being, declares the Puruṣa Sūkta of the *Ṛgveda*. The *Īśāvāsyopaniṣad* of the *Yajurveda* states that in this mutating world, every element is divine and is permeated by the Divine. It is one, unitary, self-existing principle which expresses itself diversely, says the Nāsadiya Sūkta of the *Ṛgveda*. It is also experienced and expressed diversely. This is the grand Vedic vision. Of course, these sublime ideas and noble practices are witnessed in other cultures as well and are to be reckoned with. Good ideas and practices never collide; they only supplement and reinforce one another.

Right from the dawn of human civilization, India has projected the lofty ideals of cosmic unity and universal fraternity, treating the whole world as one family. In one prayer to Agni, the fire god, it is beseeched, “I may become you or you may become I” (VIII.44.23). By reuniting with the universal, the individual seeks to inculcate universality and cosmic unity. The Vedic education thus inculcates the sense of interrelatedness of the total Reality which is projected as an organic whole. The celebrated *Gāyatrī mantra* is an earnest prayer to ignite our intellect for a virtuous way of thinking and living. Expressing the pious longing for universal happiness, the Vedas and the Upaniṣads inculcate the attitude of self-sameness everywhere (*samadr̥ṣṭi*) and realization of universal well-being (*sarvabhūtahita*). The *Gītā* (V.29.32) enjoins us to see the self in all beings and all beings in the self. It exhorts us to get engaged in the welfare of all (*loka saṅgraha*) (III.20.25), hating and having malice towards none and with friendship and compassion for all. The Vedic prayers are never for an individual self. All prayers are for universal wellness. The *Atharvaveda* (XIX.67) has this prayer:

Let us see hundred springs. Let us live for a hundred years. Let us know for hundred years. Let us progress for hundred years. Let us prosper for hundred years. Let us be useful to all for hundred years. Let us even go beyond hundred years.

It says: “To awake and arise and to march ahead is the mark of every living being” (V.30.7). So it exhorts, “Ascend high towards the zenith, taking the earth and the nation onwards in the march. Rise to affluence. Have offspring. Soar high to immortality. Rising high, touch the highest point of splendor” (XIII.1.34). The *Ṛgveda* (VII.35-8) contains the prayer: “The far-seeing sun may rise up to bless us for peace and prosperity. The four directions of the sky may be auspicious to us. The steadfast mountains may bring peace and prosperity. The rivers and waters may be conducive to our happiness.” It extols those who follow the noble righteous path. It says, “The noble persons are those who follow eternal law, preach and practice truth, extend a helping hand to all, act as ideal guide and guardian and save from sin” (V.67.4).

The Śivasamkalpa Sūkta of the *Yajurveda* (*tanme manaḥ śivasamkalpamastu*) is a marvellous expression of the prayer for virtues and purity of mind. All the four Vedic Samhitās call for ennobling the whole world as there cannot be partial and piecemeal practice of virtues. Everyone has to follow the path of *rta*, otherwise deviation from this will affect universal peace and harmony. Everyone should be

friendly with one another. The *Yajurveda* exhorts, “Let all look at us with friendly eyes and let us look at them with friendly eyes” (XXXVI.18). This mutuality of love and fraternity expresses the fundamental unity of the whole universe and the interdependence of every part. No one can afford to have enmity with others without endangering peace. In the universe we have to live like members of one family and therefore we should not hate one another, says the *Atharvaveda* (XII.1.24). The *Rgveda* (V.2.6) exhorts us to give up hatred and says that those who defame others themselves get defamed. We have to care for the well-being of all (IXX.62.1). It prays, “May my hand be curative to the entire universe and impart health and hilarity to all” (X.60.12).

The *Atharvaveda* gives a very beautiful analogy of family concord and solidarity and says that we may love one another as the cow loves its newborn calf (III.30.1). The Sūryā hymns of the *Rgveda* are remarkable expressions of ideal family life. They exhort us as to how best we may live a family life with happy marital and conjugal relations along with offspring. It is highly pertinent and beneficial in modern times when families are getting broken up and marital disputes and divorces are on the increase. The hymns from 23 to 47 are worth pondering and being emulated by modern humanity which boasts of being civilized. It is really a rewarding exercise to go through these hymns. The Saṅgaṭhana or Samjnañā Sūkta of the *Rgveda* (X.191) and the Sāmmanasya Sūkta of the *Atharvaveda* (III.30) are noteworthy for their advocacy of universal fraternity and equality of humankind. They are marvellous expressions of the longing for egalitarian living, communitarian existence, reciprocal love, cordiality and cooperation, mutual caring and sharing, commonality of thinking, willing and feeling, non-discrimination, non-deprivation, etc. In fact, the socialistic ideas and ideals enunciated there are so lofty and sublime as to be unparalleled, and they do not have any match in any of the socialistic writings of modern times. They are masterpieces in world literature, to be known, studied, meditated upon, and practised. They need and deserve to be exhibited on the premises of world bodies like the United Nations so that the modern strife-torn humanity may get exposure to them and emulate them. They are an Indian inheritance no doubt, but they are part of world heritage. They must find a place in any book on world culture. They are not the offshoots of any narrow sectarian thinking but grand visions of cosmic coexistence. They are the most magnificent intimations of the organic inseparability of humankind and the spiritual unity of the cosmos.

The Indian cultural horizon has been echoing and resounding with an intense longing and perennial quest for peace, plenitude, and harmony. The Vedic hymns are replete with prayers for peace and harmony.

The point is that in the Vedic scheme of education, all virtues which ennoble life have been taken care of and catered to. The idea is to turn the animalism of human into divinity. The Vedic system of education aims at the cultivation of richness and opulence of life leading to ultimate perfection. It is not only a view of Reality and a view of life but also a way of life. This is known as self-realization. This is the highest goal of all education. In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (VI.1.3), it is stated that Nārada learnt all the empirical sciences and became *mantravid* but could not be

*ātmavid*. So he approached Sanatkumar for this. Partial knowledge of Reality is good but not sufficient until it is grasped in a holistic manner and unified. The aim of education is both intellectual quest and spiritual satisfaction. In another parable in the same Upaniṣad (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VI), Śvetaketu is given this wisdom by emphasizing that by knowing *Brahma* (the whole), all that falls under it can be known. Here *Brahma* stands for the total Reality. Knowing the parts is information or knowledge, but knowing the whole with all interrelationships is wisdom. We need both in a symbiotic manner. The Vedas emphasized all-round development in an ordered and gradual manner with balance and harmony without any lopsidedness. They advocate a positive outlook and emphasize that we are potentially perfect, and through planned endeavour and proper education we can realize perfection. So they have evolved a holistic and integral system of education as a preparation for a life of perfection.

The pivotal concept of Vedic wisdom is *dharma*. The concept of *dharma* has its genesis in the Vedic intuition of *ṛta* (orderliness) from which it has flown into and permeated every form and facet of Indian life. *Ṛta* conceptualizes the vision of the Vedic seers of an inexorable, unswerving, and pervasive order prevailing in the Reality and the cosmos. They apprehended an immanent teleology in the Reality and “telos embeddedness” in the cosmic process. The very word *viśva* stands for the penetration and pervasiveness of order in the cosmos. *Ṛt* is coupled with *satya* (steadfastness, invariability, non-discrepancy, etc.). The Vedic seers apprehended both *ṛta* and *satya* through *tapas* (VI). This is a supra-conscious subliminal realization in the yogic state of existence that transcends the sense experience and intellection of mortals (XI.236). *Ṛta* stands for order and orderly activities. This is the normal behaviour of spiritual beings (*Rgveda*, X.190.1). *Ṛta* is to be known and adhered to. We should have *ṛtambharā prajñā* (wisdom seasoned with *ṛta*) and we should be *ṛtavān* (possessor of *ṛta*). Any transgression, violation, or deviation from it is *anṛta*. *Anṛta* is due to extraneous factors that pervert and pollute. It affects or covers up *satya* (*Rgveda*, VII.49.3). It disturbs the steadfast adherence to *ṛta*. Therefore, the Vedas advise or exhort us to follow the path of *ṛta* (*Atharvaveda*, VII.8.13).

*Ṛta* and *dharma* are cognates, and therefore later on they got conflated and the word *dharma* acquired currency and popular acceptance. It retained the full meaning of the word *ṛta* and also acquired new and additional meanings. However, its negative counterpart *anṛta* continued to be in use.

There are three close associates of the term *ṛta* (and *ipso facto* of *dharma*) in the Vedic literature. They are *svadhā* (*svam dhārayati*; the word *dharma* might have been derived from it), *vrata*, and *yajña*. All three are essential for the proper understanding and practice of *dharma*. It is unfortunate that these significant words have lost their original meanings and have been distorted through the misunderstanding of the Vedic wisdom with a detrimental impact on Indian society. *Svadhā* stands for the inherent nature of all entities. It constitutes their *svabhāva* (nature) and sustains them in spite of mutations. *Vrata* means conduct in conformity with *satya* and *dharma*, which is conducive to general welfare. So *satyam vada, dharmam cara* is a *vrata*. One who follows *vrata* is *aṇuvrata*. As stated earlier, the

*devas* are *aṇuvratas*. We have also been told to cultivate *devatva* (divine life) in ourselves (*Rgveda*, X.53.6). For this we have to be *vrataḥṛt*. *Yajña* is the principle of manifestation of the multiple worlds as a corporate unity having a common source and fund. It enjoins the commonality of thought, action, and enjoyment. It is a principle of coexistence, harmony, cooperation, and partaking. It is the *anāsakta karma* (*selfless action*) as enunciated in the *Bhagavadgītā*. It is the best type of *karma* to be performed (*Śatapatha*, I.7.15) as it is the pivotal principle of the cosmos (*Atharvaveda*, IX.11.14). It can be defined as a collective endeavour, preserving and enhancing natural resources, and performed with the purpose of equitable and distributive sharing of the fruits for social wellness. That is why after the performance of *yajña* it is said, *idaṁ na mama* (it is not being done for my sake). In fact it is a transition from *mama* (mine) to *sarva* (all). The fruit of *yajña* is *prasāda*, i.e., to be enjoyed in distributive form (*prasareṇa*).

In the Vedic scheme of education, there is too much emphasis on austerity (*tapas*), orderliness (*rta*), truth (*satya*) and dutiful renunciation for others (*yajña*). In fact, the *Yajurveda* is a wonderful treatise on *yajña*. It is unfortunate that this rich concept has been mistakenly identified with the exterior ritualistic and ceremonial form, ignoring its basic spirit. All enlightened beings act in the form of *yajña*, which alone ensures truth and righteousness. Concerning *yajña* three very serious and pertinent questions have been asked, viz., what is the *ātma* (soul) of *yajña*, what is its *prāṇa* (vitality), and what is its *sāra* (essence or purpose)? And the answer given in the tradition is, the *ātma* of *yajña* is collective enterprise, its *prāṇa* is sacrifice of the narrower self or ego (*svāhā*), and its *sāra* is renunciation of self-interest for the sake of totality (*idaṁ na mama*). All these three are highly suggestive and significant. A single individual never performs *yajña*. It is a corporate enterprise. All those who participate in it are *yajñabandhu* (friendly partners) (*Rgveda*, IV.1.9). It presupposes an integral and organic life of mutual relatedness and mutual dependence, a life of cooperative coexistence. The essence of *yajña*, as stated earlier, is annihilation of ego, a self-transcendence, an existence for the sake of others. It is a collective act and therefore its result is also to be enjoyed collectively in a distributive manner as co-sharing. This is enjoined by the famous *Īśāvāsyaopaniṣad* saying, *tena tyaktena bhujñīthāḥ* (enjoy only after giving to others) (*Īśāvāsyaopaniṣad*, I). If one enjoys the fruits of action alone, it is regarded as sinful (*Rgveda*, X.117.6). This idea has been later formulated in the *Bhagavadgītā* as *lokasaṅgraha*. The point is that according to the Vedic scheme of education, the world is an arena of planned, purposive and cooperative endeavour with a view to making the best possible use of worldly resources for universal well-being; this is the sole purpose of education.

Though the spatio-temporal expression of Vedic wisdom took shape in India and it is an inheritance of the Indian people, it does not belong to them alone. It is world heritage, and therefore it belongs to the whole humanity for all time. It would therefore be wrong to confine and limit it to a particular place, time, community and race. Nor should it be regarded as an intellectual luxury or pastime of scholarly pursuits. It is to be properly understood, reflected upon, and practised. It has the potentiality to redeem the world from its present plight. The emancipating words of

the Vedas have been resounding for countless millennia and their redemptive power has to be harnessed for universal well-being.

To conclude, in contemporary times there is one more occasion to remind us of the Indian spiritual values of peace and harmony by revisiting and interpreting the Vedic wisdom for universal wellness. Instead of the present-day fragmented, provisional and partially specialized education, education has to be holistic and integral. There is a radical need for revision of our educational curricula and syllabi and for making them genuinely value oriented. Education should be not just to bring out learned persons but also good persons. For this we should have a proper and fuller understanding of the human person. We shall have to give up our narrow, truncated and lopsided understanding of human nature. Since Vedic thought has quite a lot to contribute in this regard, let us revisit the Vedas without any bias and prejudice and revive and revitalize whatever is useful and valuable for our present needs and aspirations. There is nothing wrong in going back to the past with discriminative acumen, dissecting what is living and what is dead and reverting to only that which has worth and utility.

# Chapter 12

## Theory of *Puruṣārtha* and its Educational Relevance



**Abstract** This chapter provides a scheme of value-based education. The cardinal Indian theories of *puruṣārthas* and *karma* are discussed with their educational implications. The four *puruṣārthas* of *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa* are expounded in their proper perspective. These values of life are reinterpreted in terms of contemporary needs and aspirations.

**Keywords** *Puruṣārthas* · *Karma* · *Dharma* · *Artha* · *Kāma* · *Mokṣa*

### Introduction

Philosophizing in the Indian context has involved systematic reflection on *lived* human experiences with a view to profiting from them. It is thus both a view of reality and a way of life based on that. The theory of *puruṣārtha* has been cardinal to the Indian way of life. It has been formulated keeping in view the structure of the universe and the constitution of the human person. Whatever its formulation, it is commonly accepted in Vedic, Jaina, Buddhist, Sikkha and all other traditions. Along with a theory of *karma*, it is a salient and distinguishing feature of Indian culture.

The theory of *puruṣārtha* is based on two presuppositions. One is that the universe and the cosmic process are teleological, purposive, and goal oriented. There is a built-in telos in the cosmos. The other is that the human being is the highest emergent so far in the cosmic process. It is finite but has the capacity to develop infinitely. There are immense potentialities inherent in humans which can be manifested given suitable conditions. Human existence has meaning and significance, but this can be realized only through right knowledge, proper planning and skilful endeavour. Ideas of *karma* and *puruṣārtha* have been put forth only in this context.

Human beings are not only conscious but self-conscious as well. They have the painful realization that all is not well with their present existence. There is a constant feeling of imperfection and finitude. This is a hard fact of life which is

undeniable. This is not cause for pessimism but a call for enlightened activism. It stimulates and motivates a knowledgeable person to undertake planned and skilful performance.

In the performance of *puruṣārtha*, there are three steps: knowledge of the goal (*sādhya*), knowledge of adequate and conducive means (*sādhana*) and knowledge of skilful employment of modalities (*itikartavyatā*). The basis of the choice of goal is its appropriateness (*aucitya*). It is appropriate if it is conducive to individual and universal well-being (*artha* and not *anartha*), and it is realizable (not *asādhya*). The means has to be in accordance with the goal (*anukōla*). It should be available and accessible also (*upalabdha*). The modalities stand for proper knowledge and skilful employment of means (*upāyakauśala*) to realize the goal. Since the modalities have to be composite, it is necessary to know the different steps and their priority and posteriority (*paurvāparya*) while undertaking the performance.

There is a quadruple principle underlying pursuit of *puruṣārtha*. It is *jñāna-icchā-kriyā-phala* (knowledge-will-effort-result). All these four are to be properly harnessed in their symbiotic interrelationship.

A *puruṣārtha* has to be a collective and corporate enterprise. An isolated human individual never exists. The individual is a part and parcel of the total Reality and has no existence or meaning apart from this totality. There has to be reciprocal dependence, supportive coexistence, judicious cooperation, and mutual caring and sharing. Of course, it is the individual who is the agent, but this agency is possible only in a collectivity and therefore the motive and intention of every act should be the well-being of the collectivity. The *Gītā* ideal of *loka saṅgraha* is the guiding spirit of all theorizing about *puruṣārtha*.

Traditionally, four *puruṣārthas* have been conceived in the Vedic tradition, and they are by and large accepted in other traditions as well. They are *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*. But logically there is no fixity about it. What is important is that a human person should lead a planned life with proper knowledge and pursuit of proximate and ultimate goals of life. For this, there can be different patterns of theorizing, but the fourfold traditional schema seems to be universally desirable.

In the fourfold schema, *dharma* is the foundation and guiding principle, *artha* and *kāma* are *preyas*, i.e., worldly goals for earthly well-being, and *mokṣa* is *niḥśreyasa*, i.e., beyond the two. *Dharma*, *artha* and *kāma* are to be pursued in the empirical life and they are therefore put under one head of *trivarga* (*three basic goals*). *Mokṣa* is both this-worldly (*j vanmukti*) and otherworldly and therefore it is distinguished as *apavarga* (*final goal*).

In Indian culture, we have *dharmaśāstra*, *arthaśāstra*, *kāmaśāstra* and *mokṣaśāstra* traditions, each one having an enormous expository literature. It is worthwhile to be acquainted with them, even though one may not wholly adhere to them. Sometimes *puruṣārthas* are discussed in the context of *karma* and sometimes separately as well, but *karma* is the cornerstone of *puruṣārthas*. Any delineation of traditional theories of *puruṣārthas* must be based on the concerned literature only, and there should not be any freelancing or kite flying about this. If one wants to propound one's own theory, one is welcome to do this, but this should not be

imposed on the tradition. Below is a rough sketch of a theory of *puruṣārtha*; it should not be taken as *the* theory of *puruṣārtha*.

## Analysis of the Concept of *Puruṣa*

The human being is the centre of all moral and legal reflections in so far as all moral and legal considerations are meaningful and applicable only in the context of the human. The behaviour of inanimate objects or animals does not attract moral and legal evaluations. Even the behaviour of an insane or infant human is not an object of moral and legal pronouncements in the strict sense. This clearly implies that all moral and legal deliberations presuppose a particular view of the human to whom alone moral and legal responsibility is attributable.

There are certain properties possessed by humans by virtue of which alone they become proper and fit candidates for moral and legal evaluations. This is specifically the case in the moral context. In the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā literature, the term *puruṣa* is used for such a moral agent who is ratiocinative/discursive, who possesses freedom of will, and who has a teleological or purposive outlook. A *puruṣa* is a rational, free, and responsible agent whose behaviour is goal oriented. In order to bring out the full implications of this concept in a moral context, we may do well to dwell upon these properties of humans which are at once both constitutive and regulative. They constitute the nature of humans but are not fully manifest in humans. There has to be purposive, planned, methodical and regulated enterprise to realize those potentialities. The word *puruṣa* etymologically may mean one who strives for enhancement (*pure agre sarati gacchati iti puruṣaḥ*). Hence they are the ideals to be pursued and strived for by humans.

The primary requirement of a moral agent is the capacity to discriminate between the good and the bad, the virtue and the vice, etc. (*viveka*). In fact, the very first aphorism of the *Jaiminī sūtra* begins with *dharma jijñāsā*, whose core is acquisition of this ratiocinative knowledge. No doubt ignorance of law cannot be an excuse, but the awareness of law and the prevalence of the conditions conducive to such awareness are a necessary precondition. A law cannot be adhered to unless and until one knows what it is, and the means and the modalities for practising it. That is why moral and legal education should be an essential part of general education, which should be imparted through both formal and informal modes of education.

The second requirement of a moral agent is the possession of free will. Every act is not a moral act. Acts like eating, sleeping, etc., do not come under the purview of moral evaluations as these do not involve a choice between good and bad, and so on. Only such voluntary activities which are directed towards bringing about some desired fruits (*phalecchājanitakriyā*) can be subjected to moral evaluations. In other words, moral acts are acts performed by such an agent to whom the responsibility of their performance can be attributed not only in terms of their undertaking but also in terms of owning up to the consequences. Thus, the theory of *apūrva*, which seems to be a precursor of the theory of *karma*, has both attributive and retributive aspects.

This attribution of responsibility and the retribution of the consequences (*phala*) presuppose freedom of will in the agent and availability of alternatives in the given situation. *Karma* performed as *yajña* has a distributive aspect as well, since *yajña* is a collective enterprise for universal well-being and *karmaphala* is necessarily to be distributed as *prasāda*.

### ***Dharma as Puruṣārtha***

The Pūrva Mīmāṃsā system avowedly undertakes the exposition of *dharma* which is the basic *puruṣārtha*. It takes into account all the three facets of *dharma*: as *dhāraka* (*Mahābhārata*, Kaṇaparva, 69.58) (sustaining principle; *dhāraṇāt dharmityāhuḥ*); *niyāmaka* (Mīmāṃsā Sūtra, 2) (regulating principle; *codanālakṣṇo' rthodharmaḥ*); and *sādhaka* (Vaiśeṣika Sūtra, 2), an instrumental factor in the realization of the *summum bonum* of life (*yato' bhudayaniḥśeyassiddhiḥ sa dharmah*). The Pūrva Mīmāṃsā delineation of the concept of *dharma* in its diverse forms and facets has provided a foundation to morality and law in ancient India, and it still continues to provide guidance to present-day Hindu moral and legal traditions on the basis of the *Mitākṣarā* of Viṅṇāneśvara, which is bristling with discussions based on the Mīmāṃsā principles.

The aim of morality is attainment of a virtuous life, and virtue is realizable only through proper knowledge and volition fructifying in proper conduct. So the basic requirement is that it has to be known what a virtue is and how it can be realized, as also the will to realize it. Therefore, there has to be a close coordination between virtue, knowledge, volition and action. This implies that virtue is not a mere utopian ideal (*asādhyā*) but something which is realizable. It ought to be realized simply because it is realizable and its realization necessarily leads to good. Similarly, attainment of knowledge is not for its own sake. It has to be a knowledge leading to proper action (*anuṣṭhānopayogī*). That is why in the Jaina tradition, knowledge is called *upayoga*. This action also is not merely instinctive or involuntary, but a voluntary action that is caused by an enlightened will and not by merely passionate desire (*rāgādiprāpta*).

*Dharma* is not only a pivotal concept, it has also been the most basic, overriding, and pervasive concept in the traditional Indian cultural ethos. In its umbrella-like comprehension, it has sheltered a wide variety of differing though related notions. In spite of the fact that during the course of several centuries, it has acquired wide ramifications of meaning and has been used in different contexts—metaphysical, moral, social, political, legal, religious, etc.—its basic meaning of law-centredness has remained unchanged. According to Indian thinkers, the cosmic process and human existence have a built-in teleology and purposiveness. There is an inherent order in the cosmos. It is technically called *ṛta*. The Vedic seers highlighted this concept and exhorted us to adhere to the order inherent in the cosmos. To deviate from it is *anṛta*. To adhere to *ṛta* steadfastly is *satya*. So *ṛta* and *satya* go together. To hold on to *ṛta* and *satya* is *dharma* (*Brhadaranyaka Upanisad*, I.3.2.8). This

concept of *dharmā* becomes the backbone of Indian culture. Later on it plays a very dominant and pervasive role as an overriding principle of the Indian view and way of life. *Dharma* is regarded as the sustaining, regulating, and life-enhancing force of the entire cosmos.

The term *dharmā* stands for the whole range of virtues and virtuous conduct which a *puruṣa* ought to perform for his/her welfare and for the welfare of society and the cosmos. *Dharma* is always an *artha* (good or conducive to welfare) and never an *anartha* (bad or detrimental to welfare). The idea of being good and therefore being desirable is built into it. It is not evil and cannot be so. That is why its desirability is universalizable and it assumes the form of *codanā*, an “ought”. It ought to be practised because it leads to good and good alone. It is prescriptive of only such actions which are conducive to good. Such prescriptivism is contained in injunctive sentences which are enjoined for a *puruṣa*. In every injunctive sentence the verb contains *liṅgtva* (optativeness) apart from *ākhyāta* (verbality). It is this optativeness which expresses a prompting to do good (*pravartanā*) or to desist from doing evil (*nivartanā*). Only the prescriptive element of the verb engenders the prompting.

Another feature of *dharmā* is its instrumental or serviceable character. It is not as instinctive as mechanical activity but wilful behaviour aiming at some accomplishments. In this sense it is a means to some higher good. It is purposive in nature and always consists in being appropriate to the accomplishment of some goal. In other words, *dharmā* is to be practised not just for its own sake but because of its favourable result. Any action when performed leaves out its potency as an effect which at the proper time fructifies into its result. Thus, there is a causal chain between *karma*, *apūrva* and *phala*. *Karma* perishes no sooner than it is performed, but its potency (*apūrva*) resides in the *kartā* (agent) and subsequently gets fructified.

The source of knowing *dharmā* is Veda. *Veda* stands for a knowledge which is supra-personal in origin and trans-empirical in nature. In this sense it is defined as *apauruṣeya*. A sense-generated knowledge like perceptual knowledge is descriptive. But a norm-giving knowledge has to be prescriptive. The Pūrva Mīmāṃsā draws a distinction between a descriptive and a prescriptive knowledge. The descriptive knowledge pertains to objects which exist in the present or which might have existed in the past (*bhūta vastu*). The prescriptive knowledge pertains to objects which are yet to be brought about (*bhavya*). The descriptive knowledge is an outcome of sense-object contact and is therefore personal or empirical (*puruṣa tantra*). But prescriptive knowledge does not depend upon the senses and is therefore supra-personal ( *vastu tantra*). There is a basic difference of kind between the two types of objects and the two types of knowledge. Thus, the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā believes in an epistemological position which is technically known as *pramāṇa vyavasthā*. In other words, the source which yields descriptive knowledge cannot be the source which gives prescriptive knowledge because the descriptive knowledge is always fallible whereas the prescriptive knowledge has to be infallible, otherwise it cannot generate unwavering activity (*niṣkampa pravṛtti*). The source of knowing *dharmā* is always supra-personal because it is of the nature of *bhavya* and not that

of *bhōta*. No empirical mode of knowing can give genuinely true knowledge of *bhavya* as it is beyond empirical comprehension. That is why the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā insists on its being supra-personal. This also is a ground for regarding this type of knowledge as self-evident in terms of its truth.

*Dharma* consists of positive (*vidhi*) and negative (*niṣedha*) injunctions which are to be universally adhered to under similar circumstances. Under changed circumstances modification is permissible, but this modification has to be regularized. The Pūrva Mīmāṃsā system gives details of such regularizations. Thus, situational and contextual requirements are to be kept in view without of course overlooking uniformity.

There are different classifications of *dharma* depending upon the placement of the human agent in the cosmic set-up. *Dharma* has a dual role to play. It is a regulating principle for realization of *artha* and *kāma* and it is an instrument for realization of *mokṣa*. A salient feature of Indian culture is that it has always talked of welfare rather than empowerment, *dharma* (duty) rather than rights. In fact, we do not have any word in Saṅskṛit that may correspond to the word “rights”, though in contemporary times the word *adhikāra* has gained currency. Acquisition of the material resources (*artha*) and enjoyment of those material resources (*kāma*) always require proper management through *dharma*. Indian culture has always denounced the pursuit of *artha* and *kāma* without being regulated by *dharma*. The Indian response to materialistic ideology and its total rejection is a glaring example of this fact.

### ***Artha as Puruṣārtha***

For fulfilment of human needs and aspirations, both individual and collective, there has to be a search for appropriate means. These consist of all resources, human and material. They have to be helpful in the enhancement of human potentialities. The sum total of all such means is called *artha*. All material and mental possessions which are instrumental in serving psycho-physical needs are *artha*. But any and every means is not to be included in the rubric of *artha*. Only appropriate and legitimate means are called *artha*. Lawful acquisition to fulfil legitimate needs and not greed is *artha*. So *artha* has to be guided and regulated by *dharma*. The criterion for selection of *artha* is appropriateness and being legitimate means.

*Artha* is the base for worldly life as a means of livelihood and is needed for the enhancement of human potentialities. It is needed for *dharma* and *kāma*. It is a means to spiritual development also. So it is only a means and never an end.

For management of *artha*, social, political, agricultural, industrial, economic, commercial and other institutions are evolved, and the functioning of these has also to be under the control of *dharma*. Management of education, arts, science, and technology also comes under it.

*Artha* stands for all resources in the form of legitimate means. These resources need to be cultivated and developed. For this there are two guiding principles of

development. They are *yoga* and *kṣema*. *Yoga* means generation and supplementation of resources. *Kṣema* means protection of these resources from depletion. There can be four stages of *yoga-kṣema*. They are as follows:

1. Search and research for newer and newer resources and renewal of the existing ones.
2. Protection of available resources by their judicious use without exploitation of any sort. This is known as sustainable development these days.
3. Enhancement and regeneration of resources without disturbing ecological balance.
4. Use of resources only for wellness of the total cosmos.

For this purpose, Indian culture prescribes two modalities of *dāna* (charity) and *bhoga* (utilization) and warns that if this is not done, then *artha* gets destroyed (*nāśa*). In fact the Vedas have dealt with these in a positive and constructive way, which should be the guiding principles.

*Artha* as *puruṣārtha* is all-round material progress (*abhyudaya*) by properly managing all assets available to us both in terms of human resources and natural resources. They are distributive and shareable and all of us must share them for our mutual enhancement. There is a limit to our capacity to enjoy them and we should not hoard them beyond that limit.

### ***Kāma* as *Puruṣārtha***

*Kāma* as *puruṣārtha* has an important place and role in the traditional schema. Right from Vedic times, Indian culture has maintained a healthy and robust attitude towards life. The Vedic seers always highlighted the joyful nature of our life. They prayed for a joyful life of a hundred years and even more; a healthy life with all plenitude. They beseeched the Almighty that our body be strong; our organs be strong so that we can be joyful. In the holistic vision, not only physical strength but also mental, intellectual, and spiritual strength are desired. The significance of *grahasthāśrama* (family life) and the path of *pravṛtti* (activism) are paramount in worldly existence. Our innate nature is joyful, joy yielding, and making others joyful. Joy is implicit in our nature but we have to make it explicit. It requires *abhivyakti* (expression). It should not only be expressed but also partaken of. It should be spread so that others can also share it. That is why words like *kavi*, *kalā*, *kāvya*, etc. (*kam/ānandam vyatanoti/lāti*) are employed, meaning dissemination of beatitude through expression in *kalā* (arts) and *kāvya* (literature) through *kavi* (artistic persons). The *Kāmasūtra* of Vātsyāyana describes sixty-four *kalās* for enjoyment of *rasa* (beatitude). There are two facets of *rasa*, its arousal (*rasodreka*) and its enjoyment (*rasāsvādana*).

The natural tendency to enjoy is called *kāma*. It is a means to ennobling life and therefore it must lead to refinement. Pursuit of *kāma* has to be ennobling, a means

of refinement. It is a heightening of the emotive aspect of our life. Then only is it a *puruṣārtha* and becomes a stepping stone to *mokṣa*. It must be characterized by beauty and sublimity (*kamanīyatva*). Then only can it be soothing, endearing, and acceptable. There are two very perceptive words used for this. It has to be *ramaṇ ya* (delightful) and having *lāvanya* (charm). Then only can it yield *sāmarasya* (unitive experience). That is why it is insisted that *kāma* has to be tempered, seasoned, and controlled by *dharma* and it should not be opposed to *dharma*. A distinction is therefore drawn between *kāma* and *kāmācāra* (lust/vulturousness). In *kāma* there is spiritualization whereas in *kāmācāra* there is vulgarization. The former is appreciated and the latter is depreciated.

Apart from aesthetic enjoyment *kāma* also stands for legitimate fulfilment of all psycho-physical needs in a distributive manner. It has both individual and social dimensions which are interrelated. Such needs are named as *eṣaṇā* (desires) which are threefold, viz., *putreṣaṇā* (longing for progeny), *vitteṣaṇā* (longing for wealth), and *lokeṣaṇā* (longing for life). All three are to be pursued in a balanced and harmonious manner. As stated earlier, need should not turn into greed. *Kāma* is only a means and it should not be mistaken as an end.

*Kāma* is a creative urge. It generates action. There are two aspects of the creative urge. One is motive (*preraṇā*) and the other is intention (*abhiprāya*). Motive has to be pure and regulation by *dharma* alone can guarantee this. It requires the cultivation of *kuśala citta* (pious mind). In order that the fruits of *kāma* are enjoyed in a balanced and legitimate manner, intentions need to be spiritualized by cultivating the attitude of detachment. This is technically known as *tyāgapōrvaka bhoga* (cf. *Īsopaniṣad*). This is the *karmayoga* of the *G tā*. This is *kāma* as *puruṣārtha*.

## ***Mokṣa as Puruṣārtha***

*Mokṣa* has been seminal and pivotal to the Indian cultural ethos and value pursuits. Posited as the *summum bonum* of human life, it mainly centres on the nature and destiny of the self. It has been primarily thought of in the context of human longings and inspirations, and therefore any formulation of a theory or a view about *mokṣa* requires deep insight into human nature and its relation with total Reality.

The quest for excellence leading to and culminating in “perfection” has been a perennial human concern. There is an innate and instinctive longing and necessity in all living beings for a good quality of life. It is not only prolongation of existence but also betterment of living that prompts all beings to carry out their day-to-day activities. It is reflected and expressed in human beings in a more pronounced and systematic way. All human endeavours and all pursuit of culture and civilization have been prompted by and directed towards this existential concern. The cultivation of arts and humanities, the development of science and technology, the undertaking of material production and trade and commerce, the organization of human conduct both individual and societal, and all manifestations of human potentialities have been stimulated by and engineered in this direction. In a

symbolic form it has been put in the famous Upaniṣadic prayer as follows: *Asato mā sadgamaya/Tamaso mā jyotirgamaya/Mṛtyormā mṛtam gamaya* (*Bṛhadaraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, I.3.2.8) (Lead me from the unreal to the real. Lead me from ignorance to knowledge. Lead me from mortality to immortality).

The idea of excellence as perfection has been conceived and described variously in the multiple cultural traditions of India and different terms have been used to express it. Some of them have shared and overlapping shades of meaning and some have distinct shades of meaning, but a commonality of meaning can be discerned in all of them, as they are *sagotra* terms having family resemblance. Some of the terms available in the literature are *purṇatva*, *amṛtatva*, *preyas-śreyas*, *niḥsreyas*, *mokṣa*, *mukti*, *apavarga*, *nirvāṇa*, *kaivalya*, *ananta śānti*, *ananta ānanda*, etc. The point to be noted is that there have been alternative conceptions of the concept of “perfection” that is popularly known as *mokṣa*. In an integral understanding, these are not incompatible though conceptually they are distinct.

Human beings can consciously pursue in a planned way the realization of this perfection. They have the ability to transform themselves and the surrounding nature to their advantage. So in the planning for perfection, one has to understand and take into account human nature, human potentialities, human capabilities, human needs and aspirations. Moreover, the meaning and scope of perfection is to be understood both constitutively in terms of actual realization that is gradual and graded, and evaluatively in terms of positing ideals and striving towards the realization of the same. Thus, till its final realization perfection is not to be conceived as a metaphysical position but as a normative process calling for constant evaluation, not as a one-time endeavour but an ongoing enterprise till its complete fruition. The underlying idea is that life is meaningful in the pursuit of the ideal and not just in being satisfied with the actual. But this is not the denial of the actual for the pursuit of the ideal. It is, on the contrary, using the actual to realize the ideal. The ideal needs to be actualized and the actual should lead to the postulation of the ideal.

There is another point that has to be emphasized in understanding the meaning and scope of perfection. Perfection pertains to the human individual as well as the total cosmos. Since the two are intimately interrelated, interdependent, and interpenetrating, and thus constitute a single whole, one cannot attempt to realize perfection keeping in view an isolated individual, or society, or region, or age. Perfection cannot be solitary or piecemeal. It has to be a global vision, a holistic approach, a corporate endeavour, and a universal realization. This is the Vedic view of perfection, which constitutes the foundation of Indian culture.

No doubt human beings are the highest product of the process of evolution, but they are not the best product that has emerged so far or must have evolved. They have the painful realization of their finitude and imperfection (*alpatva*) and dependent existence (*ārtatva*). They are also aware of the need to transcend their finitude and circumscription. Further, they have the unique capacity and capability to devise appropriate means and modalities for this transcendence. They are thus an infinite-finite, a finite impregnated with infinity. That is why they have the natural propensity to strive to realize perfection and can march towards perfection.

Because of finitude there is imperfection and this has given rise to suffering. Suffering can be classified as physical, mental and spiritual, or as cognitive, volitional (conative) and affective. Every system of philosophical thought in India has reckoned with this fact of suffering and has responded to the need to overcome it. This is because philosophizing in India has been a systematic reflection upon our experiences, and suffering has been the most glaring phenomenon experienced by us. All of us have the painful realization that we are limited and conditioned in our cognitive enterprises. We seek the truth but sometimes we end up with falsity. Sometimes we are haunted by doubt. We are not sure whether that which we take to be true or false is really so. There are many things that remain unknown and unknowable to us. We experience growth in knowledge but still we fall short of complete knowledge. We wish to be omniscient but we fail to be so. At the level of volition and action also we are impoverished. We suffer from infirmity of will, moral weakness, and lack of control over performance of action and the results ensuing from it. We may know what is virtuous but we may not have the will to pursue it. We may know what is vice but we may not have the will to shun it. We are handicapped in our experience of emotions and sentiments. We do not get the desired ones and even if we get them we do not have them to the fullest extent and in enduring form. There is no coordination in our knowledge, will, effort, and the result of our effort. There is suffering at the physical and mental levels in the form of various psychosomatic diseases. Apart from limitations of body and mind, there are infirmities due to decay. The morbid fear of death and possible extinction also haunts us. We have an inkling of eternal and immortal existence. Being dissatisfied with the transient and mortal mundane life, we long for the eternal and immortal. This is spiritual suffering that affects us in spite of material prosperity. This is freedom. Perfection is freedom. At the metaphysical level, freedom is self-realization, which is a state of *svarāt* or *svarōpāvasthāna*. It is a state where there is fullness expressible as perfect peace or perfect bliss.

The conceptions of perfection in different schools of philosophical thought can be classified under two heads, viz., those which regard the individual self as a simple entity and those which regard it as composite. In the *Ātmavāda*, the self is regarded as a simple and therefore indestructible entity. Here perfection is conceived as unimpeded and unalloyed peace or bliss. In the *Anātmavāda*, on the other hand, the self is regarded as a composite or a conglomeration. It is a body–mind complex having emergence of consciousness according to the Cārvākas. It is a conglomeration of five psycho-physical elements being animated by a spiritual principle according to Buddhists. Both for the Cārvākas and the Buddhists, perfection is a state of disintegration. For the Cārvākas it is reduction of the complex to its pristine state of matter, but for the Buddhists it is also a state of absolute peace or absolute bliss (*nirvāṇam śāntam* or *nirvāṇam paramam sukham*). Somehow the Buddhists overcome the conglomeration idea to accommodate the idea of peace or bliss. The Abhidharmika tradition accepts the idea of peace and the Mahāyāna tradition relishes the idea of bliss. The Buddhist notion of *nirvāṇa* is not annihilation as some scholars have described it. In the Theravāda tradition it is realization of the state of perfect peace and in the Mahāyāna it is realization of perfect bliss.

But the ideal of bliss is also accepted in the Theravāda tradition. It is described as *amatapadam or paramam sukham*. The concept of *nirvāṇa* is the central doctrine of Buddhism and its *raison d'être*, and has fascinated the minds of the elites and won the heart of the masses. *Nirvāṇa* is deliverance from suffering. This is the outcome of enlightenment. Buddha's enlightenment consists in this wonderful insight into the true nature of Reality. It is not mere transcendence of impermanence but realization of impermanence as impermanence. Genuine *nirvāṇa* consists in realization of impermanence and working for the enlightenment of suffering-affected, *saṃsāra*-bound beings. This is the flow of *mahākaruṇā* (*Universal compassion*) in which *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* become one.

According to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika tradition, the self is a simple and pure substance. One of the most notable doctrines of this tradition is that consciousness is not the essence, or essential property, of the self. *Finitization* and the consequent threefold pain is due to acquisition of consciousness resulting from conjunction of the self with mind and body. The self thus has two states of existence, unconditioned and conditioned. The conditioned state is bondage and imperfection, and the unconditioned state is liberation and perfection. Through *tattvajñāna* (knowledge of the real) there is *ātmalābha* (self-realization), but divine grace is also helpful. Some Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika thinkers describe *mokṣa* as *ātyantika duḥkha nirodha* (absolute cessation of sufferings), but others maintain that it is *kṣema prāpti* (*realization of wellness*). Some say that it is a state of absolute peace and others say that it is a state of absolute bliss. The difference of opinion is with regard to the nature of perfection. The basic issues are whether there is consciousness, manifest or non-manifest, in the self in the state of perfection and whether there can be experience of bliss even in the absence of consciousness. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika tradition uses the terms *mokṣa*, *apavarga*, and *niḥśreyas* to refer to the state of perfection. *Apavarga* may be understood as going beyond the *trivargas* of *dharma*, *artha*, and *kāma*, comprehending them after their fulfilment. *Niḥśreyas* can also be understood in the same way as discussed earlier.

The system of Pūrva Mīmāṃsā largely shares the metaphysics of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika tradition. However, Kumārila grants presence of consciousness even in the state of *mokṣa*. The term *niḥśreyas* is also used to refer to *mokṣa*. It is enjoyment of the state of *amṛtatva*, a state of all-round development. This is the Vedic ideal of symbiosis of *preyas* and *śreyas* enunciated in the *Īsopaniṣad* and which was also emphasized by Yājñavalkya in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*.

In the Sāṅkhya-Yoga tradition, the self is conceived as a simple substance that is pure consciousness. The self is spiritual in nature. There is another aspect of Reality that is material. In the modern terminology of science, this can be put as matter and anti-matter. The state of *mokṣa* is described as realizing the distinctness of the self through discriminative discernment. It can be maintained that like the traditions of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and Pūrva Mīmāṃsā, in the Sāṅkhya-Yoga tradition also the state of perfection is conceived as absolute peace, but the idea of absolute bliss cannot be regarded as inconsistent with its conceptual framework. It is interesting to point out here that in the *Sāṅkhya Kārikā* of Īśvara-kṛṣṇa, it is stated that it is not the self but matter that is in bondage or in liberation, referring to the state of equilibrium or disturbance in matter. It may also be interesting to point out that there are two

traditions of Yoga in Indian culture, the *manas-centred* and *citta-centred*. In the Pātañjala Yoga, it is *citta* centred, whereas in most other schools it is *manas* centred. One follows the understanding of Yoga as *yuj samādhu*, and the other as *yujir yogē*.

The concept of *mokṣa* or *mukti* in Jainism and in theistic Vedānta stands for realization of the fullest perfection and absolute bliss. In spite of several differences, there is some convergence of views in this regard. Perfection consists in the infinitization of consciousness and bliss. It is freedom from the defiling and mutilating influence of karmic forces. The individual selves retain their distinct existence and become pure. It is a state of absolute peace and absolute bliss. The Advaita Vedānta also shares this view, but insists that in the state of perfection individuation ceases to exist. It is realization of *brahmātmabhāva* or *sarvātmabhāva*, or experience that *sarvam khalvidam brahma*. It is also described as *amṛtatva* (*immortality*) or *bhōmā* (*fullness*) or *pōrṇa* (*perfection*). This realization can take place even in the empirical state of existence. It is known as *j vanmukti*, a state in which the individual realizes the tranquillity and equanimity that is the state of *samādhi*. It is also a state of *samadṛṣṭi*, i.e., experiencing self-sameness with the total cosmos. The individual is free from all desires and selfish considerations. He/she becomes *āptakāma* and *nityārpta*, i.e., one whose desires are fully realized. The individual has no intensions left to make him/her act. His/her activities stem from noble and pious motives. The motives are *sarvabhōtahita* (*Universal wellbeing*) and *lokasaṃgraha* (*Universal good*). Such a well-motivated and unintended action is known as *naiṣkarmya*, and the individual who undertakes such activities is known as *karmayogi*. Such individuals always will the universal good. Altruistic actions flow from them spontaneously. This concept of *j vanmukta* is comparable to the concept of *bodhisattva* of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

The Upaniṣads refer to five dimensions of human existence all of which need to be perfected. This apart, they describe two facets of human existence. A person is at once both an individual (*piṇḍa*) and an essential member of the cosmic whole (*brahmāṇḍa*). Perfection has to comprehend both these facets. There cannot be piecemeal perfection. Perfection is thus freedom from finitude, but this consists in the realization of all-round enhancement. To use Vedic terminology, it consists of both *preyas* and *śreyas*. This is how the term *niḥśreyas* can be understood. A corollary of this position is that perfection has to be of the total manifestation of Reality. This makes it dependent upon collective endeavour and corporate living. The Vedas and Buddhavācans are replete with these ideas. They have posited the best quality of life as the *summum bonum* of our existence. This is realizable through mutual care and sharing, through the discharge of universal responsibility, and through cosmic fellowship. This is the meaning of spirituality in the Indian context.

This account of the *puruṣārtha* has great significance and relevance for a theory of education, as it provides a perspective and base for educational policy. It offers a guiding spirit for framing curricula and also for evolving a suitable teaching–learning strategy. It may help the educational policy planner to formulate a vision of educational objectives.

# Chapter 13

## Ecological Balance and Eco-education



**Abstract** This chapter deals with prevailing multifaceted eco-crises. Various facets of the environment are analysed. It highlights the cosmo-centric Indian eco-ethics as a solution. It distinguishes the Indian understanding of “deep ecology” from the western notion. The ethico-spiritual approach to nature is emphasized. It makes a plea to desist from our perverted attitude towards Nature. For this, the role of education is highlighted.

**Keywords** Eco-crises · Environmental balance · Cosmo-centric eco-ethics  
Deep ecology · Ethico-spiritual approach to Nature

### Introduction

The eradication of egocentricity and cultivation of existential openness and universal sameness based on the principles of interdependent existence and interconnectedness of all phenomena enunciated in the Indian tradition are the most remarkable and distinguishing features of eco-ethics that have great relevance and significance in contemporary times and in the new millennium to bring about universal peace, harmony, prosperity, and well-being. The mind leads and shapes the entire individual life, social set-up, and cosmic process. If we have *kuśala citta* (righteous mind), we perform good deeds and virtues spread. But if we have *akuśala citta* (vicious mind), we indulge in bad deeds and vices spread. Delusion (*avidyā*) produces greed, hatred, and all other vices. Moral degeneration results in pollution within and without. The point to be noted is that no event and no phenomenon, good or bad, is self-existent or eternal. It comes into existence due to some causal factors and gets eliminated with the cessation of those causal factors.

The implication to be derived is that all ecological pollutions have a causal origin and annihilation, and all these are caused by the human mind and resulting actions. This implies that both ecological equilibrium and disequilibrium are causal happenings. They are caused by human conduct. Human beings are the most evolved species in the cosmic evolution, and they have acquired the capacity to

preserve or harm nature. Since we have caused the evils and consequent undesirable suffering, it is our responsibility to eliminate them. This is what can be termed as “universal responsibility”. We therefore carry a universal responsibility not to create ecological imbalance and to rectify whatever imbalance we have created because of our folly. As stated earlier, our entire actions stem from our consciousness. If we have pure consciousness (*kuśala citta*) our actions will be good and conducive to well-being. If we have impure consciousness, our actions will certainly be bad and they will lead to all miseries and sufferings. Through our actions, we help or harm others and ourselves. All our thoughts, words, and deeds are the results of our past actions and shape our experiences of the present and the future. What we shall be depends on what we are at present and how we behave in the present. We have therefore to cultivate *samyak dr̥ṣṭi* (right attitude) towards life and Reality. We have only to cater to our needs and not to feed our greed. We have become much too selfish, consumerist, and exploitative. We have ceased to respect our authentic existence and also the authentic existence of others.

Apart from loving all living beings, the Indian tradition has always advocated love and respect of Nature. All living beings are creatures of nature. Nature provides them physical form and sustains them. Nature environs them and provides them nourishments. It is joyful and joy yielding.

A life in the lap of nature is a mark of spiritual freedom. It is freedom from all restraints, physical and mental. It is a widening, deepening, and heightening of spirit. It is a life of purity, internal and external. Life in nature is natural life. We should ideally lead a life of a “green monk or nun”, caring for nature and sharing the bounties of nature. If we pollute nature, it adversely affects our existence. Nature is an “embodied love” and “embodied benevolence”. For example, trees do not exist for themselves, they stand in the sun and provide shadow not to themselves, and they yield fruits and other benefits not for themselves. They do so for the sake of others. The same is the case with rivers, mountains, and other objects of nature. In this respect, nature is a great master and a teacher practising and teaching *māitr* (loving kindness), *karuṇā* (compassion), *muditā* (sympathetic joy) and *upekṣā* (selfless equanimity).

Nature has its intrinsic value as well as instrumental worth. We have forgotten the intrinsic value of nature and have taken it as merely instrumental. We forget that we are products of nature also and we are sustained by nature. Instead we try to conquer nature and have mastery over it. This is our ignorance, our *mithyā dr̥ṣṭi* (wrong view). Indian sages and seers always respected and loved nature and wanted to be in the lap of nature. If we care for nature, nature will care for us. If we destroy nature, nature will destroy us. This is the simple principle of interdependence. So it is saner to preserve and protect nature, and to worship nature as a spiritual entity. Nature is beautiful and bountiful. It is full of joy and it gives joy to us. Let us appreciate and preserve this quality of nature. Nature is to be approached with respect and gratitude. We have to regard nature and all natural phenomena as mother or as god or as goddess. This is the Indian perspective on ecology.

The western ecology is utilitarian, materialistic, and mechanical, but Indian eco-consciousness is spiritual and teleological. In the Indian tradition, we have both

surface and deep ecological thinking, but their meanings are different from those perceived by western thinkers. By “deep ecology”, the Indian tradition would mean that we have to attend to the functioning of our mind. All good and evil proceed from the mind. The mind occasions our conduct and makes it good or bad. So we should educate our mind first. This is the foundation of all ecology. This is the real deep ecology that pertains to inner environment. The surface ecology pertains to our actions that constitute the outer environment. We feel affected by our actions. They alone are visible and tangible. But they are not basic. They only result from our thinking. Their roots are in our thinking. So *samyak dr̥ṣṭi* (right vision) and *samyak jñāna* (right knowledge) are the basis of *samyak caritra*. Knowledge and conduct are two sides of the same coin, but knowledge is more basic. The point is that ecological consciousness is fundamental to ecological conduct. Consciousness operates at the deeper level and actions are its outward expression at the surface level. There is another dimension of Indian deep ecology. Because of its spiritual orientation, it talks of the essential unity of all existences. All entities exist in the same form. All existences have mutuality and participatory being. So the principle of *ahiṃsā* ensures that no harm is to be done to any being and any thing.

From the doctrine of interdependent existence of all phenomena it follows that the Indian approach to Reality and hence to ecology is holistic and integral. It does not operate at the empirical-level dichotomy of human/nature, or nature/culture, or body/mind, or heredity/environment, or theory/practice, or thought/action. Further, being spiritualistic and teleological, this view offers a vision and an approach to cosmo-centric eco-ethics, a widening of moral sensitivity as it views human actions in a cosmic context. In modern times we need such eco-conduct to solve eco-crises.

From the Indian tradition, we learn another lesson, that ecology is not merely a matter of theorizing or sermonizing but something to be practised. So all of us have to be “engaged persons” irrespective of our religious affiliation. This is important and relevant for us. In this sense, the message of India is perennial and eternal. This is enlightenment.

All natural objects have a spirit residing in them. They are our co-inhabitants. As we have a right to live, they also have a right to live. It is therefore a sin to harm or pollute or destroy them. This sort of panpsychism is an outcome of the spiritual approach to Reality and life. It also reveals the interconnectedness and interpenetration of all phenomena. In this undivided world, everything miraculously supports everything else. This insight is beautifully expressed by the Avatamsaka Sūtra in the metaphor of “the jewelled net of Indra” which exhibits “mutual interpenetration and interfusion of all phenomena”. Further, in loving all beings and nature, there has to be a life of collectivity, a *saṅgha j vana*. The real meaning of life is to be found in the midst of this network of collectivity, a network of interrelationship which we call “life”. Life is to be lived meaningfully in the spirit of cooperation, of mutual give and take, with love, compassion, and respect for all. The Indian view of ecology is based on a conservation ethics of mutual caring and sharing. Love, compassion, and concern for others should be as natural and instinctive as they are for our own selves. The cardinal principle of Indian eco-ethics is, “Live and let live and in joy and safety let every creature’s heart rejoice.” There are two very catching

and apt words for this idea, i.e., feeling of sameness with others (*parātma samatā*) and identification of oneself with other selves (*parātma parivartana*).

The entire cosmos is a network of mutuality of events characterized by universal interdependence, interpenetration, interconnectedness and interrelationships (*parasparāpekṣā* and *parasparopagraha*). It exhibits mutual interpenetration and interfusion of all phenomena. The point is that there is wholeness of life, self-sameness of all existences, and therefore we must cultivate universal love, universal compassion, universal kindness and respect for all lives and all existences.

This feeling of oneness is not physical or geographical but mental and psychological. The root cause of suffering is delusion (*avidyā*). The consequence of it is the feeling of separateness, fragmentation, a sense of separate and independent existence, separated from each other, separated from the environment that sustains us, and separated from the things we are inextricably related with. The ecological crises we witness today are the result of this delusion which gives rise to greed, hatred, and stupidity. The physical and external pollution is due to mental and internal pollution. As stated earlier, it is due to *akuśala citta*. This moral degradation affects the individual as well as his or her surroundings. The remedy lies in recovering the lost vision of wholeness and practising *ahiṃsā*.

The doctrine of *ahiṃsā* provides a foundation for an environmental perspective to be offered to humanity to meet the present-day crises that are endangering and threatening all existences, human as well as non-human. It also deals with the cardinal Indian teachings that can help in bringing about an ecological lifestyle. Ecological thinking and ecological living go hand in hand, and a symbiosis of the two has been the keynote of the Indian view and way of life. Concern for the well-being of the mental and the physical world has been an important element throughout Indian history. Human existence and destiny are inextricably linked with environments. Recognition that human beings are essentially dependent upon and interconnected with their environments has given rise to instinctive respect and care for all living beings and nature.

There is another reason for respecting the life of all living beings. Indian culture has advocated the doctrine of the cycle of birth and rebirth. This implies kinship with all creatures. We may take rebirth as any such creatures depending upon our *karmas*. These creatures could have been our parents or sons or daughters in their previous births.

In concluding, it should be reiterated that the human being is the climax of the evolutionary process. Humans possess vast potentials for betterment or devastation. They can be a super-being or super-malignancy. They have choice and also the capacity of judicious discrimination. Since they are the most evolved, they should be the most responsible. They have not only to voice environmental concern but also to cultivate environmental consciousness. For this we need an environment-friendly value system and a suitable code of conduct. Through proper education alone this is possible.

The vision of self-sameness of all existences and zealous longing for eradication of the sufferings of others as well as one's own cross all barriers of race, creed, country, and even humanity. The benevolent teachings of universal compassion and

cosmic goodwill, living and working for totality, all these have a significant message for the present-day distraction of humankind, suffering from exhaustion of spirit and languishing in the narrow and rigid confinements of ego-centricism, parochialism, and disastrous materialistic consumerism. The time has come for the beginning of a cultural renaissance, in which Indian culture can play a vital and pivotal role. Indian eco-thought has come into existence as a problem-solving exercise both in terms of prevention and cure. It is of great relevance and significance in contemporary times and in the new millennium to bring about universal peace, prosperity, and well-being. This should be the guiding light for our ecological thinking and doing. If we have to draw up an eco-syllabus for eco-education, it has to be on an Indian foundation to be meaningful, efficacious, and practical.

# Chapter 14

## Education for Peace, Sustainable Development and Judicious Consumption



**Abstract** Sustainable development and judicious consumption are the prime needs of our times. They alone can lead to peace. But this requires a particular mindset which education alone can cultivate. This chapter deals with these issues along with equality and justice. The importance of individual, social and cosmic transformation is highlighted as a prerequisite to peace and prosperity.

**Keywords** Sustainable development · Judicious consumption · Peace  
Equality · Justice · Prosperity · Triple transformation

### Introduction

The present chapter proposes to delineate sustainable development in relation to judicious consumption and in the context of peace and welfarism, as the three are interrelated and interdependent. The welfarism and sustainable development propounded in Indian thought are not materialistic welfarism but holistic welfarism, in which the welfare of not only the citizens of the state but the whole of humanity and the entire cosmos is taken into consideration. It is spiritualistic welfarism that envelops but also transcends material well-being. The guiding principle is, “Let everyone be happy. Let everyone be without hunger and disease. Let everyone experience the good and the noble and let no one meet with suffering.” (*Sarve bhavantu sukhinah, sarve santu nirāmayāḥ. Sarve bhadraṇi paśyantū, mā kaścid duḥkhabhāgbhavet.*) Reminding us and the whole human race of this sublime aspiration and lofty goal, let us march into the twenty first century with full preparedness for total and overall development not only of humankind but of the entire cosmos. It is with this sanguine expectation that this viewpoint is to be presented as a model of total and integrated development from a holistic perspective, because such a perspective, in my humble opinion, is a really significant and worthwhile sustainable developmental perspective. The present chapter aims at projecting a blueprint of this approach as a guiding principle for educational planning and programmes.

The term “sustainable development” is a fashionable catchword these days, and has acquired popular currency for socio-economic developmental policies and strategies with a concern for quality of life, intergenerational and intragenerational justice, preservation of ecosystems, forestry, natural capital, etc. Sustainable development is generally defined as the development of natural resources to meet the immediate needs of the present population without hampering the requirements of future generations as well as endangering the ecology and environment as such. It has also been defined as improving the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of the supporting ecosystems.

The western idea of sustainable development originated in the context of the Cartesian-Darwinian materialistic and competitive, divisive and conflicting conception of human beings and the universe, overlooking the facts that human beings do not live by bread alone, that food, shelter, and clothing, though basic and most essential, are not the sole requirements of human life, and that instead of conflict, cooperation and mutual support are more basic to human survival. So when there is talk of quality of life and standard of living, it has not to be just materialistic, because along with a body and mind, the human being has a spirit as well.

In the light of the above averments, in this chapter an attempt is made to take the connotation of the phrase “sustainable development” out of its materialistic confinements and provide it the widest possible meaning by using it in the sense of total or all-round development, because that alone is really sustainable. Any development concerning only a part of the Reality can never provide genuine and lasting happiness. On the basis of this logic, therefore, we may make this unconventional and unorthodox, rather odd usage by tempering and seasoning the materialistic perspective with a spiritualistic perspective and thereby widening the canvas of our deliberations, encompassing all that which has not hitherto been included. It is a radically different usage no doubt, but perhaps it is more meaningful in the deeper human context.

The traditional Indian perspective of development, represented by the Vedic terms *svasti*, *śivam*, *kalyāṇa*, *maṅgala*, etc., all meaning universal well-being, has been genuinely sustainable by virtue of being holistic, integrated, comprehensive, and futuristic, taking into account the individual, social, and cosmic dimensions of existence in its material as well as spiritual aspects. It envisages no incompatibility or antagonism or conflict among these, as they are all conceived and experienced as interrelated and interdependent elements of one and the same whole (*tadekam*). So the idea of development found expression in complementary pairs (like *preyas-śreyas*, *abhyudaya-niḥśreyasa*, *yoga-kṣema*, *piṇḍa-brahmāṇḍa*, etc.), such that all the units in these pairs are regarded as distinct but not separable. The model of their interrelationship put forth in Indian culture is not that of mutual conflict but that of mutual cooperation and mutual enhancement. That is why, instead of talking in the divisive language of intragenerational or intergenerational justice, it could talk in the integrative phraseology of not usurping what legitimately does not belong to us (*asteya*) and not accumulating whatever is more than required as bare necessities (*aparigraha*) which are highlighted in the Indian tradition. All these ideas may sound irrelevant or meaningless or utopian to a materialistic mind, but the

spiritualistic vision of Indian sages and seers has always projected these lofty ideals as supreme human objectives (*puruṣārthas*) that are realizable and worthy of realization by rational, free, and responsible human beings.

Another salient feature of the Indian perspective which needs to be repeated is that it has always talked of welfare rather than empowerment, *dharma* (responsibility) rather than rights. Acquisition of material resources (*artha*) and enjoyment of those material resources (*kāma*) always require proper management through *dharma*. Present-day consumerism is an unabashed revival of the discredited materialistic ideology that has been doing immense damage to the human psyche.

Right from the dawn of human civilization, India has always projected the sublime ideal of cosmic unity and universal perfection (expressed as Brahman or *pūrṇa*). Projecting the inspiring ideal of the entire cosmos being one family (*vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam*), Indian culture has tried to inculcate the attitude of seeing self-sameness everywhere (*sarvatra sama dṛṣṭi*) and of being engaged in the well-being of all existence (*loka samgraha*) without any selfish consideration (*niṣkāmahāva*). We find the highest expression of this thought in the *Gītā* and the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*. Hatred and malice towards none, friendliness and compassion for all, absence of deprivation and exploitation in all respects, this has been the quintessence of Indian culture at all times in all traditions. The famous “Śāntipaṭhā” of Indian culture sums up the Indian vision of sustainable development or total development as follows:

May there be peace and prosperity in the outer space and inner space, on earth, in the waters, in the life-giving vegetable kingdom, in plants and trees, in the entire cosmos, in the entire Reality, every where and at all times. May there be peace and prosperity. Peace and prosperity alone (never otherwise). May every one attain and experience peace and prosperity.<sup>1</sup>

Only such ennobling and exalting visions, aspirations and realizations, only such a heightened sense of spirituality, have enabled the Indian seers and sages and statesmen to propound the world-renowned principles of the *pañcaśāla* of mutual understanding, mutual respect, mutual tolerance, mutual accommodation and mutual interface at national and international levels, which alone can provide a genuine basis for sustainable development. It is not for nothing that in some other context, Lord Ramsay MacDonald once said,

“If we were to turn to any great philosophy or any great system of thought upon which could be built up a harmony between races, a harmony between conflicting thoughts, where could one go to find it more readily than to the great philosophies of India itself, those philosophies where brotherhood is inculcated, where peace, harmony and cooperation are enjoined, those philosophies which look at the world not in a mere abstract way but as something essentially composed of differences and yet essentially calling for a harmony of differences rather than a mere uniformity of thought and action.” (Quoted by Satchidananda Murty, Peace, 1986, Prologue, p. xvi, III.2)

<sup>1</sup>*Aum dyauḥśāntirantarikṣa śāntiḥ pṛthivi śāntirāpaḥśāntirauśadhayaḥśāntiḥ vanaspatayaḥśāntir-visvedevāḥśāntirbrahma śāntiḥ sarva śāntiḥśāntirevaśāntiḥ sāmāntiredhi (Yajurveda Samhitā, Vājasaneyi, Madhyandina Śukla, 36.17).*

Let us take this opportunity to point out how our lopsided materialistic approach to development has resulted today in the multiplication of disparity and deprivation, injustices and imbalances, subjugation and inequalities. There has been all-round moral degeneration resulting in an alarming rise in crime and corruption. There is no denying the fact that during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, there was rapid and tremendous progress in science, technology, and in all walks of material life. But the fruits of all this progress have not only been inequitably distributed, they have also been counterproductive and evanescent. Never have there been such disasters and destructions threatening annihilation of life and existence. Even in a traditional country like India, there has been a steep decline and collapse of the value system under the impact of this materialistic onslaught. For example, in every city, in the name of development so many factories and industries have come up upsetting the geographical and social ecology of the city. The way pollution is increasing and the rate at which crimes and criminals are mushrooming make us doubt whether it is a development that is sustainable and worthwhile. One has only to visit the cluster of slums to see the quality of life people are leading.

Let it be made clear once and for all that there should be no denial of matter and material prosperity. Matter is the very base and precondition of all existence. As the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* avers, “Know matter to be the Supreme Reality at its base” (*annam brahmeti vyajānāt*). But matter is not the apex Reality or the sole Reality. Matter needs to be transformed and refined into the spiritual. Matter is exclusive and competitive but spirit is shareable and cooperative. Matter is confinement in space and time; spirit is expansion beyond space and time. The same existence can be material or spiritual, more material or more spiritual. Narrowing of the self is material, widening of the self is spiritual. To be spiritual is not self-sacrifice but self-widening, self-opening. It is not self-annihilation but accommodation of the narrower self in the wider self. This is what is meant by culture and civilization in the real sense. The point is that denial of matter is lopsided and harmful, but equally lopsided and harmful is the denial of spirit. This is the correct perception of life and Reality. But one may wonder how far it would be acceptable to our vision blinded by the dazzling light of materiality.

There is another point that needs to be paid attention. Every existence is at once both an existence-in-itself and an existence-for-others. It has the twin aspects of intrinsic value and instrumental worth. It has end value as well as means value. To treat existence, whether of the human being or of nature and other living beings, as a “resource” or instrument for development without taking into account its inherent worth, is to negate its intrinsic value. It is unfortunate that due to perverted thinking we have lost all respect for the “kingdom of ends”, and our instrumentalist considerations have led us to exploitation of the “not-self” (nature) bordering on its extinction. This has caused irreparable damage to human individuals, human society, and the cosmos at large. The sooner this lopsidedness is corrected the better it is for the entire universe.

In the context of material development, the Indian perspective is positive and helpful. It embraces the vital concerns of life (*kāma*) and the means to secure them (*artha*). It is all-round material progress (*abhyudaya*) by properly managing all

assets available to us both in terms of human resources and natural resources. The issue of sustainability of these resources and related developments imply policy planning and appropriate efforts towards enabling these achievements to be passed on to posterity. This means enjoyment and conservation, enjoyment and enhancement. This is possible only if we establish corporate living in human society (*samāja*) and a no-conflict place (*araṇya*), i.e., a common place for mutually enriching life without strife. In a situation of *samāja* and *araṇya*, every existence has a place and significance irrespective of its state or nature. In fact, on a wider scale, the entire cosmos is a unitary and integrated life-support system. Only our improper and imperfect understanding of it results in problems like the ones that have forced us to talk of sustainability. There are two things we have to note here. First, we should have the realization that the world of matter is a global common possession. It is distributive and shareable and all of us must share it for our mutual enhancement. There is a limit to our capacity to enjoy it and we should not hoard it beyond that limit.

The second thing to be noted is that nature has the inherent capacity of self-regulation and self-preservation. It possesses sustainability and resilience. It can absorb to some extent external shocks and stresses caused by human follies, but let us not interfere in this natural functioning of nature and let us allow it to have renewable resource management. But all this requires a proper understanding of nature and proper practices towards nature. We have to cooperate with nature in order to enable it to cooperate with us. Here, again, the Indian perspective becomes helpful. In the Sāṃkhya system of Indian philosophy, we have a very perceptive account of *prakṛti*, i.e., cosmic matter, the matrix of the entire material evolution. It is regarded as of great value to us, the conscious beings. It is kind and benevolent to us. It is rich and bountiful and takes delight in serving us and does so dispassionately. But it is very tender and delicate. It fights shy of exploitation and abuse. So it needs to be cared for and looked after with love, affection, and adoration. It is very aptly compared to a cow or a delicate dancer who serves us but feels hurt if exploited. Likewise, nature also serves us but reacts when exploited and abused. It does so mildly, initially to warn us, to correct us, to make us rectify the wrongs we do to it. But if even then we do not pay any heed, it reacts violently. What nature wants is judicious use of its resources for progress and prosperity and not uncaring and indiscriminate exploitation. Nature will provide us nourishment and peace only if we live in peace with nature. This analogical Sāṃkhya account has been shared by the Indian masses all through the ages. Worship of nature has been the keynote of the Indian way of life. So if Indian culture enjoins worship or reverence to trees and plants, rivers and mountains, land and animals, heaven and earth, it is not an exhibition of primitive animism as some scholars mistakenly tend to believe, but a display of our concern and regard for nature which sustains us and provides us nourishment.

The need of the twenty first century for sustainable development requires us to stop the mad game of antagonizing nature and to befriend it once again. Herein alone lies the sure path to progress and prosperity. For this purpose, we shall have to humanize science and technology and make the humanities scientific. Education

for sustainable development is therefore the call of the day, and the sooner we realize it the better it is for our survival and quality of life.

Any holistic model of sustainable development should take into account the threefold transformation of the human individual, human society and the cosmos. This should be the be-all and end-all of all planning and strategies of development at the global level. Then only can it be a total development which can be really sustainable and enduring.

Transformation and regeneration of human individuals is the first and foremost requirement. It stands for the development of all dimensions of the human personality—physical, mental, intellectual, moral and spiritual. Mere physical or mental or intellectual development is lopsided and can never be sustainable. This requires a value-oriented scheme of education, a blueprint of which could be prepared by a world body like UNESCO and which could be universally adopted by suitable modification according to regional needs and aspirations and conditions. The ideal situation is to have global planning and strategy. This of course may appear a utopian dream, but given wisdom and will it is not unrealizable.

Social transformation is another foundation for sustainable development. It is the establishment of a social order and organization in a democratic form in which equality is seasoned with justice, and freedom is tempered with discipline, where tolerance is a guide to mutual relations, and cooperation is the law of interaction, where there is the practice of perspectivalism in thought, words and deeds. But this again requires a proper type of education in social living.

Transformation of Nature is the third prerequisite of sustainable development. It consists of all such policy efforts that enable us to safeguard the natural capital stock of all five material elements—earth, water, fire, air and space—in such a manner that it does not get polluted and depleted. It means that in Nature there should be no negative change, no environmental degradation, no agricultural pollution, no clearance of forests, no housing on agricultural land, no extinction of forest flora and fauna and natural livestock, etc. On the contrary, there should be positive change by forest resource management, land, water, air and space resource management, etc. Simultaneously, there should be supporting efforts like check in population growth, revival of traditional sustainable practices, and so on. These days there is a growing awareness of all these policy measures. It is unfortunate that given the present human psychology, all these policies and programmes mostly remain confined to paper only, and nothing concrete and practical is being done though statistics may show otherwise.

In concluding, it may be underlined that sustainable development is both a viewpoint and a course of action, a policy instrument and a global movement for a new international order based on enlightened spiritual principles aiming at enhancement of the quality of life of the entire cosmos and not just of human beings. It is very significant here to point out that the Sāṃkhya system talks of emancipation (freedom from suffering, etc.) not only of living beings (*puruṣa*) but also of matter (*prakṛti*). We live by hope and we may hope that saner sense will prevail upon the human race for doing the needful in this regard. In this chapter, the perspective has been Indian but the target is the entire universe. The approach is

holistic and integral. Let us end with a prayer that is highly relevant in this context and which we have referred to earlier also: *Aum sahanāvavatu saha nau bhunaktu saha vīryam karavāvahe. Tejāsvinavadhitamastu. Mā vidviṣāvahe.* (Let us live together, enjoy together and work together. Let our intellect be pure and bright. Let us not be jealous of each other.)

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# Chapter 15

## Education for Human Wellness and Social Progress



**Abstract** Present-day humanity is facing a value crisis of multiple types. There is no clarity about the goal of human existence and the cosmic process. The meaning and significance of human life are to be understood in a healthy and constructive manner. Globalization also is to be taken in its proper perspective. All this requires enlightened education, a paradigm shift in values, and a conducive direction to science and technology. Education at all levels should be engineered towards this goal.

**Keywords** Human wellness · Cosmic process · Meaning and significance of human life · Quality of life · Globalization · Beyond democracy

### Introduction

Humankind at the present juncture is passing through turmoil and facing a crisis. On the one hand, there are marvels of science and technology that are bewitching and bewildering; on the other, there are value erosions, moral degeneration, and different types of deprivations leading to tensions, strife, and suffering. There is no doubt tremendous material progress, but has it been able to usher in the aspired for peace and the desired prosperity at the physical, mental, and spiritual levels? Some people do have enormous means of material and mental comfort, but do they not also feel the evanescence of all this? The crux of the situation is that in the present day, a distracted humanity is suffering from exhaustion of spirit and languishing in the narrow and rigid confinements of ego-centrism, parochialism, and disastrous materialistic consumerism. So long as one is entangled in the labyrinth of materialism, one does not feel the pinch of it. But the moment one gets out of it, one is exhausted and lost. It is a paradoxical feeling of having and not having likes and dislikes, seeking and shunning.

As we march ahead in the twenty first century, humanity still stands at a crossroads. In its future course, humankind is condemned to facing a choice: one road leads to friendship, peace, and prosperity, and the other to strife, suffering, war, and destruction. At every juncture of life there is a demand to exercise an

option, whether it is the life of an individual or of a nation or of the world at large. The choice is posed to the human race, which has the capacity to reason and also the freedom to abide by its dictates. Whatever the decision, the choice is ours, and the consequences are also for us to bear. We are the agents of war or peace, peril or perfection. We are rational, free agents, and it is our free will to adhere to reason and prosper or to give a pass to reason and perish. Time and again, the wise and sane people all over the world have reminded us of this fact, and so long as human nature remains as it is, there will always be a need to be so reminded. In this context, there is a need to present the Indian perspective in its positive form, which may perhaps be more useful. It is possible to get newer intuitions and fresh insight from Indian thought if only we care to do so.

The notions of “peace”, “harmony”, “goodness” and “quality of life” have been projected and nourished in different cultural traditions of the world, so that all that is true, good, and beautiful, which is worth reckoning and emulating, may be brought together and synthesized for pursuit of individual happiness, social progress, world peace, and cosmic well-being. These are the ideals cherished by humankind at all times all over the world, but they have always been elusive with regard to effective realization. In the context of the present-day quest for globalization and universal harmony in the strife-ridden and divided world, such a renewed attempt may help in generating a conducive climate and congenial mindset through proper and adequate education and other media of mass communication. Thought motivates action, and good thoughts will certainly ensure good deeds. It is pragmatic to live by ideals even though they may not be easily or fully realizable. They are not to be in the form of utopias but attainable through human endeavour. Ideals need to be projected and pursued. There have been seers, sages, saints, and knowledgeable persons in every known historical age and in every region, who have on the basis of their subliminal intuitions given us noble ideas and ideals for universal welfare. It is prudent to go by their precepts and practices that have eternal relevance and utility.

## **Goal of Human Life and the Cosmic Process**

The pursuit of excellence, striving for betterment and attainment of quality of life have been perennial human concerns and aspirations. All human endeavours in diverse fields of culture and civilization have been directed towards the realization of this goal. Freedom from imperfection and the consequent suffering have been the chief motivating factors for all cognitive enterprises and technological advancements. Though every human being cherishes and strives for these and posits them as the goal of life, their realization requires planned corporate efforts. It cannot be a single individual's enterprise. A single individual may work out a plan, but its execution has to be collective. Moreover, this goal implies the attainment of excellence and the best possible quality of life not only by the individual but also by the entire cosmos, since the two are interrelated and interdependent and constitute an organic whole; therefore also it calls for collective efforts. This apart, one cannot

attempt to realize a good quality of life keeping in view an isolated individual, society, nation, or region. It has to be a global vision and a universal realization without any prejudice to any one section of the universe. Everyone has to participate and partake in the fruits of this venture that is a collective enterprise. Everyone should be able to contribute by manifestation of their capabilities through a dynamic discovery of their potentials, being assisted in this process by the society and natural surroundings. So when we plan for social progress, our outlook should be global though our performance has to be at the local level. Genuine social progress consists in the realization of universal well-being, in the sense of care and concern for all, a feeling of oneness with all, an attitude of sharing and cooperating.

## **Nature of the Universe**

The universe is an undivided whole. There is organic interdependence, cooperative partnership, and supportive mutualism in community living. There is reciprocity between living beings and inanimate things. All living beings have to coexist in the universe, but it has to be a regulated coexistence just like the nest of a bird, wherein the young ones coexist in a regulated way. The bird-parents operate with the attitude of distributive justice and selfless sacrifice and the young ones also coexist in mutual cooperation and co-sharing. They do cry for food but do not quarrel with one another. The parents see to it that their needs are satisfied, but they do not feed their greed. If little creatures can have such harmonious living, why can we who claim to be rational not have the same capacity?

## **Nature of Human Existence**

Human existence is multidimensional, multilayered, and multi-relational. It is a mind–body complex animated by a principle of consciousness called “soul” or “spirit”. It has individual, social, and cosmic aspects. It is intimately related with nature, sub-human beings, and human beings. Human identity, therefore, cannot be determined by any one of these facets. It is the totality and intricate unity of all these with subtle and fine inter-netting, interdependence, and interaction of the three which constitute human personality.

Added to this is the social dimension that is a highly complex, complicated and subtle network of relations. Society provides the ground and sustenance for human existence and also the basic structure and materials for human evolution. But there is no dichotomy or chasm between individual existence and the social environment. Further, human beings are essentially “natural” in the sense that they are an inalienable part of Nature, are sustained and nourished by Nature, and ultimately reach their culmination and consummation in and through Nature. Nature environs human beings, provides a basis for human evolution as also for excellence. But in

spite of all this, nature does not exhaust human existence nor does human existence exhaust nature. Human beings are bound by Nature and yet they can transcend the bonds of Nature. They are aware of being natural but also of the capacity to overcome and go beyond Nature. Even though dependent upon Nature, they can be liberated from Nature with the help of nature itself. Thus they have a paradoxical awareness of dependence on Nature and possible freedom from Nature. It is a prerogative of human beings to acquire this self-awareness and shape their lives and existence accordingly.

We have experience that apart from the physical we possess vital, mental, intellectual and spiritual dimensions that are all equally important. They are all interrelated and mutually supportive. They are distinct but not separate and cannot be reduced to any one of them. They may have existential hierarchy from gross to subtle, but they do not have value-based hierarchy as all are of equal value. Quality of life is to be attained in terms of catering to the legitimate needs of all these in a balanced and proportionate way. In fact, lopsided development of any one or a few of them is harmful to the total human person and is detrimental to perfection whatever be the degree of its realization. The physical, vital, mental and intellectual belong to the empirical world and can be approached with the help of science, but the spiritual belongs to a different category. It is trans-empirical and beyond the ken of empirical sciences. There are therefore two realms of human existence, empirical and trans-empirical, one constituting the base and the other the apex. Both are organically interrelated. Wise persons differentiate between the two but do not ignore one for the sake of the other. There can be priority and posterity or there can be simultaneity in their pursuits depending upon the situational requirements. But there is no chasm or gulf between the two. The spiritual is trans-empirical but it is not anti-empirical. Rather, it is the fulfilment of the empirical. The empirical is a prerequisite and a stepping stone for the trans-empirical. One cannot be realized without the other. There has to be a symbiosis of science and spirituality, the former seasoning and tempering the latter.

## **Meaning and Significance of Human Life**

Human life is a prized possession, the best product of evolution that has emerged so far. It has been a remarkable biological evolution through genetic endowment, ecological interaction, and cultural transformation, through innate competence and overt performance. Reflective awareness and self-consciousness are its unique features. On the basis of their planned endeavours and successful behaviours, human beings have been able to achieve wonderful feats. A mechanistic understanding of human ontology and human evolution cannot do justice to the spontaneity, creativity, and goal-orientedness of human pursuits. The Reality is experienced to be through and through *telos*-embedded and human life being its part and parcel has to reflect this feature. The teleological approach alone can support a viewpoint that coordinates work and welfare, possession and enjoyment with a spirit of sacrifice, social progress and social justice, material well-being and spiritual enhancement.

## Quality of Life and Globalization

Quality of life in its perfect and highest form is the *summum bonum* of human existence, and globalization is its corollary since its realization requires propagation, profession, and practice of global ethics. The principle of “universalizability of ethical norms”, and adherence to them without exception, stems from this very consideration. But globalization is not to be understood in materialistic terms only in the sense of liberalization of trade and commerce. Basically it is a spiritual ideal. It is the inculcation of the attitude of seeing self-sameness everywhere leading to global unity. It is the realization of the fundamental unity of the entire cosmos, not just of human beings or living beings. It is a mode of cosmic coexistence with a spirit of mutual support, mutual sacrifice, mutual caring and sharing. It is enlightened conduct and contented life like that of a *bodhisattva* or *jīvana mukta* who is constantly engaged in universal well-being, who is happy in the happiness of others and feels miserable in the miseries of others, who always thinks of the good of others and acts for their welfare. The seers and sages, spiritual and religious leaders, all over the world have enjoined this mode of living. The moral codes prescribed in all the cultural and religious traditions in all ages and places aim at the cultivation of this mindset of universal affinity and self-sameness. We possess a vast literature in this regard, but human nature is such that it has to be constantly reminded about this and persuasively goaded to practise this. This accounts for the need and relevance of the present endeavour.

Globalization is not the monopolistic patenting or bulldozing of multiplicity in overt or covert form but accommodating and harmonizing it within the organic unity of the entire cosmos. It stands for coordination rather than uniformity of thought and action. It envisages no antagonism or incompatibility between one part and the other, like one organ and the others in an organism, since all are perceived and conceived as interconnected, interrelated, and interdependent elements of one and the same whole, constituting a single field or continuum or unity. That is why the analogy of a living organism is put forth where there is “multiplicity-in-unity” and “unity-in-multiplicity”, many situated in one, not as separated, segregated, and scattered elements, but in mutual openness and reciprocity supplementing and complementing one another. Here conflicts and disorders may not be unnatural but their resolution and harmony may also not be unrealizable.

## Mode of Achieving the Goal

Globalization is a viewpoint and a course of action, a policy instrument and a worldwide movement for a new world order based on enlightened principles of conduct aiming at enhancement of the “quality of life” not just of human beings but of the entire cosmos. This calls for newer formulations of global ethical norms that may regulate the entire gamut of human conduct in relations between one human being and another, and also between human beings and the rest of the cosmos of

multiple animate beings and inanimate things. This is the precursor of the emergence of a global society in which the entire world can be experienced as one single family. This is possible through the realization of self-sameness and cultivation of the spirit of sacrifice. But this necessitates a trans-valuation of values, a paradigm shift in values, a changed mindset, an enlarged vision of cosmo-centricity, an enlightened view and way of life by a proper training of body and mind by illuminating knowledge and liberating wisdom. It calls for a total transformation of matter and mind and realization of spiritual oneness. It is the widening of the self as totality, from “I” to “We”, from one self to total self, from individual to cosmic. Here there should be no deprivation and exploitation, no sorrows and sufferings that are unmitigated, no injustice and discrimination unabated. This is realization of heaven on earth, to use figurative language. The cosmos is full of splendours and can provide sustenance to all its inhabitants, but we have to ensure that this is done in a just, fair, and equitable manner. But this is possible only through the postulation of a new value schema other than the one we are presently pursuing. It is the restoration and reformulation of the classical value schema that we have forgotten. It is the practice of new ethics that tends all and cares for all. This has been the cherished desire of the enlightened mind. It is not a utopian dream but an ideal realizable in actual practice through proper and adequate education.

## **Value Schema for Individual and Social Progress**

The quest for perfection and realization of values of life that reflect the meaning and purpose of our existence have been perennial human concerns. Any consideration of such value schema should be based on concrete social and historical realities and past experiences of the concerned individual and society. Values are not just to be known and posited, they are to be realized as well and lived in action. This calls for a symbiosis of knowing, doing and being.

There can be no realization without skilful means. This implies a cataloguing of resources, preserving and enhancing the existing ones and generating new ones without depleting existing ones. Skilful employment of means also implies judicious use of the resources without depriving others of the present generation and the future generations. It further implies proper management of action and the fruits of action with equitable and just distribution.

## **Progress as Evolution banking on Tradition and rooted in Culture**

Change is the law of Reality, but it has to be a change for the better, for more perfect, for greater well-being. All change is not necessarily healthy and good. In order to be beneficial it has to be in the form of evolution rather than revolution. It must be based on the solid foundations of the past, its experiences, concerns and

commitments. But this process of bringing forward from the past requires a judicious discrimination as to what should be accepted and what should be rejected.

This brings us to the consideration of tradition. It is never a threat to individual and social freedom unless it is dead, dated, and outlived. A live tradition provides for freedom, is amenable to change and improvement. Tradition makes the person and society and, contrary-wise, persons and society make a tradition. So there is mutuality between the two. Similarly, change and modernity do not mean breaking away from past experiences. What is needed is a correct understanding of the nature and role of tradition.

Tradition is rooted in a culture. Culture, in all its dimensions, is a crucial constituent of human progress, both individual and social. Cultural life consists in the pursuit and realization of values that enhance the quality of life of human beings and society. Culture is a living phenomenon coming from the past like a tradition. It is a crystallization of material and spiritual wealth created and preserved by a group of people and a society. There can be no genuine progress without cultural backing and cultural regeneration preceding and consolidating it.

## **Holistic and Integral Approach to Progress**

A meaningful planning for progress has to be all-round, graded and gradual realization with balance and proportion. Economic progress is basic to human progress, but the economic aspect is only one of the multiple aspects and cannot claim exclusive attention. Human development is not to be confined to economic development, and mere economic development cannot be equated with human development. Further, in order to ensure just and equitable partaking in the fruits of economic progress, it should be dharmic in nature, regulated by “business ethics”. No doubt pragmatism and utilitarianism are the guiding principles of economics, but they should be seasoned and tempered by welfarism. Unbridled economic growth gives rise to moral crises and many problems crop up which may seriously imperil society and its health. It may appear to be a growth but it may not be conducive to well-being. There has to be value orientation of the economy in tune with human well-being and cosmic welfare. The economy has an instrumental worth and it should not be taken as an end in itself. It is also to be remembered that not only economic development is to be guided by morality; it should also help in enhancing moral capacity. Morality should not remain confined to precepts but should get translated into practice.

## **Science, Technology and Social Progress**

Like economy, science and technology are important components of human culture. Science directs technological innovations and technology accelerates the progress of science. Both are thus interdependent. Both are needed and are essential to

human existence and social progress. But they are not value neutral. They should serve the ultimate human good that is also the cosmic good. They are means and therefore of an instrumental character. They should be humane and humanizing and should be harnessed for social progress and cosmic well-being. They should not be allowed to *technocratize* human beings; rather, they should be humanized. In this respect, a clear distinction should be drawn between humanism and humanitarianism. Humanism is anthropocentric and is vitiated by human fallen-ness, whereas humanitarianism is cosmo-centric. Only by a spiritual orientation of science and technology can they be made humanitarian. Such an orientation can come from traditional culture. At present, there is a see-sawing between traditional culture and science and technology instead of a thaw. There is a need for “great harmony”.

### **Social Progress, Democracy and Beyond-Democracy**

The hallmark of social progress and of civil society is respect for human dignity and human freedom within an *ordered* cosmos. This involves values like liberty, equality, justice, and fairness. It should be realized that each individual has immense potentialities and capabilities and should be given freedom and opportunities to manifest them. In different individuals there are diverse capabilities, and all are useful for social progress. Every human individual is a potential person and should be given scope to cultivate personhood. Personhood is an achievement concept. A person is one who is a knowledgeable, ratiocinative, free, and responsible agent. The person has to be an integrated, creative, and freely acting social and moral being. Persons must know and realize the meaning of life, justify their existence, and make it valuable and worthwhile to themselves and the society.

The criterion of social progress is achievement of a democratic spirit, a democratic mode of thinking and living, and not just a democratic state or form of political governance. Genuine democracy prevails only when diversity is fully and well accommodated in an overall unity. In the unity, differences are to be protected, preserved, and enriched. They should receive a natural and reasonable place and respect within the unity. The democratic process is not the suppression of thoughts, feelings, and aspirations of any section of people, but their unfolding and reinforcement and realization. In other words, democracy and social progress have to be in the form of inclusive pluralism, having multiplicity well situated in unity, like the organs surviving and thriving in an organism. In the ultimate analysis, though this is only an ideal, there should be no difference between “one and the other” or between “I and the other”. On the front gate of the Parliament House of the Republic of India in New Delhi, a verse from traditional Indian culture is inscribed which states that the notions like “this is mine or this is that of others” is nurtured only by a person of mean mentality and narrow mind. So the implication is that instead of viewing differences as “I and the other”, they should be viewed as “I and we”. Here the other is not an alien, an adversary, a competitor, or a threat to one’s existence, but a

partner, a companion, a fellow being, an aid or help. The other also does not resist or repel but reciprocates with a feeling of coexistence and cooperation.

Democracy in all its present forms does not ensure any of the above stated aspirations and requirements. Democracy is supposed to be a system of rules and the rule of law made legitimate by the will of the people and supposed to serve the best interests of the people, a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. But in actual reality has it been so anywhere in the world? A system that has built-in infirmity cannot be said to be the best. As society progresses, the human mind should also develop the capacity of innovative thinking, and therefore the question is: Can we not think of a system better than democracy, a system in which all the merits of democracy are well preserved and demerits are negated? Though we have come to stay with democracy as the best available form of political governance, this cannot be treated as the end of history. The human mind has experimented with various forms of political governance like anarchy, monarchy, aristocracy, oligarchy, and so forth, and has reached the stage of democracy. But the rational mind of human beings should not entertain the idea of the end of human reason and the thinking capacity of the human mind. It should be possible for the ingenious human mind to think of going "beyond democracy", to think of a state higher and better than democracy, a state which encapsulates all the virtues of democracy but discards its vices and defects. It is high time that we prepare a blueprint of a dharmic state of the desired type.

# Chapter 16

## Education for Global Ethics



**Abstract** This chapter concludes this book with an organismic view of Reality and organismic ethics for total human wellness, which should be the aim of all education. It insists on duty-oriented rather than rights-based ethics. For this right attitude, right knowledge and right conduct are needed. This should be the ultimate goal of education.

**Keywords** Global ethics · Right attitude · Right knowledge · Right conduct  
Spiritualistic ethics · Globalization

### Introduction

One of the most significant implications of the organismic view of Reality is the acceptance that the cosmos, or rather, the cosmic process, is a totality of occurrences and not of things. It is a highly complex and intricate but planned and purposive networking of events and not a mechanistic arrangement of pre-existent entities. Every existence, living or non-living, has a dependent origination out of a causal complex characterized by mutuality and openness, interrelatedness and reciprocity. Each one has a specific nature, place, role, and function in the cosmic set-up as determined in the scheme of the universe. The cosmos is a vast and subtle inter-netting of multiple interrelated and interdependent existences which are in constant flux. It has physical, mental and spiritual dimensions. There is determinism at the physical level but freedom and spontaneity at the spiritual level. The mental realm is partly determined and partly free. The human being is an organic unity of psycho-physical processes animated by the spiritual element. It is thus a complex of body, mind and spirit.

With these metaphysical premises, one can work out an organismic ethics. An ethical system purports to provide the norms to regulate human conduct in relation to other human beings, their social organizations, other living beings, and the natural environment. This is because all are dynamically interrelated and interdependent, and the functioning of one affects the rest. However, human beings are at the centre stage of ethical considerations, as they are the most evolved beings

having freedom and spontaneity, creativity and manipulating capacity. They have the prerogative to exercise free will and thus feel responsible for their conduct. Freedom necessitates norm prescription, and this implies norm adherence as well as norm violation.

Human life in the worldly state is incomplete and imperfect and points beyond itself. It has a goal to achieve, a purpose to fulfil, and an end to realize. It is the establishment of a society of perfect individuals wherein the sorrows and sufferings of the world may cease to exist. This is the longing intensely cherished by every human being. The release of human beings from the travails and travesties of worldly life is not effected by mere wishing. Nor is it an idle or ideal apprehension through abstract speculation. It is a realization through properly planned executed and accomplished endeavour. It requires rigorous discipline of knowledge, will and conduct, and the fruits of conduct in mutual sharing, mutual cooperation and mutual collective enterprise. It demands harmonious organization and skilful management of ends, means and modalities. It implies a just and distributive sharing of the fruits without selfish considerations, which is possible only through equanimity of mind and the feeling of self-sameness. This can be achieved by self-control and self-sacrifice. But this is not self-abnegation. It is self-fulfilment through corporate living and partaking.

A spiritual approach to ethics is not rights based but duty oriented. It involves the performance of one's obligations as per one's station in the total cosmic set-up without any attachment to consequences. In order that individuals can perform their duties properly, faithfully, efficiently, and disinterestedly, we must know our nature and capabilities as also what is to be performed, how it is to be performed, when it is to be performed, why, etc. An unwavering skilful performance depends upon rightness of knowledge and firmness of will.

Activity is the law of life. Conation is the essential feature of consciousness. Cessation from action in thought, words, and deeds is impossible for a human being. Action alone confers the required all-round growth and development. All individuals contain within themselves immense potentialities which, when fully developed and properly cultured, open up the centre of infinite energy, unbounded expansion, and limitless bliss. In this state, individuals identifies their whole essence with the universal centre of energy and feel themselves as only instruments through which the universal centre of energy is manifesting itself. No longer does one feel one's limited existence as a separate individual possessing limited energy, limited span of consciousness, and limited degree of enjoyment. This is egolessness. This is equanimity or *samādhi*. This realization of the feeling of oneness with the totality is possible when the actions are performed with a spirit of sacrifice without attachment to fruits and with full knowledge and skill. This is self-realization through self-sacrifice.

In Indian culture, philosophy, and religion, the Indian view and way of life, theory and practice, knowledge and conduct are not divorced and segregated. They are named as *darśana*, which is not mere reflection upon the nature of Reality but also a quest for and a realization of values. Basically it is a discipline for realization of perfection (*mokṣaśāstra*). There is a definite purpose in life and Reality if we care to know, and a definite goal to achieve if we have a will to do so. Our existence is

not meaningless. It has value and significance. But we must first of all know what we are, what is the nature and purpose of life, what we should be in our life and how we can be so, etc. The aim of human existence should be spiritual perfection through material progress. But material progress is only a means and not an end. The end is self-realization which is achieved through the removal of karmic matter and liberation from *samsara*. This is the ultimate teaching of all schools of philosophical thought in India.

In Indian philosophy, great emphasis is laid on proper knowledge. Knowledge is the only and the surest way to material progress and spiritual perfection. It therefore emphasizes that we must draw a clear distinction between truth and falsity. Falsity entangles us in the vicissitudes of worldly life. It is bewitching and bewildering and it springs from ignorance. In order to have right knowledge, the right attitude or right mental make-up is necessary. This is a prerequisite for a proper view and way of life. This is authentic existence. Opposed to this is falsity from which we generally suffer. Falsity does not serve any genuine purpose and hence it must be discarded. For an aspirant of perfection, only the right type of knowledge is helpful. This is the main theme of the teachings of all the schools. Knowledge always leads to good conduct. The value and purpose of knowledge are not theoretical but necessarily practical. Right conduct ensues only from right knowledge. Conduct without knowledge is blind and knowledge without conduct is lame. The two are complementary to each other. And therefore knowledge has to lead to the corresponding conduct. Without right conduct, deliverance from worldly miseries and from trials and tribulations is impossible, and without complete deliverance from these, no permanent happiness can be achieved. Right attitude, right knowledge and right conduct are the three jewels of life, which every human being must adorn. But this wearing is not decoration but actual practice and concrete realization. However, this is not easy to achieve. It requires austerity and rigorous discipline, a rigorous control of body, will and mind. Its essential prerequisite is right faith and firm belief in the words of great seers and sages as expressed in their life and teachings. The seers and sages are those who have conquered all passions and internal enemies, and have attained omniscience, so to say. Faith in the efficacy of their teachings as the only guide for spiritual progress and deliverance is the *sine qua non* of the spiritual mode of living. Right faith diverts the attention of the individual self from perverting worldly affairs to spiritual progress, which alone is the real purpose, meaning, and goal of life. Right faith is the only way to get rid of worldly bondage and to direct our attention, thoughts and actions to the spiritual perfection that is a necessary condition of and prerequisite to liberation.

The seers and sages attain right knowledge from their subliminal intuitive realizations and from the scriptures and impart that knowledge to the householder and laity. But the householders should remember that knowledge without conduct is useless. Merely listening to the discourses is wastage of time and futile. It does not help us in any way. What is needed is the ensuing conduct. But unfortunately most of us forget this. We listen to the sermons of spiritual persons but do not practise them. We take it as a pastime or a matter of routine of life. Our knowledge remains mere information at the mental level. A person having knowledge without practice

may be compared to a donkey who carries a burden of sandalwood without knowing its value or utility. As the donkey bears the burden of sandalwood but has no share in the wealth of its load, similarly a person without practice merely bears the burden of their knowledge. They cannot enjoy spiritual progress, which is the real fruit of knowledge. Instead they indulge in evanescent and fleeting worldly pleasures that invariably end up in pain and suffering or mental unhappiness or a feeling of the vanity of life. The Vedas and the Upaniṣads also aver the same, that knowledge is useless without conduct and conduct is useless without knowledge.

Knowledge pertains to the real. The real is multifaceted and multidimensional. It has infinite properties and relations and therefore it can be approached in infinite ways. This is perspectivalism at the levels of Reality, thought, and language. As there are many aspects of Reality, there can be multiple approaches to Reality. Each one is true in itself but it is only partially true. It is true from a particular perspective. From another perspective it may not be true. We may have a total or holistic perspective, known as *pramāṇa*. But if we have a partial perspective it is known as *naya*. Both *pramāṇa* and *naya* are true and valuable. This type of understanding leads to mutual complementarity, mutual cooperation, mutual trust and coexistence, and above all to non-violence (*ahimsā*), which is the highest truth and highest virtue in Indian ethics. The perspectival approach to Reality alone can lead to non-violence and coexistence, and this in turn can guarantee peace, progress, prosperity and perfection in the world. That is why non-violence is regarded as the highest virtue (*paramodharmah*).

The empirical real has three phases of existence. In it something endures, something originates and something passes away. So it is both permanent and changing. But we must know what is permanent and what is changing. We have to attend to both in the proper proportion and the proper perspective. More often than not, we do not do so under the spell of ignorance and the sway of passion. The seers and sages have shown the way, the right path to be emulated by us. Proper knowledge, proper will and proper effort on our part alone can yield the desired result.

We must know the nature of Reality, the world of living beings and non-living things, and also their interrelation. We must know the nature and the role of *karma* and the ways for the cessation of the karmic flow. We must know the distinction between good and evil along with their respective results. We must know how and when to practise right conduct. We must know the requirements of the practice of a householder and a retired person. Spiritual progress is a gradual and graded realization, and therefore the theory of gradual progression should also be properly understood so that we may march on this path smoothly and without falling. But all this is not just bookish knowledge which some of us possess by our readings of the classical texts either fully or partly. Such knowledge, as we have seen earlier, is only a burden and not a help.

Organicism, with its corollary of perspectivalism, provides for democracy in ideas and in living. It inculcates the spirit of peaceful coexistence, tolerance, and mutual support. This alone can ensure universal peace, solidarity, and harmony. It is a unique contribution of Indian spirituality, which is noble and sublime, deep and

subtle. It is not very easy to understand it and to practise it. But if this can be achieved, the world will be an ideal place to live in and to realize spiritual perfection. Another significant implication of organicism is the practice of vegetarianism and environmental protection, which are the dire needs of the day. Everything in the world is interrelated and interdependent. Everything has its unique existence and value. So human beings for their selfish ends should destroy nothing. The Indian ethics not only regulates human conduct in relation to one's own self and in relation to other human beings, but goes a step further to bring human conduct into relation with all living beings and the natural environment. Every existence has intrinsic worth and it must be given due respect. In case there occurs some misconduct due to ignorance or negligence or even wilfully, there is a provision for forgiveness and repentance. The Indian ethical tradition advocates self-sameness in all existence in spite of their inherent differences. It thus has the unique feature of synthesizing quantitative pluralism and qualitative monism, monadic uniqueness and modal dependence. In fact, organicism is the cardinal tenet of Indian thought and it is impregnated with immense possibilities of drawing out newer and newer implications and corollaries for cosmic well-being. But this should not be a mere intellectual exercise. It must involve programmatic action at the individual and corporate levels on a cosmic scale. This may not be easy but it is not impossible.

The Indian thinkers have put forth the concept of *dharma*. It is another unique contribution, highly valuable in the spheres of thought and action. In spite of the vast literature available on this rich and complex concept, its tremendous implications are yet to be brought to the fore by the saints and scholars. It provides a strong base for relativism, perspectivalism, and situationalism that are needed for pluralistic worldly life. It helps in avoiding the pitfalls of absolutism, dogmatism, obscurantism, ego-centricity, and narrowness of all types. The concept of *dharma* stands for the unique and distinct nature of each entity, its place, function, and value in the scheme of Reality and also the principle which has to regulate its behaviour and interrelationship. Thus *dharma* has both constitutive and regulative aspects.

In the context of spiritualistic ethics, it is desirable to analyse the notion of quality of life as it has been projected and nourished in different cultural and subcultural traditions of India, so that all that is true, good and beautiful in them, all that is worth emulating, may be brought together and synthesized for the pursuit of world peace and cosmic well-being which are the ideals cherished by humankind at all times all over the world. In the context of the present-day quest for globalization and universal harmony in the strife-ridden and divisive world, such an attempt at the theoretical level may help in generating a conducive climate and congenial mindset through proper and adequate education and other media of mass communication. Thought motivates action and good thoughts will certainly ensure good deeds. It is pragmatic to live by ideals even though they may not be easily or fully realizable. Ideals need to be projected and pursued. There have been seers, sages, saints, and knowledgeable persons in every known historical age and in every region who have on the basis of their subliminal intuitions given us noble ideas and

ideals for universal well-being. It is prudent to go by their precepts and practices, which have eternal relevance and utility.

In a meaningful consideration of global ethics, there is not only a need for a new vision and a new intuition for a newer paradigm; it also involves a widening of attitudes. In a global ethics put forth in a holistic perspective, there is no antagonism between individual and society, between egoism and altruism, between human beings and the rest of the cosmos. It is multifaceted and multilayered such that it accommodates both absolutist rules and situational or contextual rules. Both are needed in different situations, and acceptance of both as per the demands of the situation does not involve any contradiction. There may be situations wherein different sets of moral rules may appear as presenting a dilemma, but these dilemmas can be resolved by taking into account the perspectives of the differing norms.

Depending upon the nature and types of the relata there can be many branches of global ethics like individual ethics, social ethics, biomedical ethics, professional ethics, work ethics, environmental ethics, political ethics, religious ethics, etc. There are multiple aspects of human conduct which need to be regulated and there can be as many facets of ethics. The complex human existence is multifaceted both in its individual and socio-cosmic dimensions and there is a vast network of human conduct the whole of which has to be regulated by moral principles. The sphere of ethics can be widened and multiplied as per the needs of changing situations and there is nothing static about it.

In the changed situation of modern times, there is a need to reformulate the basic moral principles in response to the demands of globalization. Then only can we hope to have the emergence of a global society in which the entire world can be experienced as one family. This is realizable given a proper cultivation of knowledge, will, and action in a harmonious framework. It is possible to plan out such a framework provided there is a will to do so. This will involve education of a required type, which alone is the key to bringing about this awareness through refinement and heightening of consciousness and the transcending of narrow confinements. This has been the cherished desire of the enlightened human mind. But this requires a proper and well-planned endeavour on the part of human beings. For this, a newer ethics is called for which must go beyond the traditional ethics. It will be an ethics based on spirituality, an ethics for totality, in which there are no considerations of rights and demands but only of obligations and sacrifice. It will be an ethics of duties. All beings, human and non-human, exist in this field in intimate relation to one another having an assigned nature, status, and role. We have to know our nature and status, and the roles and functions assigned to that status.

The proper performance of our duties and discharge of obligations requires the “management of action” and “management of results of action”. Both are necessary and important. Management of action implies three things:

1. We must know what to act, why to act, and how to act.
2. We must have a will to act as per the knowledge acquired.

3. We must act in the most skilful manner so as to realize the desired result.

All these three requirements may be worked out in detail. But the point to be emphasized is that though every action is motivated, it should not be intended. That is to say, the agent should know why the action is to be performed and what shall be the result of the action. This apart, the agent should also have the will and skill to perform the action. So there is a definite motive to perform the action. But the act is to be performed without attachment to the consequences or irrespective of the consequences. This is how a soldier fights for the country. He/she knows what to act, why to act, and how to act, but when engaged in action the soldier is not mindful of the consequences. Here there is engagement in action but withdrawal from or non-attachment with respect to the fruits of action. There is a subtle but clear distinction between motivated and intended action, and this needs to be appreciated.

For the performance of an action, human agents are not the only responsible factor. There are several factors responsible for this. There is a casual collocation in which there is a multiplicity of factors but every factor has a definite place and role in the totality of the collocation. In their operation there is an order. Thus, for example, apart from human endeavour, the supporting instruments, natural circumstances, positive and negative conditions, etc., partake in the causal collocation. So the human being is not the only cause, though generally we tend to assign causal agency to human beings only. In the management of action all these factors also need to be managed. Of course, human beings play a dominant and decisive role and that is why the onus of responsibility is generally placed on them.

So far as management of the results of action is concerned, it is enjoyment with sacrifice that is the guiding principle. It is enjoyment with the totality in togetherness, in the spirit of sharing and caring following the rules of distributive justice. This alone is legitimate enjoyment of the results of action. The guiding principles of the management of the results should be such as to ensure justice and fairness to all existences, as everyone has a rightful place in this cosmos. Peaceful coexistence is the only proper way of existence. But this has to be ensured by all legitimate means. No one should be permitted to disturb the cosmic course, and for this deterring measures can also be undertaken. Rule of law, justice and righteousness, need to be protected, preferably by proper education and persuasion. Deterring measures should be the last resort. Human beings are prone to evil, but evil propensities can be prevented and checked by suitable means. It should be one of the tasks of global ethics to regulate human conduct in such a way as to lead to and ensure universal peace, prosperity, and harmony. The performance of actions is necessary, the ensuing of results is inevitable, but the sharing of results is desirable. Skilful performance of action is an ideal; proper management of results is obligatory; and its distributive enjoyment is conducive to total well-being. The objective of healthy and meaningful globalization should be material prosperity with spiritual enhancement.

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