

KIREET JOSHI

EDUCATION
at
CROSSROADS



THE MOTHER'S INSTITUTE OF RESEARCH
MIRA ADITI



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THE MOTHER'S INSTITUTE OF RESEARCH
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Publisher's Note

The papers collected in this book were presented during the recent years at conferences, seminars and workshops held in different parts of the country. Educational research involved in preparing these papers was greatly inspired and supported by the research teams of the Mother's Institute of Research.

Some of the important ideas, which would be found here unavoidably repeated, relate to the crisis through which humanity is passing today. It is this crisis which leads us to knock the portals of education which may lead us to some of the elements of a lasting solution.

It is hoped that at this important juncture when educational thought in India is being churned once again, these papers might be found relevant and helpful.

1.

Education at Crossroads

Education is at crossroads.

The road on which education has been running at present has reached dead ends from several points of view. Underdeveloped and developing countries like ours have awakened vastly to the value of education; but the road is unable to bear the burdens of increasing role of education. Requirements of economic development oblige governments to frame and pursue objectives that tend to impose heavy burdens on people, who, in turn, project expectations in regard to education which cannot be fulfilled by the present system of education. Sociology, in the whole world, is undergoing radical changes, since the fundamental problems of human relationships are becoming increasingly insoluble, and people are turning towards education as a possible means of practical remedies; but the present aims, methods and contents of education do not address themselves to these problems. The costs of education are increasing unbearably, and higher questions of human development, of human destiny and human fulfilment impose on education new directions and goals that seem impossible of achievement, if education continues to be what it is today. The question is whether there is something beyond the dead end which we must still pursue, or whether a new road is being opened up or whether we should design and engineer a new road.

In the meantime, the old road is still before us, and the educational world is so mechanically tied to it that it requires some special courage even to stand aloof for a short while in order to reflect upon where we are, what we are really doing in our schools, colleges and universities, and whether what we are doing

is meaningful in terms of matching our activities and methodologies with ends and objectives that we are required to pursue. To stand at the crossroads and to warn ourselves and others that we need to turn to something new has, however, become a necessity.

II

Let us reflect at deeper levels.

Frontiers at which humanity stands at any given stage of development determine the directions and contents of education.

Today humanity is gripped by three pulls and counter-pulls and the resultant situation is so difficult that nothing short of change in human consciousness can lift up humanity from its crisis. On the one hand, there is a downward gravitation; on the other hand, there is a pull towards horizontal development, and there is still a higher pull of vertical ascension.

The downward gravitational pull has many features that are related to the hugeness of the structures and super-structures of economic, industrial, social and political life. These structures and super-structures are being sustained by continuous scientific discoveries and inventions and technological devices and gadgets, — all of which contribute to the efficiency of the system. All these structures tend to sub-serve certain intellectual goals, but also more and more increasingly those goals which enhance pragmatism, success in competition and gratification of sensual pleasures. The fabric of life that is getting woven yields more and more through impersonalisation, mechanisation, and even dehumanisation. Even the higher and the highest pursuits of life are getting pulled down under the weight of the hurry and fury of forces that tempt and weaken human will. The subconscious and the unconscious are finding in this situation increasing avenues of invasion, and the forces of reason are being greatly defeated by those of unreason. This gravitational pull is that of the infra-rational and to fight against it so as to retain humanism and humanity requires a gigantic effort.

Fortunately, the gigantic effort is not entirely missing. While scientific discoveries and inventions tend to be utilised in their

applications by the infra-rational, science itself is a rational endeavour, and its impulse to know and to know as comprehensively as possible stands out in the contemporary scenario as an angel which can provide lofty wings to humanity to fly into higher and higher domains of efforts and achievements. There is also a widespread inquiry, — multiple inquiry and critical inquiry, — which is pushing humanity to develop philosophy and ethics as also stringent notions of justice and equity. There are also growing visions and experiments with the shining ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity, — and even though they are being hampered by the forces of economic barbarism, they still provide a push of higher struggle. In these domains, humanity can fulfil its humanism, and numerous paths are constantly opening up to invite humanity to become more and more humane, more and more rational, and more and more ethical.

This network of ideas and forces constitutes the peak of the cultural effort of today. The intellectual, the ethical and the aesthetic aspirations of humanity are combined here to pull humanity from its downward gravitation and erect a durable civilisation that can continue to spread over larger and larger areas of the world. It perceives quite clearly that even science, if it is not guided by values, can be dangerous and can injure the future of humanity. It is greatly concerned with humanism, it is international in its sweep, and it has given a decisive turn to the realisation of human unity. The birth of the United Nations Organisation and its international agencies owes much to the endeavours of this uplifting force. It feels greatly committed to the human destiny, and endeavours to create a new world order in which this destiny, conceived in terms of higher individual and social welfare, can find increasing fulfilment. It wants to impel science to utilise itself for purposes of international peace and elimination of drudgery from human life. It visualises the higher role of education in shaping a better world of tomorrow. But it is also aware that the present system of education is unable to fulfil the goals, which are imperatively demanded, if humanity is to survive and arrive at its fulfilment.

There is, therefore, an urgent search for a new road for education. This search has been briefly described by Edgar Faure, the

Chairman of the International Commission on the Development of Education, established by UNESCO, in his letter written in May, 1972, to the then Director-General of UNESCO, Rene Maheu, when he submitted the Report of the Commission, entitled *Learning to Be*. He points out that four basic assumptions underlay the work of that Commission. He explains these four assumptions as follows:

The first... is that of the existence of an international community which amidst the variety of nations and cultures, of political options, and degrees of development, is reflected in common aspirations, problems and trends and in its movement towards one and the same destiny. The corollary to this is the fundamental solidarity of governments and of peoples, despite transitory differences and conflicts.

The second is belief in democracy, conceived of as implying each man's right to realise his own potential and to share in the building of his own future. The keystone of democracy, so conceived, is education, — not only education that is accessible to all, but education whose aims and methods have been thought out afresh.

The third assumption is that the aim of development is the complete fulfilment of man, in all the richness of his personality, the complexity of his forms of expression and his various commitments, — as individual, member of a family and of a community, citizen, and producer, inventor of techniques and creative dreamer.

Our last assumption is that only an overall, life-long education can produce the kind of complete man the need for whom is increasing with the continually most stringent constraints tearing the individual asunder. We should no longer assiduously acquire knowledge once and for all, but learn how to build up continually evolving body of knowledge or 'through life' — 'learn to be'.

It can be said that this report *Learning to Be* is an excellent document of the diagnosis of the maladies of the present world

and its system of education, and the prescription it gives, if implemented with sincerity and thoroughness, would lead to revolutionary changes in the world order as also in the educational system. This Report aims at building a new road which can lift up humanity from the old road, which may be said to have reached the point of its bankruptcy, particularly in terms of humanistic ideals. With this report, we can speak concretely of standing at the crossroads presenting to us a possibility of a choice between the old and the new.

This Report has made twenty-one recommendations, and the most important is laid down in its very first recommendation, which declares: *Every individual must be in a position to keep learning throughout his life. The idea of life-long education is the keystone of the learning society.*

The other recommendations may be looked upon as corollaries. They advocate less formalism in institutions, an overall open education system facilitating mobility and choice, importance of pre-school education, broadening general education, maximisation of vocational mobility, variety in higher education, continuous adult education, principles of self-learning, right utilisation of educational technologies, raising of the status of teachers, and learner's own responsibilities in achieving higher goals of education.

There are, however, two important considerations, which render the diagnosis and prescriptions of this Report inadequate or incomplete. This Report assumes that the powers of rationality and ethicality are able to combat the powers of the Un-Reason and of the subconscious and the unconscious. Again, it assumes that the integral development of personality, which every modern human being should aim at developing, is achievable when the human faculties are properly brought into harmony by the powers of their rational and the moral sense. It lays down that *the physical, intellectual, emotional and ethical integration of the individual into a complete man is a broad definition of the fundamental aim of education.* But the question is whether something more is needed to bring about the expected integration. And since this is a very important question, we are obliged to dwell upon it and make some observations.

It is mainly during the last hundred years or more that psychological studies have begun to reveal to us the strangeness and

complexity of the components and powers of human personality. It has now become clear that the human being has many parts and planes and that each one of them has its own thrust of development, and these thrusts are far from being homogenous or harmonious with one another. The physical being is often in conflict with the vital pursuits, and when the vital ambitions and attractions impose upon the physical body their own burden, the physical often revolts or collapses. The demands of physical health are often in clash with the demands of the vital being. Again, the demands of the vital being are in conflict with the demands of the mind when it wants to pursue the purity of thought and knowledge and the purity of its ideals. Often the vital being tends to make the mental being the advocate of its desires and ambitions by means of rationalisation. At the same time, the pure pursuits of the mind succeed sometimes in obliging the vital being to make sacrifices, but the resultant condition is often that of disequilibrium.

Still, again, the triangular disposition of the mind in its pursuit of rationality, ethicality and aesthetics is itself a complex of battle and disequilibrium. The pursuit of the truth through the channel of rationality is often encumbered or even contradicted by the pursuits of the good and the beautiful through channels of the moral and aesthetic sense. Even in the field of the pursuits of the truth, there are conflicts between the scientific truth and the philosophical truth, and even when a choice is made in favour of one or the other, some kind of disequilibrium still remains. Similarly, in the field of ethical pursuit, the demands of love and justice often collide with each other, the good of the individual often collides with the good of the society, and the standards of conduct have among themselves continually sessions of disagreement. In the field of aesthetics, we are aware of the relativity of aesthetic standards and scientific judgements, and we are also aware of aesthetic personalities actuated by perceptions, imaginations and inspirations, often colliding with scientific and philosophical truth as also with demand of the ethical good. It is true that at a certain stage, one does perceive that truth is beauty and beauty is truth, but we are also aware how beauty looks askance

at the good and the truth, and vice versa. It is true that the highest developments of Reason can bring about some kind of truce among the conflicting demands of various parts of the being, but this does not amount to integration.

This is not all. The conflicts that we see between the conscious parts are nothing as compared to the conflicts that arise between the conscious and the subconscious or unconscious. How feeble is the rational, ethical, and aesthetic complex of the human being when it gets attacked by the subconscious and unconscious forces has become more and more evident when we examine the modern life in its conditions of anxiety and stress. Some of the acute psychologists have even felt that there are only two powerful subconscious impulses, those of Eros and Thanatos, the desire to love and desire to kill; and not only are both of them in conflict with each other, but both of them are in conflict with the pursuits of rationality, morality and aesthetics in their purest and highest flights. They have even warned or predicted that humanity cannot sustain its upward movement and must ultimately decline and succumb to the forces of the unconscious Unreason.

Even sociological studies have underlined the powers of Unreason against the construction of ideals or ideal order of society, and the two great World Wars which swept over humanity during the last hundred years have shown how devastating the powers of blind passions, prejudices and irrational impulses and ideologies can be. It has also been seen that even when Reason succeeds in building up structures of rational order, they turn out to be temporary and collapse sooner or later. Structures that support mechanisation and irrational pursuit of sensual pleasure tend to overpower structures that aim at flexibility, equity, justice and freedom.

Again, when the three ideals of the social Reason, — liberty, equality and fraternity, — are attempted to be established in collective life, the three are found to be in conflict with each other and defeated by the powers of Unreason. When liberty wins, equality gets dethroned; when equality is attempted to be raised up, liberty gets strangled; and fraternity does not get even a chance of getting into any programme of action. These reflections

turn us to inquire as to whether there is any other still higher uplifting force by means of which humanity can successfully be uplifted from the tentacles of the subconscious and the unconscious.

Fortunately, we find that there has been in the history of the world a persistent recognition and experience of a higher light and both in the East and in the West there have been luminous examples of those who have provided evidence of the presence and powers of the superconscious, which far exceed the capacities of the reason in dealing with the subconscious or the unconscious. In our own country, there appears to be a kind of specialisation, which has resulted in the opening up of hundreds of ways by which one can enter into the portals of the superconscient. Right from the Vedic times, of which we have existing records, up to the present day, we have a large bulk of data to show that the superconscient light or knowledge is not a matter of subjective error or hallucination but a matter of repeatable, verifiable and abiding experience as also of a continuously developing tradition. The Veda clearly spoke of three oceans, of the ocean of the inconscient, the ocean of the conscient, and the ocean of the superconscient. They speak of the battle between the forces of these three oceans and even of the triumph of the superconscient over the conscient and the inconscient. The tradition of Vedic knowledge has continued right up to the present day and in our own times, Sri Aurobindo has made radical experiments for the total transformation of the Inconscient by the process of the Supermind, the highest cosmic power of the Superconscient.

It is again affirmed that the superconscient is at work just as the subconscious or unconscious is at work, whether we may be aware of it or not. And it is further affirmed that in many critical conditions through which humanity has passed in history, the uplifting pull of the superconscient has played a decisive role. And, finally, it has been shown through latest researches that if the present crisis is so grave as never before, it is precisely because of the pressure of the superconscient and because of the resultant battle between the inconscient, the conscient, and the superconscient. It is because humanity is today entangled into the pulls and counter-pulls of

these three forces that the present state of humanity is so critical and demands from humanity a kind of choice that can truly uplift humanity at a still higher road — the third road, — of the ascending curve of evolution, where what it seeks on the middle road of horizontal progression but which cannot be fulfilled, these can yet be successfully dealt with and ultimately realised.

III

It is the pursuit of this third road that obliges us to conceive of certain new dimensions of education, and we need to look into them more closely. The pursuit of the superconscient has been, as stated above, a perennial theme both in the East and the West. This pursuit has taken three principal forms, and we need to extract from them the most valuable lessons, which are relevant to the creation of a new road of education whereby the crisis created by the three pulls and counter-pulls can be resolved. These three forms are those of religion, philosophy and Yogic science. Our concern will be, not with any specific formula, nor with their conflicts, nor, again, with outer details of practices. Our concern will be to consider mainly the theme of the conquest of the subconscient and the inconscient by higher powers of rationality, ethicality, aesthetic sensibility and the superconscient pursuits of the Truth, Beauty and Goodness.

The conflict of religions, each one of which claims to have discovered the superconscient knowledge and light as also the methods by which that knowledge and light can be attained or contacted, is one of the chief obstacles that needs to be crossed, if we are to build the needed new road of education. Fortunately, humanity has made considerable progress during the last hundred years, particularly since Swami Vivekananda declared that everyone needs his or her own religion, since each one has his or her own specific road of specific method of contact with the superconscient knowledge. Adherents of different religions have begun to understand with greater and greater sympathy the main points of agreement and disagreement, and even the claims to the possession of exclusive truths have become tampered with greater

flexibility, mutual respect and not only tolerance but even an effort to absorb new insights, experiences and realisations. If this new trend is supported by a fresh appraisal of religions without dogmatism, further progress can be achieved. Instead of excluding each other, religions need to come together and arrive at a synthesis of universal knowledge to which each higher religion can make a significant contribution.

Each one of the universal religions possesses a precious treasure of knowledge; many aspects of this treasure are common, and certain distinguishing aspects can serve as enrichment, which can be shared by all. All religions stress the need to abolish egoism and eliminate desires that obstruct the attainment of purity and unity with the higher levels of knowledge and power. All religions live in a spirit of sacredness and holiness; all religions prescribe concentration on the highest that is accessible to our consciousness; all religions affirm the possibility of transcending our normal psychological limitations and of experience of higher faculties of intuition, revelation and inspiration. Even in respect of the contents of superconscient knowledge, where there are wide disagreements, a greater understanding can be instituted, so that following the method of repeatability, verifiability and expandability of experiences, their contents of knowledge can be properly ascertained and synthesised.

Philosophy, too, is a quest to arrive at the knowledge of the essential reality or realities, their relationships with the world and with the individual human being: But as distinguished from religion, where methods consist of faith or acceptance of belief or doctrine, and practice or rituals, ceremonies and prescribed acts, — ethical and religious, — both in context of the individual progress and social living, the methods of philosophy consist of a critical and logical inquiry and rational judgements based upon the criteria of consistency and comprehensiveness. Philosophical pursuits can be very useful in arriving at a comparative idea of the contents of the superconscient knowledge as also in obtaining intellectual assessment in terms of ontology, epistemology, cosmology and axiology coupled with critical self-evaluation of philosophical knowledge in contrast to knowledge obtained

through direct experience in revelation or inspiration. Philosophical pursuit will also enable impartial seekers to arrive at non-dogmatic knowledge in intellectual language and in intellectual concepts, and may even prepare the human mind to seek and practise methods by which the knowledge gained by philosophy can be verified by direct and abiding experience.

Yogic science is also a pursuit of the superconscient knowledge, and its distinction is that it is experiential and experimental in character, and it is the methodised effort at arriving at direct experience by the contact and union with the universal and transcendental realities which, as in any science, can be arrived at without any dogmatic assumptions or even without recourse to rituals and prescribed acts based on any religious creed or dogma. Even a sceptic, an agnostic, an atheist and non-believer can practise Yogic methods and arrive at an impartial perception and experience of the truths of the superconscient knowledge.

It is true that Yogic knowledge is central for a genuine pursuit of the supra-rational truth, beauty and goodness, but still the religious and philosophical pursuits can, whenever and wherever needed, also help, and this help can be of great value. It is also true that there has been a strong tendency in religion, philosophy and Yoga to pursue the supra-rational in such an exclusive manner that claims of pragmatic life and material existence are ignored or even denied. There is too much of emphasis on the supra-terrestrial, supra-cosmic, acosmic, and the cosmic and terrestrial aims are subordinated or neglected, even rejected. Since our aim is to utilise superconscient knowledge in the conquest of the inconscient, we have to assign a central importance to those pursuits of the supra-conscient and the supra-rational which deal with the cosmic and terrestrial, right up to our material life and its subconscious and unconscious recesses. In this context, our aim should be to give the right place and justification to that tendency in materialism which affirms matter, discovers secrets of knowledge pertaining to matter and affirms the legitimate and right claims of matter in the totality of existence as also to the utilities which material knowledge has provided to humanity and is still continuing to provide so that they can sub-serve along with similar utilities of the knowledge of Life,

Mind, and other higher domains, those ends which are to be fulfilled through the conquest of the superconscient over the inconscient.

It is true that materialism denies the supra-physical and superconscient. But fortunately, during the recent times, this denial has increasingly come to be acknowledged as unphilosophical, since it assumes arbitrarily that physical means are the only means of knowledge, — a statement which can be supported only if it can be proved in the first place that matter is the only reality. Materialism, therefore, commits the fallacy of circular argument, and with the advancing knowledge of matter, material sciences themselves are obliged to accept the existence of objects which are not physically perceivable. Again, as soon as we begin to examine the increasing data of biology, psychology and psychical research, as also data obtained in the field of Yogic science, the materialistic formula collapses.

At the same time, although materialism in its latest forms attempts to avoid metaphysical or ontological questions, pre-suppositions still tacitly remain materialistic. The cure of this deficiency, however, lies in the fact that these attempts are fundamentally motivated by the desire to pursue knowledge in its purity and to liberate humanity from those pitfalls into which people normally fall when claims regarding the superconscient knowledge derived from intuitive and revelatory powers are often based on account of sporadic flashes, of half lights, and of mixtures with imaginations, hallucinations, and erroneous beliefs. For it must be admitted that in the past, religion has often stood against science and critical inquiry in the name of revelations and intuitions which were not themselves perfected and brought out in their ordered comprehensiveness. The materialistic tendency has, therefore, to be welcomed when it demands application of rigorous methods before according the title of knowledge to any belief or any claim. To be on sure ground, supra-physical and supraconscient knowledge must satisfy the criteria of verifiability, repeatability, abiding realisation, although one need not succumb to the demand that the supra-physical must necessarily be proved physically, a demand which is irrational, — since supra-physical by

nature is supra-physical and except when it has physical consequences, its proof must lie in the supra-physical and it must be ascertainable through supra-physical means. And Yogic science tells us that the supra-physical can be tested supra-physically but with such rigour that just as in physical sciences errors can be eliminated by relevant methods, errors in the field of supra-physical can also be eliminated by applying its own appropriate methods.

Educational implications of the above reflections would be threefold:

1. Considering the issues of the contemporary crisis, it should be the endeavour of the educational policy to assign a very important place in the contents of education which would bring to the students a living awareness of the issues of that crisis, since every one will be required to bear the burden of that crisis in one's active life in some degree or the other;

2. Since this crisis and its possible resolution raises a deepest question whether religion, philosophy and yogic science have to play a major role, all that is relevant to these issues in these three fields should suitably be made a part of the programme of studies at various stages of learning; and

3. Since the claims and counterclaims in the concerned fields of religion, philosophy and yogic science are still in unresolved conditions, the methods of education in respect of these fields should refrain from dogmatism, their exclusivism, and from any narrow partiality, and should therefore be taught and studied as subjects of exploration, — sympathetic, critical and as synthetic as possible, and they should further insist on rigours of appropriate methodologies aiming at verification, personal experience and comparative but impartial evaluation.

IV

So far we were concerned with the knowledge of the supra-physical, of the supraconscient and of the Truth, Beauty and Goodness in their supra-rational aspects. But closely connected with this knowledge is the domain of the pursuit and practice of values since, as we climb on higher and subtler domains,

Knowledge and Will tend to blend with each other in the sense in which Socrates visualised even their identity when he declared his famous doctrine that *Virtue is Knowledge*. Normally, the tendency is to limit the field of value-education to the ethical consideration of the practice of Goodness. But since values are not merely ethical, but also rational and aesthetic, since we aim not only at the knowledge and practice of goodness but also at the knowledge and practice of Truth and Beauty, and since our field of application will have to be as vast and integral as life itself, our educational programmes on value-education need to be conceived and designed on a vaster scale.

It is fortunate that the theme of value-education has gradually come to assume great importance with the realisation that a very important dimension of the contemporary crisis is that of the crisis of character, and efforts are being made to find appropriate place in the curricula at various levels for contents and methods relevant to the demands of value-education.

Unfortunately, however, in spite of years of effort, clear guidelines have not yet emerged. Relationship between the realms of values and the realms of religion, philosophy, and yogic science has not been clearly brought out. The salutary distinction that needs to be made between value-education and value-oriented education has not been sufficiently stressed. As a result, much time is being spent in making lists of values and formulas are being framed which might result in some moral commandments, which in practice, would tend to become dogmatic and counter-productive, since mere commandments are often implemented mechanically or avoided, — with a vengeance, — as soon as outer restrictions are removed from the environment. It has not been sufficiently realised that there is something like the unity of virtues, such that even when one single virtue is attempted to be practised, all others come in that terrain both logically and practically. It is also not sufficiently realised that ultimately all values can be summed up in the trinity of Truth, Beauty and Goodness. Besides, it is also not realised that pedagogically, if we are to avoid dogmatic methods, what is important is to present to the students such material that would give them the required orientation

towards values and stimulate the students into a process of exploration, — free, critical and constantly expanding but experiential and experimental in character.

It is also debated whether values can be taught or caught, as though both the alternatives are necessarily exclusive of each other. The simple fact is that not only values but all domains of knowledge and practice require the appropriate atmosphere in which the required lessons are caught, and various methods of teaching can simultaneously be applied. Every subject has three aspects, — cognitive, conative and affective, although the dominance of each may vary. For teaching every subject, we require appropriate combination of cognitive, conative and affective methods. In the field of values, conative and affective methods are predominant, but cognitive aspects are quite important, too, and at a certain stage even supremely important.

Another question that has been consuming a great deal of time and effort is whether studies relating to value-education should constitute a separate subject or whether they should be interwoven within various subjects in an appropriate manner. If we examine the question impartially, there seems to be good reason for both, but even those who advocate one view or the other have refrained from undertaking any mature exercise to demonstrate as to how their contentions can be actualised in pedagogical practice.

It is high time that this exercise is undertaken without delay. From a larger point of view, in which we may not be confined merely to question of value-education, but consider vaster canvas in which the present crisis and its resolutions are considered to be of central importance, it appears that the theme of value-education along with the theme of knowledge of the superconscient should get related to each other, and the consequent interrelationship should constitute the central pillar on which the new road of education can be designed and built.

V

Closely connected with the theme of value-oriented education is the theme of the integral development of personality. As seen

earlier, total education for the total personality has become predominant today, and even the concept of integration of personality is gaining ground. But the issue of the inner conflicts among different personalities in the psychological complex of the human being has not been sufficiently studied, and therefore, the concept of integral personality in which all the parts of the being and different personalities are harmonised needs still to be studied not only at the psychological level but also at the pedagogical level. A distinction can be made between capacities of personality and values that personality seeks to pursue, embody and fulfil. Thus, each aspect of our being has its corresponding values: the values that the physical being seeks are those of health and harmony of physical beauty; the values of the development of the vital being at its highest are courage and heroism; the values of the mental being are those of clarity, impartiality and synthesis. The values of ethical being are those of goodwill and disinterested action for the sake of its intrinsic rightness; the values of the aesthetic being are those of taste and joy and beauty of creativity. And if we study the integrating principle of human personality, we shall find that the values it seeks are those of the suprarational Truth, Beauty and Goodness, which attain harmony by integral self-being that lives in egoless mutuality, inmost sympathy and inalienable delight and light. And beyond this integrating principle, there is, according to the traditions of knowledge, the inmost and highest reality, manifesting in the world, and when we touch or contact it, we come to fulfil the values of unity and oneness even in multiplicity.

In order that the science of integral personality becomes pedagogically practicable, we need to collect the results of centuries of research centred on self-knowledge. Much of this knowledge is readily available in the yogic science, religious traditions and ethical experience. "Know thyself" is a precept both of the Eastern and Western wisdom; Socrates spoke of the "Daemon" which always warned him against doing anything that deviated from virtue and the good; the ethical experience speaks of inner conscience and of categorical imperative; the yogic experience has discovered the psychic or soul personality, the competent architect of self-being that

overcomes the ignorance of the self. It is this overcoming of ignorance which constitutes the yogic concept of liberation and which is given the most basic importance in the ancient Indian theory of education and which has also reappeared in Indian experiments of education during the last hundred years and more. When Swami Vivekananda spoke of man-making education, he referred to this inmost soul and its potential divinity. When Tagore spoke of education for personality development, he referred to this very entity, which like the bird, is born twice. Sri Aurobindo spoke of the Upanishadic antar atman and of the psychic being which, after crossing ignorance, enjoys liberation and immortality by knowledge. When in recent decades, Indian educationists have reiterated the Indian concept of Knowledge, they have referred to that knowledge that aims at liberation, — *sa vidya ya vimuktaye*. Religions have spoken of the soul, that is the breath of God or of Boddhisattva that attains to Buddhahood or else of the pure entity in us which, by practices of self-control, can attain to self-mastery and liberation. Even modern psychologists like Jung speak of the integrating principle, which is characterised by the powers of vision, prophecy, and knowledge of mission of life. Further researches in this field are continuing, and we have now in the writings of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother a systematic exposition of this domain of knowledge.

The anguish, anxiety and stresses of modern life are impelling educationists in various parts of the world to look for the inmost soul by the alchemic power of which calm and peace, equanimity and harmony and self-knowledge and self-integration are attained. It is being increasingly felt that neither the world problems nor the pedagogical problems relating to human development in the present critical juncture can be satisfactorily resolved without crossing the borders which point not only to concept of education for integral personality but also to the education guided by the inmost soul or psychic personality. Fortunately, the Indian tradition has dealt with this deeper aspect so extensively and intensively that it should not be beyond the powers of educationists and teachers in our country to study this Indian tradition and work out its applications in our day-to-day educational practice. Indeed, the latest

educational experiments in India have centred on this very important issue, and if we study the mature results of this experimentation, we shall find enough guidance for our immediate educational needs.

In the first place, the latest Indian experiment in psychic education have given us the concept of fourfold personality, — personality of Knowledge, personality of Power, personality of Harmony and personality of Skill. It is further emphasised that the fourfold personality can be integrated by the power of the psychic being as also by the powers of higher domains of the Spirit. In pedagogical terms, it is affirmed that psychic education has no method and yet every method, and the teacher can employ the three instruments of instruction, example and influence flexibly in every circumstance in respect of every child. This pedagogy also recognises the necessity of formulating new goals, new contents and new methods of education. It lays great stress on child-centred education and on life-long education, recognising that early childhood is the most favourable period of psychic education and recognising that once well begun in early childhood it has to continue throughout life, since integration and harmony of personality is a life-long process. As a matter of fact, it has been affirmed that psychic education is to be complemented by what can be called spiritual and supramental education, into the details of which we need not enter here.

This pedagogy emphasises the combination of pursuit of Truth, austerity of harmony and joy of free creativity. It counsels us not to encumber the child with a plethora of stuff that would bury and stifle the wings and breath of the child's soul but to provide to each child the minimum programme of learning, and the basic requirements of self-education. Once the child has begun to practise the art of self-education, the teacher needs to provide to each child the necessary facilities and learning materials appropriate to its inclinations, talents, and actual or potential capacities, so that each child progresses at its own pace and according to its own natural rhythm as also according to its own judicious acceleration of progress. A time must come, sooner rather than later, when the child becomes conscious of its own living soul and

guides its own processes of education.

Learning to learn, learning by doing, learning by practising, learning to become and learning to be, — all these important messages of progressive system of education being conducted in different parts of the world have to be welcomed but employed for the growth of the soul. It is underlined that each individual should be given the opportunity to develop his or her dominant personality, whether it be that of Knowledge, Power, Harmony or of Skill, and it should be rightly blended with the development of other subordinate powers of personality, and if this blending is effected by the free choice of the individual under the guidance of the accepted advice of the teacher, then the growth of personality and its integration may become balanced and will be free from painful transitions or from the disabling disequilibrium which often occurs when the development of personality is not guided by sound pedagogy.

Two important themes, it is found, could be of very great help, if they are properly blended in the contents of education. One of them is the theme of the aim of life. The importance of this theme becomes evident when it is recognised that the central concern of the psychic being is to provide the necessary inspiration and guidance as to how life should be dealt with and how life should discover its own right directions and goals. Everyone needs to answer the most important question: what is my role in the world and how can that role be fulfilled? And, while there is not a single book in the world which can give its specific answer concerning any specific individual, great help can come if students are given access to those texts in which the aim of life or different aims of life are presented and discussed and if these texts are not presented in any prescriptive manner but as material for each individual's personal exploration. There have been, in the history of thought, pursuits of pleasures and happiness, pursuit of knowledge, pursuit of character, pursuit of materialistic gain or pursuits of disinterested progress of the race, pursuits of aesthetic delight, pursuits of terrestrial goals or supra-terrestrial goals, pursuit even of the supracosmic or pursuits of integral aims of life that combine various goals in different manners, and pursuits also

of integral perfection, both of the individual and of the society, or pursuit of the kingdom of God on the earth. While every individual should be free to choose his or her own aim of life, the choice can be greatly helped, if contents of education are so designed that every student has the possibility of being acquainted with the various goals that human beings have pursued along with the relevant philosophies and valuable lessons that they have learnt. In any case, if education is life-oriented, if the purpose of education is to prepare students for life, the theme of the aim of life seems indispensable, apart from the fact that deeper and deeper reflections on this theme provide a powerful means of psychic education.

The other theme is connected with the fact that, both biologically and psychologically, all human beings are so designed by Nature that they have got to be pupils and teachers. Learning and teaching are, we might say, the only natural profession of every human being. Therefore, the more we are equipped to become good pupils and good teachers, the more shall we be able to fulfil what we are naturally designed for. To learn what it is to become a good pupil and a good teacher is normally left for teachers' training programmes; but this seems rather arbitrary and unjust. Everyone in schools and colleges pursues the process of learning and everyone encounters the experience of interaction between learning and teaching. Will it, therefore, not be helpful if every student comes to learn self-consciously what is the right process of learning and how to derive the best results from learning-teaching situations? In any case, it is found that the psychic being is, by its very nature, engaged in most processes of learning-teaching and guiding, and the psychic education would be best aided if contents of education can provide to students such materials which would enable them to explore the lives of the best students and best teachers in order to derive from them the necessary lessons which each one of them may find suitable in one's own evolution of becoming a good pupil and a good teacher.

This theme will also open up answers to the question which is very often raised in our own times in the context of the unprecedented explosion of information and knowledge that is taking

place. As a result of this explosion, the curriculum makers are greatly bewildered. They are also further perplexed by the invasion of multiplicity of media, which also complicate the task of framing appropriate learning-teaching materials. The central question that has come to be raised is, — and this was also raised in one of the earliest Upanishads, — whether there is any knowledge possessing which everything can be known. Or else, the question is whether there is any key to the development of learning capacities which can bear the increasing burden of greater and greater explosion of information and knowledge. There is also a further question of distinguishing between information, knowledge and wisdom, and we are compelled to inquire how to ensure that knowledge does not vanish under the plethora of information and how wisdom does not vanish under the weight of multiple insights of knowledge. The Upanishads had, of course, declared that self-knowledge, which is the goal of psychic knowledge, can contain world-knowledge or can enable us to deal with world-knowledge with ease and mastery. It is by virtue of that knowledge, the essential knowledge of unity and oneness, that one can arrive at the manifestation of that unity and oneness. In the Indian tradition, the knowledge of the One and the knowledge of manifestation constitute the integral knowledge. It is further affirmed that there are four terms of manifestation, the manifestation of Matter of which our own physical being is but a symbolic knot; the second is the manifestation of Life, of which our own individual vital being is but a symbolic knot; the third is the manifestation of the mind, of which our own individual mind is but a symbolic knot; and the fourth is the manifestation of the Supermind, the corresponding sheath in our being is still to be developed. If, therefore, we can know and develop our own body, we shall have the ease and mastery over the developing knowledge of matter; similarly, if we can develop our vital being towards its perfection, we shall have ease and mastery over the expanding knowledge of Life; and if we can develop our mind, so as to attain its essentiality and perfection, we shall have ease and mastery over the increasing knowledge of universal Mind; and if we can develop higher faculties that lie beyond the mind, we shall

have ease and mastery over the increasing knowledge of the Supermind. It is for this reason that integral development of personality includes education of the physical being, the vital being and mental being. Therefore, whatever else may be the contents of education, which every individual has to pursue appropriate to his or her own seeking and to the finding of his or her own status and profession and the role in the life of the world, he or she should be provided with such basic education of the physical, vital and mental and of higher faculties so that throughout life they can continuously develop and progress, and one may continuously face the invasion of the world and progressive developments of knowledge with adequate preparedness.

VI

It may be admitted that the application of the above ideas to educational practice will be found to be extremely difficult. But we have seen that neither the present road on which we are running today nor the middle road of the horizontal progression will lead us to the resolution of the triangular pull in which humanity's condition is entangled. We may reflect again; we may, if we like, try to arrive at the most minimum reforms, by restraining ourselves to the task that we are already doing now but slightly better and slightly more efficiently. But the needs and demands of the contemporary world are so massive, so imperative and so urgent that whatever houses we may build under our pragmatic and prudent ways of thinking, they will be found to be, it seems, only half-way houses; in fact, even before they are actually built, they will be required to be replaced by some other half-way houses. Just twenty years ago, we had thought that by building a new structure of education under 10+2+3 pattern, and with some kind of grafting of a bit of physical education and a bit of socially useful work experience, and a bit of three languages, as also of a bit of value-education so as to be in conformity with scientific education, we would have given to the country all that is needed educationally. But just within a decade, it was found that vocational education, which was the main attraction of the new

pattern, could not flourish, that the three-language formula is still remaining unimplemented in several parts of the country, and the claims of ancient languages like Sanskrit and Tamil still remain unfulfilled. Physical education has hardly developed. The burden of books has increased. The burden of entrance tests at every terminal point is smothering students even at the highest levels of their development, and demands are being made to find new ways and means by which our curricula are reformulated and the examination system completely overhauled. And the crisis of character has overtaken our country to such an extent that nobody will deny today that the minimum reform that we need is to provide education for character development. And once we admit this new dimension, we shall find that our train of thought and our train of pedagogical reform will not allow us to be arrested in any half-way house; we shall be impelled to go to the utmost logical conclusion, even though we may find it extremely difficult to implement.

In the meantime, it may be suggested that there are several measures that we can recommend for making a transition from where we are today to the ideal conditions that will need to be created eventually and inevitably may be found to be less difficult.

There are a few things which can be done urgently and which can be done even on the road on which we are running today, the road of what we have called dead ends. The first is to provide means and incentives for universal literacy and universalisation of elementary education. This programme will necessarily involve the recognition of the primacy of the girl child. There are three blockades which prevent the realisation of the goal that was fixed for 1960, namely, that every child in the country has to be provided for free and compulsory education up to the age of fourteen. The first blockade is that there are numerous habitations in our country, small and scattered, where there is no school at all, and if there is one, it is only in name. The second blockade is that a large number of parents in rural areas do not yet see how elementary education would be useful for their children and for the economic development of their family. And the third blockade is that girl children are often looked upon with some kind of adverse prejudice or else parents do not have enough means to clothe their girl children so

that they can be sent to schools, or else proper facilities in schools such as of toilet and others are not yet available that would facilitate girl children's enrolment. These subjects have been widely discussed in our country, and they can be resolved if schools are made available where they do not exist, teachers are made available where either there are no teachers or where there are only absentee teachers. For girl children, the State must make necessary provisions for providing incentives — such as the Central Government has recently decided to do — but in a much bigger way. People must also contribute their share by creating a big movement that would inspire every partner in education to contribute to the realisation of full adult literacy, full enrolment at the primary level and reduction of dropout rate up to the vanishing-point until the completion of elementary education.

One basic pedagogical reform that needs to be made is that there should be two years' component of vocational education before the end of the elementary education, so that those children who want to join an active life of employment at the age of fourteen would have sufficient equipment of those skills which are needed for meaningful employment in one vocation or the other. Provision should also be made that all children in the school system should receive good physical education so that all of them are healthy and well-built and will have such habits that they will continue their physical education even after leaving their schools. The syllabus in the elementary school should also have a good component which will provide inspiration to lead a life of self-control and self-education and also to inspire in them love for their country and for humanity in general.

It would be realised that even this immediate programme is not easy to carry out so long as the present system of education remains what it is today. But still, while the new roads are being built, the present road can be still used to bring about these minimum results to the utmost extent possible.

Simultaneously, a massive effort should be initiated through conferences, seminars, exhibitions, publications and utilisation of media to reach teachers all over the country in order to persuade them to discharge their responsibilities as teachers in the spirit of

a mission. If teachers consent to conduct themselves to the task of teaching and learning, a great change would come over the entire country. Teachers' status in the country and their condition of work should also be improved; in-service training of teachers should be facilitated in a very large way; and teachers' guide books should be brought out so that they themselves understand better the lessons that they are expected to teach to their students. Teachers and parents should both collaborate, and facilities should be created for dialogues between teachers and parents so that children get better looked after both in school and at home.

The entire educational machinery can be invigorated, if headmasters and principals of schools begin to look after teachers and students with greater understanding and with a greater inspiring force. Managers and government officials in charge of education can also be made to awaken to their role, and this awakening can make a great difference to the present state of affairs in education.

But more than all this, we should begin to build a new road. This new road must put forward the goal of life-long education and the creation of learning society. It should aim at total education for the total personality and for multiple choices in the system of education. Even if these aims do not as yet bear the imprint of deeper and higher aims where exploration of the superconscious and its relationship with life are to be explored, even then, they will create a better climate for better education and will also, in due course, contribute to the making of the higher road that is really required in the context of the present crisis of humanity.

This second road or the middle road, if pursued rightly and sincerely, will be led to propose three major reforms, which must be undertaken as early as possible. The first change will be to expand the open system of education, even at the lower levels of studies. This open system should combine the non-formal, informal and formal aspects of education in a meaningful manner so that education vibrates in the atmosphere and environment, and with the help of a mobile system of library and audio-visual equipment, as also of exhibition material, this system should be able to reach every nook and corner of the country, and every child and every adult. Compulsion of timetables and studies

The training programme itself should extend over five years, considering that the programme has to cover not only the ordinary academic components but also those components which are related to character development and explorations in regard to difficult things like the aim of life and various holistic subjects like environment and expanding frontiers of knowledge.

The fourth major change will be related to the examination system.

A minimum step in this domain will be to establish a national testing service, which will set up national standards and devise new methodology of testing students' academic and other abilities in such a way that mere mechanical intelligence would not be able to succeed. These tests will be written, oral, and practical. Methods will be devised by which personality test and character-orientation and value-orientation can also be assessed. Physical fitness and creative abilities should also be assessed.

In order to encourage non-formal education and informal systems of education in the country, national tests should be open to any candidate whether he or she has or has not passed any previous tests or whether he or she has or has not participated in the formal system of education. Computer technology can be so utilised that each candidate can take the examination at any time he or she feels competent to take it. In order to make this possible, the national testing service should be a permanent body with adequate staff of examiners, who should themselves be continuously training themselves in the art of examination. The aim of national testing service should be to ensure every candidate a fair and full opportunity of being tested in obtaining a high level certification which will satisfy the potential employer of the authenticity and strictness with which candidate's capacities have been tested.

A still further innovation would be to create a permanent commission of education at the national level. This commission should be designed to initiate and guide all the innovative projects and programmes which have been outlined briefly here. It will act as a stimulant factor in the country to obtain partnership in education between teachers, parents, students, educational administrators, policy makers, educational managers, media, and all other agencies,

which contribute to value-orientation and to the creation of a learning society in the country. It would also organise conferences, seminars, exhibitions, different events, which would keep the entire education world alive and vibrant; it would continuously study various aspects of education and various problems of education and present reports to the government, to the country and to people. It would also receive from people suggestions, complaints, grievances, and it should have the requisite authority to ensure that grievances of national importance are redressed and malpractices in education are prevented or remedied. This commission should be autonomous and answerable only to Parliament.

Simultaneously with all these proposed reforms, the country should set up special institutions, — at least one in each State, — which should serve as laboratory of research and experimentation where students and teachers join on a voluntary basis to learn and to teach through methods of exploration, where the emphasis would be laid on those aspects which are essential for building up the new road of vertical progression, — the third road. This new road cannot be imposed from above. People and country can only provide facilities and opportunities, but participation has to be entirely voluntary. Only those who are burning with aspiration, those who want to sacrifice themselves in the task of realisation of the highest, of the truest and of the perfect should be encouraged to come together in these propitious sites. Here education would be perpetual and efforts would be concentrated on those goals which are crucial for the resolution of the crisis through which humanity is passing today.

VII

The new road, — the third road, — need not be so difficult as is imagined, if we realise that India has been, consciously or unconsciously, building up this road right from the Vedic times. Some image of this road can be gained through the pages of the Upanishads where Rishis and Kings and princes, children and women were stirred to discover the meaning of life and the ways and means of arriving at the loftiest realisations as also of the con-

quest of evil, sorrow and suffering. The system of education, known as Gurukula system, which was built in those times, appears to have been perfected in many aspects; and when we study the insights and principles embodied in that system, we are bound to get guidance, the value of which cannot be sufficiently estimated. It is not surprising that even in the declining days when India came under the attacks of foreign power, something of that system still persisted, and as soon as India became reawakened, dreams of rebuilding that system or recasting it in new forms have seized the minds of the greatest of our educationists. Actually, pioneering efforts, which had begun towards the end of the XIXth century, have continued and we have today a rich accumulation of results of these efforts. The treasure of these results can now come to our help.

The most important element of this treasure is related to the acceptance of dynamic material life and its transformation by means of superconscious light. In contrast to the life negating philosophies, here the emphasis is on life-affirmation, and education is so conceived that life itself is attempted to be the teacher of life by means of organising life in an integral manner under the overarching power of the psychic and spiritual light. The drive of this education is neither materialistic nor religious, although it accepts the affirmation of Matter which is the truth underlying materialism and it accepts the affirmation of Spirit, which is the truth underlying religion or religionism. The methods of this education are attempted to be derived from Yogic science which transcends tendencies of exclusivism that we find among conflicting philosophies, doctrines and religions.

As a matter of fact, it can be said that we possess in India today those experiences, insights and assured results which can enable us to invent a new mode of education, and, therefore, a new road which can meet the needs that have been stressed here as most essential. We may present here only a synoptic statement of some of those insights that may be helpful in our immediate explorations and in building up the first laboratories of research and experimentation which we have proposed a little earlier.

1. *Sovereignty of the child and the youth*

The entire society should be increasingly conceived to be built

on the pattern of a learning society, and it must be so organised that it declares in all its activities the sovereignty of the child and the youth. Hence, it will not permit any activity which would be injurious to the highest interests of the value-oriented integral development of the child and the youth. The learning society will emphasise pre-school education, primary education and elementary education, during which the child will be so guided that its psychic being can be fostered along with the development of its faculties on the lines of its *svabhava* and *svadharma*. The child will also learn the art of self-education so that the subsequent development is propelled consciously by inner and progressive self-determination, as far as possible. The responsibility of teachers and of society will be to create an atmosphere and environment, which will remain surcharged with the ideas and inspirations conducive to the promotion of Truth, Beauty and Goodness.

2. *The Child and the Future*

The most important element that inspires children is the presentation of bright visions of the future that has to be built against the obstinate obstacles of the old world. This can be done through stories, plays, short poems and activities of drawing, painting, music, which embody a drive towards the building of the new world. Visions of the unity of humanity, messages of freedom and harmony need to be underlined.

3. *Emphasis on progress*

Children normally like to grow and develop and measure their progress. And the sign of progress is the inner happiness that they experience and this inner happiness is the inevitable result of the development of faculties of personality. Therefore, the atmospheric pressure in educational activities should be built up by a special emphasis on progress.

4. *Emphasis on Perfection*

At a little higher stage of development, the idea of perfection begins to inspire the young minds, and perfection as maximum or as a state of equilibrium or as absolute can be held before the children as a standard towards which they can constantly aspire to progress.

5. *Freedom and Discipline*

At an early stage of educational process, students begin to

experience the conflict between freedom and discipline, and while they demand more and more freedom, teachers and parents normally prescribe to them the rules and regulations of discipline. The consequent conflict can be resolved only if teachers and parents appreciate the demands of freedom and develop in their own lives the example of self-discipline, which can automatically create the necessary vibrations in the atmosphere that inspire the children to develop self-control and self-discipline. Discipline should be the child of freedom, and when self-control emerges through process of self-determination, the student becomes capable of accepting austerities of discipline which no outer method can even imagine.

6. The first task of the teacher is not to teach but to observe the students

Contrary to the view that the teachers' task is to teach, the real truth is that no meaningful teaching can be done by teachers unless students are observed carefully and understood sympathetically, so that the psychological powers of the students, actual or latent, are guided through various methods which aim at gradual evolution and awakening in each student the inner guiding light and integrating principle.

7. Research should be the method of learning at all stages

Contrary to the usual idea that methods of research should be reserved for the higher ranges of tertiary education, the truth of learning processes is that one learns best what is arrived at by exploration, by seeking and finding. Hence, the teacher should consult the child in its growth and provide materials that will stimulate exploration and research as instruments of learning. This will minimise the utilities of teaching through lecturing; it will maximise the utility of various media through which talks and demonstrations conducted by the best teachers of the world can be brought nearer to the students; and it will create conditions of personal dialogue between the teacher and the pupil, as and when necessary, — a method that was best developed and utilised by the teachers of the Upanishads.

Learning by doing, learning by practising and learning to learn will be underlined according to the needs of the progress of each

student. Due emphasis will be laid on the integration of the hand, head and heart through various activities which will underline not only the value of knowledge but also the value of art, crafts and physical labour.

Appropriate to each student's predominant and subordinate characteristics, the teacher will guide students to arrive ultimately at developing the fourfold personality of knowledge, power, harmony and skill.

8. Emphasis on the power of mental silence

The secret of all learning is concentration, and concentration is best developed by cultivating quietude, tranquillity, silence and peace of the mind. Yogic experience affirms that knowledge is best gained in the state of silence, and it is in the state of inner peace that the soul blossoms and the entire life and environment become alive and vibrant with inner joy.

Harmony with Nature rather than control and exploitation of Nature can best be developed when the child is freed from the imprisoning walls of the school, and when plants, and trees, flowers, running brooks or rivers and inviting heights of hills provide the natural environment.

9. Stress on development of faculties

Contrary to the present system of education where more and more subjects and more and more books are being loaded on the minds of students, the new road of education will emphasise development of faculties, — those of understanding, of analysis and synthesis, of intuition and revelation and inspiration. Subjects and books will be chosen keeping the development of faculties as the central object of basic education.

Emphasis will also be laid on developing three or four major subjects, which would be holistic in character and which will provide basic insights into the interrelationship of subjects, interrelationship of faculties, and interrelationship of disciplines of body, life, mind, and spirit. The suggested subjects are those of evolution, environment and human unity.

Study of languages and study of history will be so designed that students will learn with ease and interest several languages and their comparative vocabularies. In linguistic study, stress will

be on those languages which will make access to the Indian and universal cultural heritage greatly facilitated.

History will be so taught through great passages of literature, great and inspiring biographies of leaders of different domains that a holistic vision of the growth of humanity towards the goal of its unity becomes unfolded in the mind of the student. It will be emphasised that history is not merely the study of the past but a great door opening on the future.

10. *Music, art and poetry*

A large number of students are greatly attracted by the mystery and magic of these three domains, and contrary to the prejudices which are to be often found against them among parents, teachers and so-called practical and successful people, these three subjects should be encouraged greatly, particularly when it is realised that these three provide the best education to the inmost soul of the student.

11. *Emphasis on skills*

Contrary to the tendency to emphasise academic studies almost exclusively, education must stress the development of skills, which are a direct road to efficient vocational and technological education. Dealing with Matter skilfully, carefully and diligently is the sure basis of the material stability of a culture and of making Matter subservient to the higher aims of culture, — even of spiritual culture.

12. *Physical Education*

Well-balanced healthy body is the means of realisation of the highest ideals. *Shariram adyam khalu dharma sadhanam*. Hence, physical education that aims at health and strength, agility and perfect co-ordination of the bodily movements should be underlined, and along with it the moral and spiritual qualities that can be easily developed through mass exercises, games and sports must also be stressed.

At higher and higher stages of education, the theme of synthesis should be underlined, — synthesis of thought, synthesis of science and spirituality, synthesis of cultures and synthesis of yogic disciplines with humanities, sciences, arts, and technologies.

This will necessarily expand the scope of education into unending education and unending youth. Closely connected with the development of personality is the claim of professional education, which is often placed in conflict with the inner development of personality. However, the right handling of education for integral personality will reveal that everyone's profession is secretly present in one's personality, and the highest professional excellence can best be achieved only when it becomes a part of the effective expression of the integral development of personality.

Much can be written on all the above points; much of it can be debated; but it is precisely this debate that is necessary to be initiated and conducted seriously and sincerely. As we have stated at the very beginning, education is at crossroads, and we are in urgent need to build and design new roads of education. We all need, therefore, to come together to deliberate on this extremely important subject so that each one of us makes the best contribution that one is capable of.

2. Society, Morals and Ideals

We are not alone in the world; that is the rub for the egoist; that is the comfort and solace to the collectivist; that is the problem for the moralist; and that is the enigma that inspires the idealist; Human nature is complex and it is at once egoistic, collectivistic, moralistic and idealistic. It is easy to dwell upon one of the elements of this complexity, and emphasise it against the others; but the emphasis on one or the other does not abolish the complexity and unless we find a true equation and reconciliation of the elements of the complexity, we cannot realise any true harmony and peace. And in the meantime, we shall have enough room for debate in favour of one or the other, which will be found to have some kind of inconclusiveness.

At lower levels of existence, Nature has provided some kind of disorderly order, and instincts of self-preservation, on the one hand, and herd-instinct, on the other, are found to be so balanced that the individual and the collectivity subserve each other, — not irreducibly and ideally, — but in some rough measure for the immediate purposes. As one begins to ascend higher and higher, the demands of self-assertion begin to collide with the demands of the collectivity, and in human life, this collision is sought to be resolved by erecting moral values and ideals, and even then resolutions are found to be superficial or temporary, giving rise to major maladjustments and maladies of oppression and injustice. It is only at very high levels by the discovery and practice of the largest ideals, self-aware wisdom, self-conquest and mastery and compassion that we find effective clues to progressive harmonisation.

We are all aware of the moral theories of hedonism, hedonistic utilitarianism, ideal utilitarianism, intuitionism, and other higher

formulations of ethical and spiritual norms. They are all presented as universal doctrines intended to be prescribed uniformly for all people, but if we take human individual and human collectivity to be evolutionary in character, and if we take elements of the complexity of human nature in an ascending order rising from the infra-rational to the rational and from the rational to the supra-rational, we may be able to gain insights into an evolutionary mode of reconciling conflicting morals and ideals.

From this point of view, there are four main standards of human conduct that make an ascending scale. The first is personal need, preference and desire; the second is the law and good of the collectivity; the third is an ideal ethic, the last is the highest and divine ideal and law of the nature. Standard of conduct, which is prescribed by psychological and ethical but egoistic hedonism, falls into the first category; its argument is that because every individual psychologically seeks satisfaction of his personal need for pleasure, — because everyone psychologically prefers pleasure to pain and because every individual seeks the satisfaction of personal desire for pleasure, every individual ought to seek one's own pleasure. Students of philosophy and ethics are familiar with this argument and its criticism, such as whether each human being necessarily seeks pleasure or some other things also, and if pleasure alone, whether there are different kinds of pleasures, some inferior and others that are superior. They are also familiar with the naturalistic fallacy that is committed when it is argued that because pleasure is desired, pleasure is desirable. But in spite of these arguments, it has to be conceded that there is a strand, although at a lower level of the spectrum, where psychologically, egoistic hedonism and ethical egoistic hedonism seem to be relevant and even compelling.

In this connection, it may be mentioned that although consumerism cannot strictly be described as hedonistic, much of the consumeristic economics derives its force from three assumptions:

a) That human nature is driven by wants, which are largely self-centred, and which seek their satisfaction and satisfied pleasure;

b) That the increase in wants, which leads to increase in consumption, is beneficial to increase in production, competition, efficiency and prosperity; and

c) That consumerism is the natural way to enhance freedom of each individual and promote general welfare.

These assumptions, which lie at the root of competitive economics, were greatly attacked by thinkers like Ruskin and others. Later on, they were combated by Marxism, and they have also been criticised by those who advocate the combination of freedom and justice, freedom and equity, and freedom and equality. Moralists and spiritual idealists also oppose consumerism as they perceive that the human nature should not be viewed in narrow terms of what is only primary, ignoring what is the chief motivation in human life. According to them, basic necessities of physical life are only primary, but the chief wants of human life are rational, aesthetic, ethical and spiritual.

In any case, whatever silken garment we may put on consumerism and however attractive description we may make of this philosophy rooted in the human egoism and human demand for unrestricted indulgence, it cannot be denied that the collectivistic idealism and true altruism have their own roots in human nature, which are independent of that aspect of human nature which, in the words of Hobbes, is nasty and brutish. The law of competition, which is rooted in the egoistic psychology is not the only possible law for organising human society; co-operation, too, is rooted in human nature, and co-operation is not necessarily an offshoot of egoism. It is true that in the early phases of battle between competition and co-operation, the former wins the race; - not because co-operation, as a principle, is weak in human nature or lower in value but only because the law of competition is primitive and has the force of early primacy; that which is morally superior, that which is more civilised, history has repeatedly shown, gets defeated by what is primitive and barbaric, at least, in the first rounds of the battle.

Collectivistic ideals are morally superior and consumerism certainly obstructs the higher collectivistic law, but humanity which bears within its heart deeper and higher aspirations will continue to pursue collectivistic ideals and will also continue to fight for the victory of those ideals, in spite of earlier failures.

If we examine the history of thought, we find that egoistic

ethical hedonism came, in due course, to be defended in the name of altruism and, eventually, run over by universal ethical hedonism that embodied the force of collectivistic ideals. This moral law advocated, in effect, the search for maximum pleasure for maximum number of people. To use the terms of Indian philosophy, the demands of *vyashti* and *samashti* came to be pressed forward against the claims of *ahambhava*. The existence of the collectivistic law external to the individual suggests a power other than that of personal egoism and induces or compels the individual to moderate his average demands, to discipline his irrational and often violent movements and even to lose himself sometimes in a larger and less personal egoism. And yet, the collectivistic morality or idealism is found to be incapable of arriving at any satisfactory solutions. Consequently, claims of society and claims of the individual continue to confront one another. There is a demand of the group that the individual should subordinate himself more or less completely or even lose his independent existence in the community. On the other hand, the ideal and absolute solution from the individual's standpoint would be a society that existed not for itself, but for the good of the individual and his fulfilment, for the greater and more perfect life of all its members. An ideal society of either kind does not exist anywhere, and in actuality, the society somehow attempts to work out some kind of a compromise, which sometimes gives an upper hand to the claims of individuals and sometimes to the claims of collectivity. In the end, the complexity of the problem increases and multiplies its issues. A need is felt to call in a new principle, and humanity begins to climb to a level of the pure mind, where the life of personal need, preference and desire begins to be touched by a greater and elevated light, and the aesthetic, intellectual and emotional desires begin to preponderate over the demands of the physical and the vital nature.

At this higher level, search for pleasure, egoistic or universal, gives way to a search for higher ideals like knowledge and character. Hedonistic utilitarianism begins to be overpassed by what has come to be called ideal utilitarianism, which in the history of Western ethics was formulated powerfully by Rashdall, who advocated the combined fulfilment of three ideals of character,

knowledge and happiness. But even this ethical theory could not sufficiently be defended within the formula of utilitarianism, because while the utilitarian judges an action by its consequences, it was found that things like knowledge and character are ends in themselves and cannot be judged in terms of their consequences. This forced the ethical thinker to develop a search for the realm of ends, which are intrinsic and which are valuable in themselves. In India, there was an early discovery of dharma, of duty, of values of righteousness, and of action that had to be performed with a sense of equanimity as far as its consequences are concerned. In the West, in the philosophy of Conscience and Intuitionism, similar ideas were put forward, and they came to a culminating point in the ethical doctrine of Kant, which enjoined duty for its own sake and attempted to give a standard of action that had to be judged not by its consequences but by its own intrinsic value.

At that new higher level, the primacy of universal values came to the forefront and began to influence the new equations between the individual and the collectivity. The question came to be asked as to what was the real nature of the individual, and Kant's own answer was that the true individual was capable of liberating himself from the clamour of desires into a realm of ends in themselves. Kant even went one step farther and declared that the individual himself should be looked upon not merely as a means but as an end in himself. In other words, it was affirmed that while individualism is valid, the individual in its true nature is not an egocentric entity subject to appetites and desires, but an entity capable of uplifting himself to a state of intrinsic and universal values.

Consequently, it came to be advocated that the needs and desires of individuals are to be surpassed in obedience to the moral law, and even the social law has no claims upon him if it is opposed to his sense of right and denied by Conscience or by the categorical imperative. In regard to the conflict between the individual and the society, the solution that the moralist presented was that the individual shall cherish no desires and claims that are not consistent with love, truth and justice, and that the collectivity shall hold all things cheap, even its safety and its most pressing interests, in comparison with truth, justice, humanity and the highest good of the people.

The moralist's ideal of the categorical imperative is basically individualistic, and when his ideals are applied to the society, the inadequacies of these ideals come to light. For justice often demands what love abhors. Man's absolute justice easily turns out to be in practice a sovereign injustice; for his mind, one-sided and rigid in its construction, puts forward a one-sided partial and rigorous scheme or figure and claims for it totality and absoluteness and an application that ignores the subtler truth of things and the plasticity of life.

The fact is that the categorical imperative of ideal law does not signify the end of human search of the truth that harmonises and delivers. We discover that the moral nature of the human being is not the last and the highest component; there is, in us, it will be found, a divine being that is spiritual and supramental. In that component of our complex nature, it is claimed, is the integrating power; in it the truths of the individual and the collectivity coalesce; there we discover, we are told, that the individual and the collectivity are not what they appear to be in the lower or infra-rational parts of our being. Individual is not, it is discovered, fundamentally egoistic in nature; ego is only a temporary construction, but behind it there is the unegoistic centre of universality, such that the individual finds its fullness in universality and universality finds its concentrated centre of fullness in the individual. As Sri Aurobindo points out:

*There alone can we touch the harmony of the divine powers that are poorly misrepresented to our mind or framed into a false figure by the conflicting or wavering elements of the moral law. There alone the unification of the transformed vital and physical and the illumined mental man becomes possible in that supramental spirit which is at once the secret source and goal of our mind and life and body. There alone is there any possibility of an absolute justice, love and right — far other than that which we imagine — at one with each other in the light of a supreme divine knowledge. There alone can there be a reconciliation of the conflict between our members.**

* Sri Aurobindo: *The Synthesis of Yoga*, Centenary Edition, Vol. 20, p. 190.

Beyond the moral law are spiritual ideals. These ideals are not limited to moral data but embrace the totality of our being and totality of existence. The true divine law is not fully represented in exclusive formations of the mind or even in religious creeds that collide with other religious creeds. That is the reason why exclusive religions, even when proclaimed to be universal, have come to be combated by other exclusive religions with similar claims; and no social harmony can be achieved in that state of conflict.

The true spiritual and supramental consciousness takes into account the truth of all that is manifesting in this imperfect but evolving world and supports each truth in its proper place and harmonises it with all the rest. This seems to be the ideal of *lokasangraha* (solidarity of the people) of which Sri Krishna speaks in his message to Arjuna. The true universality and unity resolve lower discords into a victorious harmony and point to the ideal of the creation of what may be called a spiritualised society, where love would be absolute and equality would be consistent with hierarchy and perfect in difference. In that society, absolute justice would be secured by the spontaneous action of the being in harmony with the truth of things and the truths of oneself and others and, therefore, sure of true and right results. In that society, the quarrel between the individual and the collectivity or the disastrous struggle between one community and another would not exist, since the cosmic consciousness imbedded in the embodied beings would assure a harmonious diversity in oneness.

But before such a spiritualised society could come into existence, much serious work needs to be done, and human nature has to climb up from the infra-rational to the rational and from the rational to spiritual consciousness. It is true that humanity as a whole has already crossed several strata of consciousness and even rationality has been greatly generalised, even though it has not still been able to overpower the forces of Unreason. But the stage where we stand today is that of acute crisis and we are in search of a solution where the individual and the collectivity can live in harmony with each other. Because of the earnestness of our search and the imperative need of all-round harmony on a

global level, we can have an inner assurance that the ideals that are to be actualised may not take too long in their coming to the forefront, and, in the meantime, we need not hesitate to dream greatly and accomplish greatly.

3.

Coming of the 21 st Century: Implications for New Orientations for Education

An important fact that we need to underline is that humanity is undergoing an unprecedented crisis today, and we cannot hazard to look into the coming of the 21st century without taking serious note of this crisis, and how it has developed through the course of the 20th century.

The 20th century has been an unquiet age of gigantic ferment, chaos of ideas and inventions, clash of enormous forces, creation, catastrophe and dissolution amid the formidable agony and tension of the body and soul of humankind. During this period, the age of reason reached its highest pinnacles and widest amplitudes. Rationalistic and experimental science, armed with efficient technology, registered phenomenal developments. The result was, however, a mixture of good and evil for humanity. While new heights of excellence were experienced by it, it also got dwarfed as never before. A series of rivalries among nations dominated the scene; two stupendous world devastating Wars swept over the globe and they were accompanied or followed by revolutions with far-reaching consequences. A League of Nations was formed, but broke down after some time; the United Nations Organisation came to be built, but its deficiencies and weaknesses are forcing leaders to think of radical changes in its Constitution and working; even its replacement by a World-State, which may be a boon or a curse, depending upon how it is constituted, has also come to be conceived and may become inevitable under certain possible circumstances.

Asymmetrical relations among nations have created tensions between the North and the South, and they tend to be aggravated. Armaments have been piled up in huge quantities and although they have recently been reduced or restrained, military expenditures are being ruthlessly planned at the cost of many important priorities. And science still continues to minister ingeniously to the art of collective massacre. Environment has come to be vastly disturbed and, in spite of warnings and wise talks, it continues to be alarmingly ruined. Expensive life styles have been fashioned and advocated, and men, women and children are being increasingly led to isolated and divided lives. Multiplying complexities of the inner and outer life have been turning into complications and unresolved dilemmas; and the chaos of views of life, each with only relative validity, has been shaking, for good or evil, the foundations erected by ethical systems and religions. Individualism, the child of Reason and Revolt, which at one stage encouraged discovery of the inner realms of ends, has been overtaken by the egoism and selfish indulgence of impulses and passions.

This and much more has led humanity to a state of crisis of serious or even unprecedented proportions. We can, however, discern two major imperatives which seem to be pressing themselves for their fulfilment. The first is visible in a continuous pressure of events towards the unity of the entire humanity. With the unprecedented shrinking of Space and Time, there is an irresistible drive towards economic, administrative, legislative and social centralisation and there is an emerging need of unification of regions, continents, and even of establishment of a single World-State. It is being increasingly felt that the world can become sage and prosperous only if human unity can come to be built up. The second imperative that seems to have asserted itself is to impress upon human kind that unity, peace and lasting welfare can come about only if human nature can be radically changed. What exactly this would mean or entail is a matter of research and experimentation, but there is a growing feeling that, at the minimum level, human way of feeling, thinking and acting should be based upon a new foundation of universal wideness, voluntary optimism and unfailing goodwill. In a significant statement made in 1967, U Thant,

the then Secretary-General of the United Nations Organisation, expressed quite clearly these two imperatives. He had stated:

*"That a fraction of the amounts that are going to be spent in 1967 on arms could finance economic, social, national and world programmes to an extent so far unimaginable is a notion within the grasp of the man in the street. Men, if they unite, are now capable of foreseeing and, to a certain point, determining the future of human development. This, however, is possible if we stop fearing and harassing one another and if together we accept, welcome and prepare the changes that must inevitably take place. If this means a change in human nature, well, it is high time we worked for it; what must surely change is certain political attitudes and habits man has."**

As a matter of fact, almost from the beginning of our present century, themes of the ideal of human unity and of the necessity of change of human nature, had seized the movements of the resurgence of Asia and intellectual idealism of Europe. Asiatic peoples had begun to make bold and clear claims to equality and independence and they had behind them centuries of inner culture and discovery of spiritual knowledge which, if applied to life, could serve as effective means of the change of human nature. In Europe, the contest between Capital and Labour had entered into a crucial phase, and the Great First World War became memorable for the Russian Revolution that burst out even when that war was centred on the goal of the downfall of Germany. This Revolution was a sign that a phase of civilisation had begun to pass and the Time-Spirit was preparing a new phase and a new order. There was, at that time, a possibility of the realisation of the larger human hope as a result of the evolution of the socialistic society and the resurgence of Asia. Unfortunately, the turn of events belied the bright hopes.

Socialism soon turned into state socialism, and while it brought in greater equality and a closer association into human life, it remained confined only to a material change. It missed

* *La Suisse*, Geneva, April, 1967.

many other needed things and even aggravated the mechanical burden of humanity and crushed more heavily towards the earth its spirit. The resurgence of Asia, in spite of its glorious moments of achievements, meant eventually only a redressing or shifting of international balance. It became quite dormant, and in spite of great inner preparations, it has still not been able to provide the required condition of the step forward which is the one thing needful. It is also noteworthy that the international policy of labour had carried a promise of an international comity of free nations. But over a period of its development, the spirit of internationalism came to be overcome by the power of national egoism. It became clear that mere idealism of internationalism is not enough; what is truly important is the spiritual change that would make internationalism a vital need in the lives of nations of the entire humanity.

Much hope, however, lies in the fact that despite numerous setbacks, the need for unity of humankind continues to persist. The idea of internationalism has grown in humanity and it is at work on our minds and influences from above our actions. It is also pressing itself to be turned into something more than an idea so that it may become a central motive and fixed part of human nature as also of human organisation. It is remarkable that the First Great War gave birth to a League of Nations. It is true that the conception of this League was not happy or well-inspired, and it was destined to collapse. But that such an organised endeavour should be launched and proceed on its way for some time without an early breakdown was in itself an event of capital importance. The defects of the League arose directly from the conditions of the world at that time. Its composition proved that it was an oligarchy of big powers, each drawing behind it a retinue of small States. The absence of America and the position of Russia had helped to make the final ill-success of this venture a natural consequence. However, the significance of the League was that even when it failed, it could not be allowed to remain without a sequel. Accordingly, the League of Nations disappeared, but the force of idea remained active behind the succeeding years, including the terrible years of the Second World War. That War stirred the deeper depths of humanity and its leaders, and the United Nations Organisation came into existence. Today, this

Organisation stands in the forefront of the world and struggles towards some kind of secure permanence and success. It is also significant that many defects of the League of Nations have been avoided in the Constitution of the UNO. And yet, one major defect remains because of the preponderant place that has been assigned to the five great Powers in the Security Council; and this defect has been clinched by the power of veto given to these Powers. That in recent years there is a serious demand from some quarters to get this defect removed is a significant development. For, to leave this defect unmodified prolongs a malaise and absence of harmony and smooth working. In critical situations, this defect generates widespread feeling of futility.

But apart from this defect, the real danger to the ideal of human unity lay in the division of peoples in two camps which tended to be natural opponents. Survival of these two camps for more than 40 years, and that too, in the condition of a continuous cold war, prevented any major progress towards the growth of the inner spirit of internationalism. At the same time, the fact that this cold war did not generate into a hot war must be noted as truly remarkable. It is also a matter that gives comfort to the anxious mind and heart of humanity.

It was, of course, envisaged as a possibility that if the design of using ideological struggle as a means for world domination could come to be weakened or eliminated, then co-existence of two ideologies in the world could not be at all out of question. And, as a matter of fact, the world moved towards a greater development of the principle of State control over the life of the community and created a considerable force of balance of power through the movement of non-alignment. On the other hand, capitalism itself got modified by virtue of the welfare policies adopted by the powers of the free world. Nevertheless, tensions remained, overwhelming frictions continued to occur and it is only now when USSR collapsed and Eastern European countries asserted their independence, adopting market economy, that the world has ceased to be bipolar and we find ourselves today in a new situation.

Has the climate for human unity become more favourable under the new situation? When we ask this question, however, it

must be remembered that a greater social or political unity is not necessarily a boon in itself; it is only worth pursuing in so far as it provides a means and framework for a better, richer, more happy and puissant individual and collective life. Looking at the past examples of large aggregates such as we find under the Roman Empire and others, we are likely to conclude that if there were to come about today a social, administrative and political unification of humanity, the organisation would be so massive and tremendous that both individual and regional life would become crushed and dwarfed. And this would mean for humanity, after perhaps one first outburst of satisfied and joyous activity, a long period of mere conservation, increasing stagnancy and ultimate decay. Therefore, the unity which is to be pursued as an imperative of the present state of humanity, must be under other conditions and with safeguards which will keep the human race intact in its roots of vitality and its oneness will be kept richly diverse.

The great beneficial consequence of the recent collapse of USSR is that the world has ceased to be bipolar, and consequently, the danger of the outbreak of world conflict has greatly disappeared. Another salutary consequence which has arisen is the collapse of the oppressive system of state socialism. This has reduced greatly the peril of the coming into being of that form of the World-State under which State machinery could suppress freedom of speech and thought. Had this form not disappeared, and if an all-regulating socialistic World-State were to be established, freedom of thought under such a regime would necessarily have meant criticism not only of the details, but of the very principles of the existing state of things. The World-State could not have afforded to tolerate for long this criticism or even its possibility. Ultimately, the State would have imposed strict regulation of the mental life and extended it to the totality of life. The necessary consequence would have been a static order of society, since without the freedom of the individual, a society cannot remain progressive. We may note that a salutary form of world government must respect and encourage the freedom of the individual, and this form has now gained a new force. This is the third important consequence. For, with the break-up of the Soviet Union, several of

its constituents have emerged as new independent and sovereign states. This even reaffirms the psychological and moral principle of self-determination, which was originally announced by Russia itself during the early phase of the Revolution when its idealism was fresh and sincere.

Under the pressure of the need to resort to the principle of government by force, a contradictory element was brought in. This endangered the progress of nationalism, and the principle of free choice for each nation to choose its own line of development and association. It is true that the component States of Sovietic Russia were allowed a certain cultural, linguistic, and some other kind of autonomy, but in other matters they had come to be, in fact, governed by the force of a highly centralised autocracy of the Labourite despotism. That freedom, which was put aside or crushed earlier, has now emerged, and this is bound to provide added force and strength to the movement towards the free world union in which the principle of free self-determination must be a preliminary movement.

The modern world has, however, grown increasingly commercial in character. A powerful impulsion of our times is towards the industrialising of the human race and the perfection of the life of society as an economic and productive organism. The European idealism, which was manifest to some extent in Communism, could not be sustained in the Socialist Soviet Union. Marxian principle itself proceeded on the premise that the reign of socialism has to be preceded by an age of bourgeois capitalism and should seize upon its work and organisation in order to turn it to its own uses and modify it by its own principles and methods. It intended, indeed, to substitute Labour as the Master instead of Capital. But this meant merely a change from one side of the economism to the other. The story of eight decades of the development of USSR did not impel change from domination of economism to the domination of some other and higher motive of human life. And now, when the socialistic economy has fallen and is being rapidly replaced by market economy, basic economism will remain unaltered, except that the capitalistic competition will become more unbridled than ever before.

This competition and the goals it seeks to satisfy constitute the uppermost subjects all over the world. The futuristic studies of today are concentrated on issue of economic activity, on latest technologies of communication and processing of information, on developing markets and commercial competition among USA, Japan, EEC, China, and newly industrialising countries. If science were not developed as it has today, if modern warfare did not require the high level of scientific and technological efficiency as today, the present situation could have witnessed a fresh invasion from the primitive peoples so as to subvert and destroy our weary and crisis-ridden civilisation. But while that peril stands eliminated, the real peril that we face today is the resurgence of the barbarian in ourselves, in civilised people, and this is what we see all around us.

We are not grateful that the third World War has not broken out and that prospects of peace have become brighter; we are, however, engrossed with understanding the new equations between economic change and military preparedness. We are not worried about building the defences of peace in the minds of men, and secure true foundations of human unity; - is it not the task given away to UNESCO so that we can indulge in the freedom to do something else? And what is that something else if not questions of economic concerns and financial gains? We are not grappling with issues of knowledge and wisdom, but we are getting absorbed in the problems of power shift which are caused by "softonomics", the technologies which are related to software that produces and processes information with ever-increasing speed. In other words, we are interested in knowledge to the extent to which it gets related to money-making. What is our centre of gravity? It is the economic social ultimate — an ideal material organisation of civilisation and comfort, and the use of reason and science and education for the channelisation of a utilitarian rationality which will create mechanisms and systems for vital and material satisfactions surrounded by luxuries of intellectual and aesthetic pastimes.

The contemporary crisis of humanity arises from this centre of gravity; humanity is slipping more and more into the mire of

this pit. While its inner soul feels mutely the agony of this plunge and wants to be uplifted and liberated, it is unable to assist itself and to break its chains. There is a deeper reason for this, and we may try to understand it.

This is important if we are to envisage more accurately the transition that are likely to take place in the XXIst century.

II

Since the last five hundred years, humanity has been living in the Age of Reason. In previous cycles of human history, there have been periods where intellect dominated, but they never reached the sweep, pitch and intensity as our modern Age in cultivating, subtilising and fathoming the depths and applications of our rational faculties. The Age of Reason is, therefore, of special significance, particularly when we realise that the human being is distinguishable from other species by virtue of its Reason. We can expect from the Age those results which the human beings can obtain at their maximum level of development. And, indeed, during this period, rationalism flourished uninhibitedly and produced results of highest excellence. But it also showed quite decisively what it can accomplish and what it cannot. Two articles of faith, underlying the march of Reason, came to be fully tested and disproved. The first article was the faith that Reason can arrive at truth, comprehensive truth and certainty of truth. At the end of its march, it has come to declare that the concept of Truth has rather limited and relative meaning in terms of rationality, and that what can be known by Reason will always be circumscribed within the limits of varying degrees of probability. The second article was that Reason can, with its capacity to observe, know and govern impartially, apply itself to human life and arrive at the right relationship between the individual and collectivity. Reason also erected in this connection three great ideals of progress, — Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, — and dreamt of their harmonious fulfilment in a rational order of society. At the end of its march in our own century, Reason has now demonstrated, particularly with the collapse of the socialist experiment in USSR, that

Reason can neither harmonise the individual and the collectivity nor can it synthesise freedom, equality and brotherhood. It is seen that Reason can succeed only in establishing a limited rule of Law over uneasy springs of freedom and a narrow rule of efficient organisation by imposing on all concerned a heavy hand and compulsion and uniformity. It has proved that Reason as a governor of society can secure freedom only by overriding the demands of equality, and if it attempts to secure equality, it is obliged to strangle freedom. As for fraternity, the highest that Reason could achieve was temporary comradeship and pragmatic or utilitarian co-operation.

Having reached this end of the road, Reason now stands bereft of any agenda; its fundamental search seems to have ended; its basic experimentation seems to have come to a close; it can only turn now in expanding or contracting circles of probabilities in the field of knowledge and those of compromise in the field of practical life. It can, of course, take another course, if it can choose to become sufficiently revolutionary and institute an inquiry into those ulterior sources from which its articles of faith regarding Truth and certainty and the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity sprang into its ken and sustained its long journey, which, even when declared to be unrealisable, keep on knocking and calling us insistently for their fulfilment.

But this is more a question of choice, of will, of a deliberate effort. It is easy to refuse, and to find reasons for the refusal. For it may be argued that all articles of faith, even of Reason, invite a return to the domain of religion or of the supra-rational against which Reason had declared an open revolt at the very commencement of its march into the modern age. Or else, it may be argued that the deliverances of the supra-rational create for the mental thought antinomies which are insoluble and therefore unacceptable. We, therefore, hear the cacophony of declarations that the supra-rational is non-existent or unreal and that the best counsel for reason is to limit its activities to the practical and immediate problems of their material existence in the universe.

What is the consequence? Reason by itself cannot long maintain the race in its progress; it is the inner spiritual necessity, the

push from what is yet unrealised that maintains the progressive or evolutionary stress, the spiritual *nisus*. But if that is refused or renounced, there is bound to occur a crisis. The contemporary crisis of humanity is a crisis of this kind. It is not a sociological, political or economic crisis; it is what Sri Aurobindo calls an evolutionary crisis.

An evolutionary crisis can occur only at an extremely crucial moment of the life of a species. It is when a certain level of consciousness has effected an ascent to the next level of consciousness, integrated the powers and activities of the lower consciousness into those of the higher level of consciousness, when the integrated powers have achieved acute subtilisation and refinement, — then the moment arrives for taking a leap into the still higher level of consciousness. If at that moment there is obstruction or failure to secure the necessary push, a crisis sets in which continues to concentrate on the issue of the next ascent until the necessary conditions are created which would facilitate the ascent or mutation of the species. Or else, if there is repeated failure, the concerned species gives place to a new species and gets itself either extinct or relapses into a certain type of fixed movement, bereft of a *nisus* for a higher ascent or mutation. With humanity today such a point of crisis has been reached; this is evidenced by the fact that its highest faculty of Reason has accomplished the tasks of maximum possible integration, subtilisation and amplitude of multi-sided development; having reached this stage of accomplishment, its limitations have been made bare and acknowledged; it is very clear that the deeper powers lying behind Reason are in need of a surge, and they are being blocked by the achieved circuit of grooves set up by Reason. It is only if Reason consents to allow deeper powers to rise to a new stage of the ascent of consciousness, that further progress of humanity could be possible. That is why Sri Aurobindo states:

At present mankind is undergoing an evolutionary crisis in which is concealed a choice of its destiny." *

*Sri Aurobindo: *The Life Divine*, Centenary Edition, Vol 19, p 1053.

Elucidating the nature and basic cause of this crisis, Sri Aurobindo writes:

*... a stage has been reached in which the human mind has reached in certain directions an enormous development while in others it stands arrested and bewildered and can no longer find its way. A structure of the external life has been raised up by man's ever-active mind and life-will, a structure of an unmanageable hugeness and complexity, for the service of his mental, vital, physical claims and urges, a complex political, social, administrative, economic, cultural machinery, an organised collective means for his intellectual, sensational, aesthetic and material satisfaction. Man has created a system of civilisation which has become too big for his limited mental capacity and understanding and his still more limited spiritual and moral capacity to utilise and manage, a too dangerous servant of his blundering ego and its appetites. For no greater seeing mind, no intuitive soul of knowledge has yet come to his surface of consciousness which could make this basic fullness of life a condition that exceed it."**

Unity of life, unity of humanity, a world-union has become a necessity; but this unity must not be uniformity; it must not be mechanical; it must be fully diverse and harmonious. Reason cannot realise this goal; it has laboured intensely for five centuries and acknowledged its inability. Corresponding to the unity of life, there must be unity of consciousness, unity of knowledge. There must, therefore, be a push towards the next stage of evolution where new powers of consciousness can manifest. This is the central issue.

And this is where we need to turn to the new orientations that we require in the field of education.

III

As we enter into the XXIst century, there is bound to grow more and more insistently the awareness that education is an evolutionary force and that it ought to be made a most powerful instrument of the evolutionary mutation towards which humanity seems to be proceeding. This awareness is bound to impel a thorough revolution of education in which the aim would be to cultivate, sharpen and transform the faculties and powers of personality leading towards an unprecedented perfection that would enhance man's capacities to collaborate consciously with the upward march of evolution.

It is imperative that humanity rises in maturity so as to make the right use of scientific discoveries and inventions in order that they are not utilised in the service of lower urges but for raising the heights of cultural life.

It is also necessary that nations of the world co-operate with each other in assuring environmental protection and raising the standards of life even of the least developed countries.

And, above all, pursuit of scientific knowledge and value-oriented education should be raised to such a high level that human beings are aided in becoming global in their consciousness as also capable of generating the practice of universal brotherhood.

In practical terms, we shall need to propose radical changes in the aims, methods and contents of education.

A significant fact in this context is that there has been in India intensive experiments which embrace all these ideas and many more. It is true that these experiments have not yet made any appreciable impact, but there is a growing need to recognise the value of these experiments and to allow their results to have an influence on the new orientation that Indian education needs so urgently and imperatively. The Indian experiment began indigenously with the modern renaissance in India, and it was nurtured by the pre-independence nationalist movement. In due course, it absorbed deeply the western ideas of new and progressive education. But, at the same time, it took a great care to integrate them with the profoundest concepts of our own educational psychology.

For this reason, the Indian Experiment has been rather slow in showing its results. For its data were larger and the elements which had to be harmonised were more difficult and more numerous.

The mature fruit of the Indian Experiment is to be found in the concept of the four-fold personality. It has been pointed out that there are four central values and powers of personality, and, if these are rightly balanced throughout the process of developments, and if an healthy equilibrium of these powers is upheld progressively, then the youth could be assured of a continuous life-long integral development of personality that would constantly release freshness and creativity, enthusiasm and courage, and spontaneous dedication and consecration to all that is highest and noblest. These four values belong to the deepest and highest being, but their expressions are to be found in varying degrees, in all our instruments, body, life and mind. These four values are: Knowledge, Power, Harmony and Skill in works.

It is, indeed, recognised that this is an extraordinary programme, which implies a life-long process of integral development, in which physical, vital, intellectual, ethical, aesthetic powers are to be purified, sharpened and perfected under the overarching inspiration and progressive guidance of psychic and spiritual consciousness. But it is underlined that it must begin right from the beginning, and even earlier levels of education must be so restructured as to permit the development of the student on new lines.

It is premature to say whether the ideas and experiences generated by the Indian Experiment will be able to revolutionise the Indian educational situation. But there are bright prospects. Firstly, there is an irresistible demand among large sections of people to replace as soon as possible the educational system that the British designed for India. This demand is persistent, and it is likely to become insistent. Secondly, India cannot afford to perpetuate the rigidity and inelasticity of the present system of education, if India has to attend the needs of very large number of children and youths who cannot all be accommodated in the formal system of education. Thirdly, the Indian Experiment is at once

Indian and international, and with the growing tide of radical ideas that are growing everywhere in the world, India is bound to look more and more searchingly within its own experiment where these radical ideas have been assimilated. And, finally, India needs a new kind of manpower not only for higher purposes of evolution but even for its economic prosperity and for cultural efflorescence. And it is likely to be recognised more and more increasingly that the Indian Experiment has a special relevance to the creation of the needed new kind of manpower.

Let us make certain specific proposals that may guide us in providing new educational orientations for the initial period of the XXIst century. And it may be underlined that these are only preliminary in character and need to be followed up by more radical proposals as we move forward in the new century.

In the first place, India needs to take a decision that in pursuance of the Indian educational experiment, as also of the latest educational thought of the world, India should aim at realising and actualising the ideal of learning society, and India should co-ordinate and involve all sectors of society in the teaching-learning processes. And we have to realise that the sovereignty in the learning society rests in the child and the youth. As a result, the child and the youth should be kept in the centre of nation's care and concern.

One of chief characteristics of the learning society is that it should reject the idea that only a few should climb to the higher levels of achievement and that the rest should remain content with lower ranges of activities and fulfilment. Education for all aiming at the integral upliftment of all is a natural corollary of the idea of the learning society. And the two basic requirements that follow, in the context of the Indian situation, are universalisation of elementary education and elimination of adult illiteracy. Therefore, a top priority must be given to the realisation of the goals of these programmes within a fixed timetable. Programmes of midday meal and garments for girls should be adopted all over the country. A special emphasis must be laid on the education of girls and women. Special measures should be taken to encourage education among disadvantaged groups, particularly among the physically handicapped and scheduled castes and tribes.

While efforts should continue to strengthen and consolidate the gains achieved so far, a special emphasis should be laid on innovations and certain radical changes. Non-formal education should be developed as a full-fledged alternative system at all stages of education. Suitable linkages between the formal and non-formal education should also be forged. Non-formal education should encourage multipoint entry system, and it should be made flexible so as to suit the learners' needs from the point of view of space, time and curriculum. The formal system, too, should be so refined that it can provide to students of non-formal education a choice of lateral entry into it at appropriate levels of studies.

Harmony of Man with Nature has been the chief theme of our culture, and the quest of man of himself and the universe has been the chief theme of education. These themes are closely interrelated, and it is increasingly realised that this interrelationship needs to be effectively reflected in our educational system. Education promoting culture, and culture promoting education, will characterise the new effort. Culture depends on large and wise strides of imagination, emotion and thought, on works of art and craft, on beautiful arrangements of things, plants and flowers. Therefore, facilities should be created, both at the national and local levels, to encourage teachers, students and educational institutions to promote fine arts and activities of imagination, local folklore, folk art and craftsmanship, and to weave artistic sensitivity and sensibility into every educational activity. Right from attention to the neatness and beauty of handwriting to the harmony of forms of thought and composition, various activities of learning should be encouraged so as to transmute them into experiences of creative expansion and progress. Cultural refinement will be sought not only as an aim of education but also as integral element of the educational process.

That every Indian student should receive an adequate exposure to Indian culture seems obvious, and yet, despite previous efforts, much remains to be attempted and achieved to promote among students the study, understanding and appreciation of Indian culture. This involves an arduous task, as it implies not only reorientation of textbooks but also preparation of new leaning materials,

promotion of exhibitions and films, and creation of the proper environment and atmosphere through which the aims and manifestations of Indian culture could be properly communicated to students at various levels of education. This task should be encouraged, and a special effort should be made to underline the need to study Indian culture not only to appreciate its past glories but also to chalk out the paths of Indian future. Not revivalism but rootedness, reconstruction and new creation should be the central motive.

It is universally acknowledged that the educational needs of rural India have not received the attention that they deserve, despite certain laudable schemes which have brought about salutary changes in certain aspects. The vast human potential in the rural India has remained untapped, although powerful currents of Indian culture have continued to irrigate the minds and hearts of the rural people. The Indian peasant has often been found to possess untutored wisdom and instinctive sensibility to realities of life. But what is instinctive in him needs to be brought out in awakened self-consciousness, and this demands a new approach. Learning materials have to be so designed that they are relevant to the rural environment and ethos. Technical know-how, which needs to be transferred to the rural areas has to be judiciously determined. In particular, scientific and technical knowledge regarding alternative and non-conventional sources of energy must receive highest priority in the educational programmes. Consequent upon the increasing development of agro-industrial complexes in rural areas, there should be a growing demand for the relevant talent and skills, which, in turn, should impose a special dimension to education. This need must be met adequately and effectively. Rural employment schemes must also be linked with specially designed relevant programmes of education. And, overarching these efforts, there should be launched for the youth in the rural areas a massive programme of education that would centre on activities of physical culture, general knowledge and basic skills. This programme should be promoted and monitored by a staff exclusively charged with it.

Considering that mediocrity of linguistic competence obstructs the development of intellectual processes of thought and reflection, a major thrust of the new educational policy should be to

promote among students and people increasing capacity of linguistic comprehension, articulation and excellence. Emphasis should be laid on correctness of pronunciation, spelling and expression in the languages learnt and taught at various levels of education, formal and non-formal.

Educational reconstruction should necessitate certain fundamental innovations. The following programmes should particularly be promoted:

- Review and re-determination of the contents of education in the light of the emerging needs of the synthesis of knowledge and culture as also of increasing demands of scientific and technological skills, promotion of values and integral development of personality;
- Lightening the burden of books on children and adolescents;
- Changes in the methodology of education so as to meet the total needs of the cognitive, affective and conative growth of students;
- Radical changes in the examination system so as to achieve the goal of de-linking of degrees from jobs and to develop national tests that would be both objective and reliable and would test not only competence in a few selected subjects but also achievements in the fields of value-oriented education, physical fitness, skills for specific works and overall development of harmonious personality;
- Development of centres of educational innovation and experimentation directly related to the emerging demands of the XXIst century; and
- Programme of autonomous schools and colleges.

Research is indispensable, not only for attaining educational excellence but also for securing an increasing rate of economic growth, productivity and development. High priority should be assigned to the promotion of research, both scientific and humanistic. The learned councils or research institutes of advanced studies should be encouraged to coordinate their research efforts and to develop the manpower that can continue to remain at the frontiers of knowledge and lead the growing generation to reach these frontiers rapidly and fruitfully. In particular, encouragement should be

given not only to discover new and rich contents of ethical and spiritual domains but also to open up a new domain where the modern trends of science can meet and converge on the ancient and renascent knowledge of the secrets of spiritual perfection.

A new orientation in the teachers' training programmes has become inevitable. Consequent upon the explosion of information, increasing relevance of education to all domains of the world of work, and increasing stress on the themes of unity and integration, international understanding and peace, and individual and collective excellence, new demands are being made on the teacher. The role of the teacher is undergoing a process of rapid change. The teacher as a task-master is fading out of the educational scene, and the teacher is being increasingly looked upon as a guide and an inspirer. The teacher is also expected to contribute significantly to the task of integrating education with development. He is required to become an innovator and inventor of dynamic methods of education. And he is also expected to become a leading agent of change. He is also called upon to play an active role in the fashioning of a learning society. It is against this background that major changes need to be introduced in the aims, methods and contents of programmes of teacher education, both pre-service and in-service.

Appropriate to the new and heavy demands on the teacher, working conditions of the teacher should be improved, and measures should be taken to raise the status of the teacher. At the same time, the teacher should be expected to set a high standard of performance and discharge of responsibilities.

A question may be raised if we have the needed resources, in terms of finance and manpower, to implement all this that we have conceived. The answer to this question cannot be given merely in terms of statistics. The answer must lie in what we, as people, would like to give to our children for their highest welfare. If we take a voluntary decision to generate a will to change, to turn human life into the divine life, then we can visualise in the coming years, a period of fruitful and successful implementation of the needed ideas and programmes.

4.

An Experiment in Education for Tomorrow

An unprecedented kind of experiment in education was launched by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, when in 1943, a school came to be established at Sri Aurobindo Ashram at Pondicherry with merely 20 students on its rolls; soon it began to grow, and in 1951, when the number of students had increased, and studies in Higher Education had to be organised, it was expanded into Sri Aurobindo International University Centre. Eminent educationists of the country welcomed the formation of this University Centre, and the foremost educationist of the country, Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherji, specially came to Pondicherry to preside over the inaugural function, where the Mother inaugurated it and declared that that Centre was conceived as one of the best means of preparing humanity for future that would be marked by the manifestation of a new light and power, — the supramental light and power. *

And the Mother gave a prayer for the students of this Centre, which breathes with ever-fresh courage of youthfulness and which invokes the power to fight the great battle of the future. The prayer reads as follows:

Make of us the hero warriors we aspire to become. May we fight successfully the great battle of the future that has to be

* The Mother declared as follows: Sri Aurobindo is present in our midst, and with all the power of his creative genius he presides over the formation of the University Centre, which for years he considered as one of the best means of preparing the future humanity to receive the supramental light that will transform the elite of today into a new race manifesting upon earth the new light and force and life.

In his name I open today this convention meeting here with the purpose of realising one of his most cherished ideals. 24.4.1951.

born against the past that seeks to endure; so that the new things may manifest and we be ready to receive them.

This Centre conducted a programme of experimental research under the direct guidance of the Mother, and it became a laboratory of education for tomorrow.

II

The size was small and modest: 150 teachers coming from different parts of India and the world as full-time volunteers, having no other thought or even preoccupation than the educational experiment, with their centre of attention on 300 to 600 students.

Teachers received no remuneration, but the Mother provided for everyone of them board, lodging, clothing and other minimum needs of physical life on a very modest scale. Students were largely residents of the boardings maintained by the Centre, looked after by teachers of the Centre. Although there was one vacation of one month a half (November-December), this period was devoted to intensive activities of physical education, so that students largely devoted themselves to physical education, cultural activities and some other academic activities, according to their choice.

Teachers were supposed to be under training, and their work was designed and implemented in the spirit of practical fieldwork. Teachers were of varied background; some of them were even eminent poets, authors, artists, former diplomats, administrators, scientists, technical experts, engineers, linguists, historians or men and women of letters. Several of them has just finished their education at the Centre itself. Some of them were quite raw, - although it may be remarked that considering that the educational experiment had an unusual aim, all the teachers were supposed to look upon themselves as beginners. One former diplomat, who had held a very high position in Foreign Service, was given the task of teaching History at the primary level; a former administrator taught at the kindergarten level or at lower levels of education. In fact, the Mother assigned an extremely important

place to education of the youngest children, and work at lower levels was considered a special privilege.

There was little interference from the parents of the children, although they were furnished with periodical progress reports in regard to their children's activities. Mother had declared that parents should not send their children with a view to getting any certificate, degree or diploma, since education was not meant for passing examinations but for exploring the inner self and for developing inherent capacities and faculties under the pressure of atmosphere, which was specially created by a tremendous force of Mother's Presence and guidance, and activities so organised as to promote the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom, courage and heroism, mutuality and harmony, and skills of creativity and productivity.

Mother had also declared that there had to be no compulsion in the process of children's development; children were free and experienced immense joy of freedom. In a prominent place in the Centre, the following words of the Mother gave a warning to teachers: "Ne grondez jamais" (Do not scold, never). The children had free and direct access to the Mother, since teachers were themselves regarded as students and children, having no special authority or status. In fact, students were looked upon as sovereigns, in the sense that every activity of the Centre as those of surroundings was designed as to promote their growth and development; nothing was allowed which was injurious to the physical and psychological health of children. Verily, the entire life of the collectivity was conceived and organised as that of a learning society.

Classes ranged from the kindergarten up to the post-graduation; and although three faculty of arts, science, and engineering technology were prominent, there were no artificial barriers between them, and a very special stress was laid on physical education and on art, music, dance, drama, and various kinds of manual works and crafts. Education was conceived as a free process of growth; education was also conceived as integral education. But integrality was not imposed; it was so encouraged that each child could experiment with the growth of its faculties without any artificial hindrance or obstruction. Integrality of education was

conceived as a process of organic growth, and the way in which various faculties could be developed and integrated was dependent upon each child's inclination, rhythm of progression and law of development, *swabhava* and *swadharma*.

Integral education was not conceived as a juxtaposition of a number of subjects and even juxtaposition of varieties of faculties. The idea was to provide facilities for varieties of faculties, varieties of subjects and various combinations of pursuits of Knowledge, Power, Harmony and Skill in works. These faculties were so provided that they could be made use of by each student and the teacher so that a natural process of harmonious development could be encouraged.

III

In regard to physical education, facilities included those relating to gymnastics, athletics, aquatics, combatives, games — Indian and Western, and Yogic *asanas*. Beautiful playgrounds and sports grounds were developed, and the timetable was so designed that from 4.00 p.m. to 7.30 p.m., students were freed from burdens of academic studies, and even of homework, so that they could participate in various activities of physical education. Physical education was not conceived as pastime but as a serious pursuit of health, strength, agility and harmonious beauty of the body. Regular programmes were interspersed with periods of competitions, where it was specially emphasised that one should not try to come first but to do one's best. Captains of physical education were themselves so trained as to encourage team spirit and sportsmanship.

In a small book written by the Mother entitled "Ideal Child", it was declared that an ideal child is good-tempered, is game, is cheerful, patient, enduring, persevering, poised, courteous, truthful, modest, generous, fearless and obedient. Code of sportsmanship declared: *Keep the rules, keep faith with your comrades, keep yourself fit; keep a stout heart in defeat; keep your pride under any victory; keep a sound soul, a clean mind, and healthy body; play the game.* It was further underlined that a good sportsman is courteous, modest,

generous, disciplined and fair.

Every child developed a robust health and strength of the body. It was a treat to see year after year programmes of physical demonstration, which were organised with meticulous care, order and precision accompanied with appropriate music and display of physical abilities of students in a manner that can be described simply as marvellous.

Sri Aurobindo had written on the importance of physical education, and this was sought to be implemented both in word and spirit:

A generalisation of the habit of taking part in (physical) exercises in childhood and youth and early manhood would help greatly towards the creation of physically fit and energetic people.

But of a higher import than the foundation, however necessary, of health, strength and fitness of the body is the development of the discipline and morale and sound and strong character towards which these activities can help...

Strictness of training, habit of discipline and obedience is not inconsistent with individual freedom; it is often the necessary condition for its right use, just as order is not inconsistent with liberty but rather the condition for the right use of liberty and even for its preservation and survival...

I am concerned here...with the necessity of the qualities they [the sports] create or stimulate for our national life. The nation which possesses them in the highest degree is likely to be the strongest for victory, success and greatness, but also for the contribution it can make towards the bringing about of unity and a more harmonious world order towards which we look as our hope for humanity's future."^{*}

IV

According to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, one aspect of education that is normally neglected but which needs to be

^{*}Sri Aurobindo: *The Supramental Manifestation upon Earth*, Centenary Edition, Vol. 16, p. 2-4.

emphasised is what they call "vital education". Vital education aims at the training of the life-force in three directions: to discover its real function and to replace its egoistic and ignorant tendency to be the master by willingness and a capacity to serve higher principles of the psychological constitution; to subtilise and sublimate its sensitivity, which expresses itself through sensuous and aesthetic activities, and to resolve and transcend the dualities and contradictions in the character constituted by the vital seekings, and to achieve the transformation of the character.

The usual methods of dealing with the vital life-force have been those of coercion, suppression, abstinence, and asceticism. But these methods do not give lasting results and besides, they only help in drying up the drives and dynamism of the life-force; and thus the collaboration of the life-force in self-fulfilment is eliminated.

Experiments at the Centre have shown that right training of the vital is much more subtle and much more difficult, needing endurance, endless persistence and an inflexible will. But many of the methods that are designed to deal with the vital tendencies are found centred upon the mastery over the vital, which the teachers attain with their own vital tendencies towards acquisition, possession, enjoyment and exercise of influence. As the Mother often pointed out, whenever the teacher complained about any given child's misbehaviour, the vibrations of the misbehaviour in the child have an organic connection with similar vibrations in the teacher; therefore, Mother's counsel was that every occasion where children manifested indiscipline or unruly behaviour, the teacher must look within himself or herself and create within oneself such vibrations that would counter against the undesirable tendencies in one's own psychological composition. Teacher's control over oneself would automatically guarantee his or her own capacity to generate self-control among children.

Sri Aurobindo has suggested in his book entitled *A System of National Education* the following:

Every student should... be given practical opportunity as well as intellectual encouragement to develop all that is best in the

*nature. If the student has bad qualities, bad habits, bad sam-skaras, whether of mind or body, he should not be treated harshly as a delinquent but encouraged to get rid of them by the Rajayogic method of samyama, rejection and substitution. He should be encouraged to think of them not as sins or offences, but as symptoms of a curable disease, alterable by a steady and sustained effort of the will, — falsehood being rejected whenever it rises into the mind and replaced by truth, fear by courage, selfishness by sacrifice and renunciation, malice by love. Great care will have to be taken that unformed virtues are not rejected as faults. The wildness and recklessness of many young natures are only the overflowings of an excessive strength, greatness and nobility. They should be purified, not discouraged."**

V

In regard to mental education, the Mother had written in her small but great book on *Education*, the following:

*A true mental education, which would prepare man for a higher life has five principal phases. Normally these phases follow one after another, but in exceptional individuals they may alternate and even proceed simultaneously. These five phases, in brief, are: 1) Development of the power of concentration, the capacity of attention. 2) Development of the capacities of expansion, widening, complexity and richness; 3) Organisation of one's ideas around a central idea, a higher ideal or a supremely luminous idea that will serve as a guide in life. 4) Thought control, rejection of undesirable thoughts, to become able to think only what one wants and when one wants. 5) Development of mental silence, perfect calm and a more and more total receptivity to inspirations coming from the higher regions of the being."***

* Sri Aurobindo: *A System of National Education*, Centenary Edition, Vol. 17, p. 211

** The Mother: *Education*, Vol. 1, pp. 34-5.

Experiments at the Centre have shown that an atmosphere vibrant at once with ideation and silence, an atmosphere surcharged with great thoughts and ideas, as also with synthetic thoughts and integral aspirations are indispensable conditions for the perfect mental education.

At the centre of the experimentation, a special effort was made to present the essentials of Indian culture as also of different cultures, not merely intellectually in ideas, theories and principles, but also vitally in habits and customs, in art, under all forms such as paintings, sculptures, music, architecture, decorative arts and crafts, — and physically, through dress, games, sports, industries, food, and even reconstruction of natural scenery.

Multiplicity of ideas, richness of ideas, totality of points of view, — these were allowed to grow by a developed power of observation and reflection, and care was taken to see that nothing was imposed upon the growing mind and no dogmatic method was allowed which tends to atrophy the mind.

Speaking of the importance of study of languages in connection with mental education, Sri Aurobindo had written as follows:

*Our dealings with language are much too perfunctory and the absence of a fine sense for words impoverishes the intellect and limits the fineness and truth of its operation. The mind should be accustomed first to notice the word thoroughly, its form, sound and sense; then to compare the form with other similar forms in the points of similarity and difference, thus forming the foundation of the grammatical sense; then to distinguish between the fine shades of sense of similar words and the formation and rhythm of different sentences, thus forming the foundation of the literary and the syntactical faculties. All this should be done informally, drawing on the curiosity and interest, avoiding set teaching and memorising of rules. The true knowledge takes its base on things, arthas, and only when it has mastered the thing, proceeds to formalise its information.**

* Sri Aurobindo: *A System of National Education*, Centenary Edition, Vol. 17, pp. 224-25.

A major experiment in education at this Centre was centred on three principles of teaching that Sri Aurobindo has laid down in his *A System of National Education*. As Sri Aurobindo points out: *The first principle of true teaching is that nothing can be taught; that the teacher is not an instructor or task master, but he is a helper and a guide, and that his business is to suggest and not to impose.* The second principle, according to Sri Aurobindo, is that *the mind has to be consulted in its growth.* He pointed out that the idea of hammering the child into the shape desired by the parents or teacher is a barbarous and ignorant superstition. He warned that to force the nature to abandon its own dharma is to do it permanent harm, mutilate its growth and deform its perfection, and that there can be no greater error than for the parents or the teachers to arrange beforehand that the given student shall develop particular qualities, capacities, ideas, virtues or be prepared for a pre-arranged career. And the third principle of education that Sri Aurobindo laid down is to work from near to the far, from that which is to that which shall be. In other words, Sri Aurobindo underlined that education must proceed from direct experience and that even that which is abstract and remote from experience should be brought to the ken of experience.

VI

These principles of education have a profound bearing on what Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have called psychic and spiritual education. These two domains bring into the picture all that is central to value-oriented education, and to higher and profounder elements of human psychology. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have advocated new methods that are free from those of dogma, rituals, ceremonies, prescribed acts. Spirituality, according to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, is a vast domain of the inmost soul, of the immobile silence, of the higher objects of the higher psychological exploration. The justification for psychic and spiritual education rests upon three important considerations: (a) education should provide to the individual a steady exploration of something that is inmost in the psychological complexity of

human consciousness; (b) the most important question of human life is to consider the aim of human life and the aim of one's own life and one's own position and role in the society; and this question can best be answered only when the psychic and spiritual domains are explored and when one is enabled to develop psychic and spiritual faculties of knowledge; and (c) the contemporary crisis of humanity has arisen because of the disbalancement between the material advancement on the one hand and inadequate spiritual progression. If, therefore, this crisis has to be met, development of psychic and spiritual consciousness should be fostered. Unfortunately, spiritual consciousness is often conceived as a denial of material life and concerns of collective life. In Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's view, however, there is no fundamental opposition between Matter and Spirit. True integrality, according to them, implies rejection of no element in human personality and no denial of anything that can contribute to the full flowering of faculties of personality.

Again, according to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, psychic and spiritual development cannot be effected without effecting high level development of the body, life and mind, and that the perfection of the body, life and mind can be attained only when the powers of psychic and spiritual consciousness are bestowed upon the instruments of the body, life and mind.

At an important stage of experimentation, the Mother gave the message that while India has or rather had spiritual knowledge but neglected Matter, the West has knowledge of Matter but has neglected the Spirit, — as a consequence of which both India and the West are suffering, the solution would be to develop integral education, which would restore the development of matter under the guidance and authority of the Spirit.

Earlier, Sri Aurobindo had written in his magnum opus, *The Life Divine*:

In Europe and in India, respectively, the negation of the materialist and the refusal of the ascetic have sought to assert themselves as the sole truth and to dominate the conception of Life. In India, if the result has been a great heaping up of the treasures of

*the Spirit, — or of some of them, — it has also been a great bankruptcy of Life; in Europe, the fullness of riches and the triumphant mastery of this world's powers and possessions have progressed towards an equal bankruptcy in the things of the Spirit... Therefore the time grows ripe and the tendency of the world moves towards a new and comprehensive affirmation in thought and in inner and outer experience and to its corollary, a new and rich self-fulfilment in an integral human existence for the individual and for the race.**

VII

There is a distinction between psychic consciousness and spiritual consciousness, as there is a distinction between spiritual consciousness and supramental consciousness. As the Mother pointed out:

*The psychic life is immortal life, endless time, limitless space, ever-progressive change, unbroken continuity in the universe of forms. The spiritual consciousness, on the other hand, means to live the infinite and the eternal to be projected beyond all creation, beyond time and space. To become conscious of psychic being and to live a psychic life, you must abolish all egoism; but to live a spiritual life, you must no longer have an ego." ***

As far as the supramental consciousness is concerned, the Mother pointed out that:

The supramental education will result no longer in a progressive form of human nature and an increasing development of its latent faculties, but in a transformation of the nature itself, a transfiguration of the being in its entirety, a new ascent of the species above and beyond man towards superman, leading

* Sri Aurobindo: The Life Divine, Centenary Edition, Vol. 18, p. 9.

** The Mother: Education, Part I, pp. 35-6.)

in the end to the appearance of a divine race upon earth." *

If these three aspects of higher education are to be conducted properly, one must take great care to ensure that methods of religion are not introduced. Religion implies normally the methods of belief or dogma, performance of rituals and ceremonies, and prescriptions of certain specific acts, which are considered to be religious as distinguished from profane.

But what then are the methods that are to be employed in education that must be psychic, spiritual and supramental?

These important questions were the central core of the momentous experiment that was carried out under the direct guidance of The Mother.

There was one view, and it has great force, that there are no special methods, but the teachers must themselves develop higher and higher levels of consciousness and allow them to be transmitted in their activities of education. Among those who held this view, there was a kind of resistance to the proposals that came to be made from time to time by those who laid great value to the development or invention of new methods that could be called appropriate to the development of higher and deeper levels of consciousness. When the conflict between these views rose to a critical point and the question was referred to the Mother, the answer that she gave was that while the development of higher levels of consciousness is of fundamental importance, the development and invention of new methods is also important and indispensable. As she explained, a good teacher can perform his or her responsibilities much better if appropriate methods and appropriate facilities and equipment are developed.

In due course of time, therefore, a flexible framework of education came to be invented, which could facilitate new methods of education that are definitely advantageous both to the teachers and the students in their exploration of deeper and higher levels of consciousness. This came to be called by the Mother "free progress", and she defined it as a process of growth, determined

*The Mother: *Education*, Part I, p.38.

not by any conventional methods, but by the living and progressive guidance of the inner soul or the psychic being and the Spirit. To discover one's own inmost being, one's own universality, beyond egoism and ego, is the chief aim, and this aim cannot be realised by any mechanical or conventional methods. This is a process of change of consciousness, the methodology of which itself is a progressive change of consciousness; it can be done when teachers and pupils march together truly and sincerely in the task of plunging into the inner depths of the being or rising into the higher peaks of consciousness. As one progresses, one discovers that mechanical methods, which we have normally built up in our methods of lecturing, and imposing syllabi and curricula and in framing methods of evaluation and testing, are an obstacle even though they cannot be totally discarded and have limited uses.

This implied a meticulous and scientifically scrupulous inquiry into the lecture system, syllabus system and examination system. There was a period, in the course of experimentation, when lecture system was completely abolished, except in regard to teaching of languages where listening to the articulation of the language by teachers was found to be useful and necessary. There was a period when all prescribed curricula were discarded, and instead curricula were formulated in accordance with the quest of the students. It was found that students often have certain persistent needs to inquire into questions, which are not normally dealt with by prescribed curricula. While studying a subject in physical sciences, a student became deeply interested in the question: What is at the bottom of the ocean? While studying history, a student became deeply interested in the history of costumes; another became deeply interested in the history of weapons. These are only stray examples. But in a subject like philosophy, at higher levels of education, it was found that everyone of 40 students studying in a class wanted to pursue a question different from those of others, and given the freedom of experimentation, the concerned teacher framed 40 alternative curricula of philosophy and pursued them successfully with results that were amazing. Indeed, when such a freedom is employed, the advantage is

that students are able to pursue their own lines of inquiry, which are directly related to something that is profoundly inward, and therefore, psychic. Another advantage is that students do not have to be goaded, but they become highly motivated, and they are allowed to understand and practise their own processes of education. Students become self-conscious and self-propelling. They also come to understand the interrelationship of topics and studies, and vistas of visions, even holistic visions, begin to unfold on their own. And students are able to progress at their own pace and in the direction that they choose. Freedom becomes the hallmark of the whole methodology, and the task of the teacher is not fundamentally that of a lecturer or instructor but that of an observer and a counsellor. Necessarily, the system of lecturing becomes largely irrelevant when students pursue different subjects at different paces of progression and at different levels. Timetables cannot be arranged, and education really becomes education without walls. And how can there be uniform testing at any fixed time pre-determined in advance? The entire examination system, therefore, collapsed, and something new had to be invented.

The story of this experimentation can form a subject matter of a big volume, which can be fantastically interesting and stimulating. But what ultimately emerged after intensive experimentation, struggle and even controversies, was something truly marvellous. We can only indicate a few major elements of a new system of education, which can hardly be described as a system.

VIII

The structure came to be oriented towards the meeting of the varied needs of the students, each one of whom has his or her own special problems of development.

It is not merely the "subjects" of study that should count in education. The aspiration, the need for growth, experience of freedom, possibility of educating oneself, self-experimentation, discovery of the inner needs and their relation with the programmes of studies, and the discovery of the aim of life and the art of life — these are much more important, and the structure

must provide for them.

In this system, each student is free to study any subject he or she chooses at any given time, but this freedom has to be guided; the students should experience freedom, but it must not be misused. The student has, therefore, to be watched with care, sympathy and wisdom. The teacher must be a friend and a guide, must not impose himself, but may intervene when necessary. The wastage of opportunities given should not be allowed indefinitely. But when to intervene depends upon the discretion of the teacher.

A great stress falls upon the individual work by the students. This individual work may be a result of the student's own wish to follow a particular topic of interest, or it may be a result of a suggestion from the teacher but accepted by the student. It may be of the nature of a follow-up of something explained by the teacher, or it may be of the nature of an original line of inquiry.

This "individual work" may be pursued in several different ways:

- by quiet reflection or meditation
- by referring to books or relevant portions of books suggested by the teacher;
- by working on "worksheets" prepared for the students by the teachers;
- by consultation or interviews with the teachers;
- by carrying out experiments;
- by solving problems;
- by writing compositions;
- by drawing, designing, painting, etc.;
- by any other work, such as decorating, cooking, carpentry, stitching, embroidery, etc

There are topics in each subject where lectures are useful, and for these topics, lectures can be organised but these lecture classes have to be comparatively fewer than those obtained in the ordinary system. This often necessitates the announcement of timetables every week.

There are also classes of discussions between teachers and students and between students and students. These discussion-classes again are not compulsory. However, discussions do not

pertain merely to academic subjects; they often centre round the individual needs of growth, and thus they provide an opportunity for guiding the students in their inner search.

In each subject, there are topics, which more easily yield to the project system; teachers, therefore, announce a few projects in each subject, and students according to their choice select at least a minimum number of projects for which they collectively or individually work and produce charts, monographs, designs, etc., which are periodically exhibited for the benefit of the whole school.

Experiments in the lecture system, syllabus system and examination system can be considered to have resulted in the following suggestions for education for tomorrow:

The lecture system will no more be given the central place. Lectures will be used mainly for:

- (a) introducing a subject;
- (b) stimulating interest in a subject;
- (c) presenting a panoramic view of the subject;
- (d) explaining general difficulties or hurdles which are commonly met by a large number of students in their work or studies;
- (e) creating a collective atmosphere with regard to certain pervasive ideas; and
- (f) initiating rapid and massive programmes of "training".

Similarly, the syllabus system will also undergo a radical change. A syllabus as a general panoramic view in the vision of the teacher and as a guideline for the student has a legitimate function, and this has to be preserved. But in the actual operation of the educational processes, there have to be what may be called "evolutionary syllabi". A syllabus should grow according to the needs of the inner growth of the student; and the student should be free to develop and weave the various elements of his work and studies into a complex harmonious whole.

It may be noted that it is in this setting of "evolutionary syllabi" that we can truly fulfil the needs of multi-point entry system. Again, it may be noted that it is in this setting that we could have flexible programmes of work and studies suitable to different

categories of students, and thus we can have a flexible pattern of education in a general framework which can cater to the needs not merely of a small percentage of students who may be ready and fit to reach the higher levels of academic education, but also of a large number of students who may remain in the educational system only for 4 years, 7 years or a little more. The central point is that the educational programme, whatever its duration, should aim at providing to the students a real base for three things:

- (i) art of self-learning and continuing education
- (ii) art of noble life, and
- (iii) art of work.

Finally, in the proposed organisation, the examination system will also under a radical change; Tests will be used mainly for:

- (a) stimulation,
- (b) providing opportunities to the students to think clearly and to formulate ideas adequately,
- (c) achieving precision, exactness and mastery of details,
- (d) arriving at a global view of the subjects or works in question,
- (e) self-evaluation, and
- (f) gaining self-confidence.

Tests will be woven into the learning process and each should be given test when it is needed and when the student finds himself or herself ready for it. The central thrust will be to develop among the students the noble qualities such as those of truthfulness, sincerity, cheerfulness, benevolence, right judgement, sacrifice, cooperation, and friendship.

Tests for placement in the employment market should be conducted by a National Testing Service, and they should open to anyone who wants to take them. These tests should be related to specific jobs or employment opportunities or certain specific pursuits of studies and disciplines of knowledge and skills. These tests should be rigorous and must test not only powers of memory but of comprehension, practical work, physical fitness, creativity and value-orientation.

The role of the teacher in this system is:

To aid the student in uncovering the inner will to grow and to

progress — that should be the constant endeavour of the teacher.

To evolve a programme of education for each student in accordance with the felt needs of the student's growth; to watch the students with deep sympathy, understanding and patience, ready to intervene and guide as and when necessary; to stimulate the students with striking words, ideas, questions, stories, projects and programmes; — that should be the main work of the teachers.

But to radiate inner calm and cheerful dynamism so as to create an atmosphere conducive to the development of higher faculties of inner knowledge and intuition; — that may be regarded as the heart of the work of the teachers.

An adequate organisation of the above working of the Free Progress System would need the following:

- A Room or Rooms of Silence, to which the students who would like to do uninterrupted work or would like to reflect or meditate in silence can go as and when they like;
- Rooms of Consultations, where students can meet their teachers and consult them on various points of their seeking;
- Rooms of Collaboration, where students can work in collaboration with each other;
- Lecture Rooms, where teachers can hold discussions with their students and where they can deliver lectures — short or long — according to the need.

The study of each subject can be so directed that it leads ultimately to the discovery of the fundamental truths underlying the subject. These fundamental truths form ultimately a unity, and at a higher stage of philosophical study, this unity would itself contribute to the deepening of the sense of Truths which directly helps in the maturity of the psychic and spiritual or yogic aspiration.

The sense of the unity of the truths would also contribute to the reconciliation of the various branches of Knowledge, thus leading to the harmony of Science, Philosophy, Technology and Fine Arts. In the spiritual or yogic vision, there is an automatic perception of this unity, and in the teaching of the various subjects the teacher can always direct the students to this unity.

There are golden reaches of our consciousness, and from them

and from the reaches intermediate between them and our ordinary mental consciousness there have descended forces and forms, which have become embodied in literature, philosophy, science, in music, dance, art, architecture, sculpture, in great and heroic deeds and in all that is wonderful and precious in the different organised or as yet unorganised aspects of life. To put the students in contact with these, Eastern or Western, ancient or present, would be to provide them with the air and atmosphere in which they can breathe an inspiration to reach again to those peaks of consciousness and to create still newer forms and forces, which would bring the golden day nearer.

The teachers and scholars at the Centre were preoccupied with this work, and the research work was contained in the actual contents of the day-to-day work, in their task of consultations and in their organisation of exhibition, dance, drama, music and numerous other educational activities. It is in the context of this vibrating and powerful process of the psychic and spiritual education that the activities of the physical, vital and mental education were pursued and worked out at this great Centre of experimentation.

IX

It is often asked whether having invented a new framework, a new way of free progress education, it can be sustained and replicated. The answer is in the affirmative, but considering that human nature tends to lapse into set routine, into mechanical processes, which can be easily be repeated, into artificial standardisation, what is needed is persistent determination on the part of the partners of education not to allow this tendency. This is not an easy task. But if it is realised that the alternative to this new model of education is what obtains today, which tends to become more and more dysfunctional, then the needed aspiration can be kept alive. If this is coupled with certain reforms at the national level, then indeed, this new model can be made operative on a large scale and on a durable basis.

5. Lifelong Learning Project

The aim would be to make available appropriate opportunities for lifelong learning to increasing number of people without regard to restrictions of previous education or training, sex, age, handicapped condition, social or ethnic background, or economic circumstance.

Lifelong learning is the process by which individuals continue to develop their knowledge, skills, interests and cultural attainments throughout their life times.

Lifelong learning is a "motherhood" issue, and it overarches all aspects and all levels of learning, formal, non-formal and informal.

Justification of lifelong learning project is to be viewed in the context of the impact it has on developing the human potential and quality of life.

Lifelong learning project will have a special role in promoting work place skills and in stimulating participation by increasing number of people in the civic, cultural and collective life of the country. Lifelong learning includes continuing education, adult education, independent study, open system education, agricultural education, business education, labour education, occupational education, job training programme, parent education, pre-retirement and post-retirement education, remedial education, special education programmes for groups or for individuals with special needs, education for cultural development and excellence, and educational activities designed to upgrade occupational and professional skills to assist business, public agencies, and other organisations in the use of invocation and research results, and to serve family needs and personal development.

Initial activities of the lifelong learning project will include:

- (a) review of the lifelong learning opportunities and delivery systems provided through schools, post-secondary educational institutions, cultural institutions, libraries, museums, media, employers, unions and other public and private organisations in order to determine means by which enhancement of their effectiveness and co-ordination may be facilitated;
- (b) study of ways and means by which the Central Government, State Governments, and local bodies can more adequately support lifelong learning activities;
- (c) support research and experimentation, including review of existing major foreign lifelong learning programmes in order to determine the applicability of such programmes in our country;
- (d) support demonstration projects;
- (e) suggest ways and means of eliminating barriers to lifelong learning;
- (g) improvement of information and assessment efforts;
- (h) encourage the establishment of interstate and regional services for adults;
- (i) support programmes that develop new learning approaches for adults;
- (j) suggest ways and means of making financial resources available to programmes of lifelong learning;
- (k) organising round-tables, seminars and a National Conference on lifelong learning;
- (l) evolve programmes to develop learning society in the country.

Long-term activities will include:

- (a) Planning and assessment to determine whether in each State there is an equitable distribution of lifelong learning services to all segments of the population, particularly women, handicapped and gifted;
- (b) assessment of the appropriate roles for the Central, State, and local governments, educational and cultural institutions;

- (c) consideration of the alternative methods of financing and delivering lifelong opportunities;
- (d) development of alternative methods to improve:
 - i) research and development activities;
 - ii) training and retraining people to become educators of adults;
 - iii) development of curricula and delivery systems appropriate to the needs of various programmes of lifelong learning;
 - iv) development of techniques and systems for guidance and counselling of adults and for training and retraining of counsellors;
 - v) development and dissemination of instructional materials appropriate to adults;
 - vi) assessment of the educational needs and goals of older and retired persons and their unique contributions to lifelong learning programmes; and
 - vii) promotion of activities that will stimulate pursuit of wisdom and highest ends of life.

The fundamental goals of human resource development will be kept in view in designing and executing the above activities, and a special effort will be made to integrate education and physical, intellectual, aesthetic and spiritual culture. Special emphasis will be laid on the needs of parents, children, youths and women.

6.

Peace through Learning and Education

Peace is often interpreted to mean absence of war. This is not entirely illegitimate; but on a close scrutiny we find it to be inadequate. Absence of war does not rule out prevalence of tensions and even of cold wars. And where tensions exist, hot war can at any time become a concrete actuality. We must, therefore, go to the root of the matter and define peace in positive terms. Fundamentally, peace is a collective phenomenon, and it connotes a collective state of harmony, which can provide a stable base for activities of growth, development, friendliness, comradeship and brotherhood.

It is true that there is a view that tensions and wars are necessary for development and progress. We are familiar with the declaration of Heraclitus that war is the father of all things. And it is not difficult to show how in the past wars have contributed to multi-faceted progress of mankind. The question, however, is normative, and we must ask whether mankind would not have progressed much faster and in a much better way if wars could have been absent. In this mixed world of contraries, we often find good coming out of evil and evil coming out of good. But that does not give us a clue to the inevitable connections that need to be discovered by reflecting on the ideal laws of harmony. The primitive conditions in which man finds himself in his relation with his fellow beings and the world is that of struggle for existence. This struggle is often portrayed as a battle between the creature and Nature. But we observe that as man becomes increasingly self-conscious, there grows in him an irresistible tendency to learn the law of harmony of himself with the universe. This tendency has become actuated in recent times because of the increasing percep-

tion that world tensions, if allowed to persist, human survival itself may become endangered. This has led to the realisation of an *imperative* need of directing our efforts to generate and strengthen the forces of understanding, harmony and peace.

This realisation constitutes the core of the intention to establish United Nations Organisation and its varied agencies. And when UNESCO declared that defences of peace should be built in the minds of men, there was a clear recognition of the necessity to develop the positive concept of peace and to deal with the problems of peace at a psychological level rather than at the level of politics and diplomacy.

Peace is essentially a state of consciousness, a state "that passeth understanding", a state that we experience when we witness Buddha's ocean of calm or Christ's prayer to liberate mankind from ignorance or in the Rishi's realisation of Perfect Consciousness which is immobile even in the midst of intense mobility and action. It is a state where contraries meet and reconcile themselves by a sort of dialectical movement which conciliates thesis and anti-thesis into a synthesis.

At one time, it was thought that the positive state of peace can be attained only by a few exceptional individuals and that the large masses of people are condemned to live for ever in a state of turmoil, tensions and battles. Fortunately, this view, which can be termed the capitalistic view of peace, is being replaced at an increasing pace by a saner view that the ideals are not a prerogative of a few but they are boons for all. The leaders, who will stand at the forefront of human progress, will be those individuals who will inspire all to climb the heights, however difficult they may be, so that the highest ideals are held in common and are shared in common. We look forward not to the goal of individual salvation, but to the goal of salvation that is collective and which is even physical. It is in pursuit of that goal that we seek peace as a positive, collective and global ideal, and perceive, at the same time, that the means of achieving this goal are to be sought in progressive and increasing perfection of development of faculties which constitutes the essence of human culture.

Peace through culture is the only practicable and sensible

proposition, if we are serious and sincere about what we ought to be doing in the world today. Just as peace is not mere absence of war, neither is it a mere state of civil state of law and order. There are several levels of civilisation where law and order can prevail for shorter or longer temporary periods. But history has shown how such civilisations have declined and fallen, and how deeper aspirations have manifested to go beyond civilisation in search of higher and higher levels of culture. For it is necessary to underline that although man looks primarily for economic stability and civil stability, that is not his chief seeking, and given the complexity of human life, it is difficult to seek primary things first and chief and principal things later. Indeed, for shorter durations, this separation is possible, but as soon as we come to the point of seeking lasting solutions, this separation proves to be a blockade.

Take, for instance, the problem of poverty, - economic poverty. There is no doubt that elimination of poverty should be the primary aim, and it is easy to argue that elimination of poverty should take priority over all other aims and goals. But we see that if we are truly serious about the elimination of poverty, we cannot realise it without, at the same time, realising the ideal of common effort, cooperation, mutuality, harmony, integration and unity. How many nations today, which are poor, are sinking into greater poverty simply because they are torn by inner dissensions and disintegrating factors. The cure of their poverty does not lie in mere economic activities but lies in the pursuit of greater and higher ideals of creating bonds of unity, which are constituents of chief or principal aims of human life. On a higher level, if we take the problem of poverty at the global level, do we not see that this problem becomes more easily soluble if there grows in the world a greater and greater sense and action towards human unity? It requires no acrobatics of mental thought to see that if the amount of money that is being spent today in building up the piles of armament are spent on production and creative activities, and if this effort is done at a global level, transcending all narrow local, national or regional interests, poverty can be abolished within a comparatively short period. And this can be done if the forces of peace press themselves irresistibly and triumphantly.

The problems of poverty become insoluble and dangerously insoluble because we refuse to go to the root of the problem, because we refuse to shake ourselves from the narrow bounds of our present situation, because we refuse to change ourselves.

The real problems of today are not economic problems; they are problems of psychology, they are problems of culture. Mankind has reached a stage where it is blocked, not for want of money, but for want of will to progress. We are blocked by refusals and denials. We are blocked by prejudices and preconceptions. We want to turn round and round, at the most we want to walk horizontally, but we refuse to fly vertically. In sober terms, we are not yet inclined to see that the solution of our problems lie not at lower levels of negativity and compromises but at higher and refined levels of culture.

Culture can be defined in various ways. But for our present purposes, we may define or describe culture as a sum total of the effort to cultivate rational, aesthetic, ethical and spiritual faculties, to educate our physical, instinctive and vital drives by infusing in them increasingly and progressively the light and power and wisdom derived from the cultivation of higher faculties and to create individual and collective life, in its inner and outer aspects in such a way that the law of the individual development and of collective development harmonise with each other.

The purely physical life, devoid of mental interests and pursuits is the opposite of culture; it is barbarism. The unintellectualised vital, the crude economic or the grossly domestic life which looks only to money-getting, the procreation of a family and its maintenance are also opposites of culture. In a certain sense, they are even uglier barbarism. Even the life which is purely practical and dynamic, a life of conventional conduct, average feelings, customary ideas, opinions and prejudices, a life of senses and sensations, controlled by certain conventions, but neither purified nor enlightened nor chastened by any law of beauty, — this too is contrary to the idea of culture which may not be barbarism, it is yet Philistinism. A society, in order to reach the elementary stage of culture, must break the prisons of barbarism and Philistinism. It must develop activities of knowledge and reason and a wide intellectual curiosity, activities of enlightened will which make for

character and high ethical ideals and a large human action, governed by truth and beauty and self-ruling will. This is the ideal of a true culture and the beginning of an accomplished humanity.

This strategy by which this ideal can be channelised in humanity is not easy to find. Education is often supposed to be the best strategy for the creation of cultural life; and if culture is to be the means of peace, then education has to play a most dominant role. Obviously, education that aims at providing information, education that limits the human mind to books and to the goal of passing examinations, cannot be adequate to meet the requirements of the goals of culture and of peace. We must propose new ideals, new contents and new methods of education. Education should aim at the development of rationality which attempts to enlighten and reconcile the conflict between the ethical and the aesthetic; it must aim at providing to each individual deeper depths and higher heights of self-knowledge; realising that there are higher spiritual dimensions of personality, which alone can harmonise the triangular disposition of the rational, the ethical and aesthetic aspects of our personality, realising that it is the spiritual dimensions that can change and transform our blind impulses, drives and desires, and realising that the spiritual is not the negation of the material but rather the power of material transformation, true education should provide ways and means by which the inner spirit can be awakened, developed and chiselled, leading all powers and functions of our being under the dominant guidance of spiritual illumination. Integral education for integral personality — this should be the principal aim of education. It should be stressed that the true self-knowledge liberates us from egoism and opens us up to the gates of universality; the conflict between self and the universe is resolved when the self is seen not as a bounded prison of finitude, but as a centre whose circumference is as wide as the universe. True education should evolve universal man who is spontaneously and effortlessly the citizen of the world.

We speak today of education for international understanding but the means that we employ consist chiefly of exchange of information, exchange of experts and meetings of experts in seminars and conferences. These means are superficial and they can

hardly meet the real demands of the object in view. In the first place, we need to make it clear that international understanding is basically rooted in the idea of the Family of Man. Secondly the real means of establishment of the Family of Man is the cultivation of the sense of brotherhood, which would transcend all narrow loyalties that conflict with the goal of universality. And, thirdly, the sense of brotherhood can grow and develop only by means of education that fosters mutuality, team spirit and self-discipline.

We speak today of education for human rights and people's rights. Unfortunately, we do not speak of human duties and people's duties. It is only when we match rights with duties, and create a new mode of consciousness among learners in which the individual develops collective consciousness and the collectivity develops profound care of the individual that rights and duties come to be fulfilled in a meaningful manner.

Ours is a world beset with tensions, injustices and discriminations. Threat of war accentuates these tensions, injustices and discriminations. And threat of war can be eliminated, as we have seen above, by building defences of peace in all its aspects. Our contention is that peace can be built securely by means of culture, and our deliberations lead us to the conclusion that culture for peace implies a new orientation of human consciousness; it implies eventually transformation of human consciousness. Fostering among people the necessity of this new orientation, this change, this transformation is our immediate and imperative task, to which we are impelled by virtue of circumstances and also by virtue of what we can conceive at the highest and deepest level of our consciousness.

7. Value-Oriented Education

I

Values, secularism and spirituality

At the outset, it seems necessary to deal with the concept of secularism, since we may observe that this concept is ridden with ambiguities in our Indian situation; and it is thus left to every one to interpret it in any way one thinks best. There is a view of secularism, which consists of equality before law irrespective of caste, religion or race. But this view often tends to become tainted in actual situations where there are unreasonable demands coming from religious groups, which insist on special provisions which tend to mitigate the idea of equality before law. There is also the idea of secularism which advocates that the state funds should not be utilised for the promotion of any religion. In practice, very often, this rule is employed even where there is a question of the promotion, not of any religion, but of ethical and spiritual values. There is a tolerant view of secularism, which aims at equal respect for all religions. Here, again, it has become difficult to create an ethos where equal respect for all religions could be practised, and no significant efforts have been made to create a climate where secularism understood in this sense can flourish. There is also a synthetic view of secularism, which aims at bringing about unity of religions on the basis of the unity of moral and spiritual values. This is an excellent idea, but here, again, no significant effort has been made to actualise this view in practice. A very powerful interpretation of secularism is the materialistic view which denies any justification for religion as such. This view tends to get an upper hand, since it can be more convincingly made out that materialism is incontrovertibly secular. The net effect is that our

country has tended to promote confused thought on this vital subject, and people are afraid to think on this subject with clarity and boldness. There is also a tendency to shut the doors even of those tendencies in religions and in spiritual planes which lie above religions, which, if consciously acknowledged and promoted, would heal the divisions of religions, bring about greater understanding among them, and, eventually enable us to cultivate the scientific body of spiritual knowledge. What we need today is a positive recognition of spirituality as distinct from religion; we need also to recognise that there exists a scientific body of spiritual knowledge, and that this needs to be promoted by the state. We may also note that this becomes all the more necessary when we find that the true truths that lie behind democracy and socialism which are underlined in the Indian Constitution can be integrated and expressed effectively only when the ultimate spiritual aims are recognised and promoted.

In sum, the urgent need of India is to evolve a clear concept on the basis of a recognised body of spiritual knowledge which embraces all domains of human life, physical, emotional, vital, dynamic, intellectual, ethical and aesthetic.

Having said this, let us observe that secularism, if it is to subserve the higher aims of spirituality, as distinguished from those of religion, should be conceived to connote several clear and distinguished values. This is not entirely impossible for it can be agreed that it stands for life, that it affirms ideals of growth, and that it aims at the maximum possible perfection of life; that, again, it stands for liberty, that it affirms the individuality of individuals, and that it aims at ever-growing being and becoming; indeed, it questions dogmatism, ignorance and superstition, it affirms the ideal of truth, science and scientific temper, and it aims at progressive and comprehensive knowledge; finally, it combats authority and privileges of the select few, it affirms the right of the weak and the oppressed, it aims at universal emancipation.

Secularism, it may be agreed, is wedded to the conception of the right of all individuals as members of the society to the full life and the full development of which they are individually capable. The master potency of this conception is so great that it is no

longer possible to accept the theory that the many must necessarily remain for ever on the lower ranges of life and only a few climb into the free air and light. It is impossible for it to accept as an ideal any arrangement by which certain classes of society should arrogate development and full social fruition to themselves, while assigning a bare and barren function of service alone to others. Full development of all should be the recognised mark of secularism.

The second master idea that secularism should affirm is that the individual is not merely a social unit, but he is a soul, a being, who has to fulfil his or her own individual truth and law as well as his or her natural or his or her assigned part in the truth and law of the collective existence. It is for this reason that secularism should insist on individual freedom, on individual initiative, individual thought, individual will, individual consciousness.

In the course of the rationalistic age of modern times, momentous experiments have been conducted in democracy, socialism and democratic socialism. These experiments have not been entirely successful. It has been found that when liberty is assured, equality has suffered, and when equality is sought to be assured, liberty gets strangled. In fact, democracy puts forward a trinity of values, liberty, equality and fraternity, and it appears now that the key to the fulfilment of the democratic ideal will depend upon the extent to which the value of fraternity will be applied to the disbalancements which are created in experiments of liberty and equality. A serious issue for secularism is to fathom deep into the heart of fraternity and to create conditions for the realisation of the spirit and practice of universal brotherhood.

II

Individualism, Science and Values

The concept of individualism, which secularism often affirms, needs to be analysed and examined, particularly in the context of the development of science. At an early stage of the development of individualism, it was realised that the unrestrained use of individual judgement without an objective criterion of truth would

mean a perilous experiment. A search was, therefore, instituted to discover a general standard of truth and also for some principle of social order. This search resulted in an answer provided by the discovery of physical science. This answer was two-fold: (1) Physics demonstrated a truth of things which depended upon no doubtful scripture or fallible authority, since that truth was written on the open book of nature which everybody can read, provided he had the patience to observe and intellectual honesty to judge; (2) Science provided a norm of knowledge and principles of verification to which all can freely and must rationally subscribe. This answer was the culminating point of the 19th century in Europe, which was preceded by two centuries of preparation. During these two centuries, the method of scientific induction was evolved, and a new scientific outlook on the world was developed. What we call today scientific temper is the result of this great endeavour. Since then, there is a widespread acceptance of the attitude which maintains that statements of facts should be based on observation, and not on unsupported authority.

It must however be observed that the victory of the physical science was largely due to its application, its technique and technology. Beginning with the discovery of gun powder and mariner's compass to the discoveries of electricity and telegraphy, and atomic power, we have a long story of mixed colours of good and evil, and we have today increasing number of sensitive and refined thinkers who have even come to equate science and technology with domination and violence. Some of them have fixed their attention on the way in which development is projected in India and elsewhere, and they have brought quite vividly the peril of plunder, propaganda and violence to which masses of people are being subjected in the name of science and development. Promises of science have come to be questioned and there are increasing trends of thought which advocate limits to growth and the use of technology to control technology. The idea of the "small is beautiful" has achieved a wide appeal. There is a growing awareness that all is not well with science and technology, that things cannot be allowed unchecked and unchallenged, and that fundamental issues of humanity's future need to be considered without any dogmatism, even if it implies questioning science itself.

We need, however, to draw up a more balanced evaluation of the contribution of science, particularly when scientific progress has a great role to play in determining the directions of value education. Let us, first, underline that science has affirmed the virtues of impartiality, of ever-widening quest of knowledge. It has fought against ignorance and superstition, and it has enhanced the cause of education. Science has enlarged for good the intellectual horizons of the human race, and raised, sharpened and intensified powerfully the general intellectual capacity of mankind. In its dispassionate movement, science pursues truth for the sake of truth and knowledge for the sake of knowledge. This is the highest right of the intellectual faculty of humanity, and in this dispassionate functioning, there is perfect purity and satisfaction.

On the other hand, when science tries to apply its discoveries and functions to life, it becomes the plaything of forces over which it has little control. This is the reason why the balance sheet of science is a mixed one. While, on the one hand, science has made discoveries which have promoted practical humanitarianism, it has, on the other hand, supplied monstrous weapons to egoism and mutual destruction; while, on the one hand, it has made a gigantic efficiency of organisation utilisable for economic and social amelioration of nations, it has, on the other hand, placed the same efficiency of organisation in the hands of national rivalries for mutual aggression, ruin and slaughter; while, on the one hand, it has given rise to a large rationalistic altruism, it has, on the other hand, justified monstrous egoism, vitalism, vulgar will to power and success; while on the one hand, it has drawn mankind together and given it a new hope, it has, on the other hand, crushed it with the burden of commercialism.

Science does not have within itself any inherent leverage by which it can prevent its exploitation by human impulses and passions, and since it can produce great results, its exploitation for evil can also be great. The modern civilisation, which is science-based, has to deal with an extremely difficult issue that it has created, namely, that of the emergence of dominant economic barbarism. This barbarism impels humanity to sink in the mud of desire and hunger on a massive scale. It makes satisfaction of wants and

desires and accumulation of possessions its standard and aim. It has conceived of the ideal individual in the image not of the cultured or noble or thoughtful or moral, or spiritual person, but of the successful person. It puts forward the opulent plutocrat and the successful mammoth capitalist as images of achievement and fulfilment. It is this barbarism which assigns to them the actual power to rule the society. It prescribes pursuit of vital success, comfort, enjoyment for their own sake. It subordinates all other pursuits; it looks upon beauty as nuisance, art and poetry as a frivolity or means of advertisement. Social respectability is its idea of morality; it uses politics as a door for markets and exploitation.

It is now increasingly recognised that the development of science should be supplemented by enormous development of human goodness. Bertrand Russell has pointed out that there are two ancient evils that science, unwisely used, may intensify: they are tyranny and war. In an important study of the theme of science and values, Bertrand Russell declared:

There are certain things that our age needs, and certain things that it should avoid. It needs compassion and a wish that mankind should be happy; it needs the desire for knowledge and the determination to eschew pleasant myths; it needs above all courageous hope and the impulse to creativeness. The things that it must avoid, and that have brought it to the brink of catastrophe, are cruelty, envy, greed, competitiveness, search for irrational subjective certainty, and what Freudians call the death wish.... The root of the matter is very simple and old fashioned thing ... the thing I mean — please forgive me for mentioning it — is love, Christian love, or compassion. If you feel this, you have a motive for existence, a guide in action, a reason for courage, an imperative necessity for intellectual honesty.

We thus see that the central issue of our age is the growth of love, of compassion, of fraternity. This is the conclusion that is reinforced when we consider the issues of human unity and those of development. Global unity is necessitated by a number of factors, — the growth of science which is universal in character,

powerful means of communication and transport which have tended to shrink the world, and prospects of enormous economies if regions and continents can unite. But even when there are increasing reductions of armaments, there is a fear in mankind; for there are still enough nuclear warheads which can destroy the world several times over. Hence, there is a continuing need to build the defences of peace in the minds and hearts of men. Again, at a time when the world is shrinking, the gulf between the rich and the poor is widening. The sharp disparities of development and asymmetrical relations among nations are impelling disadvantaged countries to seek unattainable goals. The resulting vicious circle of dilemmas and predicaments can be broken, it seems, only if it is realised that development like peace is indivisible and that not by competition and exploitation, but by mutual help and cooperation can the goals of development be realised. Development of peace and development of cooperation seem to be indispensable for the modern society's future growth and advancement.

It is clear that if science is to be utilised for stabilising society, if world unity is to be achieved, and if development of all nations is to be secured, we have to work vigorously on human beings. It is evident that present structures of society and human nature as they are today are incapable of taking us to the road to fulfilment. And it seems obvious that the systems and structures cannot be changed if human nature cannot be changed. And when we speak of the change of human nature, we speak of radical operations of the maladies of human nature. We need to create human beings who will feel spontaneous brotherhood with all; we need human beings who will effortlessly extend cooperation in tasks of development; we need human beings who will have peace within themselves so that they will radiate peace in their environment.

This goal that we need to seek is to be viewed in the context in which we find an irresistible drive towards totality and all-comprehensiveness. The wheels of the world are spinning so fast today that we are all obliged to overpass our limitations continuously and interminably. We are proceeding towards the future where a peculiar combination of wide comprehensiveness and effective specialisation will become imperative; they will have to be fused together.

This is further reinforced by the human crisis created by the need of the development of new faculties of consciousness.

All this explains why we need value education and why we need integral education. In recent trends of thought, we have been presented with the ideal of learning to be and learning to become. It is only when there is a right balance of the development of all our faculties that we can reach and attain the state of self-possession and self-mastery. We can then experience our true being and discover the secret of our perpetual being. We need to emphasise, therefore, the education of all our parts of being, physical, vital, rational, aesthetic, moral and spiritual. And the development of faculties and capacities of these parts of the being is closely connected with the question of the values that they seek. Values are the ultimate ends that personality seeks to embody, express and fulfil. Corresponding to each capacity, there are specific values. Our physical being seeks the value of health and strength; our vital being seeks the value of harmony and heroism; our rational faculty seeks the value of truth and universality; our moral will seeks the good and the right; our aesthetic sensitivity seeks the value of beauty and joy; and our spiritual faculties seek experiences and realisations of inalienable fraternity, unity and oneness. Integral education, therefore, is the same as integral value education.

This, we may say, is the broad framework of the theme of value education, and we stand in the need of clarifying and discussing implications of this framework. Much work has been done during the last four decades and more. But the issues are difficult. They involve questions of goals of education, contents of education, methods of education. They relate to the goals of society also, and therefore, the climate of life at home, life in institutions, and life in general. There are also issues connected with parents and teachers, question as to how we look upon the child, how the entire society gets involved in the process of learning and teaching. There is also the issue of developing a learning society. It is for this reason that we need to think more and more rigorously, and to be engaged in the process of value education.

8. Value-Oriented Education II

We are passing through a critical stage of a battle between the best possibilities and the worst possibilities. At a time when forces of unity and harmony can triumph and science and technology can be used to abolish poverty and deprivation, precisely at that time, the forces of violence and gravitational pulls of impulses of the lower human nature are pressing forward on a global scale. Rationality, in which humanity has placed great trust for arriving at fulfilment of its ideals of true knowledge and comprehensive knowledge, appears to be overtaken by the forces of Unreason. It has, therefore, become imperative to explore deeper and higher dimensions of human resources by means of which we can successfully work for the victory of the ideal dreams which have inspired the onward march of civilisation.

It is in this context that the theme of education for character development has emerged with some imperative force. And our eyes have turned to the dimensions of values, the dimensions of will-power and to the dimensions of cultural, ethical and spiritual potentialities. These dimensions have not yet been sufficiently explored, but we have begun to uncover what lies in our present framework that would meet our urgent need to uplift ourselves and the coming generations.

In India, our Constitution has been wisely prefaced with the ideals of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity in its very Preamble; it has guaranteed certain basic fundamental rights and it has given a chapter on Directive Principles of the State Policy, which although not legally enforceable, embodies ideals and values, which are salutary for the progress of India on the lines which had come to be articulated and cherished during the Freedom Struggle.

In 1976, realising that apart from Rights, there is a need to emphasise responsibilities, obligations and duties of the citizens, Article 51 A was inserted to lay down certain fundamental duties. It is to that Article that we have recently turned our focal attention, with the hope that its operationalisation in the field of education would bring about a new climate of recovery of forces that can regenerate national ethos, national unity and integrity.

Government of India did well, therefore, in appointing a high level committee, in July 1998, to operationalise suggestions to teach fundamental duties to the citizens of the country. This Committee is chaired by Mr. Justice J.S. Verma, the former Chief Justice of India, and it has recently submitted its final Report to the Minister of Human-Resource Development on 31st October 1999. This is also the time when the NCERT has undertaken the Review of Curricular Framework, and we can expect that the recommendations regarding the Rights and Duties will find favourable application.

The Verma Committee has done well to highlight the work which has been done by the International Interaction Council in drafting a Declaration of Human Responsibilities.

This Council had a preliminary meeting in Vienna, Austria in March 1996, April 1997 and the Plenary Session was held in Noordwijk, Netherlands, in June 1997. On 1st September, 1997, the Inter Action Council proposed a universal declaration of human responsibilities, just one year before the 50th anniversary of the universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations. A number of former Prime Ministers, former Presidents, and leading personalities in the fields of thought and practical action have endorsed this draft of universal declaration of human responsibilities. The basic point that has been made by the Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities is that the concept of human obligations serves to balance the notions of freedom and responsibilities. Without a proper balance, unrestricted freedom is as dangerous as imposed social responsibilities. It declares, in effect, that if we have a right to life then we have the obligation to respect life; and if we have right to liberty, then we have the obligation to respect other peoples' liberty too.

In other words, the golden rule of responsibility is that we do not do to others what we do not wish to be done to us; or that we should do unto others as we would have them to do unto us.

This draft declaration which has now been submitted to the world community at large reaffirms that the time has come to talk about responsibilities, about obligations. It also shows that the action taken by the Government of India to set up a Committee of Teaching Fundamental Duties is timely and that while we have talked for decades of value-education, we have now to take decisive action in implementing the programmes of value-education.

Let us recall that various commissions and committees of the Government of India have underlined the importance of value-education and important recommendations have been made to distinguish morality and spirituality from religious creeds, so that imparting of moral and spiritual values does not come within the purview of the prohibition that is laid down in the Constitution to impart religious education in educational institutions that are financially supported by the Government. Dr. Radhakrishnan had made a distinction between a religious education and education about religions and advocated that there is no constitutional-disability in imparting education about religions in our educational system. The Sriprakash Committee had advocated moral, emotional and cultural education as understood in their widest connotations. The Kothari Commission recommended value-education that is in coherence with the development of science and scientific temper. The National Education Policy, 1986, devoted one full section to value-education.

Unfortunately, our curricula, by and large, have changed little or only marginally. The main difficulty has been that there has been a long drawn out debate on what values should be promoted and what place should be given to study of religions, which are closely connected with value systems. In answer to this debate, there is one thing which is very clear, and that is the Fundamental Duties, which have been listed in the Constitution, which represents national consensus and which has some kind of binding force.

The Fundamental Duties include, first and foremost, the obligation on the part of the citizens to abide by the Constitution and

to respect its ideals and institutions. In large terms, this would mean obligation to secure justice, liberty, equality and fraternity as also the values that are embedded in the Fundamental Rights and the Directive Principles of the State Policy. In declaring that these duties will include the obligation to cherish and follow the noble ideals which inspired our national struggle for freedom, we have a wide spectrum of values, spiritual, moral, economic, social and political. Again, in laying down the obligations to value and preservation of the rich heritage of our composite culture, the Constitution has stressed the wide range of values that have come to be cherished right from the times of the Veda to the present day, which has played a role towards assimilation and synthesis. Again, in laying down the duties to develop scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform, the emphasis has been laid on the value of truth, knowledge and freedom from dogmatism and obscurantism, — all that is valuable in modernism. In requiring everyone to protect and improve the natural environment and in renouncing practices that are derogatory to the dignity of women and in developing compassion for living creatures, some of the most pressing problems of contemporary times in the fields of environment and empowerment of women has been taken into account. Finally, by insisting on striving towards excellence in all the spheres of individual and collective activity, a great ideal has been stressed in respect of the perfectibility of the individual and the society and their harmonious relationships.

This is not an occasion to bring out the implications of these duties and salutary effects that the operationalisation of duties in the field of education could bring about. It must be said, however, that this operationalisation should be regarded as a good beginning in the right direction, although the higher goals of man-making education of which Swami Vivekananda spoke will imply a still greater effort and we should not lose sight of this higher goal and the need for still greater efforts.

There is a dimension of values, which transcends the dimension of duties. That dimension is the spontaneous perception and commitment to ends-in-themselves. If I love a friend only as a matter of duty, it is, in a sense, not as valuable as I do so out of

my spontaneous appreciation and admiration for him and for his achievements and qualities. Love for my own country as a duty is inferior to the love of a patriot that arises spontaneously in his heart and soul, as he looks upon his country as the very source of his breath and life. Search for truth is an end in itself, search for goodness is an end in itself, search for beauty is an end in itself; and they have to be encouraged not as duties but as irresistible demands of our being as we begin to uncover deeper and higher depths of our Selves, which transcend the limitations of egoism.

Self-knowledge and self-control are the true foundations of value-education. As Socrates had pointed out, virtue is knowledge, and it is when knowledge is rightly pursued, that pursuit of virtue attains its right place as a spontaneous action and it has a lustre brighter than that obtains in performance of our duty.

These reflections have two important consequences in our formulations of value-education. Firstly, value-education does not merely remain a matter of do's and don'ts; it becomes a process of exploration, and it crosses the border of constraints that are felt in the performance of duties and leads us into a realm of freedom of which discipline for performance of duty is a happy product. Secondly, value-education opens before us the gates of the harmony between truth, beauty and goodness, which impart to us the sources of true humanism and even our true godliness.

It is necessary to bring out, even though briefly, these important dimensions of value-education, since it will help us better to prepare our curriculum of value-education in its wider aspects, and also to prepare corresponding programmes of teacher-education.

The role of the teacher in education is irreplaceable, and unless the teachers' programmes or training are conceived in the light of the full implications of value-education, we shall not be able to equip the teachers with the right inspiration and with the required tools. If value-education has suffered so far, it is because teachers' training programmes fall short in many ways of an ideal system. We require to redesign programmes of teachers education, both pre-service and in-service; in a certain sense, we need to overhaul our entire system of teacher education, keeping in view that value-education is absolutely imperative and that unless a good teacher

is himself value-oriented, we cannot fulfil the objectives of value-education.

We have to realise that methods of value-education have to be different from those which are required in respect of many other subjects. The reason is that in value-education what we need is not merely the cultivation of cognitive faculties but also affective and conative faculties. One cannot merely give lectures on value-education and expect to fulfil the objectives. Just as swimming cannot be taught merely by lecturing, but by leading the learner to jump into the water and help him in the practical art of swimming in the midst of water, similarly, value-education requires of the teacher the ability to inspire the student to enter into the waters of life-situations and give him practical abilities and art of practising values in concrete situations of life. In a sense, it may be said that value-education is perhaps the most difficult domain among all domains of education.

Without going into details, it may be said that we need to undertake a three-pronged exercise in the teacher education programmes:

Firstly, our programmes must be so inspiring that teachers come to look upon the task of teaching as sacred;

Secondly, the curriculum of teachers' training programme should have the component of the theory of value-education, both in terms of the foundations of Fundamental Duties and of the values which lie beyond the domain of duties; and it should have also a component of practical art of the practice of exploration of values in life-situations;

And thirdly, the duration that is normally assigned to teacher education programmes should be sufficiently enlarged. A most salutary combination would be to propose an integrated programme of teacher education of the duration of five years on the completion of class XII, leading to a qualification equivalent to post-graduation. That has also consequences for career development and other aspects relevant to the structure and framework of teaching profession. But this is an aspect, which needs to be looked into separately.

In any programme of education for character development, we

need to ask three important questions. Firstly, we have to determine with greater precision what we mean by character and how the development of character can be stimulated and nourished through the processes of communication and information, cultivation of faculties, and the methods by which the states of consciousness which express themselves in virtues can be stabilised. For character development is concerned with what may be called being or the central core of the individuality which tends to grow into universality and sovereignty of transcendence. Indeed, the concepts of individuality, universality and transcendence can be communicated to some extent in the form of information which relates to the history of these concepts and how these concepts have been interpreted by different thinkers, scholars and practitioners and how they have been applied in life and in the development of civilisations and cultures. Indeed, this information can kindle the inner urge of the individual to grow inwardly and to fashion the processes of learning which can properly be called the processes of learning to be. But still, the part played by communication of information in the development of character is only peripheral or of primary importance and not of chief importance.

A greater part is played in the character development by the development or cultivation of faculties and if we study numerous faculties that human personality comes to possess, we shall find that they relate to four main groups, namely (1) those which pertain to understanding, comprehension, synthesis, universality, knowledge and wisdom; (2) those that relate to will-power, fearlessness, courage, heroism, control, mastery, power and strength; (3) those that relate to imagination, sensibility, emotional refinement, harmony in relationships, friendship, co-operation, and loyalty, allegiance, unfailing love; and (4) those that pertain to skills of expressions, patience, perseverance, endurance, love for precision, and detailed execution of command, order, system and search for perfection. Unfortunately, in our curricular framework, preponderant emphasis is laid upon communication of information, but no deliberate attempt is made to the task of stimulating the cultivation of faculties; and yet, if faculties develop among our students, they do so because faculties have an inborn stress in

themselves to push forward their developments. But a more rational and careful curriculum should provide guide-lines, occasions and exercises by which faculties can be cultivated consciously and systematically.

But of even greater importance in character development is the role played by development of attitudes and states of consciousness. The depth of seriousness which accompanies the process of search or quest will determine the quality of search or quest and its eventual success. And the states of seriousness result from the cultivation of attitudes and of sincerity. If we examine closely, we shall find that what we call virtues are basically manifestations of certain states of consciousness; it is virtues that constitute character; and the stability of character depends upon the stabilisation of those states of consciousness which constitute virtues. How to develop, therefore, virtuous states of consciousness and how to stabilise them should constitute a major constituent of education for character development.

Closely connected with this first set of questions is the second set of questions which relate to the aim of life. The moment we raise the question of aim of life, we begin to address ourselves to something that is central in our being, in our potentialities and in what we can become and can be fulfilled. No great character can be built where the aim of life remains a matter of doubt or tends to be neglected or retained for consideration or amusement in our hours of idleness or superficial leisure. Indeed, the theme of the aim of life should become a theme of exploration, and during the process of exploration one has to pass through periods of doubts, periods of long reflection, periods of experimentation and even of uncertainty. Educational process should provide both time and scope for this kind of exploration and every student should be provided with enough material in respect of this theme. Indeed, no prefixed aim of life should be proposed and no indoctrination or dogmatic assertions should be thrust upon on the mind and heart of the student. But the educational process should allow each student a process of exploration, experimentation and reflection as a result of which a mature decision is arrived at as to what aim of life one should pursue. It will then be seen that the quality of life and the

quality of character reflect the quality of aim of life that one determines to realise.

Finally, there is a third set of questions which are also relevant to the development of character. These questions relate to the ways and means by which students become conscious of the methods of learning and methods by which character can be developed. In other words, character development has to become a conscious process, a deliberate process, voluntary process. Students have to become conscious of the psychological complexities and how the tangles of instincts, desires, emotions, will-force, powers of thought and imagination and the powers of aesthetic, ethical and spiritual consciousness can be understood, disentangled and yet controlled, mastered and harmonised. This is perhaps the most important part of education for character development. Here we have to focus upon the processes by which students can gradually become conscious of their inner being, of their potentialities, of their own character so that students can take upon themselves the task of fashioning and perfecting what is best in them.

Whether we are dealing with the curriculum for students or for teacher education, we need to bring forth these deeper aspects. At a time when the curriculum is now being debated, it is opportune for us to delve deep into these questions and suggest those considerations that should get reflected in the framework that will emerge from the present deliberations on the curriculum.

9. Conception of Education in Ancient Indian Tradition and Culture and its Contemporary Relevance

Introductory Questions

At the outset, let us ask the question as to why we need to explore the concept of education in the ancient Indian tradition, and why we want to ascertain the relevance of that concept to the present time. Justification for this exploration could arise if we ask a further question as to whether our present system of education is relevant to our own times, and if we are prepared to undertake a critique of the present system.

Do we Need to Change the Present System of Education?

There is a view that the present system of education is, after all, quite reasonable and what we need is to make it a little more sophisticated, much more polished, with some modifications here and there like vocationalisation and job-orientation, and what we further need is to ensure accountability of teachers and educational institutions. It has even been prominently asked, in defence of the present system, if we ourselves are not the products of that system and whether we are not, more or less, quite well-equipped to deal with our responsibilities.

There is, on the other hand, a more progressive view, which does not admit that we, the products of the system of education, are what we ought to be, that a better system could have made us better equipped, in terms of both personality and skills, and capable of meeting the demands and challenges of our times. The spectrum of this view is quite wide, and at one end, it advocates

some major reforms, and at the other end, it advocates a number of radical reforms. In any case, this view argues that education must aim at the integral development of personality and that we need to have complete education for the complete human being. Analysing the concept of the integral development of personality, it pleads for the harmonisation of the physical, vital and mental personality. It also recognises that the mental personality itself requires harmonisation of the rational, the ethical and the aesthetic. Two further propositions are also added: first, that the personality develops best when the educational atmosphere provides to every student a good deal of freedom; — freedom in pursuing inner inclinations, freedom in regulating pace of progress, and freedom in determining directions of education; and secondly, that education should be so child-centred that it not only puts the child in the centre of the classroom but also in the centre of the society itself.

Implications of these contentions are momentous. They require major changes in the attitudes of teachers, parents, and educational administrators, even of the students themselves. They demand applications of new methodologies of education and transformations in the classroom situation, in teaching-learning materials and in the established routine of the educational institutions; they also demand radical reviews of curricula, syllabi and the current examination system.

Closely connected with these demands, life-long education is also being underlined. Correspondingly, a great expansion of non-formal education and open system of education is also being advocated. Finally, the concept of learning society is being increasingly proposed as the right setting for all the innovations and reforms of education.

Difficulties

The major difficulty in implementing these important proposals is threefold: (i) as noted above, these reforms call for great changes in attitudes among all the partners of education and these changes are not at all easy or facile; (ii) they also imply difficult structural changes, which need to be conceived, designed and

implemented on a sustainable basis and there are no agencies that could accomplish these tasks; and (iii) they require not only major funding but also prudent planning, prioritisation and delicate balancing between the act of modifying or dismantling the old and that of creation of the new.

Need for Bolder Reforms

It is in the context of this situation that serious and sincere educationists feel hesitant to make some further and bolder proposals, particularly in the context of the Indian system of education, — proposals which are indispensable and which can be postponed only on the peril of risking loss of cultural identity and even of crippling the very soul of India.

Let us examine this aspect in some detail.

We are all aware that the current Indian system of education was designed by the Britishers for their narrower purposes and for promoting in our country the Western view of India, — her past and her period of decline or backwardness and the cure by which they thought India could occupy some place among those countries, which could tolerably be described as "civilised". Unfortunately, what the Britishers designed has hardly been altered even after our attainment of Independence, and whatever changes have occurred can only be regarded as cosmetic in character. Worst of all, those institutions which had come up under the influence of the nationalist movement came to be closed down or they were obliged to fall in line with the "normal" system of education designed by the Britishers. And the financial allocations made to education departments were distributed among the increasingly multiplying number of institutions belonging to the "normal" pattern. Free India's money was thus pumped more and more vigorously to spread in India on a vast scale that very system which the nationalist leaders had dreamt to demolish once Independence was won. This situation is continuing with increasing vigour, and unless we bestir ourselves vehemently to think afresh, and design afresh, one does not see how else we shall be able to redress the harm that we are inflicting on generations upon generations and to the cause of Indian renaissance.

Free India's Failure

It is noteworthy that the greatest representatives of the Indian renaissance, from Maharshi Dayananda Saraswati to Sri Aurobindo, had perceived in the ancient Indian system of education such an uplifting and inspiring model that they had all advocated for free India a national system of education, rooted in the ancient Indian conception of education, which would, at the same time, cater to the ideals of internationalism and universality. They had all dreamt of a free India where students would relive the presence and guidance of the wise and benign and courageous Rishis who had sown in the soil of India the seeds of perennial inspiration. They wanted to recreate sanctuaries of living souls who could be fostered by teachers who would, like *Vashistha* and *Vishwamitra*, *Vamadeva* and *Bharadwaja*, remain unfettered by dogma or any restraining force of limitation or obscurantism. They wanted perfect harmony between the human and the natural, between the individual and the universal, between the mundane and the supramundane. Their message was clear that the ancient Indian concept of education should not only be revisited by free India but should also be resurrected, renovated and perfected by the aid of all that is modern and useful, by all that is Indian and universal.

Let us Do the Needful

There is no point in crying over the fact that free India has so far failed in giving shape to the dreams and aspirations of these great pioneers. But is it not overdue that we try to understand them, get into the heart of the ancient Indian system of education, evaluate it in the light of the needs of today and tomorrow and design for our children something new that will give to them the best fruits of their heritage and also the best fruits of modern advancement?

II

Three characteristics of the Ancient Indian Concept of Education

If we study the Veda and the Upanishads, and the related literature from where we can get some glimpses of the ancient Indian concept of education, we shall find that there were three special characteristics of that conception. The first characteristic stresses the fact that the educational process had resulted from the understanding of the fullness of life, its own methods of instruction and how these methods can be employed by teachers to secure acceleration of progress of students. The second characteristic is related to the astonishing fund of integral knowledge that could serve as the foundation of the contents of education. And the third emerges from the ancient pursuit of individual and collective perfectibility in the light of their laborious experiments related to the human potentialities.

Let us briefly elucidate them.

1. Education and Life: Methods of Education; Role of teachers and students

Education was conceived as something springing from life itself, and it was conceived as a part of the organisation of life and it was designed to relate education with life and its highest possible fulfilment.

It was observed that life itself is the great teacher of life, that life which is in its outer movement a series of shocks of meeting between individuals and circumstances, has in its inner heart a secret method of progression from untruth to truth, from darkness to light, and from death to immortality. It was further observed that this process of life can be systematically organised and methods can be built by which the intended progression can be accelerated. Accordingly, education came to be conceived as a methodised organisation of life in which threads of progression are so woven that each individual can be aided to bring about a judicious acceleration of the rate of his growth and development.

In this conception, the home of the teacher represented the fabric of life in which the educational process was subtly and methodically intertwined in such a way that all life was education and all educational activities throbbed with life-experience.

The home of the teacher, which came to be called the *ashrama* or *gurukula*, was centred on students, and each student received individual attention. The teacher looked upon his task as that of an observer, as a helper, as a guide, — not as that of a taskmaster. He taught best, not so much through instruction, as through the example of his wisdom and character and through his personal and intimate contact with the soul of each student. He had no rigid or uniform methods; but he applied every possible method in a varying manner in regard to every student. For *Satyakama*, the teacher would apply the simple method of learning through the activities connected with grazing cattle; for *Shvetaketu*, the teacher would apply the method of meaningful questioning and demonstration through apt examples; *Pippalada* asked his pupils to dwell for one year in holiness and faith and askesis before they could put their questions; and *Bhrigu* was asked by his father and the teacher, *Varuna*, to concentrate himself in thought and discover the truth of Matter, of Life, of Mind, and of the Supermind and of the Bliss by successive and higher and higher meditations. Often the teacher communicated through silence so as to destroy the doubts in the minds of the pupils; the teacher taught students in groups but also individually; the teacher, in fact, utilised every incident of life for imparting knowledge and experience.

The student was looked upon as a seeker, not to be silenced by any dogmatic answers, but to be uplifted in higher processes of thought, meditation and direct experience or realisation. In the educational process, student's enthusiasm, *utsaha*, was of utmost importance. *Svadhyaya* was the cornerstone of the learning process. Nothing was imposed upon the student except the willing acceptance of the discipline. The pupil was the *brahmacharin*, devoted to self-control and askesis; he was asked to obey the command of the teacher, knowing very well that the teacher asked nothing arbitrary and only laid down the path by which self-perfection can be attained. The teacher was the Rishi who knew the inmost needs of

the growth of the soul of the student, and he had the knowledge and power to place each student on the right road to perfection. It was left to the student to walk or run on that road, according to his ability, inclination and rate of progression.

The teacher and the pupil lived a joint life, a life of joint prayer, of joint endeavour, of joint conquest of knowledge. Just as the student sought the teacher, even so, the teacher too, sought the student. As the teacher in the Taittiriya Upanishad announces: *May the Brahmacharins come unto me. From here and there, may the Brahmacharins come unto me.*

An important element in the organisation of education was that of Time, *Kala*. The teacher knew that everything in life has a rhythm of germination and flowering, and every process of life has a rhythm of development, which can be measured in terms of time. The teacher, therefore, combined the methods that required patience with those that ensured perfection. He knew how the student can be enabled to arrive at progression, neither too quickly nor too slowly, but by slow building up of foundation and rapid process of the blossoming of the faculties. Each student was, therefore, helped to obtain a judicious rate of progression and a judicious rate of acceleration.

The most important element in the educational process was the illumined condition of the teacher, — his state of knowledge, his command over different domains of life, his ripe experience, his wisdom, his realisation.

This brings us to the second characteristic of the ancient Indian concept of education.

2. Integral Knowledge; Importance of the Intellect; Exploration and Realisation of the Superconscious

As we study the Veda and the Upanishad, we are struck by the profundity and loftiness of the knowledge that the Rishis had attained. The Vedas and the Upanishads can rightly be regarded as the records of "integral knowledge:, — the synthesis of God-knowledge, self-knowledge and world knowledge. The Rishis, the composers of these great compositions, had arrived at the secret methods of attaining deeper and higher states of consciousness;

and they had formulated various forms of concentration, which served as the key to knowledge. They had discovered that what the world revealed to us in response to our seeking and questioning depended on the state of sincerity, of impartiality, of complete identity between the subject and the object of knowledge. Thus they knew the secret of intuition, revelation, inspiration and discrimination. But they knew very well also the knowledge by separate means of knowledge, knowledge that can be attained by senses, and the knowledge that can be obtained by reasoning and intellectual thought.

The famous *Gayatri* mantra of *Vishwamitra* singles out one faculty of the human being as of singular importance, without whose cultivation and concentration, the best or the highest cannot be attained. This is the faculty of *dhi*, the pure intellect. This mantra indicates that it is only when the intellect can be trained in the system of meditation and contemplation that the major step in the process of knowledge can be taken. This *Gayatri* mantra also indicates that *Vishwamitra* had discovered the highest domain of luminous knowledge, which is symbolised as *Savitri*. He had further discovered that intellect can be so trained that it can succeed in concentrating upon that higher Light. Finally, it indicates that the intellect can be properly directed when it joins itself with *Savitri*, with the most beautiful form of creative Light.

The Vedas and the Upanishads abound with thousands of statements and indications that the world can best be known when its source is known and only when its relationship with the individuals is known, — individuals who take it as a field of their experience, their enjoyment, their bondage and their liberation. The modern psychologist takes great pride in his discovery of the unconscious and the subconscious, but the *Rishi*, the Vedic teacher, had discovered even the inconscient that which was wrapped darkly in the shroud of darkness. He had discovered also how the inconscient awakens and becomes the subconscient and how the subconscient and the conscient are related to each other. He had also the assured knowledge of the deeper and deepest domains of consciousness that lie behind (not below) the outer layers of consciousness. He had also scaled the heights of the superconscient, and not stopping

anywhere, he had declared that as one rises the ladder higher and higher, more and more becomes clear as to what still remains to be known. The Vedic Rishi declares his own state of knowledge where all darkness gets shattered and where his soul, like the falcon, liberates itself from the hundred chains of iron and soars above in the wide sky of consciousness in liberation, to the unmixed truth and to the unmixed bliss. The Vedic Rishi tells ús of the secret of immortality and of the great path by which that secret can be attained by every human being.

The ancient Indian concept of education had its foundations in the Vedic and the Upanishadic integral knowledge. Its aim was to transmit to the new generations this knowledge and to develop it further by means of fresh quest and experimentation.

3. Human potentialities and pursuit of Individual and Collective Perfectibility

The third characteristic of the ancient conception of education was its emphasis on harmonisation of different aspects of personality so that the physical being of the individual is made a strong base for sustaining the growth and perfection of the vital, mental and higher aspects of personality. The *Taittiriya Upanishad* speaks of five sheaths in the human being, all of which needs to be integrated, — *annamaya*, the physical, *pranamaya*, the vital, *manomaya*, the mental, *vijnanamaya*, the supramental, and *anandamaya*, the bliss that is conscious and self-existent. The Vedic and the Upanishadic Rishis had made a thorough study of the problem of integration and come to the conclusion that the mental being, *manomaya*, is the leader of the physical and the vital, — *prana sharira neta*, and that it is by developing the mental powers that the vital and the physical can be controlled and mastered, although the real and lasting integration can come about only when one develops higher degrees of consciousness which transcend the mental consciousness.

According to the ancient Indian psychology, the physical, the vital, and the mental can be uplifted to their higher perfection when the Spirit is made to manifest its four powers, the power of wisdom, the power of heroism, the power of harmony and the

power of skill in works. The *Purusha Sukta* of the *Rigveda* makes it clear that these four powers are all spiritual in character and that it is when all of them are fully manifested that the deepest divinity can become operative in our dynamic life. At the same time, the concept of *swabhava* and *swadharma* was developed on this basis, a full exposition of which we get in the *Bhagavadgita*. Each individual has, according to this system of knowledge, a predominant force which gives rise to a special tendency in the being, either of wisdom or of heroism or of harmony or of skill. This predominant tendency is what is called *swabhava* and each individual needs to be given the freedom to develop on the lines of one's own *swabhava*. The Indian system of education made a special provision so that each *swabhava* receives the necessary aid and framework of development as also the system of culture and the system of developing those qualities which can ultimately foster and nourish the totality of the personality. It was a later corruption of this great psychological principle of *swabhava* that led to the development of the caste system, where *swabhava* was the least to be considered and its inner truth was sacrificed in favour of the system of determination by birth and the system of privileges and handicaps — a parody of the ancient insights of profound psychology.

Nonetheless, the ancient system of education in India, in its peak period, produced amazing results in terms of development of faculties and capacities, and their integration, a supreme example of which is found in the personality of *Sri Krishna* who was at once a spiritual teacher, a heroic warrior, a great harmoniser, and skilful worker who could excel in the task of a charioteer in the field of *Kurukshetra*. If we consider the spiritual history of India and also its history of dynamic activities that built up great edifices of mathematics and natural sciences, medical sciences, numberless philosophies, teeming *dharmashastras*, profusion of literature, art and architecture, and powerful administration and system of governance, we shall find that these great achievements were traceable to the ancient system of education. This system, though spiritual in character, did not reject the life on the earth, but laid it down that the higher achievements are to be attained in the life of the earth, — here itself, *iha eva*.

This system put forward the conception of *shreshtha*, and pointed out various qualities that we should expect in the ideal personality. This conception was emphasised because it was consciously recognised that people tend to follow the best and distribution of the best qualities among people at large can be effected only by encouraging and fostering the best.*

In the heart of the *shreshtha*, these qualities blossomed: benevolence, love, compassion, altruism, long suffering, liberality, kindness and patience; in his character, the qualities of courage, heroism, energy, loyalty, continence, truth, honour, justice, faith, obedience, and reverence. These qualities included also a fine modesty and yet noble pride, and power to govern and direct.

The *shreshtha* was required to develop in his mind wisdom and intelligence and love of learning, openness to poetry, art and beauty, and dedicated capacity and skill in works. In his inner life, he had the urge to seek after the highest and nourish the spiritual turn. In his social relations and conduct, he was strict in his observance of all social responsibilities as father, son, husband, brother, kinsman, friend, ruler, master and servant, prince or warrior, or worker, king or sage. *Shreshtha*, the best, was an ideal seeker of the spirit endowed with robust rationality, both spirit-wise and world-wise, nobility, and devotion to *dharma*. He was tolerant of life's difficulties and human weaknesses, but arduous and self-disciplined.

The ancient system of education at once indulged and controlled man's nature, it fitted him for his social role, it stamped on his mind the generous ideal of an accomplished humanity, refined, harmonious in all capacities and noble in all its endeavours; and above all, it placed before him the theory and practice of Yoga, the theory and practice of a higher change, and it familiarised him with the concept of a spiritual existence and encouraged in him a hunger for the divine and infinite.

* As Sri Krishna points out in the Gita:

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः ।

स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥

Whatsoever a great man does, the same is done by others as well. Whatever standard he sets, the world follows the same. (Bhagavadgita, 3.21)

The scope of the ancient system of education was comprehensive; it rejected no discipline of knowledge, no means of expression, — literary or artistic, — no craft, and technology that could make for best utility of matter and substance. The Indian tradition speaks of sixty-four sciences and arts, and it catered to the education of women in such a liberal way that we still speak of great examples of *Lopamudra*, *Gargi* and *Maitreyi*. In the courses of study, apart from the study of the Veda, which was in itself a great science and art of living, emphasis was laid on comprehensive training of all that could equip each one for the role that was suitable to each individual on the lines of *swabhava* and *swadharma*. Study of healthcare and *Ayurveda* was also an important part of the programme of study. In course of time, six *Vedangas* had developed as also four *Upavedas* and a number of other sciences and *shastras*. With the development of *Buddhism*, a different system of education developed which laid great emphasis on practices of asceticism, rules of *dharma* and studies of philosophy, medicine and other sciences. This had also effect on the orthodox system of education, and in due course of time, different systems of education developed. But the history of this development does not concern us here.

Image of The Ancient System of Education

Of the ancient Indian system of education that flourished for a considerable period of time, we have in our mind an inspiring image as it is described in a few pages of the *Upanishads*. This image has been presented to us by Sri Aurobindo in the following words:

The sages sitting in their groves ready to test and teach the comer, princes and learned Brahmins and great landed nobles going about in search of knowledge, the king's son in his chariot and the illegitimate son of the servant-girl, seeking any man who might carry in himself the thought of light and the word of revelation, the typical figures and personalities, Janaka and the subtle mind of Ajatashatru, Raikwa of the cart, Yajnavalkeya

*militant for truth, calm and ironic, taking to himself with both hands without attachment worldly possessions and spiritual riches and casting at last all his wealth behind to wander forth as a houseless ascetic, Krishna son of Devaki who heard a single word of the Rishi Ghora and knew at once the Eternal, the Ashramas, the courts of kings who were also spiritual discoverers and thinkers, the great sacrificial assemblies, where the sages met and compared their knowledge. **

III

Question of Relevance

It is not possible to go into greater details and delineate a more precise and comprehensive description of the ancient Indian conception of education. But while considering the question of the relevance of this concept to the needs and demands of our own times, we should distinguish between the essence and outer forms in which that concept was made operative in the ancient times. It is evident that we have to concentrate on essence rather than on outer forms.

Ideal Teachers

In the first place, it is not easy to find in our current times *Rishis* like *Vashishtha* and *Vishwamitra* and *Yajnavalkya* around whom the ancient system was built. But still, we can make use of the ideal and consider as to how that ideal can be brought nearer to actuality and what conditions of atmosphere, conception, vision, and equipment would be necessary to create among our teachers a new aspiration to embody in themselves those qualities and concerns which dominated the ideal teachers of that antiquity. It is not entirely impossible to build up a new system of teachers' training through which new roles of teachers can be visualised and imparted to the coming generations of teachers.

*Sri Aurobindo: *The Foundations of Indian Culture*, Centenary Edition, p. 280

That the task of the teacher is not primarily to teach but to observe the students and to guide them on the proper lines which are suitable to their potentialities, inclinations and capacities can be emphasised. That the teacher's instruments are not confined only to methods of instruction but include also the example of the inner character of the teacher and his capacity to enter into the depths of students' inner souls can also be stressed. That the teacher must concentrate and embody a vast and true knowledge and continue to learn more and more can also be underlined. In any case, the country can take a major decision to create such conditions where the image of the ideal teacher is made vividly visible, so that we can have in the coming decades a growing number of teachers who can approximate in their qualities and in their character as also in their knowledge and skills to the ideal teacher of our ancient system.

This we should strive to do, not only to maintain our continuity of cultural development but also because the ancient Indian pedagogy was extremely sound, and India will stand to gain if that pedagogy can be brought back to life, and can be further enriched by applications of the results of various progressive educational experiments which have been conducted in India and in different parts of the world during the last two centuries.

Child-Centred Education; Integral Education on the Lines of Swabhava and Swadharma

Modern emphasis on child-centred education is consonant with the care that was bestowed upon the child and the *brahmacharin* in the home of the teacher in our ancient system. And there is no doubt that the more will this emphasis be translated into practice, the more will our modern system begin to resemble our ancient system in spirit, although not in outer form.

Among the idea-forces which have powerfully emerged in the modern world and which will determine the future, there are two which will stand out for the universal acceptance. The first among these is the conception of the right of all individuals as members of the society to full life and the full development of which they are individually capable. No ideal will persist which will allow an

arrangement by which certain classes of society should arrogate development and full social fruition to themselves while assigning a bare and barren function of service to others. And the second idea is that of individualism, which proclaims that the individual is not merely a social unit, that he is not merely a member of human pack, but he is something in himself, a soul, a being, who has to fulfil his own individual truth and law as well as his natural or assigned part in the truth and the law of collective existence. The individual thus demands freedom, space, initiative for his soul, for his nature, for his *swabhava* and *swadharma*, to use the Indian terms. These two ideas together are bound to force contemporary system of education to undergo such a radical change that the ideal of the integral development of personality is given highest importance and, considering that the concepts of integral personality are getting increasingly enriched under the stress of modern search of the inner soul, the ancient Indian concept of education, in which integration of human personality was sought to be effected by the fourfold powers of the soul will be found directly relevant and useful. It is increasingly recognised that the human beings of the present day are so acutely torn by the inherent conflicts between the rational, the ethical and the aesthetic that they are obliged to look for something else, something higher than the rational and the pragmatic, something spiritual and much more truly effective in solving the problems of life.

It is often contended that the Indian system of education had for long been instrumental in sustaining the pernicious caste system and therefore, in the new atmosphere where casteless and classless society is being envisaged, the Indian system will be found to be entirely relevant. But this is a misreading of Indian history, and it commits the error of attributing what happened at one stage during the period of decline to the entire long history of Indian education. There was in the early times of Indian history a system of four *varnas*, but this system was quite different from its degenerated and distorted caricature that the later caste system represents. In any case, without going into disputes regarding the ancient *chaturvarnya* and the later caste system, two things can be safely stated that the individual develops best when he develops on the lines of

inherent propensities, potentialities, capacities and predominant interests; and secondly, that the individual develops perfection only when all the potentialities are developed and integrated into a harmony. This is now being increasingly acknowledged in the modern educational psychology, and this was already acknowledged and practised to a greater or a lesser degree in the ancient system of education. The Indian educational theory and practice laid special emphasis on *swabhava* and *swadharma* and on the idea of fourfold personality which can be perfected by developing the individual soul, conceived not as an ego but as a harmonious entity which has its own uniqueness and which yet lives by mutuality and harmony with the totality. This theory and practice will be found most relevant to the task of rebuilding a new system of education.

Teacher Education

It is also increasingly recognised that corresponding to the aim of the integral development of personality, the teacher also must have a personality that is very well developed and integrated. Our present system of teacher education is not only superficial but also mechanical and uninspiring. The time that we have allotted to the programme of teacher education, which practically comes to eight months, is hopelessly inadequate, and the wiser counsel that we are now hearing in our country is that we should institute an integrated course of teacher education, which can extend over four to five years. This wise counsel seems destined to succeed, and we shall, therefore, be in a better position to design a comprehensive programme of teachers' education. In that design, all the valuable aspects of the ancient concepts of education and the ancient concept of the role of the teacher will find some kind of rebirth and renewal.

Environment

It is often contended that one of the most salutary aspects of the ancient Indian system of education was the setting that was provided to the *Gurukula*, — the setting of a forest, which was

remote from the hustle and bustle of worldly life. It is, however, argued that this condition is hardly feasible in our times and this reduces the relevance of the ancient system. The argument has some force, although it must be stressed that a large number of universities which have come to be developed in India after independence have been provided with beautiful settings, but unfortunately, many of them have been ruined by human misuse. Many private schools also are being developed in our country in beautiful settings. In any case, it is true that with the development of modern media, the isolation which was sought for the educational institutions in ancient times has now become almost impossible. But these practical difficulties do not contradict the truth that the educational institution must be set up in such a beautiful environment that the harmony between human being and Nature can become a part of the organisation of life, and, therefore, a powerful medium of education. If this truth is kept in view, it will serve a great purpose when our country will be required to build an increasing number of educational institutions, even in remote villages and groups of hamlets. The importance of environment, or surroundings full of vegetation, flowers and fruits, can never be underestimated, and the fact that our ancient system of education had underlined this important aspect will remain a permanent contribution to the higher causes of civilisation.

Contemporary Crisis; Value-Education; Spiritual Education

It is important to note that there is an increasing awareness both in India and the world that the contemporary crisis is fundamentally the crisis of the disbalancement, of an exaggerated development of the outer structures and organisations and means of physical and vital satisfactions, on the one hand, and the neglect of the ethical and spiritual dimensions of human life, on the other. One, therefore, hears of the crisis of character, crisis of values and crisis of spiritual evolution. Gripped as we are in this crisis, we are bound to look for the knowledge of ethics and spirituality, of values and of the knowledge that can bridge the gulf between the life of matter

and the life of spirit. In the West, increasing number of leaders are now speaking of return to basics, and in India we have begun to conceive of programmes of value-education. This subject has not yet received the attention that it deserves, but there is no doubt that under the pressure of circumstances or of our enlightened foresight, when we shall explore this subject, we are bound to raise three important questions, helpful answers of which will largely be found in our ancient Indian conception of education.

Meaning of Values

The first question will be related to the meaning of values, particularly when they are not to be restricted only to the domain of morality, but will also extend to the domain of aesthetics, rationality, and even to the domain of supra-rationality. This question will become complex when we come to consider values of physical education, vital education, and mental education in the context of the integral development of personality and of the perfectibility of the individual and the collectivity.

Science and Values

The second question will be related to science and values, particularly when humanity is awaking to the necessity of directing scientific knowledge towards the goal of the higher welfare of humanity. This question will again become complex when we examine the claim of scientific knowledge that knowledge by its very nature has to be scientific and that the knowledge of values is not strictly speaking knowledge. The question will be whether this claim is sustainable in view of the growing idea that knowledge is not a matter merely of inductive or deductive process of thought but that even instincts, desires, emotions, aspirations, faith and intuition give clues to knowledge and are themselves imbued with knowledge. This will necessarily lead us to the question of harmonising positive knowledge with axiological knowledge and of developing an integral system of knowledge.

Values and Self-Knowledge

The third question will be related to relationship between self-knowledge and pursuit of values, particularly when it is seen that pursuit of values demands increasing self-control and self-mastery, which in turn, are related to self-knowledge. For, as it was realised by the ancient Rishis, the Self cannot be known except through self-discipline, and self-discipline cannot become perfect without the true knowledge of the self. Again, this question will become complex when it is realised that self-knowledge is intimately related to world-knowledge and God-knowledge.

It will be seen that these questions will oblige us to converge upon the profound psychological, ethical and spiritual knowledge which was so central to the ancient Indian conception of education.

Modern Knowledge; Physical, Supraphysical and Spiritual Knowledge

We realise that modern knowledge is expanding at a tremendous rate of progression; in the course of this rapid movement, the materialism of yesterday is being increasingly over passed. The philosophical inadequacy of materialism has become obvious when we see that the advanced materialists of today refrain from making any metaphysical propositions, including those regarding materialism. The argument that science can deal only with matter is also being overpassed. The development of life sciences, psychological sciences and humanistic sciences has shown that what is important in science is the scientific method but not the unsustainable assumption that this method can be applied only in the domain of Matter. As a matter of fact, the boundaries between the physical and the supra-physical are being broken up quite rapidly, and as against the earlier assumption of materialism that only that is real which can be physically verified, it is clearly proved that the basic sub-atomic substratum of matter is physically invisible although real. Even in technological matters, dependence on material means alone is being increasingly substituted by inventions which reduce

dependence on material means, such as in the case of wireless telegraphy.

Increasing Importance of the Yogic Knowledge

With these developments, we can see that the knowledge of the physical will gradually or rapidly begin, for its further development or completion, to knock at the doors of the supraphysical knowledge. And, in that context, the importance of the knowledge — physical and supraphysical — that constituted the contents of the ancient Indian system of education will come to be underlined.

And this will lead also to the study of Yoga as a science. As *Swami Vivekananda* has declared, Yoga is science *par excellence*, since it proceeds by the scientific method of observation, experimentation and verification, of repetition and of rectification as also of continuous expansion. And with the admission of the Yogic knowledge, it appears that the entire body of discoveries made by the Vedic and Upanishadic Rishis and by the subsequent numberless Yogic explorers will become the central focus of advancing research. Already some Western scientists are turning to the knowledge that Yoga can provide, and we can foresee that this movement is bound to move forward. And this will enhance the relevance of the heritage that we possess of the ancient Indian conception of knowledge and education.

Renewal of the Old Spiritual Knowledge; Need for Developing New Knowledge

This is not to say that all that we need today and tomorrow was already contained in the ancient Indian system; although loftiest and central discoveries of the secrets of the Spirit were made in those ancient times, there is still much more to be done in the coming days. New knowledge of matter and new knowledge of spirit are likely to be the preoccupation of the seekers all over the world. It is also possible that the older synthesis of knowledge will be replaced by newer synthesis. But still the old foundations will always be found to be not only relevant but of basic value.

sent system of educational aims, educational methods and educational contents. Radical changes will be required; and we shall need to revisit the ancient Indian concept of education and derive from it valuable insights, which can guide us in the right direction, provided we also take care to embrace the latest results of the latest educational research and experimentation that has been conducted in India and elsewhere.

Upanishadic Secret of Embracing Unending Knowledge

We have to realise that our present Indian curricula hardly provide to our students any adequate idea of the unbroken history of Indian culture, which extended in the past at least beyond five thousand years. If we are to give even a faint idea of this vast canvass of Indian culture, — which incidentally, is indispensable if we want to sustain our cultural identity, — and if we are to add, as we must, also the new and expanding horizons of knowledge, which are vastly developing, we shall be obliged to consider ways and means by which our entire system of curriculum-making and our system of educational methodology can undergo radical changes. We shall have to find a central answer to the question as to how to master knowledge when it is very vast and when it is expanding at an exponential rate. And shall we not be tempted to listen seriously to the Upanishadic declaration that there is a kind of knowledge having acquired which all can be known?

Towards a New System of Education

India has had in modern times five greatest educationists. Significantly, all of them were stirred by the teacher-pupil relationship that flourished in the ancient Indian system of education, and all of them renewed for us the ideal and practice of education that the *gurukulas* or the ashrams nourished in the days of *Vasishtha* and *Vishwamitra*, of *Aruni* and *Yajnavalkya*.

Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati visualised clusters of teachers spread over the entire breadth and length of the country nestled in groves of woods and trees where pupils could be trained in the ancient knowledge contained in the Veda as also in rational modes of thought so as to be equipped with invincible knowledge and robust character that is forged by constant practice of truth, self-control and fearlessness.

Swami Vivekananda, inspired by the Upanishads and their message of divine perfection inherent in every individual, strove to give to the youth of modern India the lessons of man-making education so as to cast them in the image of heroic builders of new India and new world.

Mahatma Gandhi conceived, even when he was in South Africa, a scheme of ashram education and developed it further in India at Sabarmati Ashram and at Wardha into what came to be called "Nai Talim" that would reflect the ancient spirit of blending head, heart and hand so as to create new types of human beings that would be self-reliant, chaste, truthful, non-violent and devoted servants of the country and the world.

Rabindranath Tagore established in Shanti Niketan a school and a Brahmacharyashram where, like the ancient Upanishadic Guru, he lived and taught as a companion of the children who

came and lived with him. As he himself explained:

I sang to them. I composed some musical pieces, some operas and plays, and they took part in those plays. I recited to them our epics and this was the beginning of this school... They had that perfect freedom to do what they wished, as much liberty as was possible for me to give them. And in all their activities I tried to put before them something which would be interesting to them.

That experiment of Shanti Niketan was a living criticism of our present system of education, a system in which Rabindrananth Tagore as a young boy had felt terribly miserable. As he explained later about the school where he went as a child:

It could not be possible for the mind of a child to be able to receive anything in those cheerless surroundings, in the environment of dead routine. And the teachers were like living gramophones, repeating the same lessons day by day in a most dull manner. My mind refused to accept anything from my teacher... And then there were some teachers who were utterly unsympathetic and did not understand at all the sensitive soul of a young boy and tried to punish him for the mistakes he made. Such teachers in their stupidity did not know how to teach, how to impart education to a living mind... And then I left school when I was thirteen and in spite of all the pressure exerted on me by my elders, I refused to go to my studies in that school.

Rabindranath Tagore, therefore, created in Shanti Niketan a new living image of freedom and harmony with Nature and personal and intimate relationship between the teacher and the pupil that existed in the Upanishadic Ashram.

Sri Aurobindo gave to the world, through radical experiments at his Ashram, a new mode of education as also a new aim that would bring back the Vedic ideals of self-perfection and would even prepare for the bolder and newer goal of supramental manifestation on the earth. In his great book *A National System of Education*, as also in his *Synthesis of Yoga*, he demonstrated that

all life is education and all life is Yoga.

The surprising and shocking fact is that in spite of these great messages and experiments which, if followed, would have not only enabled us to create a new system of education but even revolutionised the entire educational atmosphere, India did nothing of the kind since the last fifty years of Independence, but even did worse by multiplying huge structures of the irrelevant alien system imposed upon us by the British. Even now, we are still going round a vicious circle, and when we think of innovations and reforms, we do not find ourselves bold enough to propose any radical and comprehensive change that would show the imprint of that ancient and ever-new spirit of India.

In the meantime, a new wave of external influences is spreading over the country, and the goals of economic barbarism have begun to shape the attitudes of parents and students, and even of teachers; we find ourselves in a psychological state of a tempest, and we do not know what and how we ought to be functioning.

Our need is to reflect clearly and luminously of the steps we should take to conceive and implement a new system of education.

But we may first try to arrive at the quintessence of the principles that determined the greatness of the ancient Gurukula system. Next, we shall examine how the present system can be changed into a new system so that the principles of the Gurukula system could be incorporated in the context of the modern setting and the special needs of today and tomorrow.

II

In his *Synthesis of Yoga*, Sri Aurobindo speaks of four aids by which perfection can be achieved. The first aid is that of the knowledge of the psychological principles by which growth and development of faculties can be properly guided. This means that education is not a haphazard movement but a deliberate action based upon sound psychological knowledge.

The second aid of which Sri Aurobindo speaks is that of patient and persistent action on the lines laid down by the knowledge, and the force of the personal effort of the pupil. For no education can

be effective if it is not rooted in the enthusiasm of student's quest and *tapasya*. The task of educational endeavour is to ensure that students feel so inspired that a burning quest seizes their being so that they can joyously accept the difficult labour of learning.

Indeed, the aid of the teacher is indispensable; for it is the teacher who creates the right organisation of the life of the pupil; it is the teacher who possesses the sound knowledge that leads to perfection; but all this constitutes the background so that central concentration falls on the *utsaha* of the child, enthusiasm of the child. The visible or invisible action of the teacher is connected centrally with the spontaneous process of the students's quest. The teacher's aid is the third aid in the process, and it comes in the form of teacher's intervention, which aims at uplifting student's effort. And the teacher's role is least as far as instruction is concerned; far more important than instruction is the example of the life of the teacher, — not so much the example of outer behaviour of the teacher, but the example of the inner life of the teacher. And more important than example is the influence of the teacher; but this influence does not and ought not to emanate from the authority and status of the teacher but it emanates from the fragrance of the inner soul of the teacher. As Sri Aurobindo points out, the teacher is one who can hold the hand of the pupil in an act of inspiring help, and he adds that the teacher is verily *a child leading children, a Light kindling other lights and an awakened Soul awakening souls...*

Sri Aurobindo also speaks of the fourth aid that comes from the instrumentality of Time, — *Kala*. He points out that in all things there is a cycle of their action, and the child is like a flower that needs to be given the right atmosphere of appropriate soil, water and sunshine so that in the right season the flower can blossom. To understand every child's season of growth and ripening and flowering and to provide the right means of an appropriate acceleration to the child's growth is to utilise the factor of Time. To combine endless patience and insistence on utmost rapidity, — to arrive at an equilibrium of these two opposites will give the right measure of the load that we should place upon the child at any given point of its development.

This analysis will bring out very clearly the crucial questions that we have to put to ourselves when, dissatisfied with our present system of education, we are striving to move towards a new system of education. These questions can be formulated as follows:

1. Does our present system of education present obstacles to the implementation of the principles of teaching and learning that we have briefly expounded? If so, what precisely are these obstacles?

2. Are these obstacles insurmountable? If not, how can they be tackled?

3. Can we think of specific measures of positive action that can be recommended to ourselves and to the country?

III

Goals of Education

The first set of obstacles will become obvious as soon as we inquire as to what exactly are the goals or objectives of our present system of education. It is sometimes argued that the present system had for its model what in the West is called a system of liberal education, and therefore the goals of liberal education are implicitly present in our system. This argument has some historical truth, but whereas liberal education aims fundamentally at a free growth of personality that sharpens taste, interest and rational faculties, our system was, right from the beginning, reduced in its liberality and narrowed down to the aim of producing a large number of clerks who may have learned several subjects covered under the scheme of education, but at a level of mediocrity and through a syllabus that encouraged no free choice but compulsion, that cared for no tastes but mechanical learning and cramming, and which provided little food for critical thought but a good deal of second hand or third hand information punctuated by fashionable phrases, reproduction of which would enable the student to get a little more than pass marks in the examination! The so-called liberal education of India is a mere parody of what the Western system provided and is still providing to its students.

It is sometimes argued that what our present system lacks is job-orientation. But, in a sense, this is a mistaken view. The present

system, as we noted above, is job-oriented, although the main job that is aimed at is largely that of clerks. In 1966, when the present system of education was changed to some extent, there was a better perception of what our system lacks. It was pointed out that our system needed vocationalisation, and much effort was bestowed to tinker with our present system so as to make room for an optional vocational stream at the higher secondary level. Retrospectively, it has been found that the scheme was psychologically so unsound that vocationalisation has hardly flourished. But even now, instead of going into the roots of the question, whenever we think of reforms, we still go on hammering only on two ideas and we clamour for job-oriented education and vocationalisation of education. Not that they are not needed, but they need to be a part of a holistic system of education.

It may be mentioned that the present system did and does provide for those who, in spite of the limiting factors of the system, achieve by their inherent talent some higher standards. For them are the three professions, — professions of law, medicine, and engineering. And, indeed, some of those who cannot get jobs as clerks and some of those who are somewhat bright in one or two subjects can become qualified for one more profession, — that of becoming teachers or professors. It is only in recent times that some marginal place has been given to such subjects as arts, crafts and technologies of a few varieties. But the scheme as a whole has still remained what the colonial rulers had designed for us, and its goals have reduced the entire system to a mechanical routine, which is fully imprisoned in the walls of a few subjects devoid of any holistic vision, in a few textbooks or guidebooks devoid of sound pedagogical insights, and an examination system, which can hardly evaluate critical achievements of intelligence, qualities of character, values like patriotism and universality, or skills of head, heart and hands.

It follows that we need to attend to the problem of goals of education in such a central way that they would shine out glaringly and would oblige the entire process of teaching-learning to be geared into a creative organisation of the lives of students and teachers, and which would vibrantly cater to the needs of man-making education,

to the integral development of personality, to value-education, to the pursuit of self-knowledge, to the pursuit of self-control, to the task of bringing out the inner divinity and perfection that is latent in every human being.

Let us affirm that basically this is not a very difficult task. But difficulties arise from three directions: there is a fear of the word "divine", — for this word can be so employed so as to emphasise dogmatism, religionism, and some kind of superstition or blind faith. In answer to this fear, it must be asserted that divinity is not a belief or dogma but a state of consciousness that can be achieved only by pursuit of freedom and of self-knowledge. The second difficulty arises when the goal of self-perfection is so transcendently or negatively formulated that it gives an impression that it has nothing to do with practicality, with skills of productivity and utility and with professional excellence. The truth, however, is that the secret of profession lies in personality and that the concept of integral personality necessarily implies not only aspects of wisdom, power and harmony, but also of skills in works and chiselling of capacities of practical efficiency. And the third difficulty arises when it is feared that the new goals of education will require of teachers and parents such creative ability, such hard work and such commitment and care of the child that it would oblige them to be shaken out of their present facile inertia, which is tolerated or encouraged by the present mechanical and increasingly de-humanising system. But this difficulty can be overcome if teachers and parents resolve to pursue a rigorous work ethos and to develop creative abilities, which true education demands.

Teachers and parents have to realise that the perils of their inertia are not only great but disastrous. If the present crisis is a crisis of character, if it is a crisis of value-system, if it is a human crisis, then the only way by which this crisis can be met, is to replace the colonial goals of education by the new goals of education, and new methods of education, which necessarily reflect our Indian aspirations but which imply very hard work and very creative and careful work. Fortunately, there is a new awakening among parents and teachers, and we can trust that they will eventually rise to the occasion and will not disappoint the great aims

that need to be fulfilled if our posterity is to find its true fulfilment.

Contents of Education

The second set of obstacles is related to contents of education. And here the difficulties are enormous. The contents of the present system of education are focussed on packets of information, which can often lack the qualities of clarity and precision. They are centred on information rather than knowledge and they promote teaching by snippets. A subject is taught a little at a time, in conjunction with a host of others, with the result that what might be well-learnt in a single year, is badly learnt in seven and the student goes out ill-equipped, served with imperfect parcels of knowledge, master of none of the great departments of the human knowledge.

The scheme of the contents of education does not aim at the development of faculties. Powers of imagination, powers of criticality, powers of creative expression and powers of complex thought do not receive any direct help either from the contents or from the methods of their exposition. It is not realised that textbooks are systematic manuals of information but they cannot be ideal tools for teaching and learning. One of the best ways of stimulating students is to come directly in contact with the original writings of some of the greatest writers or poets. If, for example, our aim is to develop among our students a living patriotism as also a living aspiration for universal fraternity, the sense of *vasudhaiva kutumbakam*, this cannot be achieved if our students do not have a direct contact with texts of the Vedas and the Upanishads, of Vyasa, Valmiki and Kalidasa, of the great Indian scientists, philosophers, mathematicians, historians, linguists and artists or of great men and women of action, and if this is not coupled with an original acquaintance of some representative personalities of the East and the West.

The scheme of education, which is prevalent today, prescribes a few subjects like languages, mathematics, sciences, — natural and social, — and a bit of art and craft. The syllabus of each subject is formed in a linear fashion, which rises from the lowest to the highest; the theme of unity of knowledge, interdisciplinarity

and overarching unity of humanities, sciences, fine arts, and technology, — these important integrating aspects of knowledge are hardly kept in view. Proper blending of subjects and specialisation, which are both required in varying measures at different levels of studies, receive very little attention.

As there is today an explosion of information, there is a constant clamour for updating and adding new loads on the existing heavy weight of curricula. New subjects also are being added. Pruning of what is obsolete and rewriting so as to assimilate the new and yet keeping the load as low as possible, — these tasks have hardly been attempted systematically and comprehensively.

As a result, some important areas, which have never received any attention but require to be introduced in the curriculum, cannot find any room. For example, education for character development is an important theme; its necessity in the curriculum is increasingly acknowledged; but no room is found for it in the curriculum; or else, attempts are being made to dovetail a few elements in the existing curriculum in an artificial manner. A more important subject, which is not even recognised as a subject, but which was a central subject in the ancient curriculum of India, and of which Veda and Upanishads were the real texts, is not even contemplated. This relates to the knowledge of the self and the method by which this knowledge can be obtained. In India this knowledge has been given the status of *vidya*, and although educationists and various reports have underlined the importance of this knowledge and even emphasised it in terms of the famous Sanskrit adage: *sa vidya ya vimuktaye*, there has been no attempt to consider how this very important subject should find its proper place in our curriculum. It is high time that we wake up to this great need and consider what should be done in regard to this particular and other similar subjects, which need to have their appropriate place in our curriculum.

In fact, there is a strong case to initiate a comprehensive exercise of redesigning the entire curriculum.

Corresponding to the redesigning of the curriculum is the task of preparing new teaching-learning material. And considering that different subjects have varying components of cognitive, conative and affective elements, care has to be taken in regard to the

methodology appropriate to these varied elements, — and this will have consequences in the modes and methods of writing teaching-learning material.

The absence of serious thinking upon these important methods and the absence of any institution that can take up the required task constitute the principal obstacles, which need to be overcome at the earliest. We have to note that institutions like NCERT, CBSE or UGC, which can undertake some of these tasks, have neither the required manpower nor the equipment nor the time. We have, therefore, to think of something new.

Examination System

The third set of obstacles is connected with the present examination system. It is not necessary to analyse the evils of this system. For it is recognised that so long as the present system of testing and certification continues to be what it is, the motivation of students will remain focused merely on passing examinations, teachers will concentrate on lecture system and on delivering hurried lectures so as to cover the prescribed syllabus, and books and guidebooks will continue to be written in such a way that they cater to the requirements of written tests. Higher modes of education, creative methods of education and development of great qualities, virtues and values will remain neglected. Even if new types of teachers emerge, even if new methods of education are employed, and even if new types of teaching-learning materials are produced, — all these will remain marginal, and everything will come to be sacrificed which will not fall within the purview of the examination system.

We need to develop not only a new system of examinations but also new kinds of examinations. One major reform would be to set up a decentralised National Testing Service. This system would be open to anyone who wants to get himself or herself examined irrespective of whether he/she holds any degree or certificate. The concerned test should be related to specific jobs for employment opportunities or certain specific pursuits of studies and disciplines of knowledge and skills. These tests should be written, oral and practical. The National Testing Service would also evolve special

methods of assessing those qualities, which education for character development aims at. Similarly, this service would also test every candidate's physical fitness. The National Testing Service would also require every candidate to show intimate acquaintance with Indian culture as also great awareness of India's problems of development and how India can attain its leading position in the world.

If this testing service can be properly organised and made effective, it should be possible to retain in the educational institutions only such tests, which are relevant to stimulation for further studies, for providing opportunities to students to think clearly and to formulate ideas adequately, for achieving precision, exactness and mastery of details, for arriving at a global view of the subjects in question, for self-evaluation and for gaining self-confidence. In other words, these tests will aim at promoting academic excellence and will not be tied up to those objectives which are relevant to gaining employment. This will relieve the entire system of education from those extraneous considerations, which are not strictly related to the promotion of the development of personality and academic excellence. Teachers will, therefore, be free to adopt varieties of tests suitable to different categories of students or even individualised tests.

IV

The most important question is as to how these reforms can effectively be brought about. This is not the occasion to discuss this question in depth; but it can at once be said that there should be set up in the country a permanent National Commission for Education. This Commission should be specifically assigned the tasks of training teachers, redesigning curricula at various levels of education and of setting up a National Testing Service. It should also have the power and means to organise conferences, seminars and training camps not only for teachers but also for parents and for people in general. Its broadest aim should include schemes of innovations in education and utilisation of television and other media for promoting educational programmes and curbing such programmes, which are injurious to value-oriented development of

children and young people. Finally, this Commission should aim at creating in our country a clearly new system of education, which would reflect the spirit and principles of our great ancient system of education and which would also reflect the results of the progressive experiments which have been conducted in different parts of the world.

In due course, this new system of education would replace the present system.

Appendix: Enrichment of Contents of Learning

Enrichment of contents presents to teachers a severe test of their understanding of the curriculum and the corresponding syllabus and also of their mastery over the subject matter, textual and reference material as also the relationship that the subject matter holds with related subjects. Many other skills also come under the test, and to attain excellence in the exercise of these skills would demand from the teachers not only sincere devotion but also painstaking labour. Teachers of the schools are well known for their use of latest modern techniques for curriculum transactions.

The subject can be viewed in regard to four important contexts:

1. The first is that of curriculum, syllabus and textbooks. Many problems of content-enrichment arise because of the deficiencies of the curricula and of the available teaching-learning materials.

2. The second is related to the processes of communications, the primary aim of which is to focus on making the subject matter interesting and to promote understanding. Teachers are required to enrich contents and communicate them in such a way that students begin to take increasing interest in their studies and come to understand and appreciate as also to demand more and more learning material from teachers as their inquiry becomes sharper.

3. The third context is related to the development of faculties of students, and here the teachers' task is to deal with the contents of education in such a way that they enable students to develop their intellectual and other faculties. Here, questions relate to a sound knowledge of different faculties, how they are interrelated and how different subjects and their contents can be

combined to promote harmonious blending of the developments of different faculties.

4. The fourth context is related to the demands of value-oriented education and to inquire into certain details so that we can determine how contents of education can be enriched to meet the demands of promoting value-orientation among students.

5. I should also like to add one more context and that relates to the increasing concern we feel regarding presentation to students the dimensions of Indian contributions to various subjects of studies. Since India has made through her long history extremely important contributions in the development of sciences and arts and various other subjects, it is felt that our students should get some direct acquaintance with at least pioneering contributions that India has made to mathematics, astronomy, linguistics, natural and human sciences, theory and practice of art and architecture, even to economics, and social and political studies. The theme of content-enrichment should also provide us some serious reflections on this very important concern.

We may take up these five important contexts one by one.

I

Curriculum, Teaching-learning Material & Content-Enrichment

This is not the occasion to enter into the assumptions and processes of curriculum-making, which are central to the contents of education, but it would be useful to remark that our country needs to undertake a massive exercise to introduce curricular reforms so that our curricula attain greater relevance to the needs of the growth of personality, and to the needs to meet the challenges of unprecedented explosion of information coupled with the rise of new media of transmission. Our curricula have, for long, been designed for narrow purposes and they have been strictly tied down to subjects and books. Our curricula lack holistic vision and yield merely to linear and piecemeal organisation of subject matter. Our curricula often ignore concentric

development and reinforcement; they ignore also pedagogical insights that should guide the right methods of communication between the teacher and the taught and utilisation by the teacher of the feedback received from the pupils.

The defects of the curricula adversely affect teaching-learning material. In fact, we rarely have teaching-learning materials; - the textbook is normally the only material that is available to the teacher and the pupil. The general complaint that our textbooks are usually tedious and boring can easily be substantiated. In fact, it is not understood that the textbook is the manual of material, but it is not teaching-learning material. Textbooks there are, and they must exist; they can be a part of reference material as also useful tools for revision. But teaching-learning materials have to be quite different; there must be variety; there must be flexibility; there must be copious notes to explain, to elicit, and to distinguish between the essential and the peripheral. Teaching-learning materials should be pedagogically sound so that they incite the interests of students and the message of the concerned topic may be received by the students as concretely as possible.

The inadequacies of our curricula, deficiencies of their framework and poverty of our textbooks impose upon our teachers a tremendous load, and many conscientious teachers struggle hard to compensate these enormous drawbacks. This compensation requires teachers to improve the methods of teaching, and to enrich the contents. And this brings us to the question of close interrelationship between methods and contents of education. If the loads of the contents are very heavy, - as is the case today, - we cannot expect teachers to improve the methods of education beyond a marginal degree. Unfortunately, our system is almost exclusively lecture-oriented, and although teachers can improve the quality of teaching by means of varying the methods of lecturing, the most important elements of communication such as those of dialogue, consultation, personal intervention, and inspirational instruction can hardly be covered under the scope of the present system. Moreover, new methods of teaching-learning necessitate new kinds of teaching-learning materials, - such as worksheets, quiz notes, short letters, reference sheets, pictorial or illustrative

materials, charts and diagrams, and exploratory devices that would facilitate students' learning by discovery and invention. In an ideal system, instruction should play a minor role, but dynamic methods should play a major role. Instruction is less important than the example of the teacher, - example, not only of outer behaviour but much more importantly of the inner life; and more important than example is the influence that the teacher can exercise, - not by virtue of the authority of teacherhood but by virtue of the power to contact the inner soul of the pupil. But since we are still far from the ideal system, the utmost we can ask from the teachers is to do their very best within the present framework and to lay the greatest emphasis on the task of content-enrichment.

II

Awakening Interest and Promotion of Comprehension among Students through Content-enrichment

Content-enrichment has a very wide scope and many methods can be employed by the good teacher to correlate enrichment material with the subject or topic on hand. The most important and basic aim of communication is to create interest and promote understanding. If a student gets interested in a subject, the student can be regarded to have been placed on the right road of progress. There is nothing more precious for the student than to fall in love with the subject. Once this important event takes place, the student will enter into what Whithead has called the "romantic" period of studies. The World begins to shine and variety of Nature begins to smile. The inner heart of the student begins to explore and even the burning of the midnight oil causes freshness; the student reads and labours, turns the pages of the book rapidly and grapples to discover what is hidden in the depth of mysteries; or else, there are visitations of reflection, meditation or contemplation. Interest is the key to concentration and concentration is the key to knowledge. The teacher can incite the awakening of interest, and this is greatly aided by the process of understanding.

Understanding has two stages: straight look into the centre of

the word, of the idea, of the subject; and this is followed by the perception of continuous grasp and process of the meaning that settles down in the consciousness in a state of satisfaction and repose. Every process of understanding is centred on meaning, and the teacher's ability can be judged by the way in which the context is created and meaning emerges with a shining spark. One can expand the realm of meanings, until students are led to raise larger questions of the meaning of the universe and of our place in it.

One of the great discoveries that the Indian sages and thinkers had made was to identify meaning and substance that is grasped in understanding. One of the discoveries that Socrates had made was that of the power of the concept at the centre of which the meaning stands out as expression of the Essence; and the secret of every concept lies in the intellectual perception of the universal. No particular can be understood without the universal of which it is an illustration or a member. Therefore, one of the counsels that the good teacher gives for content-enrichment is to enlarge the vision of the students so as to open out before them the vistas of universals. It is these vistas of universals that can serve as nurseries of students' contemplation and understanding.

Understanding can be followed by higher stages, and if the teacher can enrich the onward journey, particularly, in case of talented and perceptive students, a stage can be reached where learning can become the process of experience, and one can arrive at what can be called "overstanding". Understanding is to stand below the object of meaning; it is a stage where there is a strain and effort to gaze and grasp; on the other hand, one can stand above the object of understanding, and one feels like being on the top of a hill from where vast vistas or horizons can be viewed effortlessly and even majestically. The ultimate goal of all studies is to arrive at "over-standing" which, in turn, opens up wide spaces in which one can fly higher and higher like the famous Jonathan Seagull, - the ever-young learner and teacher of Bach's story.

III

**Promotion of Development of Faculties
through Content-Enrichment**

As is well known, there is a debate whether education should aim at mastery of subject matter or at development and chiselling of faculties. Our present system of education lays an overwhelming emphasis on subject matter, and the one faculty that it encourages most is that of memory on account of the nature of our examination system. Without entering into the details of the debate, it can safely be said that development of faculties should receive greater importance than what it has received hitherto. Much, however, depends upon how in the subject-oriented and book-oriented system, contents are so presented to the students that they are conducive to the development of faculties. Here, again, content-enrichment will play a crucial role.

As far as the intellect is concerned, there are right-hand faculties and there are left-hand faculties. Sri Aurobindo has described these faculties with great clarity and illuminative instructiveness in the following words:

The faculties of the right-hand are comprehensive, creative and synthetic; the faculties of the left-hand critical and analytic. To the right-hand belong judgment, imagination, memory, observation; to the left-hand comparison and reasoning. The critical faculties distinguish, compare, classify, generalise, deduce, infer, conclude; they are the component parts of the logical reason. The right-hand faculties comprehend, command, judge in their own right, grasp, hold and manipulate. The right-hand mind is the master of the knowledge, the left-hand its servant. The left-hand touches only the body of knowledge, the right-hand penetrates its soul. The left-hand limits itself to ascertained truth, the right-hand grasps that which is still elusive or unascertained. Both are essential to the completeness of the human reason. These important functions of the machine have all to be raised to their highest and finest working power, if the education of the child is not to be imperfect and one-sided. * (* Sri Aurobindo: *A System of*

National Education, Centenary Edition, vol. 17, p. 207.)

It is obvious that since our curricula and syllabi are not being framed in response to needs of the development of faculties, the only way by which teachers can help students in developing their faculties is by furnishing appropriate material in the form of copious exercises in correlation with the familiar subjects, which are taught in our educational institutions. But considering the wide range of these faculties, teachers and counsellors have to work very hard to identify or design the relevant material and exercises. When these faculties mature, students will have developed the capacity to arrive at clarity of thought, subtlety of thought, complexity of thought, analytical thought and synthetic thought.

There are two processes which must combine if student is to be helped in this journey. The first process is to cultivate realism, - and here the process of content-enrichment requires the teacher to provide direct touch with concrete objects, which can be minutely observed, analysed and grasped with precision. Here measure and proportion, determination and utilisation and successful control and mastery are to be emphasised. Whether students are very young or grown up, teachers have to ensure that they develop through various scientific studies the necessary training in observation, experimentation and verification. Every subject provides a varying scope for scientific study and for the development of realism. Even a small child can be induced to study a flower or a leaf so that the child can observe and describe accurately the size and shape, colour and smoothness, fragrance and taste, their distinguishing marks from others, their uses in the economy of Nature, and the contributions they make to the environment and to the ecological balance. Even in the matter of pronunciation of words and phrases, a good teacher can induce in the child the exercises and practice of the required sound, pitch, flow and rhythm and impact and effectiveness that they can produce. Even the fields of art, music and poetry have their realistic and concrete measures, their meters and their proportion of compositions without which these aesthetic pursuits cannot achieve their heights and perfection.

Along with realism, pursuit of imagination and creativity

should be promoted. Imagination should not be conceived as a fantasy of airy nothing; imagination is the power to image and to symbolise and to arrive at figures that swing open the doors of the invisible and the inaudible reality. If science leads to the knowledge of reality of the physical world, poetry, art and music, - indeed, every creative activity, - also lead to the knowledge of that very world, and if they are properly pursued with the deeper aspects of the required effort, one can perceive deeper aspects of that world and beauty; and beauty when rightly perceived gives us its equation with truth. As the great poet burst out "Beauty is truth and truth is beauty." The greatest poets are the seers of Truth; Vedic Rishis were great poets and they have been described as drishta and satyashrava, seers of Truth and hearers of Truth. Vision of truth and experience of reality or features of reality is at the root of poetry. The poet expresses the depth of his experience through the rhythmic word in a style that is appropriate to the substance and evokes in the hearer the vibrations of his experience. A proper blending of realism and creative imagination can best be achieved by the careful teacher who presents the contents of studies with such enrichment of scientific and artistic experience that the student gradually becomes a member at once of the concrete and creative world.

It is not sufficiently recognised as to what a great help can be obtained in developing faculties and powers by habituating the mind to mental quietude, mental calm, mental tranquillity, mental silence and mental peace. Our ancient seers had discovered the potency of the intellect when through meditative processes of silence, the intellect can be united with the higher faculties of knowledge, symbolised in the Vedic literature as the brightest light of the Sun. We are all familiar with Gayatri mantra, which contains this secret of the intellect, its meditation and its capacity to receive the higher light; many recite this great mantra, but do not realise its great educational value.

In fact, the higher faculties that are rarely developed will be needed more and more in the pressing circumstances of today and tomorrow; these are precisely those faculties, which can be developed by the union of the intellect and the higher light. These fac-

ulties are those of sovereign discernment, intuitive perception of truth, plenary inspiration of speech, direct vision of knowledge amounting to revelation and making a human being a prophet of truth. It must not be supposed that these faculties get developed, if at all, only at a very high level of studies or experience. Presence of these faculties can be found by teachers who are perceptive even in ordinary movements of students, and they will be able to detect flashes of genius and through them they can get an entry into a more systematic and wise processes of handling. The ordinary teacher, who is a mere instructor, often discourages and stifles genius, but the more liberal teacher welcomes it.

Faculty-oriented education will require special training of teachers but students should not be required to wait for a teacher who has specialised in this important domain. It is best that teachers of today, whatever their present limitations, should, on their own, realise that most of the children will be best helped if they can promote faculty education among them. And once this is realised, teachers will have a vast field for content-enrichment.

IV

Content-Enrichment and Domain of Value-Oriented Education

Closely connected with faculty-education is the domain of value-oriented education. Unfortunately, the subject of value-oriented education has been turned into a field of uncertainty and controversies. But the simple fact is that education to be true education has to be value-oriented, since the fundamental aim of education is to prepare students for life and life finds its fulfilment only in the intrinsic ends, which we call values. Again, the simple fact is that the main function of education is to provide to the student the basic key to open the gates of world-knowledge, and since true world-knowledge is impossible without self-control, education should necessarily provide to the students the basic knowledge of how to control oneself and how to transmute the lower self into the higher self.

One of the essential capacities of the human being is that of

the will that gradually develops the power to choose; and this power to choose becomes crucial when the choice is to be made between the pleasant and the good, between preyas and shreyas, to use the words of Kathopanishad. Teachers may give all equipment to the students to learn and to know and to learn to know more and more, but if they do not provide the equipment to enable them to exercise their will in making the right choice, then education must end in failure.

Unfortunately, however, our present system of education provides very little to nourish among our students this important dimension of value-orientation. The subjects that are taught, - languages, natural and human sciences, and mathematics, - constitute the main bulk, and they hardly provide those contents, which are central to value-orientation. Some textbooks do, indeed, refer to values but in a very perfunctory manner. An effort is being made these days to correlate every subject with certain specific values but that has hardly touched the core of the problem. Sometimes a course in moral education is prescribed. But when we consider the contents and methods of moral education, we feel hesitant and begin to wonder whether they focus on the right aims or at the full aim of value-oriented education. In this situation, teachers are required to make up all the deficiencies in this important domain, and hence they are called upon to make huge exercises in content-enrichment.

The most important base for value-oriented education has to be carefully laid in the life of the child at its early stages. The most important attitude that should be developed is that of sincerity, and the most important ideal that should be placed before the child is that of truth. The best means are, of course, inspiring stories and plays, which illustrate this attitude and this ideal. Often, the stories that are related lack human situations, and often there are supra-human elements, there are myths and interventions of miracles. Even the straightforward story of Sri Rama, where one can illustrate strictly human situations, there is a tendency to show that Sri Rama could be truthful because he was suprahuman, and this indirectly encourages a wrong belief that ordinary human beings cannot practise truthfulness. The story of Harishchandra is also so narrated that the situations, which Harishchandra had to

confront, were contrived situations, and this lessens the directness of human relevance. There are a number of stories and tales, which teachers of today are required to reframe so the right lessons are derived in their proper human dimensions.

Another important message that needs to be conveyed to children is that the secret of attainment in life is their aspiration for perfection, and, therefore, whatever they do, they should do as perfectly as they can. This has to be coupled with the dreams of the new world, since the present world neither gives sufficient illustration of the ideal of truth nor a response to the aspiration for perfection. Children are naturally future-oriented; they have voluntary optimism; and they are builders of dreams. Profiting from this psychology, teachers can present to the children visions of the new world where truth alone will prevail and where beauty and goodness will pervade.

At the deepest level, value-oriented education turns to the education of the soul, - to the psychic education and to spiritual education. This education has three aspects: discovery of the soul and the spirit, preparation of the outer nature of the body, life and mind so as to make them fit to permit the sovereignty of the soul and the spirit, and thirdly, the process by which the soul and the spirit can manifest through our outer instruments of thought, feeling and action. Introspection plays a major role in all these three aspects, since the individual needs to turn more and more inwards (*antarmukha*). This requires the aid of encouragement and atmosphere where everything is turned towards the truth, beauty and goodness. Children need to be given the necessary inspiration to observe their impulses, their thoughts and their propensities of action as minutely as possible and as impartially as possible. They need to be told that their wrong impulses are not sins or offences but they are symptoms of a curable disease, alterable by a steady and sustained effort of the will. They can be shown how falsehood can be rejected and replaced by truth, fear by courage, selfishness by sacrifice and malice by love. The teacher needs to develop sincere affection for the children, - affection that is firm yet gentle and this is to be coupled with a sufficient practical knowledge that will create bonds of trust with the children.

There are a number of stories with the help of which teachers can illustrate various aspects of inner psychology. If we take the stories of Svetaketu and Nachiketas, we can explain the psychology of adolescents; if we take the story of Satyakama, we can explain the psychology of innocence and of courage that is dedicated to truthfulness; stories of Prahlada and Dhruva indicate how even in childhood spiritual aspirations can reach the heights of maturity. The story of Buddha along with a number of stories of Bodhisattvas illustrate a number of psychological elements that are at work in the development of human personality. Arjuna's hesitation at the beginning of the war of Mahabharata can easily illustrate the distinction between thought, will, emotion, impulse, sensation, perception, and even involuntary and reflex functions of the body. The story of Socrates can illustrate the power of thought and power of virtue over hostile criticism and even the prospect of death. The close relationship between knowledge and virtue can also be brought out clearly through the life and thought of Socrates. Stories of adventure and courage such as we find in the life of Sri Rama and Sri Krishna as also in the lives of great personages in Ramayana and Mahabharata provide deep insights into the psychological depths, which become manifest in the conquest of deep-seated ambitions by powers of valour and will-force, of purity of character and of the powers of the soul and the spirit. What is called a vital personality or rajasic personality can very well be illustrated by studying character like say, Alexander, since his psychology was like quicksilver; pursued as you may, he always wanted to be one step ahead. The bursting life-force in him was overwhelming, ready to listen all the time to the call of adventure and ambition. This study can be followed by stories of characters possessed of sattvic qualities so that a comparison can be made between the vital and higher vital and mental personalities. Examples can be multiplied and teachers can enrich the contents by possessing a fund of knowledge of stories of Jesus and the Sermon on the Mount, stories of the life of Mohammed and his message on submission to the will of the Supreme, or of the story of the lives of great philosophers and thinkers, of scientists and artists, of great teachers and ardent students.

Passages of great literature can also be an indispensable aid. We rightly look upon Upanishads as the supreme literature of India, and passages of Upanishads like those of Isha, Kena, Chhandogya, Brihadaranyaka and others can uplift students to very great heights of aspirations and even of practice of the realisation of the Ultimate Reality. Profound passages from great thinkers like Plato can ignite in the students the fires of the inner soul. The stories such as those of relationship between Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda can convince that search for God is not submission to dogma but a relentless process of questioning and of finding. Passages from the writings of great scientists such as those of Einstein and others can open up in the students' vision the perception of the strangeness and the wonder of the world and of the dimensions, which are unimaginable. The spirit of inquiry that we find in writings such as those of Shankara, Descartes and Bertrand Russell will give to the students the psychological insights into heights that one needs to scale if one wants to look what lies behind and beyond the horizons which seem to be unending.

The subject of value-education is directly related to the search of the aim of life. The best way to deal with this great theme is to avoid any dogmatic answer to the question as to what aim one should pursue in life but to initiate and conduct a process of exploration. Each student should feel that various pros and cons are presented for impartial understanding and consideration. If one explores the subject, we shall find that historically four aims have come to be discussed among all who had striven to reach the highest and the best. Some have arrived at the supracosmic aim of life, which does not find in the world any satisfying fulfilment. They have experienced some supreme and transcendent Reality and found in that experience and realisation something most substantial and most ecstatic; and they have found that one can abide in that realisation permanently and fully when one transcends or rejects the world. There are some others who have found that one can abide in that realisation permanently and fully when one transcends or rejects the world. There are some others who have found that there are worlds other than the physical world, some kinds of heaven or paradise, Goloka or Vaikuntha, where the high-

est glory and bliss can be attained. They have, therefore, advocated what can be called the supra-terrestrial aim of life. There are still others who seek the highest fulfilment in the world and on the earth. They advocate the terrestrial aim of life and there are several varieties of this aim, - materialistic, vitalistic and idealistic. They find that the world in which we live is the only existing world or even if there are some other worlds, the problems of our own world are already too many and we do not have the time or inclination to deal with other worlds; or else, some of them feel that what is most important is to bring about best possible in human beings to live in harmony and peace, in concord and justice, and in a fine blending of work and leisure, productivity and freedom of joy. Attempts have also been made in the course of history to combine all these three aims of life, and right from the Vedic times to the present day there have been pursuits of integral aims of life. This view does not reject life but looks upon life as a process of struggle and as a process of progress by which the life of the earth can be transformed by our ascension to supra-terrestrial realities and even to the supracosmic Reality and by bringing down the highest divine light and power.

There are a number of related texts, which can be quoted by teachers and they can be presented to students in such a way that they can be understood by them at their proper levels of development. There are, for example, accounts of the great adventures of the Vedic rishis and the Upanishadic rishis; the search of the Buddha and his attainment of Nirvana; tapasya of Mahavira and his state of liberation; the question of Arjuna and the message he received from Sri Krishna to fight in the battle as an instrument of the Divine Will; search of Plato and his conclusion that the world can be set right only when kings become philosophers or philosophers become kings; realisations of Jesus that filled him with love that inspired him to give himself in sacrifice for the sake of the salvation of all children of God on the earth; revelations received by Moses or revelations received by the Prophet Mohammed and the promises that they gave for the world and for the beyond; question of poets and artists and their search for excellence and perfection such as what we find in Leonardo da Vinci, search of

Sri Chaitanya and his unity with the supreme love and ecstasy; intellectual struggle to prove the existence of God and attainment of intellectual love of God such as what we find in Spinoza; quests of reformers of society and politics, their dreams and battles for establishment of life of equity and justice, - all these and many more accounts can be presented to the students. There is also a beautiful short play written by The Mother entitled *The Ascent to Truth*, which describes drama of life in all the stages and an epilogue. This drama presents the quest of the philanthropist, the pessimist, the scientist, the artist and three students and two lovers, and two aspirants, and how they struggle to aim and arrive at their own respective levels of fulfilment. This entire play is a story of an exploration that ends with a message that only by the highest effort and the highest aid can one know truth and truth alone, truth and complete truth, integral truth.

V

Need to Highlight Indian Contributions to various Disciplines of Knowledge

We may now come to the last point that needs to be made for all who are keen to enrich the contents of studies. Most of our textbooks, whether they relate to science or history or humanities, tend to give an overwhelming impression that the best has been attempted and achieved in the West and that Indian contribution has been only marginal or almost nil. The fact is that in every field, India has initiated greatly and achieved greatly, and even in the periods of decline, India has striven to rise once again, as has been happening since the 19th century when India began her renaissance. While new textbooks need to be re-written to give a true and full account of the achievements of India, teachers will have a good deal of homework to do today so that they can supplement the present texts used by them in the schools. This indeed is a gigantic task but we cannot shirk the responsibility that this task imposes upon us. As an aid to this task, let me present the following statement from Sri Aurobindo:

In what field indeed has not India attempted, achieved, cre-

ated, and in all on a large scale and yet with much attention to completeness of detail? Of her spiritual and philosophic achievements there can be no real question. They stand there as the Himalayas stand upon the earth, in the phrase of Kalidasa, *prithivya iva mandandah*, "as if earth's measuring rod", mediating still between earth and heaven, measuring the finite, casting their plummet far into the infinite, plunging their extremities into the upper and lower seas of the superconscient and the subliminal, the spiritual and the natural being. But if her philosophies, her religious disciplines, her long list of great spiritual personalities, thinkers, founders, saints are her greatest glory, as was natural to her temperament and governing idea, they are by no means her sole glories, nor are the others dwarfed by their eminence. It is now proved that in science she went farther than any country before the modern era, and even Europe owes the beginning of her physical science to India as much as to Greece, although not directly but through the medium of the Arabs. And, even if she had only gone as far, that would have been sufficient proof of a strong intellectual life in an ancient culture. Especially in mathematics, astronomy and chemistry, the chief elements of ancient science, she discovered and formulated much and well and anticipated by force of reasoning or experiment some of the scientific ideas and discoveries which Europe first arrived at much later, but was able to base more firmly by her new and completer method. She was well-equipped in surgery and her system of medicine survives to this day and has still its value, though it declined immediately in knowledge and is only now recovering its vitality...

In literature, in the life of the mind, she lived and built greatly... India has not only had the long roll of her great saints, sages, thinkers, religious founders, poets, creators, scientists, scholars, legists; she has had her great rulers, administrators, soldiers, conquerors, heroes, men with the strong active will, the mind that plans and the seeing force that builds. She has warred and ruled, traded and colonised and spread her civilisation, built polities and organised communities and societies, done all that makes the outward activity of great peoples... The modern Indian revival, religious, cultural, political, called now sometimes a renaissance, which

so troubles and grieves the minds of her critics, is only a repetition under altered circumstances, in an adapted form, in a greater though as yet less vivid mass of movement, of a phenomenon which has constantly repeated itself throughout a millennium of Indian history.* (* Sri Aurobindo: *The Foundations of Indian Culture*, Centenary Edition, Vol. 14, pp. 185,6,7.)

It is essential that the students of our country get the right and the great picture of India, even though they should also get the right and great picture of other countries. It is also essential that the students of our country understand properly how to arrive at the synthesis of the cultures that have flourished in the world in the past and in the present and how they can be united. But, still again, it is essential that they are enabled to derive the right lessons of the historical experience, gain fresh inspiration to discover new knowledge in all fields. For then only, they will be able to know what is the real role of India and how that role can be fulfilled in building up a new world order of ever-ascending cultural spiral. But all this implies for sincere teachers a great deal of work when they want to prepare themselves for content-enrichment.

The papers collected in this book were presented during the recent years at conferences, seminars and workshops held in different parts of the country. Educational research involved in preparing these papers was greatly inspired and supported by the research teams of the Mother's Institute of Research. Some of the important ideas, which would be found here unavoidable repeated, relate to the crisis through which humanity is passing today. It is this crisis which leads us to knock the portals of education which may lead us to some of the elements of a lasting solution. It is hoped that at this important juncture when educational thought in India is being churned once again, these papers might be found relevant and helpful.

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